

Rotary Club of Cooma Inc

Meeting - 23 April 2014

Gary Nairn - Life after Politics



Transitioning out of a political life depends somewhat on how you transitioned into it. Those that originally came from the “real world” tend to transition back more easily than those who had a politically related life before being elected to parliament. The exceptions to that rule are individuals who reach high office in politics as by that very fact their connections are generally worth something to someone post politics. But if your political career is more than two or three terms, returning to your pre-politics career is often very difficult. It depends on your particular qualifications and previous career. Which is why taking the step of standing for parliament in the first place is such a big step. You effectively risk your future.

In my case, I had been an equal partner in a surveying & mapping business for the previous 13 years and that company employed about 25 people. So it was a substantial business and I had quite a responsibility to my business partner, my staff, not to mention my family.

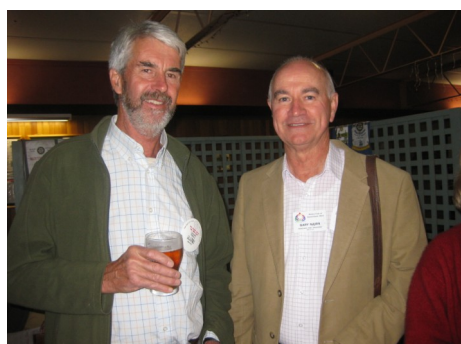
Over the first few years of my parliamentary career I had progressively sold my 50% share of my business to three of my employees. My business partner had retired and had done likewise. So there was no business to go back to as some former members are able to do. Farmers are generally the most likely to do that as the family farm tends to continue on during their political life. Having been in my own business prior to parliament my natural tendency was to work for myself. But what would I offer. The answer to that question was assisted by an invitation to speak at a spatial data conference in NZ. My work as Special Minister Of State (SMOS) in the spatial area was picked up on by the organisation that represents the surveying and mapping profession, SSSI, and the NZ Government. So I presented on the topic of “Issues and Trends Facing the Australian Spatial Information Industry.”

After my presentation I was approached by someone from the NZ Department of Trade & Enterprise who was working on promoting the IT and spatial industries of NZ. He found there was little understanding within the NZ Government (mainly at the political level) of spatial information and he asked if I was interested in helping him develop a value proposition that could be used to inform his political leaders. To cut a long story short, I carried out a consultancy for that Department that I called “Spatially Enabling New Zealand Society”. It was delivered to the NZ Government just before an election where that Government lost power however the incoming Government (who I had been able to brief in Opposition) picked up on the work I did and have subsequently implemented most of my recommendations. So through that experience I decided I might have something to offer to other clients.

This work wasn’t taking up all my working week so in those early days I was able to indulge myself in some woodworking, something I always loved but never had the time to do, and I ultimately fitted out my home office with desks, coffee table etc plus a few other items. I also agreed to join the Board of Auswide Projects, a not-for-profit organisation running indigenous programs, employment and training services and other community based projects in this region. It is a pro-bono position and I continue on that Board today. A long time dream to have some land of our own, Rose and I bought 55ha on the Numeralla River south of Numeralla in October 2011. This was something we had together, was starting from scratch, and we saw it as something we could gradually retire to. I never contemplated retirement, but retiring to something different was attractive. We built a shed, we bought a tractor and we started to spend the odd weekend cleaning the place up. I also saw opportunities to employ some of the innovations I experienced through my work with Soils for Life. My post politics life was coming together.

While my “real jobs” increased, so have my pro-bono jobs which include chairing an advisory committee for a research centre at Melbourne University, as trustee for Alliance Franchise building fund in Canberra, a member of an advisory committee for the Mulloon Institute, plus I’m currently chairman of the Spatial Industries Business Association, the peak industry body for the surveying, mapping and GIS industries, and close to here, as a member of an advisory committee to the Monaro Early Intervention Service helping with their strategy as the National Disability Insurance Scheme looms large.

So there is definitely a life after politics and for me, a very busy one, but I am loving the diversity. I continue to run into people I haven’t seen since leaving parliament and inevitably they ask “how is retirement going?” To which I respond “which one of these several business cards would you like?”!



Rotary Theme of the Month: Magazine Month

For his three minuter, Les spoke about bravery and put it into three categories.

At ANZAC time we remember the bravery of the men and women who fought in wartime, so many of them giving their lives in the process.

Then there are the people who do extreme acts of bravery in an emergency situation, such as saving someone from drowning or rescuing people from a burning house.

The third group is the majority – the quiet people who go about their lives doing extraordinary things in ordinary situations. There are the unsung heroes. Such a hero could be living with a member of the family extremely ill or disabled. It could be that the family is going through a period of adversity such as drought. These are the people who carry on, not expecting any praise, but know that it is important for them to persevere in their role.

These quiet heroes are the ones that Les especially remembers on ANZAC Day.



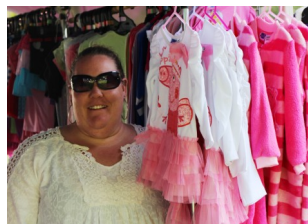
Thought of the Week - Katrin H

A good life is when you get up in the morning and can't wait to do it all again.

Projects being supported by Cooma Rotary include:

- End Polio Now - ROMAC - Shelter Box - Monaro Early Intervention Service (MEIS)
- New public seating in Cooma - More trees at Rotary Oval - Outdoor workout equipment
- Rotary Youth Exchange Program

Market Photos including the Easter Bonnets by Katrin Hackney



April Rosters	
Attendance	Richard L
	Tracey A
Property	Wolfgang
	Patrick K
Fellowship	Margaret E
	Claire N
Market	John K - Co-ord
	Alyson - PA
	Marco (BBQ trailer)
	Elaine S
	Robb S
	Tony S
	Les S
	Darrell G
3 Minute Talk	
30 April	Des T
Thought of the week	
30 April	Neil B
Introduction	
30 April	Darrell G
Thank you	
30 April	Ken D

Upcoming Speakers
30th April - Jim Brindle My Life in Theatre
7th May - Club Assembly
14th May - Judy Ford District Membership Committee
21st May - Craig Chilcott About Monbeef

MEMBER HAPPENINGS April

BIRTHDAYS

Des T - 15 April

Geoff B - 17 April

JOINING DATE

None recorded

ANNIVERSARIES

Dave & Trish Libauer - 20 April

This Weeks Attendance:

Visiting Rotarians:

Guests: Gary Nairn, Rebecca (Club)

Apologies:

Leave: John V

Make-ups:

We Also Missed:

The contact for making apologies and for notifications of guests for dinner meetings is
Les Sutcliffe on 6452 7442 during business hours or e-mail leecooma@bigpond.com