

Rotary Club of Rutherglen

Bi-Annual Business Person's Dinner 2010

Organised every 2 years, the 2010 Business Person's dinner was a great success. Held at Tuileries restaurant function room on Thursday 13th May, President Phil Trimble opened the dinner with a warm welcome to all. With over 90 attendees, there were several potential new members in attendance, together with Ken Jasper, our local Member of Parliament and David Flannigan, the new site manager at Uncle Tobys.

Phil made a short speech about Rutherglen Rotary's role in the community, the service it provided and gave a brief history of the Business Person's dinner, one of its key goals being to attract new members to Rotary. Steve Jones (Membership) then introduced the guest speaker for the evening, Neil Hodding, Oceania Regional Director of Cereal Partners Worldwide (CPW).

Neil gave an overview of CPW, a joint venture between the world's largest food company Nestlé and the giant US food company General Mills. It is a relatively young company, experiencing phenomenal growth and has been very successful in its battle for breakfast cereal leadership against its biggest competitor, Kelloggs. The company is headquartered in Lausanne, Switzerland and markets cereals in more than 130 countries. With well-known brands such as *Cheerios*, CPW is the second-largest cereal company outside North America, with approximately US\$1.4 billion. It has over 4000 employees and operations in over 40 countries. The 2006 acquisition of Uncle Tobys moved CPW into the number two position in the Australian cereal market share. With its long-term goal of creating category growth, CPW has an ongoing commitment to health and nutrition through continuous enhancement and nutritional profile of their cereals. The breakfast plant at Wahgunyah produces over 6 million cases (38,000 tonnes) per year across 130 products.



Neil went on to talk about his experiences, having worked in many countries throughout the world, with regional responsibilities in Europe & the Middle East, before becoming CPW's Global Director of Trade. He was also responsible for setting up the business in China. He considers himself a global citizen, being born in Malaysia of British parents, educated in England and the US, and then responsible for businesses in many countries across the Globe. As well as being a smart business person on the global stage, he came across as a very down to earth and approachable individual, who continually strives for a work life balance to ensure he can spend time with his wife and two boys whilst playing golf and fishing.

It is not often we get a person with global business experience to be a guest speaker at a local Rotary event. Neil certainly fitted that bill and kept the audience engaged through his talk.

Thanks to Gordon McKinlay (Vocational Service & past President) for his organisation of the event and to Steve Jones, (Membership) for persuading Neil to be our guest speaker.

