**Aussie Alex accepts his award**

By Dan Nixon and Arnold R. Grahl

Rotary International News

Former Rotary Foundation Ambassadorial Scholar Alex Buchanan realised Rotary's power to influence the world when he was working on a cooperative food research project between Australia and countries in south-east Asia.

“The level of cooperation between countries worked like a charm,” Buchanan told Foundation alumni during the Rotary Alumni Celebration on June 20.

“I looked around this very, very successful international cooperative, and out of the six global leaders running it, three were former Rotary Ambassadorial Scholars.

“So I say, thank you to The Rotary Foundation for making this possible.”

A food technologist and member of the Rotary Club of Melbourne, Vic, Buchanan, 75, created the high-protein Australian milk biscuit and high-energy biscuit, which are staples of his country's international food aid program. He also developed an affordable infant food made from rice and soy flour that is commercially produced in Thailand. In January, he was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for his service to food science and technology and to the community.

For these and many other accomplishments, The Rotary Foundation presented Buchanan with its 2008-09 Global Alumni *Service to Humanity* Award at the 2009 RI Convention in Birmingham, England.

Buchanan's connection with Rotary began when he was a 1959-60 Ambassadorial Scholar studying agriculture and science at Iowa State University in the United States. He has since helped obtain Foundation Matching Grants on behalf of the Rotary Club of Melbourne for service projects in Cambodia, Timor-Leste, and India. A Paul Harris Fellow, he has also worked closely with Past RI President Royce Abbey in establishing the Royce and Jean Abbey Endowment Fund through the Foundation. The fund has provided scholarships to 10 students from developing countries for agricultural training in Australia since 2001.

“I was drawn to Rotary because it changed my life with the opportunity to work, travel, and study,” Buchanan said before the convention.

His favorite Rotary club project, which involved two other Australian clubs, created the East Timor Roofing Company and a campus for the Dili Institute of Technology in Baucau, Timor-Leste. The company was established by the Melbourne club and the Rotary Club of Doncaster, Vic, with financial support from the Rotary Club of Adelaide, SA, and the Shell Foundation.

“It now employs 15 people and is operating independently and profitably,” Buchanan said. “We also started a revolving loan fund which helped more than 200 locals, mostly women, develop micro-enterprises in and around Baucau.”

In addition to professional honours, Buchanan has received Rotary District awards for providing nourishment in underprivileged countries suffering from famine, as well as other service efforts. One other recognition is also especially precious.

“My father was a dairy factory manager in our small village and the outstanding community leader,” Buchanan said.

“As a boy, I always felt that I was in his shadow. Later, I [worked] in Melbourne. I travelled extensively and became well known in the dairy industry throughout the state. One day, at a dairy industry conference, my dad was introduced as ‘Alex Buchanan's father.’

“The pride on his face was a revelation to me and a joy to behold.”