



Reach Within to Embrace Humanity Rotary District 9800

• February 2011

What if our luck runs out?

Don Argus AC presented the Angus Mitchell Oration to 162 Rotarians and guests at the Rotary Club of Melbourne luncheon meeting on 29th February. In his introduction, he said: The dearth of political leadership in this country is why I have decided to concentrate on a few themes which should be of concern to all of us as we tackle structural changes in the economy and lock in a long term strategy which allows us to reap the benefits of the growth of India and China who are demanding more and more of our scarce and non- renewable resources.

That can only happen if our political leaders set acceptable standards, create commitments to objectives and determine the values and principles that guide the country.

At the moment our leader-follower relationships are tense, cynical, confused and mistrustful.

That sort of environment only leads to dysfunctional relationships and of course a crisis of commitment.

The theme of my public speeches over the past few years has been that although Australia has been incredibly lucky, we cannot rely on luck for our future prosperity.

Instead, we need to make sure the country remains competitive in uncertain times and that our political leaders foster strong sustainable growth for the benefit of all Australians.

The source of Australia's so called luck is well known. We are positioned in a unique way to benefit from the shift in the globe's economic centre of gravity from the western world, to Asia. And we stand to benefit enormously from the emergence of the Chinese middle class over the next two decades.

Against that backdrop I want to structure my talk today around three issues where I believe we will need strong leadership to deliver quality outcomes.

We need to get these things right to ensure that the living standards of our children and grandchildren are at least as good - and hopefully better - than what we enjoy today, and we need to engage in outcome thinking to build that healthy community to which I referred



Don Argus, AC



Rotary Club of Melbourne President Austen Burleigh presenting a certificate and a copy of "[Australia's First Rotary Club - A History of the Rotary Club of Melbourne](#)" by the late Owen Parnaby, to Don Argus AC.

earlier.

The three areas I want to focus on are productivity, management of our public finances and taxation.

As I have said before on previous occasions, I fear that in many cases our political leaders are opting for the most politically convenient outcomes, not those that are in the best interests of future generations; - all this selfish leadership debate is really quite exhausting and futile”

[Read the full Angus Mitchell Oration here:](#)

Don Angus AC Is the former Chairman of BHP Billiton, the world's largest diversified resource company.

He is a member of the Order of Australia (AO) and was further awarded the Centenary Medal in April 2003 for service to Australian society through business.

In 2010 Don was made a Companion of the Order of Australia in recognition for his service to business and commerce through leadership in the mining and finance industries, and to the community through the promotion of philanthropy, and executive roles in conservation, health, charitable and sporting organisations.

The Angus Mitchell Oration was initiated by the Board of Directors of the Rotary Club of Melbourne in 1971 in honour of Sir Angus Mitchell as part of the Club's 50th birthday celebrations. The Oration has been delivered by a number of eminent Australians.

Sir Angus was inducted into the Rotary Club of Melbourne on 7th December 1927. He was President of the Club in 1931-32, elected District Governor in 1934-35, and again in 1937-38.

He became the first Australian to be elected to the office of President of Rotary International in 1948–49. He was created a Knight Bachelor by Her Majesty the Queen in 1956. Two years later, he was the first member of the Club to be named a Paul Harris Fellow.

Paul Harris, who founded Rotary with three compatriots on 23 February 1905, became a close personal friend. Sir Angus died on 18 August 1961.

Past RI President Royce Abbey delivered the 1989 Oration and attended the meeting last Wednesday with Jean.

Also, Sir Angus' grandson Alister Payne, a Past President of Doncaster East (now Manningham) was a guest of the Club.

