I would like to thank the Club for the honour of being President for this coming year, because I do regard it as an honour.

I wish to acknowledge special guests this evening including three of my children, Aaron, Joanna and Paul, and Rebecca and Bevan. I would also like to acknowledge Noel and Alison Lamberton, good friends of mine, and Patrick Butterworth who has come up from Wellington to be our guest speaker tonight.

I want to thank President Russell and the previous directors for the excellent job that they have done over the past year, and I want to acknowledge, that for a number of reasons, it has been a difficult year, which makes their achievements all the more significant.

I have had the opportunity to witness two extremes of incoming President speeches. On the one hand, there was Past President Richard Pryce’s record breaking speech of approximately 45 minutes. I wanted to emulate this because Richard is something of a role model to me. Unfortunately we didn’t have enough paper in the office. And at the other end of the spectrum, I witnessed President Anne Walsh’s delightful speech last week of approximately 5 minutes. I think tonight, I will be just a little longer than Anne’s and hopefully a lot shorter than Richards.

I have been a member of this Club for 20 years and I recognise that that is not much compared to the membership of John Heaton and some other members of this club. But I am amazed at the speed at which those years have past. In my late teens, like so many others here, I joined Jaycees in Henderson where I enjoyed the fellowship, the community service, and the leadership and public speaking skills that it gave me. I had always been interested in joining Rotary and I remember very clearly when Doug Forsythe asked me to be the guest speaker at the Christmas function held at the Trout Hatchery during Dave Stack’s presidency.

It was through Doug that I became a Rotarian. I joined for the opportunity to continue community services, for fellowship and for networking. My job, of course, is very different to everyone else in this room, with the exception of Allen Foote and with the wonderful networking opportunities, Rotary was unable to help me build my business. However, if provides me with a huge number of people that I have been able to talk to and refer clients to when they have had problems outside of the areas of my expertise, and for that I am grateful.

I want to acknowledge the changes that Past President Russell has made in the last 12 months, with the introduction of some evening meetings, change to the Presidents table, the smartening up of the meeting room, and the banners etc. I want to follow on in the same line and consultation with the directors.

I had the privilege this year of giving the reflections at the District Assembly, and I have been asked to share some of what I said tonight. And so I quote: “I want to say that we cannot go through life simply remembering, we can’t keep looking back.”
We need to look forward to the future and to keep reinventing ourselves. This is true of all organisations including Rotary.

I would ask:
Is there a still a need for Rotary? YES!
Do we need to change? YES!
Are the things that were involved with Relevant? YES!

What then needs to change?
Can I suggest the format of our meeting to make them relevant to this younger generation.

I was doing some research for a project that I am involved with and went onto the Department of Internal Affairs Religious census figures. I don’t need to tell you that the number of people who are identified as have a Christian faith has decreased. In fact it has decreased 200,000 between 2006 and 2013. The interesting thing is that it says on the website that the mainstream or traditional churches have reduced considerably, but there has been considerable growth in the new contemporary churches.

Why is that?

**POWERPOINT**

**SLIDE**

_Father McKenzie, writing the words_  
_Of a sermon that no one will hear_  
_No one comes near_  
_Look at him working, darning his socks_  
_In the night when there's nobody there_  
_What does he care_

**NEXT SLIDE**

There are a number of factors, but I want to suggest that the main reason is that although the message of the church hasn’t changed, the method of doing church has changed. Even that phrase “The method of doing church” may be foreign and uncomfortable to many of you.

So when I look at Rotary, I see a lot of similarities between us and Churches:

What they and we do is still relevant
Membership in most is declining
Membership is increasing in those that have moved with the times

*NEXT SLIDE*

Contemporary churches don’t look like traditional churches.

*NEXT SLIDE*

They have stage lights, bands (often loud), generally no altars or religious furniture on the stage. They have the latest audio visual equipment, Data projectors, large screens, modern music, many of them don’t even have a cross. .... And they are full and increasing

What has changed?
Not the message
Not the things that churches have been involved in
The aesthetics have changed
The buildings have changed,
The music has changed
The interior has changed
THE YOUNGER GENERATION LOVE IT

Does everyone love it? No, in fact for many it is extremely uncomfortable.

BUT people put up with the uncomfortableness because they see new people coming in and the church able to tackle bigger projects because of increased numbers and resources. They realize that the church doesn’t exist for them but for the community they are in and they need to be relevant while holding onto their values.

In the same way Rotary doesn’t exist for us! It exists for the benefit of our community, and so we need to be relevant to it.

The important thing is to rally around the vision of Rotary – to remove the sacred cows and to increase our movement.

Of course you have to want it, to really want it! That is the key, but if you do, then we can continue to really be A GIFT TO THE WORLD.

*LAST SLIDE*
I want to conclude by taking a quote from Past President Paul Wilson in his presidential speech who said “We are going to have fun.” I sincerely hope that that will be the case this coming year.

Thank you