



ROTARY NEWS

Among the main events this past month was the annual District Conference held at Caloundra. Speakers came from as far away as Iceland. As we all know, they have been doing it tough there lately – topographical devastation from that monstrous volcano last year, on the one hand, to financial devastation under the global financial crisis. Other speakers ranged from Denise Drysdale (hilariously funny) to the very serious Operation Cleft about Rotary's Oceania Medical Aid for Children (ROMAC), by Michael Kirk. Under this program, seriously disfigured and handicapped children are brought by Rotary to Australian hospitals for major corrective surgery (often given free) which they would not be able to obtain in their own country.

Ms. Pantea Beigi, who is hosted in Australia by our Rotary club, also spoke brilliantly at the conference. Ms. Beigi is an Iranian-American human rights advocate, born in Teheran in the aftermath of the 1979 Iranian revolution. She then endured the 1980s Iran-Iraq war. Over the past decade, she has worked closely with a number of Nobel Peace Laureates to address conditions of social and economic injustice faced by underprivileged youth across the globe. She assists 2003 Nobel Peace Laureate, Dr. Shirin Ebadi, in her efforts on behalf of Iranian citizens and helped protect Dr. Ebadi and her clients during the December 2008 attacks on human rights workers in Iran. For a powerful radio interview of Dr. Ebadi from her home in England, by a radio host based in the U.S. with Ms. Beigi interpreting from right here in Brisbane, go to:

<http://www.yourpublicmedia.org/content/wmpr/where-we-live-shirin-ebadi>

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