



Rotary welcome USA visitors

The members of the Rotary Club of Alexandra had yet another busy week, this time it began on a lighter note as they welcomed a group study team from District 5610, South Dakota USA.

The team of five were on their second last leg of a four week study tour of District 9790 and had just attended the annual Rotary Conference at Geelong, when they were collected by the Alexandra Rotarians on Sunday.

They travelled up via Kinglake West and Flowerdale and then on Wednesday they travelled to Healesville via Marysville, so saw first hand the extent of the destruction caused by Black Saturday's fire.

Team leader Chris Paustian and team member Ryan Jensen, a business banking officer, spent Monday as guests of the Murrindindi Shire economic development group and their day included a visit to Lake Mountain.

For the rest of the team, Monday morning was focussed on vocational visits. Kim Anderson, an occupational therapist, was hosted by local occupational therapist Lea Fitzgerald.

Jacqueline Scoular, a middle level mathematics teacher was hosted by the staff of the Alexandra Secondary College. Macy Martinson, grocery store manager, was hosted by the staff at Reddrops. Rotary and the team members extend a special thank you to all who gave so freely of their time and expertise.

Other activities included water skiing on Lake Eildon, golf at Alexandra, a picnic on the Goulburn River, thanks to Ron Hedger, a visit to the Incident Control Centre at the DSE office and a chance to meet Incident Controller, Steve Grant and get the inside story of the Black Saturday fire.

On Tuesday morning the team joined with local Rotarians to provide breakfast to the Great

Australian Bike Ride, a group of Rotarians and friends who are riding round Australia to raise money for the Australian Rotary Health project.

The riders and the team met Mayor Lyn Gunter who started the riders on their next stage to Mansfield. The group's visit concluded as guest speakers at the Rotary dinner on Tuesday and then a visit to Healesville Sanctuary on Wednesday.

A full program for everyone and the team were very impressed with Alexandra and district, despite the ravages of the bush fire.

The Alexandra Rotarians were still at work at the relief centre and coordinating the electrical fit out for the 20 sheds, which was completed on Saturday.

Many members said it was great to have our visitors; in particular those from USA who made meeting this week sparkle and left everyone with a smile.