

Rotary club speech – Maiana Cameron

Good afternoon distinguished members of the rotary club and members of the community, My name is Maiana Cameron, I am a student at Mornington secondary college, year 11 captain and student representative on the school council, it is my honour today to speak on behalf of the students at my college about the effects of the pandemic on students and their learning.

I think I can speak for many when I say this past year has been very challenging for the well-being of students, going from an entire week of school to isolated online study directly impacted all students, as it prevented the main form of socialization that teenagers have.

The change to online schooling for what seemed like forever was an adjustment that took time to get used to, I, like many others struggled to engage during online lessons, I thrive within a classroom. Face-to-face assisted learning and socialization with my peers was something my cats, unfortunately, could not live up to. I watched my grades and productivity decline as I tried to cope with the angst my family and I faced .

Deprivation of in-school education and increase of uncertainty caused a lot of anxiety within the community especially as activities of everyday life such as after school jobs and sports clubs were also cancelled due to covid fears, further limiting any healthy coping mechanisms we had.

There were many challenges faced by teachers, parents, and students. Luckily this year has been very positive so far, the teachers and coordinators work very hard to support students. Many resources have been made available for students- such as doctors in schools which includes psychiatrists as well as tutors provided for those students who particularly struggled in 2020.

Despite growing worries, the pandemic truly showcased how lucky my generation is to be able to experience the full extent of globalisation and the wave of social media. Many students made incredible efforts to support and help their peers, checking on those who were especially affected under restrictions. Although not being able to hug and talk in person online we could facetime and chat in real-time. Our loved ones overseas and out of state seemed to make an effort to reach out and regularly check upon us. I believe the pandemic and restrictions which forced us to move to online schooling, managed to bring the community together. We all worked hard to bring down the cases and keep those of us at most risk safe.