

Northern Highlands Soroptimist members celebrated their 25th birthday with a lunch at the Jamestown Golf Club on Sunday 19th July.

Northern Highland's members welcomed a number of fellow Soroptimists from Clubs around the state, Northern Areas Council Mayor Denis Clark and community members.

The delicious meal was catered for by the Jamestown Golf Club, receiving well deserved praise from those attending. Beautiful weather complimented the day highlighting the wonderful views from a very suitable venue.

Mayor Clark addressed the gathering, welcoming and thanking all for attending.

Guest speaker Kathryn Finnigan AM APM, a Soroptimist member and former Police Officer spoke on the history of policing in South Australia and her work prior to retiring in 1998.

When South Australia was settled law and order was almost non-existent but it was soon realized that a Police Force had to be formed.

Kate Cocks was a welfare worker and the state's first policewoman in South Australia. She was accompanied by Annie Ross patrolling the sandhills and beaches of Adelaide, advising 'indiscreet couples to move '3 feet apart', noting in their reports that many were respectable and occupying good positions in social and business spheres'

In 1964 Kathryn was considered too short to join in Queensland so she moved to SA where she was accepted into the Police Force, serving in a variety of areas including Whyalla, Coober Pedy, Kadina, Burnside, Unley, Darlington and Christies Beach.

Women police officers went into uniform in 1974 and this also saw the separate establishment of men and women officers abandoned.

Kathryn was the first woman to join the Drug Squad and served as a Detective Sergeant with Burnside CIB from 1979 to 1984 moving back to being a uniformed officer until 1985.

Being a woman found her discriminated against in many areas of her work even called a 'Dickless Tracy' following one of her promotion to the CIB. She therefore had to prove herself fit and able to maintain her position if the Force time and again but has been awarded for her persistence receiving an APM for service to the development and progress of women in SA and in 2000 the Order of Australia medal (AM).

Kathryn was appointed Honorary Aide-de Camp to Governor Sir Eric Neal and her community service includes work with the Order of Malta helping out in soup kitchens feeding the homeless of Adelaide.

She continued her presentation explaining what being a Soroptimist means to her, having joined Southern Districts of Adelaide in 1987, transferring to Port Pirie Club when she was based at Kadina. She said that Soroptimism has enabled her to make wonderful friendships within her own club, interstate and overseas.

Some of Kathryn's thoughts on the meaning of the Soroptimist Pledge are 'The sincerity of friendship' – she made wonderful friends within her own club, interstate and overseas. 'The joy of achievement' – pride in our efforts and skills, bravery and sense of achievement and togetherness involved. 'Dignity of Service' – thoughtfulness when dealing with members of society 'i.e. the disabled /disadvantaged people. 'The Integrity of Professions' – each of us has had, or has, different professions so our moral principles came with us and this is the basis of our dealings within the sisterhood of Soroptimism. 'The love of Country' – we are very fortunate and privileged for being an Australian.

Kathryn finalized her excellent speech with an 1873 quote by Sr. Mary McKillop, "Remember we are but travellers here and never see a need without doing something about it" adding ' Sr Mary would have made a good Soroptimist!'

Celebrations continued with Kathryn Finnigan and Rosemary Martin, who was also celebrating a birthday, cutting the cake which was then enjoyed for dessert winding up a great day of friendship and celebration.