

Is your club ready to vote on our future?



*“You don’t imagine yesterday, you imagine tomorrow.”
- RI President Jennifer Jones*

Now that the changeover season is behind us, the Zone 8 Regionalisation team is back in action. Club visits are occurring to explain the need to embrace change, the pilot concept itself, and how it will proceed if approved.

CLUB support is required before the pilot can proceed and it is important to realise that this is just what it is – a pilot. The aim is to explore opportunities to develop, test and evaluate a regional approach to supporting and governing Rotary and Rotaract in Zone 8 (Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands), from July 2023 to June 2026.

It is an opportunity for Rotarians and Rotaractors to design Rotary for tomorrow to suit our region. Hopefully, it will offer more doable leadership opportunities across the organisation and create an approach that will assist us to be more adaptive to our changing world. “Australasian Rotarians have always been at the forefront of adopting

change. We were co-sponsors of the admission of women to membership, we created RYLA and RYPEN, and were amongst the first to take part in Rotary Youth Exchange, among many innovations. To paraphrase Bill Boyd’s theme, *We Lead the Way*,” said Past Rotary International President Ian Riseley. “At the Council on Legislation, and at the request of the Board, the Rotary world agreed to ask our zone, along with the UK, to conduct a pilot study to look at ways to achieve such regionalisation. The first step is to obtain the approval of clubs and districts to take part in this pilot.”

Check the vote fact sheet

The vote fact sheet, available at creatingtomorrowrotary.org, explains the process to follow for your club to vote on whether we should participate in the pilot: Rotary International South Pacific and Philippines Office (RISPPPO) in Sydney will manage the vote, which will be online. “This is a great opportunity for us to really make a difference, and there is no risk to our way of life, because if the results of the pilot are not to our liking, the Rotary world will continue to operate under the old rules, and that includes us,” Ian said. “I encourage all clubs

and districts to support the undertaking of the pilot when the vote takes place.” The pilot requires two thirds of all clubs in each district to vote ‘Yes’ for it to proceed. Clubs vote first, then each district governor will vote. As district governors are the officers of Rotary International and will play an important leadership and advisory role during the pilot, their vote as custodians for the future is vitally important to ensure we address the challenges before us. All districts in Zone 8 will need to achieve the two thirds of clubs majority. **Rotary done our way** Zone 8 membership is declining, despite our valiant recruitment efforts and population increases over the past 10 years. In fact, we have declined 24 per cent in this period, but it is actually worse than it appears – this 24 per cent is *after* including more than 30,000 new

members recruited in the period. “The decline in our membership is horrific and unless we do our Rotary differently, in another 10 years there may not be much left,” said Past Rotary International Director Stuart Heal. “Membership, PR, projects and partnerships done in ways to fit Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific are possible. Regionalisation also presents an opportunity to refresh our leadership with the best people.” As well as exploring better ways to govern Rotary in our region, it should be noted that the ultimate aim of the pilot is to better support and strengthen the core work of Rotary and Rotaract clubs and their members, not to change clubs. “This is an opportunity to be in charge of our own destiny and become ourselves – to speak with ‘one-voice’, which will enable us to work with corporates, NGOs and government, while

RIGHT: RYLA Oceania Rotary Club – Social Impact Network Chair Rebecca Fry wants to ensure Rotary is alive and well for her kids to be involved in in the future.

we support our clubs to be stronger locally,” said Past Rotary International Director Noel Trevaskis.

Embracing our past to envision our future

The pilot is not about throwing away the magnificent history and impact that Rotary and Rotaract clubs and members have contributed. Our history and the amazing impact Rotary has had over the past 117 years is vital to the heart of who we are.

The current structure will remain while the pilot explores what works and what doesn't, with continuous input from Rotarians, Rotaractors, clubs and districts.

“Trends in volunteering are changing – people want more flexibility about how and when they volunteer and more meaningful

volunteering roles,” said Rotary International Director Jessie Harman. “We need to continue to adapt Rotary to meet the changing needs and lifestyles of current and future members. This is our greatest challenge and our greatest opportunity.”

Worldwide, there are almost 1.4 million Rotary and Rotaract members who want to see our great organisation flourish into the next century and, if we are to increase our impact and reach in the face of changing societal trends and expectations, we must

do something different to reverse the decline.

“As a new mum, I want to ensure Rotary is alive and well for my kids to be involved in in the future,” said RYLA Oceania Rotary Club – Social Impact Network Chair Rebecca Fry. “The pilot is an exciting opportunity for us to not only imagine Rotary, but create a Rotary in our region that is thriving, not just surviving.”

What's in it for clubs?

Working regionally, we anticipate several benefits:

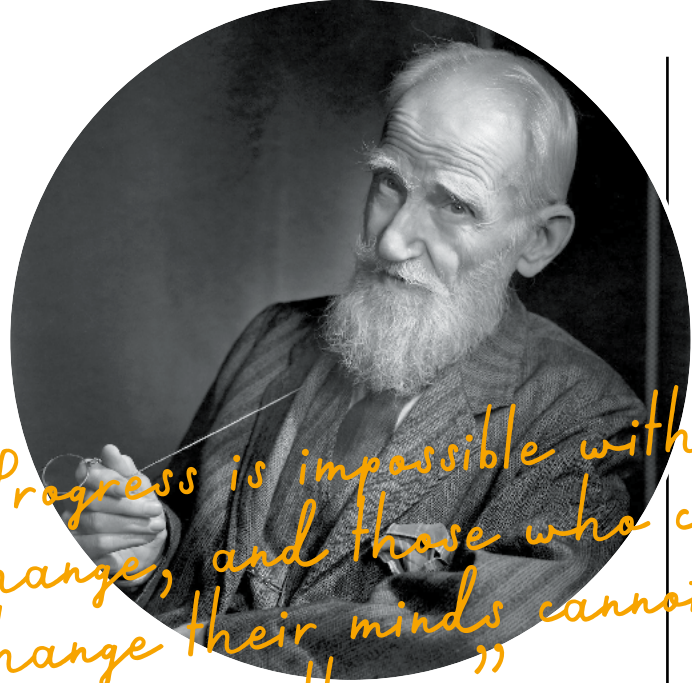
- Greater effectiveness through collaboration on bigger national projects and working together locally.
- Greater external reach as we speak with ‘one voice’, delivering relevant and more consistent messages to enhance our public image and to make Rotary simpler to partner with.
- Targeted support for clubs from the best of the best Rotarians in the fields clubs wish to pursue.
- Reduced costs through the elimination of duplication, better use of technology, and better use of our best volunteer resources.
- Better leadership development suited to growing Rotary in a modern environment.
- Support for clubs interested in being innovative in attracting, engaging and retaining members and growing Rotary in their local environment.

Changing with a changing world

Remember, the pilot is to explore what change could look like for our zone, how Rotarians and Rotaractors will benefit, and potentially how this could be replicated by Rotary internationally.

“This is a changing world; we must be prepared to change with it.” These words, spoken by Rotary's founder Paul Harris, have probably never been more apposite than they are today. As our world changes, so must Rotary.

“I am excited at the opportunity for change that is regionalisation,”



“Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything.”
- George Bernard Shaw

said Rotary International President-elect Gordon McNally. “Regionalisation will help shape the future of Rotary, ensuring it thrives and grows in the years to come. I urge you to be the leaders and the innovators as you show the rest of the world how Rotary will look in the years ahead.”

Get informed

Every club has the opportunity to have a representative from their district speak to them, either in person or via

zoom, before voting. If this has not happened, contact your district representative. More information can also be obtained by participating in or viewing a recording of recent and upcoming online webinars, open to all Rotarians and Rotaractors in the zone – see creatingtomorrowrotary.org for more details.

Get informed, have your say, and let's create a Rotary we can leave as our legacy for future generations; let's Imagine Rotary in our zone as thriving. ^{RDY}

For more information: The dedicated pilot website has various recordings and a frequently asked questions section, the new vote fact sheet, and registration links to upcoming webinars hosted by Rotary International Director Jessie Harman – plus the opportunity for you to participate personally and send your questions to the pilot planning group. Visit creatingtomorrowrotary.org



“We are leading the world in elevating Rotaract, and I implore every Rotarian and Rotaractor to approach regionalisation with an open mind and look towards the possibilities of a united future together.”
- Rotaract Australia Chair Laura Telford