

## Rotary for Beginners

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**ROTARY OVERVIEW** - Rotary International (RI) is a worldwide organization, comprising 1.2 million members, in over 200 countries and 34,000 Clubs. It was the first service Club in the world and was founded on February 23rd 1905 by Paul Harris in Chicago USA.

Its structure is as follows:

- **Head Office** - Chicago USA
- **Regional Offices** – There is generally one in each major geographical region of the world. The one that services Australia is in Parramatta
- **Districts** - This is a group of Clubs that is overseen by an overarching organization structure similar to that of a Club. Our District is 9790 and comprises 63 Clubs. Its geographical spread is from Deniliquin in the NW to Holbrook in the NE and in a wedge south down to Coburg and Preston in Melbourne.
- **Club** - We are an autonomous Club which controls its own destiny, although we do follow guidelines and recommendations from the levels above. Clubs are the most important part of Rotary, for without Clubs there are no higher levels.

**CLUB STRUCTURE** - Like most Clubs, ours has a Board through which most decisions pass. We follow the recommended Board structure for a Club of our size, as recommended by RI and District.

***Our Board Structure is typically as follows:***

President  
Vice President – Immediate Past President  
President Elect  
Secretary  
Treasurer  
Service Projects Director - generally President Elect  
Foundation Director  
Public Relations Director  
Membership Director  
Federation Festival Director

Under these Directors are numerous committees and it is these committees who help implement the programs of Rotary International and the Club.

***Under the Board are a number of other key positions:***

- **Sergeant at Arms** - whose job is to setup the meeting venue, call the meeting to order and run the fine session. They are helped each week by a Club member, nominated on the roster, who is called Sergeants Help.
- **Programs** - whose role is to organise the guest speakers, or other weekly activities. The Program person also checks with the Guest Speaker if there is a need for IT equipment on the night.
- **Bulletin Editor** - reports on the activities of the meeting, as well as promotes future Club events. Included in the Bulletin is a synopsis of the Guest Speaker's talk and a roster for the coming weeks. The Editor sends each member a copy of the Bulletin before the next meeting by email, as well as post it on our website (This may be done by one of the **Social Media Team** of the Club). The District Governor, Assistant Governor and District Bulletin person are also emailed a copy of the bulletin.

The jobs on the weekly roster are as follows:

- **Sergeants Help** - helps the Sergeant at Arms setup the items needed for the meeting, serves the drinks during the meal, assists in the fine session and helps put everything away at the end of the meeting.
- **Treasurer** - collects weekly dinner fees and record raffle numbers
- **Chairman** - after the President's welcome, takes over the meeting, introduces the guest speaker and controls questions to the speaker.

- **Grace** – the nominated Rotarian says the Rotary Grace. There are a number of options for this, with some being non- religious for those so inclined.
- **Loyal Toast** - proposes the toast to “*the Queen and people of Australia*”
- **International Toast** - researches another Club, generally overseas, tells the Club about them and then proposes a toast to that Club. The purpose of this is help members learn about what other Clubs are doing. (The Vice President’s job is to then contact the subject Club of the toast each week)
- **Rotary Information** - This is a short presentation about something in Rotary, or in one’s own profession or career. Again, the purpose of this is for members to find out something of interest about Rotary in general.

In the District we have contact with:

- **DG** - District Governor - the individual who is responsible to RI for the performance of the Clubs in their District. They are also there to help the Club Presidents with any problem they may have
- **AG** - Assistant Governor - Individuals who work with a group of Clubs, assisting and representing the District Governor. Our District 9790 has nine Assistant Governors. AG’s serve for three years in this role.
- **DGE** - District Governor Elect - Next year’s District Governor.
- **DGN** - District Governor Nominee - The next DGE and the DG the year after that

**ROTARY PROGRAMS** - There are a great number of programs that Rotary runs. No Club can possibly be involved in them all, and below are the ones we are involved in on a regular basis.

- **Youth Exchange** - A Rotary Program that our Club embraces. It involves High School students (normally year 10) spending a year hosted by an overseas Rotary Club and attending the local high school in that country.
  - In most cases the students return to the year that they would have gone into had they not gone overseas. That is, if they were about to start Year 11 before they went overseas, then they will return to year 11 when they start their next school year.
  - Students we send overseas are referred to as Outbound and ones we host are referred to as Inbound.
  - If a Club sponsors a student - sends a student out - it is obliged to host an Inbound student.
  - Students should still be under 18 by the time they return home from their year of exchange.
- **Polio Plus** - This is Rotary International’s major program and has been running since 1979. Its aim is to rid the world of Polio and this has almost been completed, with only three small pockets of Polio active in the world. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is a major contributor to this cause. Our Club contributes to this specifically on a regular basis, through various events and special efforts
- **Foundation** - Rotary International’s primary fund from which it can contribute to major worldwide projects such as Polio Plus.
 

Our Club contributes to this every year. Our primary method of doing so is through a donation method called Every Rotarian Every Year, where either \$1 or \$3 from the members weekly dinner fee goes to not only Foundation, but into their personal donation account. These funds then are eligible for a tax deduction.

These donations build up over the years and help with contributions towards a member’s Paul Harris Fellow award.

  - **Paul Harris Fellow** - *Technically this is someone who has given \$US1,000 to Rotary Foundation. However, in Australia, Clubs treat this as an award to a member for services rendered to the Club and wider community over the years. Clubs may also give a Paul Harris Fellow to a person outside the Club for work done within the community. As members of our Club give to Foundation via their dinner fee, when the Club Board deems it time a member should have a Paul Harris, it may add to the member’s Foundation account to total \$US1,000.*
- **Australian Rotary Health** - This is an organisation that funds health programs – mental health research, indigenous health scholarships, SIDS research - throughout Australia. We normally make a special donation in October after ‘HAT DAY’, which has a focus on mental health.
- **Ian Murphy Memorial Debate** - This is a District wide program for Year 11 debating students. The Clubs sponsor a school debating team which then debates against other school teams in a knockout competition throughout the year. The culmination of this competition is a debate held at District Conference.
- **Bowelscan** - This is program of Australian Rotary Health and provides a testing pack that can be purchased through participating pharmacies. Following the instructions in the kit, people are able to conduct the tests at home and send the samples for analysis. The Club has done this for many years and is one of the best performing Clubs when it comes to getting responses to this program.

**OUR LOCAL PROGRAMS** - While the Club contributes to and is involved in many Rotary Programs, we are involved in a number of specific local programs and fundraising events. Some are ongoing, or are done every year and others are only done once to meet a specific cause, which is occurring at the time.

The ones we do regularly are:

- **Christmas Giving Tree** - This is a Club initiative where we work with Corowa IGA and the local branch of St Vincent de Paul to get donations of non-perishable food to help needy local families at Christmas time. A Christmas tree is set up at the front of IGA and the people of Corowa are asked to donate as they see fit. St Vincent de Paul volunteers then make these donations up into hampers and distribute to needy families.
- **Clean-up the Highway** - An initiative of Rotarians Graham Campbell and David Talbot, the Club has adopted a section of highway between the saleyard roundabout and Corowa tip to keep tidy. Once every three months or so we have a working bee to collect litter and other rubbish from this section of highway and take it to the tip.
- **Race Gates** - A long standing arrangement where we staff the ticket box and horse gates for the Corowa Race Club on their race days.
- **School Bursaries** - Money raised in the *fine session* is used to give all schools in our area a bursary ranging from \$150 to \$300 to be used as scholarships for their student(s) at the end of the year. This amounts to about \$1,300 each year. How the schools allocate it is up to them. Rotarians normally volunteer to attend the school's presentation ceremony and present the bursary to the student(s).
- **DG's Partners Charity** - Each year the DG's partner selects a charity, to which they ask Clubs if they wish to contribute. Our Club contributes by means of the *small change box*. This passed around at the start of each meeting when members can put in any loose change. At the end of the year a cheque is written out and sent off to the District Treasurer who consolidates it with contributions from other Clubs and pays one contribution to the charity.
- **Fred Taylor Memorial Scholarship** - An initiative of the Club, which resulted from a bequest in the will of Rotarian the late Fred Taylor. The scholarship is for local students undertaking full time tertiary studies at either University or TAFE. Applicants need to fill in an application form and submit to an interview.
- **Federation Markets and Federation Festival** - We took over the running of the monthly Federation Market in September 2014 and it has proven a great success. On the Australia Day weekend we also run the Federation Festival weekend, which includes the market on Saturday and Sunday, Federation Dinner incorporating the Tim Fischer Oration on the Friday night, the B&S Ball on the Saturday night and the Federation Parade on Sunday morning.

**ACRONYMS** - Like all large organizations, Rotary has many acronyms. Below are a few of the more common ones:

- **RAWCS** - Rotary Australia World Community Service
- **ROMAC** - Rotary Oceania Medical Aid for Children
- **RAM** - Rotarians Against Malaria
- **ARH** - Australian Rotary Health Fund

**FELLOWSHIP** - This is a term used quite a bit by the Club and is an important part of our culture. It refers to the time before and after our meetings when members and guests may get together to socialize. Some meetings are also set aside as purely social. We also have additional social events outside of normal Rotary meetings.

**MEETINGS** - Meetings are weekly, on a Wednesday evening, except over Christmas - when we have a 2 or 3 week break - and whenever a public holiday coincides with a meeting date.

- **Cost** - Our normal meetings are \$25, this made up as follows:
  - Meal - \$20
  - Raffles - \$2 we have two
  - Wine - \$2 optional
  - Every Rotarian Every Year - \$1 (or \$3) - depending on whether or not wine is chosen
- **Structure** - While some people see this as being too formal, having a structure is the only way we can keep meetings to a controlled time period.

**Normally our meetings run as follows and aim to be finished between 8:00 and 8:30:**

- 6:30 - 7:00 Fellowship
- 7:00 - Sergeant - Call to order for start of meeting

- President - welcomes members and asks for visiting Rotarians to introduce themselves and members to introduce their guests.
- Grace
- Loyal Toast
- International Toast
- Rotary Information
- Announcements and Notices - normally done during the meal
- Attendance Report / Birthdays / Anniversaries
- Fine Session
- Guest Speaker
- Close

During the meeting we also do a little bit of fundraising. The first is the "*small change box*". As the name suggests a box is passed around to collect any small change members wish to put in, with proceeds going to the DG Partner's charity (as mentioned above).

The second fundraising each night is the *Fine Session*. This is where we have a bit of fun. Firstly, the sergeant at arms fines members for anything they have done during the week, real or imagined, then members have the opportunity to fine each other for similar indiscretions. Fines are a \$1 for each, but after being fined a couple of times in a night it is up to the individual if they wish to keep paying. The fine session is meant to be good natured and in good taste.

**ATTENDANCE** - This has continuously been a sticking point for potential new members, as they think they need to come every week. Minimum attendance requirements are 50% of Club meetings, but this is negotiable. Members can also do a "*makeup*" to help with their attendance percentage.

- A "*makeup*" can be done by visiting another Club, going online and attending and *e-meeting* at an e-club, representing the Club at an event and / or participating in Club events such as BBQ's, clean-up the highway, monthly market, etc. When travelling, makeups are a great way to meet other Rotarians and see how other Clubs run, even if it isn't always done in English.

**ANNUAL FEES** - Currently the Club charges \$240 p.a. This charge basically covers the costs we are charged by District, RI and Insurance and is set for the start of each Rotary year, i.e. July 1st. New members are charged on a pro-rata basis as well as a joining fee of \$50, which covers the cost of Rotary pin, dinner badge, literature and club polo top. Our fees are amongst the lowest in our Rotary District as we are only looking to recover costs.