

# ROTARY ZONE 8 REGIONAL PILOT



## Frequently Asked Questions

*Here we provide a selection of frequently asked questions and responses from the recent member briefing presentations. Additional content will be added as we gather more feedback. Please note: this is a pilot program and we are on a journey of continuous learning and exploration.*

### **WHY - the rationale for this project** [\[click for detailed responses to questions\]](#)

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## **REDISTRICTING**

[What does this mean for current and upcoming redistricting directives?](#)

## **How can you get involved or submit a question or feedback?**

Email the Regional Pilot Core Team at [rotaryregionalpilot@gmail.com](mailto:rotaryregionalpilot@gmail.com).

## DETAILED QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

### RATIONALE

**How did this project come about? Why does Rotary need to change?**

Falling membership and retention issues have been tracked, analysed, and spoken about for more than 20 years. We've taken a variety of approaches to address these challenges, but it hasn't been enough.

One of Rotary's strategic goals is to increase our ability to adapt. What current and future members need and want from Rotary changes quickly and, so far, we have not been able to keep up. Today, people want to be a part of an organisation that welcomes diverse perspectives and provides value. They want opportunities to serve, lead, and network, but not necessarily within a rigid hierarchy.

Our current governance structure is 70 years old. It has not adapted to the needs of today or tomorrow. In 2018, the Rotary Board of Directors tasked the Shaping Rotary's Future (SRF) Committee with developing an innovative plan to enhance the current membership experience, improve our ability to adapt, and create an organisational structure that attracts and engages new participants for generations to come.

It started with analysing club needs through focus groups and surveys with Rotary members and looking at what made successful clubs successful. With clubs and the member experience foremost in mind, the committee determined that a more streamlined governance structure could allow Rotary to adapt to the needs of our members, while enhancing the membership experience. It would provide members additional opportunities to increase their impact and expand their reach through service, which may inspire a new generation of members to join Rotary. It would also welcome more diverse voices into leadership roles by creating positions that are more manageable. Most importantly, it will allow members to receive more direct support and access to resources without the layers of hierarchy. And, through regionalization, allow for more targeted, local approaches that can be used to meet community and member needs.

The time has come to test the efficacy of this new governance model and Zone 8 was chosen to potentially be a part of the pilot. We have established a Regional Team and are currently working with district leaders to determine how the pilot can be implemented in our zone. This pilot will allow our entire zone to work together to address membership, public image and fundraising challenges in a regional and strategic way.

**What is the Zone 8 Regional Pilot Team and how did it come about?**

Around 80 Rotarians and Rotaractors from Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands have been working in various teams since early 2019 after the RI Board approved a unanimous petition by the 2018-19 district governors to address the significant challenges in our region.

The petition sought approval to develop a coordinated regional approach to brand awareness, declining membership, community partnerships, fundraising, and change management in order to better support clubs.

In April 2020 the emphasis of the project changed to exploring the SRF proposal once the team became aware of this model, which aims to assure Rotary's future in a contemporary environment.

To ensure required expertise and sponsorship, a wide range of respected and experienced [Rotary members](#) have been included in the process. The Regional Pilot Team includes:

- A **Core Group** providing overall leadership and project coordination. These consist of nine AU/NZ Rotarians and Rotaractors. All have change-leadership credentials and meet weekly.
- A **Regionalisation Group** consisting of AU/NZ Rotarians and Rotaractors elected by past, present, and future governor cohorts, providing direct representation to the project.
- Five **Working Groups** consisting of AU/NZ Rotarians and Rotaractors. These are jointly chaired by AU/NZ leaders who were selected for their expertise in the following areas:
  - 1) Communication, Engagement, and Supporting Technologies
  - 2) Marketing, Membership, and Culture
  - 3) New Organisation Models, Constitution, and Governance
  - 4) Public Image, Media, and Partnering
  - 5) Leadership and Development
- **Regionalisation District Representatives.** These are recent appointments by each AU/NZ district governor to be a direct conduit between the project team, the governor train, and clubs in their respective districts. This is an important linkage and feedback loop.
- Some 600 Rotarians and Rotaractors participated in the 2020 RDU survey on how Rotary could look in our region and consented to continue to be involved. They have been termed the project's **Reference Group.**

In addition, the Regional Pilot Team is partnering with senior Rotary advisors PRID Noel Trevaskis, PDG Juliet Riseley and PRID Stuart Heal. Juliet and Stuart were involved in the 2010-11 Regionalisation initiative.

**How do we know the proposed changes will reverse the membership decline and improve gender balance?**

There are no guarantees that a new governance structure will improve member engagement, increase membership, or welcome more women into our clubs, but we have to try. The pilot provides us with an opportunity to align the product we offer (a valuable club and membership experience) with structure and a regionally-focused strategy that will result in better outcomes.

	<p>By participating in the pilot, we will see what works, what doesn't, and have a say in Rotary's future (also see answer to next question about change management).</p>
<p><b>How will the new governance model drive change management and thinking at club level?</b></p>	<p>The aim is to support clubs with change whilst protecting and enhancing what is great about Rotary. Section leaders, as guides and coaches, will be trained in adaptive leadership skills to assist clubs with innovation and improve the membership experience and club effectiveness.</p> <p>Being more suited to a contemporary environment, it is expected this will help grow Rotary in <u>all</u> key areas</p>
<p><b>How will success be measured?</b></p>	<p>Success metrics are still being determined, but are expected to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The number of new clubs chartered</li> <li>● The number of clubs that adopt an innovative club model</li> <li>● Membership growth throughout the zone</li> <li>● Member retention and engagement</li> <li>● Club participation in Rotary Foundation grants</li> <li>● Fundraising</li> <li>● Public image</li> <li>● Increased diversity, including gender balance and those taking on leadership roles at club level and beyond</li> </ul> <p>Member satisfaction surveys could also be used to gather data.</p>
<p><b>Many clubs continue to exist hanging on whilst there is a district to support them. How might this model be more effective for them?</b></p>	<p>It's important these clubs continue to be supported throughout the pilot. By providing clubs with more direct support via better trained local leaders who offer motivation and guidance, their potential for survival and growth will be enhanced. Flexibility and support are key issues that we hope this new governance model will address.</p>
<p><b>TIMING OF PROJECT</b></p>	
<p><b>When will the pilot launch?</b></p>	<p>The ability to conduct a governance model pilot is being presented to the Council on Legislation in April 2022. If it is approved, then districts in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands will vote on whether to adopt the governance structure and be part of the pilot.</p> <p>If Zone 8 decides to move forward with the pilot, implementation will take place in six stages. The districts would work together, within an interim multi-district structure, to gradually transition to sections. If this pilot is successful, then the district will be inactivated for one to two years before a decision is made as to whether the districts should be disbanded or resurrected.</p>

<p><b>What does stage one involve?</b></p>	<p>Stage one is the consultation and voting process (from July 2021 to voting in May 2022)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Conduct an extensive consultation process with all stakeholders to fully explain the rationale and benefits of the SRF model.</li> <li>● Seek approval of the clubs and districts to proceed with the pilot (subject to COL approval).</li> </ul>
<p><b>What does stage two involve?</b></p>	<p>Stage two is the development phase (August 2021 – June 2023)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Districts continue to function as they do now.</li> <li>● Select and prepare some special functions (e.g. public image and communication) that can be rolled out regionally almost immediately within the interim structures.</li> <li>● Implement the management of the special functions regionally.</li> <li>● Identify at the regional and district level the 10-30 clubs that would form a section.</li> <li>● Determine Regional Council structure and roles.</li> <li>● Identify the initial Regional Support Committees.</li> <li>● Determine role and nature of Regional Support Teams and section leaders.</li> <li>● Develop selection procedures for all leadership positions.</li> </ul>
<p><b>What does stage three involve?</b></p>	<p>Stage three is selection and training (January – June 2023)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Districts continue to function as they do now.</li> <li>● Select Regional Council members, section leaders, and the start-up Regional Support Committees, with maximum stakeholder involvement in the processes.</li> <li>● Train the new Regional Council, section leaders, and Regional Support Committees.</li> </ul>
<p><b>What does stage four involve?</b></p>	<p>Stage four is the partial regionalisation (July 2023 – June 2024)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Districts function in a condensed mode (some functions delivered by the region).</li> <li>● Establish and operationalize the Regional Council.</li> <li>● Establish who will be section leaders.</li> <li>● The start-up Regional Support Committees begin operation and work on regional initiatives; section leaders begin to work with clubs.</li> <li>● Select additional Regional Support Committees.</li> </ul>
<p><b>What does stage five involve?</b></p>	<p>Stage five is the fully regional model (July 2024 – June 2025)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Districts continue to exist, but essentially as a shelf entity under the stewardship of the last district governor (all district functions will be taken over by the region).</li> <li>● The Regional Council is fully operational.</li> <li>● Section leaders work directly with the region and support committees.</li> <li>● COL decision on initial outcomes of regional pilot, if possible.</li> </ul>

<p><b>What does stage six involve?</b></p>	<p>Stage six is the evaluation and assessment (July 2025 – June 2026)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Districts still exist as a shelf entity under the stewardship of the last district governor.</li> <li>● Regional model is in full operation.</li> <li>● Conduct an extensive assessment of the regional model and report out to RI and all stakeholders.</li> <li>● Decide whether to adopt the regional model, revise or modify it, or return to the district model.</li> </ul>
<p><b>STRUCTURE</b></p>	
<p><b>How is the focus on the Objects of Rotary maintained under the new structure?</b></p>	<p>Our vision, mission, values, and objects don't change. What does change is how we provide value to members, support clubs, and implement new strategies that enhance our ability to serve our communities, have fun, and make friends, while attracting a new generation of leaders and volunteers.</p>
<p><b>What in our governance structure is changing?</b></p>	<p>The roles of Rotary leaders are evolving to be more manageable and doable with a regional approach to the administrative, support and legal responsibilities normally done by DGs.</p> <p>District roles will transition into new, more focused leadership opportunities with two or three-year terms, depending on the role and the requirements of regional support committees.</p> <p>Rotary and Rotaract clubs will serve in sections together. All Rotary members can apply for and be elected to any leadership positions in the region.</p> <p>There will be fewer layers of hierarchy, allowing members to receive more direct support and communication.</p>
<p><b>What is staying the same?</b></p>	<p>Rotary's vision, values, objects don't change — we remain committed to creating lasting change across the globe, in our communities, and in ourselves. Opportunities to help others in need, have fun, and enjoy fellowship will be enhanced, as will leadership development opportunities for those interested in growing personally and professionally.</p> <p>Members will continue to have access to Rotary resources, such as the Learning Center, Brand Center, Grant Center, My Rotary, online giving, convention registration, and Rotary Club Central, and will continue to apply for and receive global, regional, and disaster response grants.</p>
<p><b>Where will the administration support come from?</b></p>	<p>Support will come from the Regional Council and the Regional Support Committees, who will be supported by the Global Cadre (Specialist Support Team). Staff at Rotary International South Pacific &amp; Philippines Office (RISPPPO) in Sydney will continue to provide support, as will RI.</p>
<p><b>Will the Rotary branding be impacted?</b></p>	<p>There is no intention to change Rotary's brand. We will simply work better as one.</p>



<p><b>What happens to past district governors (PDGs)?</b></p>	<p>PDGs will serve an important and valuable role as advisors, as they are the custodians of the history of each district. The respect Rotary members have for PDGs is important and we need their support to bring about change. We are all being called upon to leave a legacy for the future.</p>
<p><b>How will the role of district governor (DG) change?</b></p>	<p>DGs will continue to serve their clubs and managing the district. In addition, they will be assisted by a Regionalisation District Representative to ensure they understand the proposed pilot before voting in May 2022 and thereafter.</p> <p>Throughout the pilot, DGs will be part of an advisory council that will provide advice, guidance, and communication pathways during the pilot, maintain the legalities and responsibilities related to the district and ensure their district nuances are provided for.</p>
<p><b>Who else is participating in a pilot?</b></p>	<p>Many countries have expressed interest to be a part of this pilot, but at this time, the RI Board wants to limit the pilot to three zones due to cost and RI administration.</p> <p>Zone 8 is more prepared than any others to be a part of this pilot due to the preparatory work we've been doing since January 2019.</p>
<p><b>How does a section leader differ from a district governor?</b></p>	<p>In our current structure, a DG has the responsibility to attend up to 480 administrative tasks within the district, while simultaneously managing and supporting an average of 65 clubs. The amount of responsibility makes this position unattainable for some and can limit who can be a Rotary leader.</p> <p>In the proposed governance model, the current DG position is being divided into two separate and distinct roles: administrative responsibilities will fall under the Regional Council and the section leader will provide guidance and support, inspiring and coaching clubs to enhance their reach, adapt, improve the membership experience, and increase their impact.</p>
<p><b>Will we be electing the next district governor-nominee?</b></p>	<p>Appointment processes will continue until we know the pilot works and decisions are made to formalise the changes with the new governance model.</p>
<p><b>Are we electing district governors for 2023-2024?</b></p>	<p>Appointment processes will continue, and DGs appointed for 2023-24 will serve in a key advisory position to the Regional Council, not reporting to them, but playing an important role in ensuring district nuances are considered and allowed for.</p>
<p><b>Will Rotaract Australia and New Zealand/Pacific be integrated with Rotary or sit outside of it?</b></p>	<p>Our recommendation is that it be integrated. There needs to be conversation about how this will work and a separate working group led by Rotaractors is being formed for this purpose.</p>
<p><b>Why don't we make Rotaractors members of Rotary rather than spend more on them?</b></p>	<p>Rotaractors are Rotary members. Rotaract clubs have a distinct personality and provide young people with a unique way to participate in Rotary with people their age. It is critical that Rotarians welcome and treat Rotaractors as equals. We need to invest in and support Rotaract as they are our future.</p>

<p><b>When Rotaract representation in sections is significantly less than Rotary, how will Rotaractors have equal opportunities to be elected to leadership roles?</b></p>	<p>Endeavours will be made to ensure Rotaractors are proportionately represented as Regional Council members, section leaders and committee members. Consideration is already being given to how this can be done.</p> <p>Similar thinking needs to apply to the representative needs of Pacific Island clubs and members.</p>
<p><b>How do Interactors fit into this new governance model?</b></p>	<p>Interact clubs will continue to be supported by their Rotary club via their section leader and, as important members of the Rotary family with potential to develop into our future Rotaract and Rotary leaders, they will be supported by the appropriate Regional Support Committee.</p>
<p><b>For many Rotaractors, their first major leadership role is as a District Rotaract Representative (DRR). Is it possible to take on a role leading Rotarians?</b></p>	<p>We get our experience through leading, both in Rotary or Rotaract. There is no reason a Rotaractor could not take on a leadership role that involves leading Rotarians particularly when their professional experience qualifies them to do so.</p> <p>Generally, Rotaractors interested in serving in a leadership position would need some leadership experience. We need to find ways for Rotaractors to have an opportunity to develop their leadership skills in current district committee chair roles or as chairs of fundraising events to help them get that experience.</p>
<p><b>Can we migrate districts rather than closing them down? Can this be done using the title “Area Governors,” which has proved effective?</b></p>	<p>At this stage districts will not be closed down. With governance and administration work being transferred to the Regional Council, section leaders, free of administration responsibilities, will be free to focus on supporting, inspiring, and motivating their clubs to help them meet strategic objectives.</p> <p>It is important we remove the word “governor” from any titles so that it is clearly understood the section leader is not a governor. Nevertheless, RI is open to a title for this role that better reflects the area responsibilities and the leadership and coaching aspects of this important position.</p>
<p><b>Are Regional Committee elections open to everyone?</b></p>	<p>Yes, any member within the region can apply to serve on the Regional Council.</p>
<p><b>Will this structure make one person in charge of Rotary in our Zone, enabling us to speak with one voice?</b></p>	<p>This is one of the key benefits of this pilot. The Regional Council will be able to communicate with local partners, governments, and the public in one local voice. We hope this will enhance our fundraising effectiveness, as well as our image and attractiveness to potential participants and members.</p>
<p><b>There are TRF chairs in each district. How many will we have in the pilot?</b></p>	<p>The Foundation is a crucial part of who we are and the number of TRF leaders within a region is still being worked through.</p>
<p><b>Will clubs be distracted by the changes in governance?</b></p>	<p>Club structure and administration doesn’t change, but we hope they will continue to evolve and adapt. The pilot focuses on providing members a better support system to deliver their amazing product: the Rotary experience.</p>
<p><b>Does a Regional Council Committee coordinate and deliver the training needs for all sections?</b></p>	<p>The Regional Council and its support committees, plus the Global Cadre, are major resources to assist clubs and section leaders deliver the training needed. Getting the balance right between these roles will be</p>

	<p>worked through in the pilot along with RI who will conduct training of regional leaders.</p> <p>We have already developed working groups to examine how to best provide leadership, learning and development, communications, culture change, membership growth, and public image in this modern environment. This work will underpin the implementation of the pilot with training an essential success factor.</p> <p>By introducing regions, each Regional Council will have more flexibility to provide training that best meets their members' needs rather than implementing a one size fits all approach.</p>
<b>Who are SRF and what is their role?</b>	SRF is an acronym for Rotary International's Shaping Rotary's Future Committee, which reports to the RI Board. It commenced in the 2018-19 Rotary year and is currently is chaired by Past RI President Barry Rassin. The committee, which works with RI staff, was formed to examine what is necessary to assist Rotary to deliver on its strategic goals, particularly our aim of increasing our ability to adapt to a changing world.
<b>Are club structures being reviewed as well?</b>	The pilot only affects district governance, not club governance.
<b>If there is any confusion during the transition period, who should clubs turn to?</b>	A spirit of cooperation and unity through the transition period will be required with the sitting DG working with Regional Council and Regional Support Committees to ensure clubs are supported. This will require a special effort by district and regional leaders, as well as section leaders. We unite to take action to create lasting change.
<b>Why can't the role of assistant governor (AG) and district governor (DG) be modified rather than creating new leadership positions?</b>	The new structure transfers governance to the regional council. It would be misleading and inappropriate to maintain the existing titles.
<b>What is the Regional Council and what is its role?</b>	The Regional Council supports and governs leaders and clubs in the region, managing the day-to-day activities of Rotary, including assessing regional dues and creating committees. There are a number of positions on the Regional Council that correspond to key Rotary activities. Each role will be elected by the Rotarians and Rotaractors within the region to serve a three-year term.
<b>What is a section leader and what is its role?</b>	<p>A section leader supports and motivates clubs to set and deliver on their goals as they align with Rotary's strategic priorities. Section leaders have a unique opportunity to localize their strategy to consider the strengths, weaknesses, and culture of their clubs in ways that are most meaningful to them and their members. Section leaders will communicate and represent clubs' needs to the Regional Council, providing leadership and relaying concerns.</p> <p>A section leader will serve a two-year term and support between 10 and 30 Rotary and Rotaract clubs in a geographic area.</p>

	<p>It's important to note that a section leader is not replacing the district governor role. Instead, we've taken the best parts of the district governor position and divided it so the administrative responsibilities transition to the Regional Council, while the motivating and guiding clubs part of their role will become the section leader's responsibility. This separation allows members to choose a leadership role that better aligns with their professional goals and interests.</p>
<p><b>What is the Global Cadre and what is its role and function?</b></p>	<p>The Global Cadre are leaders with expertise on specific topics. Their expertise may come from their Rotary experience or their professional lives. A Global Cadre member will support sections, clubs and members as requested by those entities.</p>
<p><b>IMPLICATIONS</b></p>	
<p><b>How does this impact grants and DDF?</b></p>	<p>TRF tracks where all money comes from and it is very easy to apply to a section for future use. Work will need to be done in this area and the aim will be to ensure better support is given to clubs to enhance their use of grants in projects and grow the impact of Rotary in their chosen areas of need.</p>
<p><b>Will our membership dues structure change? Will funding be needed to make this change?</b></p>	<p>We need to transition membership dues from the district to the region. Currently we don't believe it will be more, rather less, but that will be a decision for the Regional Council. We recognise we will be running two models and if that causes extra costs, we expect RI will assist with those costs.</p>
<p><b>Is a financial model being developed?</b></p>	<p>RI has many subcommittees looking at related issues and finance is one of these. We understand that running two systems in parallel will incur costs and put extra pressure on regional RI staff at our South Pacific Regional Office in Sydney. RI Evanston staff are looking at how they can provide additional assistance as well.</p>
<p><b>What are the cost-savings for clubs?</b></p>	<p>A Finance Committee has been established and is currently analysing costs. We believe that long term, this will be less costly for the organisation because we will have more certified volunteers and less staff to pay for.</p>
<p><b>Will district conferences still exist?</b></p>	<p>District conferences provide a lot of knowledge, motivation, and fellowship value. We will find ways to continue to provide this value in a contemporary environment in a more effective way. In some cases there may be less frequent events with regular on-line training between major events.</p>
<p><b>How can Rotary/Rotaract members assist?</b></p>	<p>Rotarians and Rotaractors can provide valuable insight to the project team by sending their contact details to <a href="mailto:rotaryregionalpilot@gmail.com">rotaryregionalpilot@gmail.com</a>.</p> <p>We need everyone's support to make this a success.</p>
<p><b>What does this mean for current and upcoming redistricting directives?</b></p>	<p>A request has been made via the RI Board and its Redistricting Committee for affected districts to have the option of pausing the need to redistrict should the pilot proceed.</p>

<b>What are the feedback loops for the pilot? How will we know it is working or what needs to change?</b>	Key performance indicators and measures to determine success have yet to be developed but will form an important part of the transition and the monitoring process by the Regional Council in conjunction with DGs in their advisory role. These indicators will be used to confirm the efficacy of changes and prompt further adaptation as needed in alignment with RI and SRF as the pilot progresses.
<b>Who will have the ultimate decision-making responsibility: the Regional Council or the RI Board?</b>	Similar to a current district as an incorporated body, the Regional Council will make local decisions in line with an established constitution and bylaws in accordance with local laws, and approved by Rotary International.
<b>Districts and District Charitable Trusts are legal entities/ incorporated societies. Is there a group looking at legal and financial implications of change?</b>	Districts, as legal entities, will continue along with established District Charitable Trusts. A Governance Group is part of the pilot and will examine this aspect and provide recommendations for the longer term.