

# Rotary For Newcomers

## What is Rotary?

In response to the often asked question “what is Rotary, or, what does it do?” This is a simplistic overview of Rotary’s origins, structure & achievements. This is not a detailed outline. There is so much more to Rotary, but this document should go a long way in de-mystifying the legend of Rotary.

Rotary was the world’s first, & is therefore the world’s oldest Service club.

## When Did It All Start?

It was formed in Chicago in 1905, by four friends who wanted to meet regularly for the sake of acquaintance & to further their businesses. Their names were: Paul Harris, a lawyer, Silvester Schiele, a coal dealer, Gustavus E. Loehr, a mining engineer, & Hiram Shorey, a merchant tailor. Membership grew rapidly, & today there are over 1.2 million Rotarians in 200 countries.

## Where Did The Name “Rotary” Come From?

The name “Rotary” came about because of the rotation of visits by the original four members to each other’s offices. Initially it was known as the Chicago men’s club, & as membership grew to a point where it was no longer practical to meet in each other’s office, it was decided that meetings would be held once a week in restaurants or hotels.

It was at this time that the group formed “ The Rotary Club of Chicago” Originally, only one person per form of occupation was given membership, eg: dentist, doctor, carpenter, electrician etc.

As membership grew, it was decided that the members should engage in community projects, & the first Rotary community project was a public toilet in Chicago.

## Rotary Becomes International.

When a club was formed in Manitoba, Canada in 1911, Rotary became an International organization. Next came a Rotary club in Cuba, & from there Rotary has expanded to the giant humanitarian fraternity that it is today.

Rotary is non-political, non-religious, & welcomes women.

Rotary was influential in the formation of the UN, & today holds a non-voting, permanent seat on that body.

## The Rotary Motto.

The sole objective of Rotary is to serve others. In fact the Rotary motto is  
“Service Above Self.”

This service to others less fortunate is done in friendship. The camaraderie within the Rotary family is strong. Rotarians meet once a week for fellowship & fun.

# The Four Way Test

Rotarians are expected to demonstrate high ethical standards in their business & private lives. They are guided by “**The Four Way Test**” which states:

**Of the things we think, say, or do:**

- 1. Is it the truth?**
- 2. Is it fair to all concerned?**
- 3. Will it build goodwill & better friendship?**
- 4. Will it be beneficial to all concerned?**

## Demystifying Rotary: It's Structure.

The governing structure of Rotary is quite simple.

The head body is simply Rotary International, or “RI”

Then the Rotary Foundation, known as “TRF” This is the financial arm of Rotary.

Rotary divides the world into zones. There are 34 Zones worldwide.

Each Zone is divided into districts. Moree Gwydir falls into Zone 8, district 9650.

Each district has a Governor, known as The District Governor, or “DG.”

Several Assistant Governors, or “AG’s” assists each Governor

Each district is broken down into “Clusters” There are 9 clusters in district 9650.

Each cluster has its “Group of Rotary Clubs.” There are 6 clubs in Cluster 8 (Moree Gwydir). These include the Rotary Clubs of Barraba, Inverell, Inverell East, Moree, Moree on Gwydir, and Warialda.

The strength of Rotary comes from its clubs, the grass roots.

The highest rank in Rotary is the International President.

Below the President is a governing body, the board of directors. Like any business, this body is the administrative heart of Rotary.

Next in the chain of command come the Governors, then the assistant Governors, then the club Presidents.

Each Rotary club is an incorporated body, subject to certain parameters set down by Rotary International by charter. Apart from that they are completely autonomous.

Although Rotary is not a charity, it is a not for profit organization. But to be effective there is an obvious need for funds.

## So, Where Does The Money Come From?

Rotary raises its funds in several ways.

Rotarians meet once a week for fellowship & to plan local & world community programmes. They typically meet at a club or restaurant for a meal, & a percentage of that cost, approximately \$2, is sent to Rotary headquarters. There are 1.2 million Rotarians in 200 countries, meaning this levy becomes considerable in time. Each club is also responsible for a further levy per member, usually a part of the annual membership dues.

On top of this, each club engages in annual fundraisers such as sausage sizzles, raffles, book sales, trivia nights, dinners & other, sometimes quite innovative means

## What Happens To This Money?

The amount collected each year is distributed by each club among the projects & programmes it set out to assist at the beginning of the Rotary year. Really, the fund raising is two pronged. A small percentage goes to “headquarters,” while the greater amount raised by each club goes to that club’s dedicated programmes.

Funds are also raised by donations, grants & the issuing of “**Paul Harris Fellows**” (or **PHF**) As mentioned; a **PHF** is awarded for outstanding service to the cause of Rotary. But each medal costs \$US1, 000 which goes directly to headquarters. Rotary also receives bequests from people who wish to contribute even after death.

## What does Rotary do?

Rotary serves. The object of every Rotarian is to serve their fellowman. This is achieved through a system of “branches” or committees. Each committee sets an agenda to address a particular problem faced by certain countries or peoples.

**Here are some examples with their respective acronyms.**

**Rotary Youth Leadership Award (RYLA)** This is a one-week residential seminar, which concentrates on developing leadership, self-confidence, dignity & self-respect in 18-24 year olds.

**Model United Nations assembly (MUNA)** This assembly concentrates on building bridges of goodwill & understanding in the minds of youth as they debate, research & speak of a range of world issues.

**Youth Exchange Programme (YEP)** This programme deals with the incoming & outgoing students from each District to & from other countries over a 12-month period. Very educational & eye opening.

**Rotary Youth Driver Awareness. (RYDA)** Promotes driver awareness in youth to prevent road deaths.

**Australian Rotary Health (ARH)** Raises money & invests in worthy medical research such as: Mental illness, Indigenous health, & the provision of scholarships in Rural medicine, & Rural nursing.

**International Plastic Surgery (Interplast)** Undertakes programmes of plastic & reconstructive surgery such as cleft palates, severe burns, or other crippling injuries in children & adults from neighbouring countries.

**Rotary Youth in Agriculture (RYAG)** The various RYAG programmes listed below are developed & run by clubs to provide vocational experience for high school students.

RYAG Aquaculture

RYAG Beef

RYAG Cotton

RYAG Dairy

RYAG Equine

RYAH Sheep

RYMARINE

RYSTARS (Astronomy)

Rotary Aviation Careers Expo (RACE)

**Rotary World Community Service (RAWCS)** is the body responsible for international services & projects in developing countries. The following committees come under the umbrella of RAWCS:

**Rotary Volunteers (Fourth Avenue in Motion or FAIM)** Volunteers work with & train local people in developing countries, mainly the South Pacific.

**Donations In Kind (DIK)** This committee collects, sorts, packs & dispatches goods when & where they are needed.

**Pacific Training Aid (PTA)** Educates people with skills they can then pass on to their countrymen. Also helps them experience the Australian way of life.

**Rotarians Against Malaria (RAM)** Addresses the prevention & treatment of Malaria through research, education & training.

**Adopt A School (AAS)** Matches a local school with one overseas to provide school equipment & correspondence.

**Safe Water Save Lives (SWSL)** Aims at providing clear water to overseas communities by a planned system of water catchment, storage & reticulation, & to provide education, tank construction & related health programmes.

There are other committees dedicated to various programmes, but the above are an example of some of Rotary's involvement in world & community projects.

**The Rotary Foundation (TRF)** Provides several & varied grants & scholarships for local & overseas students & programmes.

Rotary rewards Rotarians & others with a "Paul Harris Fellow" medal. It is treasured by all Rotarians as a mark of the recipient's contribution to Rotary & world peace.

## **Some of Rotary's Achievements**

- Was instrumental in the formation of the UN & has a permanent seat.
- Help set up: United Nations Educational, Scientific, & Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
- Also, the International Society for Crippled Children (now Rehabilitation International)
- After World War II set up educational & charitable organizations through The Rotary Foundation.
- Provides the funds & expertise to provide clean water in developing countries.
- Helps combat illiteracy by way of funds & training.
- Through the "Fred Hollows Foundation" combats blindness in developing countries.
- Has all but eradicated polio worldwide. This is ongoing.
- Through education, training & provision of treated nets, combats malaria.
- Provides vocational training for near pacific countries.
- Is still rebuilding after the India earthquake of 2001, floods in Papua, 2008 Indonesian Tsunami 2004 & raised vast sums & goods for the Victorian bushfires of Feb. 2009.
- Through Interplast & Operation Cleft, has given new hope to people, mainly children, with horrific disfigurements & afflictions.
- Has so far contributed over 1.6 billion dollars in medical research for many diseases including cancer, mental & indigenous health & rural nursing
- Provided valuable exchange programmes for students & professional people.

It must be remembered that on top of all that, each club throughout the world, recognises & responds to local needs that are of course, unique to that club, country or area.

## **In Conclusion.**

In response to the question "What is Rotary" it can be seen that Rotary is a not for profit service club that is non-political, non-religious & non-sexist. Rotary exists to alleviate the suffering of those who, for various reasons, can't help themselves. Through the ideal of Service Above Self, & high ethical standards, Rotary aims at achieving world peace & understanding.

In summation, Rotary is a vast, well structured service club, who's members maintain high ethical standards in business & personal dealings. Rotarians believe that through "Service Above Self," we can achieve world peace & mutual respect among all nations. This may not occur in our lifetime, but it will occur.