

A Concept for Larger Rotary Districts; How a “One Sydney” District Could Operate

Districts, Clubs and Rotarians are putting in a terrific effort to halt the decline in membership. While this has slowed the rate of loss somewhat, contemporary methods of rendering service have changed from the traditional service club and a new approach is needed. Rotary is a membership based organisation and we still need membership to pursue our objectives, but if only Clubs can turn around the membership decline, what can Districts do to meet their obligation to Support and Strengthen Clubs?

One option (and one that is mandated by RI if District membership falls below 1100) is to grasp the initiative and form a new larger District. Forming a new District presents the opportunity for District to provide more effective support to Clubs and Rotarians through; changing how support is delivered to Clubs, having a unified branding voice, economies of scale, and encouraging and implementing fresh ideas.

As PRID Noel Trevaskis said “Larger districts are just the platform for change as we move forward together to face the challenge of change”.

Benefits of a Larger Rotary District

The benefits that could flow from a larger District that embraces all of the Greater Sydney Area now covered by Districts 9675 and 9685 are as follows:

- Redistricting will put us in a stronger position to share talent, unite and promote Rotary across Greater Sydney, offering improved communication, collaboration and networking across neighbouring Clubs and the District.
- A larger District can stage bigger events that are better for branding and awareness. We can work to build the Rotary Brand and be known as the leading service and networking club in our area.
- Economies of scale should drive down costs for things like insurance and conferences, and will enable the District to support brand initiatives such as messages on buses or similar.
- Some of the cost savings can be directed at training District teams who will deliver support locally.

The Opportunity Offered by Change

To take advantage of the opportunity offered by change, new Districts have to be more than just two existing Districts amalgamated; there needs to be a change in the delivery of leadership and support from District to Club. This means change in areas such as district roles, structures, financial operations /models, modes of communication, learning and development, events and resources.

District Role

There are two key aspects to the District role;

Leadership; providing inspiration, motivation, and support, and

Governance; ensuring conformance and operational performance, and providing support.

These aspects of leadership and Governance combine to provide planning, policy, administration, public relations, risk/crisis management, and support for doing good in the world.

The District Governor and District Leadership Team in *One Sydney* would operate differently to what has been the traditional case in the Sydney Districts. This would be mainly reflected in a greater role for Assistant Governors (renamed) and District Committee Chairs (renamed), with the District Governor focused on leadership.

Assistant Governors would be named Area Governors and take on a greater role in inspiration and motivation to Clubs, in essence leading and managing the Area on behalf of the District Governor. The effectiveness of the Area Governor would be vital to the success of a larger District.

District Committee Chairs would be named District Functional leaders (e.g. District Membership Coordinator). Each District Functional leader would have Area leaders (e.g. Area “xxx” Membership coordinator) to represent the function at Club level; thus able to deliver information, education and support directly to the Clubs in the Area.

New District Structure

In the new District, the District Governor and Board (incorporating the Committee of the Association) would be responsible for governance and strategy, and Area Governors and District Functional leaders would be responsible for operations.

The **Board** should consist of a balance of skills and diversity (age, gender) such as the following:

- Total of 10: - District Governor (Chair), DGE, DGN, Treasurer, Secretary, one person representing strategy, risk and governance, two Next Generation representatives, and two Area Governor representatives:

The **Operations** group should consist of:

- Area Governors.
- Functional Team Leaders (Rotary Foundation, Membership, Youth, Learning & Development, Public Image, Avenues of Service, Administration, Rotaract District Rep, Newsletter, Other).
- This group should work collaboratively to deliver operational support to clubs locally wherever possible.

The Operations group could be managed by DGE or an appointed District Chief Executive Officer. The advantage of the DGE is that they could build familiarity with the District and Rotarians before taking office; the latter could be a three-year term and provide continuity. The form of management and operating would be decided after functions are more fully spelt out.

Other Matters

Training And Development

- District Governor (G-train) training to focus on practical and effective leadership
- Dedicated training for Area Governors
- G-train, Area Governors and District training representatives funded to Rotary Australia Conference
- Combined PETS
- Area Assemblies or LETS (Leaders Elect Training Seminars) to be more intensive – use qualified facilitators and trainers

Communication and Technology

- Administration and support will adopt and utilise all aspects of technology
- Communication plan is vital for a more professional approach across District
- Aim for one portal of communication
- Introduce IT tutorials, webinars, Zoom meetings. Work outside the square. Utilise rock stars to record messages.

Finance

- Analyse all aspects of costs and finance and tie in with new model
- No increase in cost to Rotarians under new District
- Identify best practice and identify best people
- Consider a paid financial person – full or part time – to conduct increased administration responsibilities

Selection of District Leadership Team

Area Governors and District Functional Leaders would be selected on merit, with the required skills and attributes to take on the training and responsibilities of the appointment.

Area Governors would be selected by a selection committee process. Responsibilities of Area Governors would include (in consultation with the District Governor):

- Conducting, implementing, or reviewing district strategic planning with the Governor, Governor-elect and Governor-nominee ^[L]_[SEP]
- Strengthening clubs ^[L]_[SEP]
- Starting clubs ^[L]_[SEP]
- Promoting membership growth and engagement by working with district leaders and club presidents to set realistic membership goals for each club within your Area. ^[L]_[SEP]
- Communicate clubs' strengths, weaknesses, and progress toward goals to the Governor. ^[L]_[SEP]
- Attend the presidents-elect training seminar and district training assembly. ^[L]_[SEP]

- Attend club meetings, club assemblies, and other events as invited [SEP]
- Identify and develop future leaders [SEP]
- Supporting The Rotary Foundation through fundraising and grant activities [SEP]

Selection of District Governor

The District Governor would be selected by a nominating process in accordance with RI Policies and be open, independent, fair and objective. District Governor Responsibilities and Attributes are as follows:

Responsibilities of DG

- Officer of RI
- Lead, inspire and motivate Rotarians
- Chair of the board
- Enhance the District Relationship with Rotarians
- Be champion for people development within District
- Lead and champion change:
 - so that District provides value add
 - so that Clubs are relevant, attractive and effective and provide a meaningful Rotary experience for members

Attributes required

- High degree of emotional intelligence -EQ
- Outcomes focussed (KPIs)
- Strategic thinker and visionary
- People and leadership focussed
- Resilience
- Low ego
- External advocate for Rotary
- Passion and enthusiasm
- Sufficient Rotary knowledge

District 9675/9685 New District Task Force
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