

The Battle for Survival

ROTARY is used to fixing the world's problems, but now all eyes are on the organisation itself as it attempts to reverse an ageing and declining global membership.

Average age of an Australian Rotarian is now 71. Is there a problem with that

Some Clubs report experiencing a hard time finding people to join and an even harder time keeping them,"

What are we doing that makes our Club a successful Club ? One without declining Membership ?".

"You would think that for all Rotary does, for all the effect that we have on our local community and all that we stand for in principle and purpose, that outside every single Rotary door would be a line of people waiting to get in,

"We come together to do truly remarkable things, profound things, because we as an organisation very naively decided we would do something that had only been done once before – the elimination of a disease."

"The truly remarkable thing is that we felt we had the ability to do this in our spare time while keeping our day jobs.

"We are literally at the doorstep of the eradication of this disease. It is imminent and there are those that believe that by the end of the next Rotary year it will be gone from the earth."

Rotary was also a world leader in peace initiatives through its work at grassroots level, "We improve literacy and numeracy, we house the homeless, we feed the hungry, we teach children in our community the right way to do things."

Is our Club attracting the young business people and professionals who started Rotary in the beginning ?

"The people who put together our organisation were all in their 30s and 40s. They were trying to join together to help each other, not just to do business with one another, but to do business better."

Do we need to start talking about Rotary differently. You hear people say Rotary is the greatest service organisation in the world. Should we be saying, we are a membership organisation that performs service?

“We have to always be aware of our customers – the men and women who join our clubs.

“The next question you must ask is, who is our competition?

“Our competition is **LIFE** it’s work, it’s family, it’s church, it’s friends and it’s sleep. The really bad thing about that is this competition is the most formidable opponent we have and until we start being competitive with life, that will always be a problem.

“Fifty-two per cent of the world’s population are 30 and younger. The wave of change is coming. What can we as a Club do to embrace this ?

Would younger Rotarians who are mentored by experienced Rotarians, strengthen the club with their “vitality and creativity” ?

Are our Membership Fees a barrier to younger, potential Members ? If so, do we have any ideas to subsidise or reduce these ?

Rotary rules have also been relaxed to give members more flexibility. “If we take care of our members, they will take care of our Club”.

Our Club is a lucky Club. We are fortunate in that we have a solid Membership Base and retention of Members is something we are also good at. This is because most of our Members get involved with Club Activities. Whether it be volunteering or attending Socials or helping and attending at Fundraisers. We have assigned a “buddy” to each Member, and everyone is included in a Service Committee. All these things combine to provide a sense of belonging and friendships between Members.

However, we should never become complacent. We have to have Members to provide the Services we offer.

Congratulations everyone ! Keep up the good work and always be on the lookout for a potential new member, to help our Club remain a vibrant Club.

