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## **COLLABORATION WITH PROBUS HAS EXCELLENT BENEFITS**

There is no doubt that the most pressing concern facing Rotary clubs in D9500 is declining membership.

This has been a concern for some time, but most clubs continue to grapple with this problem. Indeed, the very survival of some clubs is under threat. Rotary clubs are being urged to seek new members, but there is one demographic or community group that Rotary clubs are ignoring.

Rotary's sponsorship and establishment of Probus clubs has been an outstanding success. In South Australia there are 172 Probus clubs (nearly all sponsored by a Rotary club) and more than 9,000 Probus members. However, even though there was a close relationship at "birth", there appears to be a disappearing relationship between Rotary and Probus — I would challenge most Rotarians to name a Probus club their Rotary club has sponsored. I believe that this is a lost opportunity.

As a symptom of declining membership, many Rotary clubs are under pressure to maintain some of their long-running and successful programmes. There are several thousand Probus members that have a precious commodity to offer — time. You could very well gain additional people to assist your Club to continue with its programmes.

There is at least one example in District 9500 of a Rotary club that has re-engaged with a Probus club in its community to assist with their programmes, with the result that the Rotary club has gained new members.

So I encourage Rotary Club Presidents in the new Rotary year, to plan to renew the relationship with a Probus club in your community.

- seek out the Probus club that your club sponsored, or a Probus club in your community (the Rotary District Probus Chair can assist in identifying the Probus club)
- welcome the Probus President to a Rotary meeting
- have joint Rotary/Probus meetings
- examine club programmes where Probus members could assist

This process of re-engagement may take some time, i.e. do not expect immediate success. However, there is everything to gain and nothing to lose.

Many existing Rotary members are also members of Probus, membership of both is compatible. If Rotary could gain at least one new member from a Probus club, there could be 172 new Rotary members.

I would welcome your inquiry.

Peter Perkins