



GREEN LIGHT FOR PILOT REGIONAL STRUCTURE

On February 5, Rotary International general secretary John Hewko advised the 2018-19 district governors of Australia and New Zealand that the RI Board had approved their petition to plan a pilot regional structure for Australia, New Zealand and 14 Pacific countries.



The aim of the proposed pilot regional structure is to enable a more coordinated and supportive local approach for districts and clubs in our region compared to cultural differences associated with the wider Philippines zone. The focus will be on key local issues, such as brand awareness, membership decline, community and corporate partnerships, and change management.

The decision to submit the petition was unanimous by the 2018-19 district governors and it was taken at the Hobart Conference last September after consulting with and gaining the support of district governors elect and district governor nominees, who were also present.

As a result of the approval received in February, a planning group has been set up to scope the project, develop a statement of purpose and define

desired outcomes. A key element will be ensuring all Rotarians in the region have an opportunity to be engaged in the vision and plan as it is developed. These aspects are about the “why” this petition was needed, the “what” and “how” of the project will now be tackled.

To fully appreciate “why”, one must go back to the 2011-12 Rotary year, when the RI director for our Zone, Stuart Heal, and district governors of that year sought to revitalise Rotary following a decade in which membership had declined by 13 per cent; unfortunately, that proposal did not proceed.

Seven years later, in October 2018, and following a drop of 24 per cent in membership in the past decade, the 2018-19 governors unanimously agreed it was time to once again petition the RI Board. This followed a visit by general

secretary John Hewko in September 2017, when Noel Trevaskis was zone director; John challenged Australia and New Zealand to be the laboratory for positive change.

Soon after, RI President Barry Rassin launched the *Be the Inspiration* theme asking all to look beyond the current year and have the courage, optimism and creativity to embrace change, leaving a legacy for the future. With the centenary of Rotary in Australia and New Zealand due in 2021, and one of our biggest changes in the past 100 years imminent (redistricting for several districts), the need for more effective support of districts and clubs has never been greater.

A group to develop the plan in the next six months has been set up based on appropriate regional and current governor-by-year representation and

essential functionality to ensure diverse perspectives and optimal outcomes.

Members of the planning group are as follows:

- **Co-chairs:** 2017-18 District 9800 governor Peter Frueh (Australia) and 2018-19 District 9920 governor Ingrid Waugh (New Zealand). Both Peter and Ingrid have extensive vocational change management experience.
- **Governor train representatives:** 2018-19 District 9810 governor Russell Gurney and District 9500 governor David Egan; 2019-20 District 9650 governor elect Phil Hafey, 2020-21 District 9640 governor nominee Andy Rajapakse and District 9970 governor nominee Mark Yaxley.
- **Other representatives:** 2016-17 District 9940 governor Martin

Garcia; 2016-17 and 2017-18 District 9710 governor Steve Hill; 2014-15 District 9685 governor Ian Scott; past president D’Arcy Walsh (District 9500); past president Amanda Wendt (District 9800), past president Kaye Titmarsh (District 9640) and 2017-18 Rotaract Australia Chair Rebecca Fry.

- When needed, a facilitator role will be carried out by 2010-11 District 9780 governor Jessie Harman, while representatives from Rotary International Evanston and Parramatta will provide strategic support.

Specialist teams will also be set up in the areas of communication engagement and supporting technologies; marketing and membership; public image, media and partnering; new organisation models; constitution and governance at national

level; and learning and development.

Online reference groups will also be set up for people interested in receiving updates on ideas being developed with an opportunity to provide valuable feedback to the planning group; anyone interested in the future is encouraged to participate in these online communication groups.

Co-chairs Ingrid and Peter are strongly committed to engagement and anyone interested in this exciting challenge is invited to send an email to their respective country co-chair letting them know which specialist team/s they are interested in, and/or if they are interested in participating in an online reference group.

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