



## **PLANNING GROUP FOR A PILOT REGIONAL STRUCTURE – AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND & 14 PACIFIC COUNTRIES**

Our region is about to approach a very significant change when the number of Districts will be reduced as we simultaneously seek to grow Rotary's presence and replace ageing membership following a decline of 24% in the region over the last 10 years.

In these circumstances, current RI President Barry Rassin has encouraged us to embrace change with courage, optimism and creativity and General Secretary John Hewko has asked Rotarians in Australia and New Zealand to be the laboratory for positive change for the rest of the world.

Taking these challenges seriously, last September the 2018/19 DGs unanimously agreed to petition the RI Board for approval to develop a plan to pilot a regional structure for Australia, New Zealand and the 14 Pacific Countries in our Zone (see the response and the petition further below).

The RI Board approved the petition in late January acknowledging that a coordinated regional approach to brand awareness, declining membership, community partnerships and change management is crucial to ensure districts and most importantly clubs, are supported to flourish in this time of transformation.

Following this approval, and in consultation with past RI Director Noel Trevaskis and other senior Rotarians, a planning group has been set up to progress the matter.

In establishing the group the aim has been to firstly ensure appropriate regional and current governor-by-year representation and then essential functionality. People with appropriate skills and experience, some of whom are outside the governor trains, have also been included. Diverse perspectives are essential for optimal outcomes, so people already engaged or interested in innovation and redistricting plans in Australia and NZ for the last one to two years are also included. In addition, care has been taken to ensure that where appropriate people already nominated by their governor-by-year colleagues to represent them, are involved.

The Planning Group is as follows:-

Co-Chairs:        Australia – PDG 2017/18 Peter Frueh (D9800)  
                      New Zealand – DG 2018/19 Ingrid Waugh (D9920)  
                      (both Peter and Ingrid have extensive vocational experience in change management)

Governor Train Representatives:        2018/19 - DG Russell Gurney (D9810) and DG David Egan (D9500)  
                                                          2019/20 - DGE Phil Hafey (D9650)  
                                                          2020/21 - DGN Andy Rajapakse (D9640) and DGN Mark Yaxley (D9970)

Others Representatives (for experience, skills and future perspectives):  
                                                          PDG Martin Garcia (D9940 - 2016-17)  
                                                          PDG Steve Hill (D9710 - 2016/17 and 2017/18)  
                                                          PDG Ian Scott (D9650 - 2014/15)  
                                                          PP D'Arcy Walsh (D9500)  
                                                          PP Amanda Wendt (D9800)  
                                                          PP Kaye Titmarsh (D9640)  
                                                          Past Chair Rotaract Australia Rebecca Fry (2017/18)

A facilitator role will be carried out by PDG Jessie Harman (D9780 2010/11) as needed and representatives from Rotary International Evanston and Parramatta will also be involved to provide strategic support and guidance.

The first job of the Planning Group will be to scope the project including a statement of purpose, defining desired outcomes and developing ways to ensure all interested Rotarians have an opportunity to be engaged in the vision and plan as developed.

The co-chairs are committed to the engagement aspect and it is expected the first stage will be completed over the next six months. This will enable progress to be discussed at the Australia & New Zealand Rotary Conference to be held in Christchurch in September 2019.

To ensure the plan is all encompassing it will be necessary to establish specialist teams in important areas which are yet to be resourced; areas such as:

- communication, engagement and supporting technologies
- marketing and membership
- public image, media and partnering
- new organisation models
- constitution and governance at national level
- learning and development

It is acknowledged that the planning group does not contain a person from every part of Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific. However, there is a strong commitment to engagement with all key parties who will be impacted by this initiative. This is likely to include direct communication and consultation, and also where possible representatives will be sought from these areas on the specialist teams.

This process is only just beginning and as it unfolds there will be regular communication and opportunities for all Rotarians in the region to engage in this important matter.

Below is the approval letter from General Secretary John Hewko dated 5<sup>th</sup> February 2019 and also a copy of the petition to the RI Board, which was submitted on the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2018.

1<sup>st</sup> March 2019



John P. Hewko  
General Secretary

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5 February 2019

Mr. David C. Egan  
Governor, District 9500, RI  
4 Moldavia St.  
Glandore S.A. 5037 AUSTRALIA

Dear Governor Egan,

Thank you for submitting a petition requesting both approval to form a working group to establish a regional pilot structure for Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific Islands, and initial funds of US\$10,000 to cover planning meetings for the pilot. The RI Board considered this petition at its January 2019 meeting.

The Board acknowledged that all district governors of the region unanimously agreed to this petition and appreciates the amount of discussion and work it has taken for the group to get to this point. Your understanding of the regional challenges around brand awareness, declining membership, community partnership opportunities, and change management will prove essential as discussion to redraw the district boundaries of the region progresses.

Under the guidance of Past RI Director Noel Trevaskis, various regional and district leaders undertook similar conversations and meetings to address the declining membership challenge and brand awareness issues. Several district changes scheduled to take place in future Rotary years have been submitted and already approved by the Board. Any additional changes your group envisions would also be welcomed for review by the Districting Committee.

The Board approves your request to form a working group to establish a pilot for a regional structure for Australia, New Zealand, and 14 Pacific Countries as outlined in your petition.

While the Board supports your region's desire to continue discussing further changes, it is not able to approve any funding for such meetings to take place in person. As we are doing with other groups in the organization, we ask you also, to consider how to utilize technology to best connect and discuss this pilot and redistricting opportunities without holding an in-person meeting that requires funding from Rotary. Should you determine meeting in person is required, the region would be responsible for payment of any associated costs. You might also want to hold this meeting during a planned regional meeting such as a Rotary Institute to keep costs minimal.

The RI Board looks forward to seeing your plan for a regional pilot structure in Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific Islands.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Hewko".

John Hewko

cc: Mr. Rafael M. Garcia III, Director, Rotary International

# **RI BOARD PETITION – Regional Pilot Australia, NZ & 14 Pacific Countries**

## **Preamble/Background**

In 2011/12 a proposal to revitalise Rotary was developed to address a decade of significantly falling membership in this vast region. Unfortunately, the proposal did not proceed.

The objective was to not only address a 13% decline in membership in the previous ten years, but also to facilitate more consistent delivery of RI Programs and provide a coordinated if not single voice to ensure Rotary was more effective in the region and growing.

Regretfully, seven years later, the decline in membership continues and is down 24% in the last decade; this has resulted in a plan to significantly reduce the number of Districts in the region.

2021 marks the centenary of Rotary's establishment in Australia, New Zealand and the 14 Pacific countries, and our challenge is to secure our future in this fast-changing world. To do this, we need to ensure that Rotary remains relevant, contemporary and flexible. We need to be bold.

## **What is Needed & Why**

Rotary International's new vision statement and strategic plan presents an ideal and positive opportunity to come up with a more effective and coordinated local structure to support Districts to manage culture and public image with national and regional responses in a way that attracts and retains membership in this fast-changing world.

With an ageing Rotarian population in the region, there is an urgent need to promote a strong brand - one that attracts new members and is relevant to our multi-cultural communities and demographics, facilitating membership growth and encouraging community, government and corporate partnerships and ultimately more donations and bequests.

We need a coordinated and strong Rotary voice to enhance our public image and effectiveness in a similar manner to other service and volunteer organisations.

In addition, we have a critical need for a local structure to provide proactive change management direction and support.

The region is about to approach the most significant change in the last 100 years when the number of Districts will be reduced achieving significant efficiency gains as we seek to grow and replace an aging membership.

A coordinated regional approach to strategy, leadership, training and development, public image, and local Rotary entities and programs, will avoid the pitfalls of change, and assist us to embed a new culture whilst bringing all our members with us.

**To meet these critical needs, we seek approval to form a working group to establish a pilot for a regional structure for Australia, New Zealand and 14 Pacific Countries. If the RI Board approves this pilot, we envisage working with RI staff on the parameters of the programme with an anticipated commencement date of 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020.** This will allow time to carefully work through the approach, costs, benefits and risks.

## **Our Approach – How**

This pilot approval will enable us to bring together representatives of the District Governors, the District Governors Elect and the Nominees of this region with others from RI, to develop and manage national

strategic action plans for structure, communications, public image, membership, culture change and change management.

Plans will include the development of training resources to proactively support States and / or Districts to plan and manage redistricting, culture change and public image as we seek to increase our impact in the region, expand our reach, enhance participant engagement and most importantly, increase our ability to adapt and flourish for another 100 years.

A key aspect of this petition is to work closely with RI resources in this regional pilot. There is much to be done. A central feature will be our “without reservation commitment” to the internationality of the Rotary brand, our vision statement and our new strategic priorities.

## **Financial Implications**

In the long-term redistricting will result in substantial cost savings, but in the short and medium term, there will be extra costs in implementing the regional structure pilot, which will in time be offset by the reduction in the number of Districts.

The goal is significant membership growth, and improved community, corporate and government partnerships in the medium term. This will generate more income and over time the restructure will be overwhelmingly cash positive.

We request US\$10,000 be initially allocated to cover four face-to-face meetings with four representatives from Australia and two from New Zealand from 1 Jul 2019 to 30 Jun 2020. These will be supplemented by online meetings from 1 Apr 2019 and beyond, as necessary.

## **Conclusion**

The District Governors of Australia, New Zealand and 14 Pacific Countries are unanimous in supporting this petition and have consulted with District Governors’ Elect and Nominee, who are also in support.

As well as discussions with Governors’ Elect and Nominee, we have liaised with key past Governors and regional Rotary leaders who also support for this petition.

Finally, we are acutely aware of RI President Barry Rassin’s call to “be the inspiration for positive change and to face today’s challenges head on with courage, optimism and creativity”.

Front of mind also is General Secretary John Hewko’s challenge to the Governors’ of this region to innovate and “avoid falling into the trap of addressing 21<sup>st</sup> Century challenges with 20<sup>th</sup> Century solutions”.

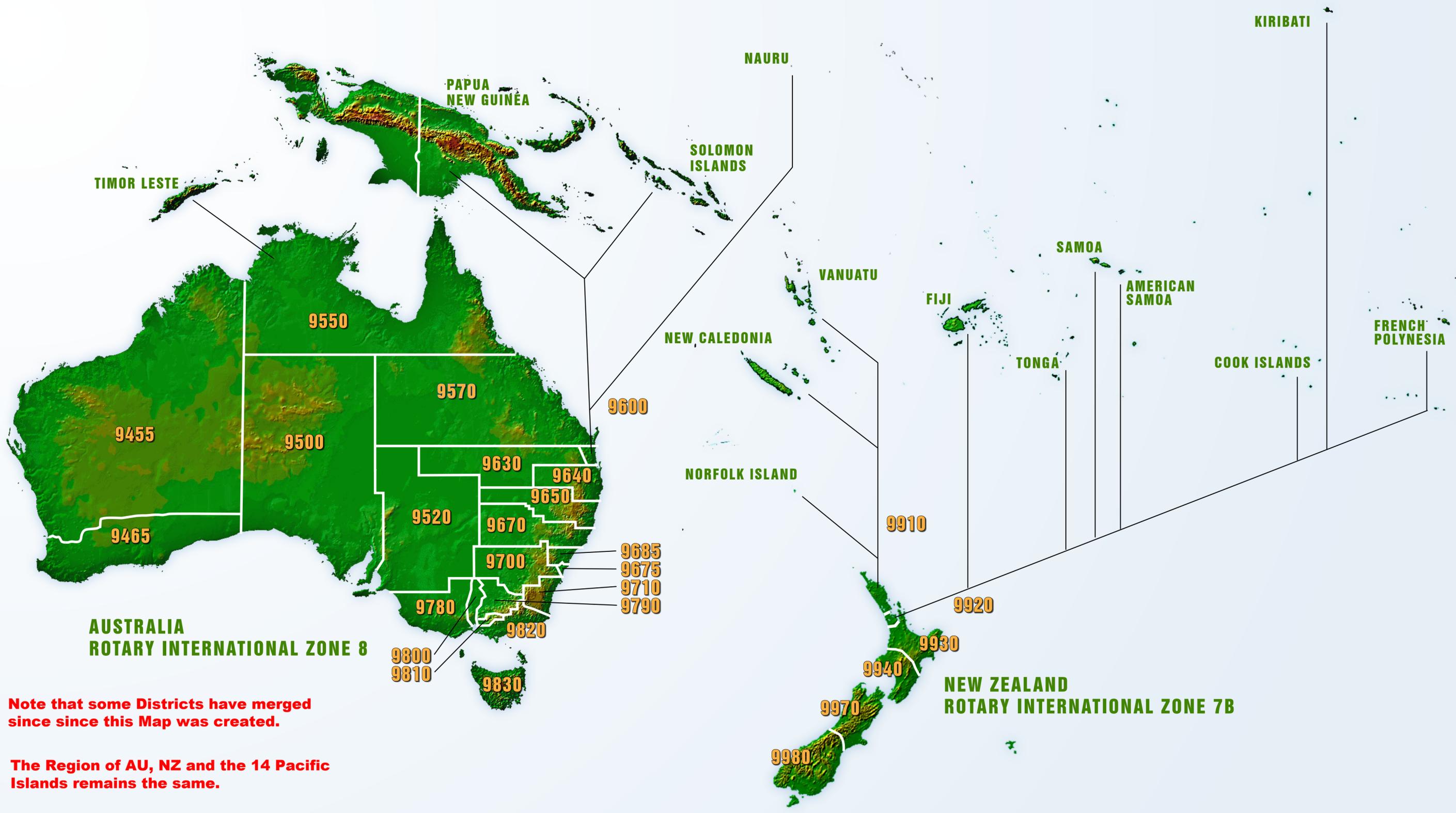
RI Board’s approval to this pilot will not only assist us avoid the considerable pitfalls of change, but also ensure Rotary International is more effective and efficient and acts with a coordinated voice to ensure we flourish in this part of the world.

We look forward to the Board of Rotary International approving this exciting pilot, which will also provide a valuable source of learning that may help RI in the future.

Signed

**2018 - 2019 Governors**

**Australia, New Zealand & 14 Pacific Countries (map attached)**



Note that some Districts have merged since since this Map was created.

The Region of AU, NZ and the 14 Pacific Islands remains the same.

# REGIONAL MAP

## ROTARY INTERNATIONAL ZONES 7B & 8

rotary  
DOWN UNDER  
[rotarydownunder.com.au](http://rotarydownunder.com.au)

