

Rotary International Zone 8
Post Regionalisation Pilot
Redistricting Discussion

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Executive Summary

The Rotary South Pacific Regionalisation Pilot is currently scheduled to conclude on 30 June 2026. Even if this date changes, a transition plan is required to outline both the post-pilot operating model and the pathway for implementation.

To support this process, four dedicated work streams have been established, each contributing to the overall transition plan. Oversight of this work is with the Zone 8 Regionalisation Steering Group, in close collaboration with Zone Leaders, Rotary International, the Regional Council and other key pilot personnel.

This discussion paper represents the first deliverable of Work Stream 2 – “Post-Pilot Desired Operating Model.” It presents alternate scenarios illustrating how Zone 8 could be structured to enable continued growth. It considers Rotary International’s traditional governance framework for redistricting.

We would like to thank the DGE cohort for their paper re future structures. That thinking has contributed to the development of this proposal.

Background

The Zone 8 Regionalisation pilot was established in 2019 to address significant membership decline over the previous decade through the introduction of a new governance structure and a regionally focused strategy to transform Rotary and Rotaract and better support clubs and members. The Regional Council was established on 1 January 2024 and began implementation on 1 July 2024. The pilot period was agreed with RI to be two years from that date (1 July 2024).

Progress of implementing the new Governance model and adoption of change has been slower than desired. It is therefore likely that the pilot will be extended so that it can be fully implemented and properly evaluated. A request for an extension will be made of the RI Board in January 2026.

One of the conditions of the pilot was that redistricting would be paused for its duration. The level of membership decline was such that if we had not commenced the pilot we would be in the midst of redistricting in several Districts. The pilot enables us to trial and assess new ways of operating that otherwise would not be possible. In particular, we can determine how we redistrict rather than be directed by RI.

In considering future options, we want to consider not only membership numbers but also the following factors:

- Jurisdictions, which determine certain legal obligations for clubs, such as youth protection, incorporation.
- Geography and culture – how groupings of clubs will enhance geographical and cultural connection.
- Size – to create larger Districts with the potential to spread administrative and financial loads, share resources.
- Purpose – consider what will be the key deliverables of the newly defined Districts.
- Communication – how can we facilitate communication, with District leadership and members, and how we can use technology to improve communication and access to resources for members.

Looking to the future

As part of the Regionalisation Pilot, several Rotary International (RI) policies were suspended by decision of the RI Board. This transition point creates an important opportunity for Zone 8 members to reflect on what we have learned, consider the outcomes we want to preserve and discuss how we might continue shaping our own future.

At a high level, two broad pathways emerge for consideration. These are not decisions but starting points for discussion.

Path 1 – Take control of the situation

Under this approach, Zone 8 would continue the spirit of innovation that has been established during the pilot, improving our governance and leadership model to better reflect the geography, culture, and contemporary needs found across our region.

This pathway invites us to:

- intentionally design future District structures rather than having them imposed externally.
- continue developing and refining modern leadership frameworks tested during the pilot.
- explore models that support ambassadorial roles aligned with jurisdictional boundaries (e.g., Australian states/territories and New Zealand and island nation jurisdictions).
- maintain the ability to trial new strategies that address membership decline and support stronger, healthier Districts.

This path keeps the Zone in a position of working collaboratively, being informed by data and able to adapt to emerging challenges with flexibility.

Path 2 – Do nothing

This pathway would see the ability to innovate and test ideas within the pilot cease and decision-making regarding District boundaries and governance structures would revert to RI's standard policies.

A key implication is that redistricting would recommence, managed by the RI Redistricting Committee, which would design new District boundaries to comply with RI requirements.

Based on current membership levels if decline continued by approximately 4.5% per annum, Zone 8 should expect to reduce the existing 19 Districts to between 9 and 12.

This pathway would see a return to established and familiar processes and would significantly limit Zone-led experimentation and reduce the ability of Zone 8 to propose or pursue new approaches tailored to our unique context.

Topic for Discussion

Do we take control of our own destiny

or

cease innovation and hand control back to RI?

Path 1 - taking control

This pathway allows Zone 8 to build on the Regionalisation Pilot's momentum by further testing governance and leadership approaches that align more closely with the region's geographic realities, cultural differences and evolving priorities.

Approach

This path allows us to

- Seek RI Board support to continue with relaxed policies and procedures.
- Apply pilot learnings to continue to reshape Zone governance and the application of traditional District delegations.
- Change District leadership roles to focus outward on key stakeholders rather than inward supporting clubs.
- Continue developing and improving centralised support for clubs and members.

Topic for Discussion

What principles should guide ongoing change?

Potential advantages

- Zone 8 actively shapes redistricting instead of awaiting RI intervention.
- New Districts are built around present-day realities and future-proof thinking.
- Encourages larger, healthy Districts equipped for modern communication and leadership practices.

- Improved stakeholder engagement at jurisdictional level.

Topic for Discussion

What functions should a District provide?

Implications of Zone 8 led redistricting

Current Zone 8 Districts have been shaped over decades and in many cases no longer reflect the geography, culture, or administrative realities of our region. By applying clear guiding principles, such as geographic coherence, cultural alignment, local ecosystems, and regulatory consistency, we have an opportunity to redesign District boundaries in a way that better supports clubs and leaders.

Establishing Districts along jurisdictional lines provides a logical and contemporary foundation, with an initial framework weighted by membership, of 2 to 3 Districts in New Zealand and the Island Nations and 7 to 8 Districts in Australia offers an effective starting point for discussion.

Membership projections without positive trajectory change from the Pilot further reinforce the need for change. By 30 June 2026, eight Districts (9640, 9675, 9780, 9830, 9910, 9920, 9930 and 9940) are expected to fall below 1,100 members, the minimum level considered viable under Rotary International legislation. District 9685 will dip below the threshold soon after.

Several Districts currently span multiple regulatory regimes, creating avoidable administrative burden and complexity. Examples include District 9510 (VIC/SA/NSW/NT), 9640 (QLD/NSW), 9780 (VIC/SA), and Pacific Island groups attached to both Australian and New Zealand Districts. Aligning future District boundaries with regulatory jurisdictions would significantly reduce compliance challenges and enable District leaders to focus on key stakeholder engagement.

Taken together, these factors provide a compelling case for resetting District boundaries based on modern principles rather than inherited patterns. A redesigned structure would create stronger, healthier, and more resilient Districts capable of supporting Rotary's mission across Zone 8 well into the future.