

## **BRIEF FACTS - of the Youth Exchange Program of Rotary Australia**

### **WHAT IS ROTARY?**

Rotary International is a worldwide organization, founded in 1905 to serve the local community and to promote peace and friendship throughout the world. On a global scale it is involved in medical and developmental programs for developing nations as well as instituting services for local groups and needs.

The Youth Exchange Program is one such service, providing individuals with a broader view of the world and a deeper understanding of themselves. Rotary is the only organization with a seat on the United Nations.

### **WHAT IS THE YOUTH EXCHANGE PROGRAM?**

Rotary Youth Exchange Programs are organized by individual Rotary Clubs and Districts throughout the world. Each year Rotary Youth Exchange provides thousands of young people with the opportunity to experience the cultures and accomplishments of people in other countries. The ambassadorial nature of the exchange promotes world understanding and peace.

The Rotary program is recognized as the best exchange program by schools, parents and the students themselves, because of its sound infrastructure and the worldwide support network.

### **WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM?**

1. To further international goodwill and understanding by enabling students to study at first hand some of the problems and accomplishments of people in lands other than their own.
2. To enable students to advance their education by studying for a year in an environment entirely different from their own and undertaking study courses and subjects not normally available to them in secondary schools of their own country
3. To broaden their outlook by learning to live with and meet people of different cultures creeds and colours from their own, and having to cope with day to day problems in an environment completely different from the one they have experienced at home
4. To act as Ambassadors for their own country and by addressing Rotary Clubs, Community organizations and Youth Groups in their host country and by imparting as much knowledge as they can of their own country and its problems to the people they meet during their year abroad.
5. To study and observe all facets of life and culture in the country where they are hosted, so that on their return to their home country they can pass on the knowledge they have gained, by addressing Rotary Clubs, Youth Groups and Community organizations.

### **WHO IS ELIGIBLE?**

1. The preferred age of applicants is between 15 years 6 months and 17 years 8 months of age at the time of departure. This also depends largely on the state in which you reside because states have different rules on age limits. Our preference is for younger students.
2. Applicants must have above average academic ability and must have an outgoing and pleasant personality to fit them for the role as an Ambassador for Australia. They must have the ability to accept discipline without question and be capable of adjusting to new and strange conditions.
3. Applicants must be of good character and reputation.
4. Sons and daughters of Rotarians are eligible for Youth Exchange, however, they receive no special preference in selections.

### **COUNTRY SELECTION?**

The Rotary Exchange Program maintains exchanges between districts in various parts of the world. Students will be asked for their order of preference for those countries. The interviewing panel will be seeking to match the student with the requirements of a particular country. Students will be offered an exchange in a country after the District Selection Interviews.

Typical countries include but not limited to:

Austria  
Brazil  
Belgium  
Denmark  
France  
Italy  
Japan  
Germany  
Finland  
Spain  
Netherlands  
South Korea  
Sweden  
Taiwan  
USA

This district does **not** currently exchange with, including but not limited to:  
Canada, UK, Argentina, Chile, Turkey, and South Africa.

## **OBLIGATIONS OF STUDENTS:**

1. Students must obey the laws of the host country and the rules of the Rotary sponsoring and host Districts at all times. They must also accept discipline without question of the host school and host parents. Students are expected to adapt to the home environment of the host families - the host families are under no obligation to adapt themselves to the student.
2. The student is an Ambassador for Australia and must at all times behave in a manner which will reflect credit on his or her family, community and country.
3. Students must return to Australia at the completion of the year. Students will not be allowed to stay after the termination of their exchange period.
4. Students must liaise with their sponsoring Rotary Club while they are on exchange. The Rotary Club should become an integral part of the exchange.

## **OBLIGATIONS OF PARENTS & WHAT DOES IT COST?**

1. The parents are required to pay an up-front fee to Rotary in the year preceding the exchange. This fee covers the cost of airfares, visas, insurance cover, compulsory week-end briefing camps in July and December, uniform, contact cards, administration, venue hire and much more. This fee can be paid in two installments in July and November. The basic fee for the program is AUD \$9000.00 however depending on which country you have chosen there could be additional fees, specific government requirements, language camps, translations and insurances that only apply to that particular country. The cost of these is not supported by the program. Additional costs, if known, will be advised to the parents at the time of initial interview so as a decision can be made to proceed or find another country. All costs are given in good faith on information received but no liability will be borne by the program for any unforeseen issues or expenses that arise post acceptance.
2. Parents will provide for day to day personal living expenses such as clothing, telephone, postage and travel on organized tours etc. for the student whilst overseas. Parents will also provide and maintain an emergency fund of A\$500.00 which can be drawn on with the consent of the student's counsellor or host parents. The students will receive a monthly allowance of approximately US\$100.00 per month from the host Rotary Club for personal incidentals.
3. Parents will be required to attend the two "Briefing Camps" with the student to prepare for the exchange. Costs of Parents attending the briefing camp accommodation, if required, will be at their expense. Student accommodation and food and necessary educational tools will be paid for by the program.
4. Parents should demonstrate support for the student, the program and its objectives. Parents will be required to host (or find hosts ideally through and working with the Sponsor Club) an Inbound Student for three x three-month periods two whilst your child is away and the other when your child returns. This is the essence of the program and it cannot function without parental grass roots involvement. This will be managed by the District YEP Committee and Sponsor Club and timings will be what best suits all parties involved.

## **ROTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE PROGRAM TIMETABLE ... for outbound students**

1. Applications must be lodged in writing on the "Initial Application Form" with the District Chair and then we (the district YEP committee) will assist to find a sponsoring Rotary club in the town or suburb near where the student RESIDES. (see Addresses of Local Rotary Clubs following). It is essential that we secure a sponsoring Rotary Club for the application to proceed to acceptance.
2. Applications should be lodged with the District Chair by the end of February, however late application will be accepted on merit, but preferences of countries may not be available.
3. Local Rotary Club Committees will interview students and their parents and will recommend suitable students for further consideration by the District YEP Committee. These interviews must be completed by the Club by mid-March. Late applications will be considered.
4. Following the Club interview, the recommended student will be required to complete three copies of the more detailed "Rotary International Youth Exchange Program Australia - APPLICATION". This will be sent to you electronically by the District Chair upon request. This Application requires school, medical and dental certification and upon completion should be signed and witnessed by Club Officers who will forward them to the District Committee. These forms are required before the District YEP Committee Interviews as they contain important information for the panel.
5. District application forms should be lodged with current District Chair. Email to - david\_kenny@live.com
6. The selection of students to be sent overseas is subject to the District YEP Committee being able to secure host agreements from Rotary Clubs overseas. No student is to be regarded as a Rotary Club's Youth Exchange Student until officially accepted as such by a host Rotary Club in another country. Briefings for outbound students and parents will be held in JULY and DECEMBER.
7. Students selected by the District Youth Exchange Committee will depart from Australia in the following January for twelve months.