



New Members Mentoring Program Guidelines for Rotary Clubs



Background

Rotary Club of Melbourne – Engaging new member early

The Rotary Club of Melbourne (Rotary Melbourne) launched its *New Members Mentoring Program* in 2019 to support members as they join the Club. For any new member working out how to get to know other members and get involved in Club programs, projects, and activities can be challenging and without proper guidance and support they may feel like they don't belong, a bit overwhelmed or disengaged. This can lead to new members leaving the Club within the first 12 months. Mitigating this can be achieved by partnering them up with a Club mentor.

New members who participated in the mentoring program since inception have consistently highlighted the significant positive impact that having a mentor has had on their ability to quickly connect and actively participate in Club activities resulting in an increase in member retention.

District 9800 - Belonging

Fostering a sense of belonging from the moment a prospective member expresses interest in joining a Rotary Club is essential to their journey in becoming a long-term Rotarian. Achieving this requires effort and a consistent approach from existing members to ensure new members feel welcome, respected, and valued for what they bring to the Club. This can be initiated by appointing a Club mentor to guide new members in how to engage with and participate in Club activities and programs from the outset. Evidence shows that this also increases member retention.

New Members Mentoring Program Guidelines

To assist Clubs who may be interested in implementing a New Members Mentoring Program or similar, and improve member retention, Rotary Melbourne and D9800 are pleased to share the [New Members Mentoring Program Guidelines](#) with Clubs across the District.

We hope these guidelines will be helpful to Clubs in the retention of members.

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New Members Mentoring Program

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New Members Mentoring Program

1.0 Overview of the Program

1.1 Attracting, engaging and retaining new members

New members are the lifeblood and the future of Rotary Clubs. While attracting new members is important, retaining them is much more challenging.

The key to retention lies in engaging new members as soon as they join. This is when they are most enthusiastic and excited about their decision to be part of the Club. Providing opportunities for meaningful involvement early on helps sustain that enthusiasm and ensures they feel valued. By guiding them to discover how they can contribute in ways that align with their interests and strengths, the risk of disengagement can be significantly reduced.

Far too often new members become disengaged early because they are left to figure out for themselves how the Club operates and what they need to do to get involved. Experience and feedback consistently show that the sooner new members become actively involved in programs or activities, the more likely they are to remain with the Club. Having a go-to-person such as a mentor to assist them can make all the difference in retaining new members.

1.2 Aim of the New Members Mentoring Program

The aim of the *New Members Mentoring Program* is to assist in mitigating the risk of new members becoming disengaged early. This is achieved by matching existing Rotarians (mentor) with a new member (mentee) to ensure she/he feels welcome and has a clear pathway to quickly engaging with members, activities and programs.

Each new member brings unique skills, experiences, and expertise that they wish to utilise in meeting their commitment to "Service Above Self." It is the responsibility of existing Rotarians to foster this commitment, ensuring new members feel valued and supported and have a sense of 'belonging' paving the way for their active engagement and long-term dedication to Rotary.



2.0 Role of Mentors & Mentees

2.1 Role of the Mentor

- **Coach or Teacher**

A mentor can best be described as **a coach or a teacher** who passes on and shares their lived experience and knowledge about the structure, operation and opportunities offered by the Club to its members.

This sharing of this knowledge and experience will assist mentees to gain a better understand of the Club structure and to engage in Club activities shortly after induction.

- **Mentors play a key role in motivating mentees to identify the Club activities or programs that are of interest to them:**

This may involve going through the various activities, committees and volunteer opportunities available within the Club and providing as much information as possible to the Mentee (see Appendix 1).

- **Once the mentee has identified their preferred activities and programs, the mentor will provide advice, assistance and guidance to the mentee on how they can get involved in Club activities and projects. This may include but not be limited to:**

- Introducing the mentee to other members of the Club involved in the relevant activity.
- Setting up a meeting for the mentee with the Chair of a relevant committee or the leader of a specific project specifying that this request is part of the new member engagement plan.
- Once an introduction or meeting has been scheduled it is **most important** that mentors follow up with their mentee to ensure that the relevant members they have been introduced to or need to meet have followed up with the mentee.

This should enable the mentee to form other relationships and get involved in the Club's activities and programs in ways that best fit their interests and needs.

- **Regular Contact is a key to success in the mentor/mentee relationship:**

It is crucial for mentors to follow up with their mentee on a regular basis to determine if their expectations are being met, or if they need any further assistance or support to improve their Rotary experience. Effective follow-up and contact provide valuable feedback and an opportunity to improve the mentees' experience of the Club.

- **Pacing:**

To be successful it is important that mentors are able to pace the sharing of information so as not to overwhelm their mentees with too much information too quickly, and that the mentor/mentee relationship offers a **meaningful** learning experience, personal connections, inspiration, and fun for the Mentee.



2.2 What Qualities, Traits or Skills do Mentors need?

Mentors will need to:

- Have the time, patience and commitment to work with their mentee over a period of 6 months. This time can be extended by the mentor and mentee if both agree more time is needed.
- Be personable and have good communication and listening skills.
- Have a reasonably good understanding of the workings and structure of the Club.
- Be willing to find further information or details about the working/operations of the Club or Rotary more generally when necessary and/or when requested by the mentee.

2.3 Informal Training for mentors

- A set of power point slides is available with these guidelines for mentors to view and run through before taking on a mentee. The slides should be viewed in conjunction with the manual. [Download](#)

2.4 What is the Role of the mentee?

New members who agree to participate in the mentoring program will need to:

- commit to working in partnership with their appointed mentor to ensure they are able to get engaged and involved in the Club as quickly as possible,
- take the initiative to engage regularly and make contact with their mentor,
- follow up promptly with other Rotarians, Chairs of Committee and leaders of projects following an introduction by their mentor,
- provide feedback to their mentor on how they believe the program is working for them and any issues or concerns they may have,
- advise the Mentoring Coordinator if they have any issues or concerns, they are unable to address or speak to their mentor about.



3.0 Benefits of the Mentoring Program

Mentoring benefits the Club, the mentors and the mentees as follows:

Club

- Utilises the great skills, knowledge and experience of existing members/Rotarians to assist new members to get engaged in Club activities as quickly as possible.
- Provides an avenue to engage experienced members, who may otherwise be disengaged.
- Improves retention rates.
- Reduces turnover of members.
- Reduces the risk of new members feeling disengaged after their induction into the Club.
- Improves diversity within the Club.
- Creates a “Mentoring culture” within the Club, which continuously promotes new member engagement and involvement in the activities of the RCM as quickly as possible following induction.

Mentor

- Gain satisfaction in sharing knowledge and personal experience of the RCM.
- Reinforces the Mentor’s commitment to Rotary in putting ‘service above self’.
- Helps to keep long-term members engaged in the Club in a meaningful way.
- Provides an opportunity for existing members to learn more about the current RCM programs and activities and other areas of Rotary activity and programs (e.g. District).
- Assists the future sustainability of the Club by assisting it to continue to grow and diversify.

Mentee

- Gain knowledge and information about Rotary more broadly and the operation of the RCM from the Mentor’s expertise and experience.
- Learn specific knowledge that will be relevant to their involvement in the RCM and Rotary more broadly.
- Will have the opportunity to be introduced to and meet other members of the RCM.
- Have a trusted ear with which to share any frustrations or challenges, as well as successes, while initially navigating the complexity of the Club



4.0 Mentoring Program Coordinator

To assist with the smooth running of the Mentoring Program, it is recommended that the Director Membership or equivalent role take on the role of Mentoring Coordinator for her/his term. This will ensure the program is embedded as an important part of the new membership process.

4.1 Role of the Coordinator

a) Matching Mentors and Mentees

The Coordinator should, where possible, try to match mentors and mentees to ensure they are compatible. This can be achieved by asking mentors and mentees to fill in the sample matching forms provided (see below) and doing a comparison of likes, interests etc. With permission from both mentor and mentee the completed forms can be shared with each of them so they can get to know a bit about each other prior to induction. (Matching for compatibility may not be necessary or possible for all Clubs).

b) Monitoring the mentor/mentee Relationship

- Check in with the mentor to see if she/he has been able to get in contact with their mentee and how things are going from their perspective.
- Contact mentees from time-to-time to ensure the mentoring relationship is working for both parties.
- Should a mentor/mentee relationship not be progressing for any reason, discuss the situation with the mentee and the mentor to determine the underlying cause; once determined, provide assistance to enable reconnection between the mentee and mentor or, if appropriate, appoint an alternative mentor.



Appendix 1

Guideline on Information to share with your mentee

Before joining the Club, your mentee will no doubt have gained some knowledge about your club and Rotary. However, the level of knowledge and understanding will vary from new member to new member.

The role of the mentor is to get a better understanding of what his/her mentee does/does not know about Rotary and to build on their current understanding by sharing your knowledge and experience as a Rotarian and member of the Club to answer any questions they may have. The table below offers ideas on what may be beneficial to share with your mentee:

1.0 Background to Rotary and the

RCM Rotary

- Explain Rotary's mission and values including The Four-Way Test and what it all means to you as a Rotarian.
- Rotary's legacy in the effort to eradicate polio worldwide.
- How Rotary started and grew.
- The history and background of your Club
- That your Club is part of District 9800 and part of an international organization of people who share a passion for service.

Your Club

- Explain your club's culture including the different kinds of meetings that occur (e.g. lunch, evening meetings, group meetings and other fellowship opportunities), when we meet and how often and what happens at these meetings.
- What the Club does best and what it's known for.
- The Club's history in terms of successful past projects, ongoing projects and upcoming projects.
- Activities and volunteering opportunities the Club is involved in.
- Social events within the Club.
- Point new members to other information about the Club, including the website, social media pages, and any other materials the Club has.

2.0 The many opportunities that being a Rotarian offers a new member, including but not limited to:

- Making a difference in the lives of others.
- Opportunities to develop Leadership Skills (e.g. participating in Rotary Leadership and Development Courses run by District and RI or taking up a leadership role within the Club or District).
- Opportunity to develop skills that can easily be applied to a career or other volunteering roles such as public speaking, project management, and event planning.
- Ability to build lifelong friendships within the RCM, the District, nationally



and/or internationally over time.

- The numerous activities, committees and projects to get involved in.

Appendix 2 – [click here](#)

New Members Mentoring Program

Mentor Matching Form

To be completed by Mentors

The information gathered from this form will be used to assist the Mentoring Coordinator to match you with a new member (mentee) to ensure you are both as compatible as possible.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1.0 Background

1.1 How long have you been a member of the Club or any other Rotary Clubs?

1.2 What is your current situation?

Working full time (paid employment) ☐ Working part time (paid employment) ☐

Retired ☐ Semi Retired ☐ Other ☐ -see below

Other – further details

1.3 Which Committees, activities or projects are you involved in regularly or have been involved in previously?

2.0 Availability

2.1 What days & times would suit you best to meet with your Mentee face-to face?

Monday ☐ Tuesday ☐ Wednesday ☐ Thursday ☐ Friday ☐
Saturday ☐ Sunday ☐

2.2 Identify the time/s that best suit you on those days:

Day	Times

3.0 Why do you want to participate as a mentor in the Mentoring Program?

3.1 What do hope to achieve from participating in this program

3.2 Are you willing to commit to your Mentee for a 6-month period depending on the needs of the Mentee?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If no, please advise how long you would be prepared to commit.

4.0 Personality and Interests

Circle any of the words below that you think describe your personality.

honest	hardworking	caring	funny	quiet	spiritual
optimistic	risk taker	sensitive	moody	happy	confident
talkative	withdrawn	outgoing	sad	angry	forgiving
friendly	insecure	inquisitive	brave	shy	rebellious
forceful	listener	helpful	thoughtful	loyal	judgemental
approachable	content	discreet	dependable	trusting	imaginative
respectful	nervous	impartial	observant	reliable	impulsive

Highlight, underline bold or circle all the topics and activities that interest you.

Water & sanitation	Cycling	Science	Reading	Theatre	Hiking	Outdoors
Basic education & literacy	Music	Singing	Golf	Painting	Eating out	Fishing
	Drawing	Gardening	Gym	Jogging	Writing	Cinema
AFL/AFLW	Crafts	Swimming	Climbing	Photography	Sport	Design
Astrology	Local history	Athletics	Wildlife	Soccer	Maternal & child health	Cars
Games	Dance	Environment	Animals	Cooking	IT	Tennis
Peace & conflict prevention / resolution	Museums	Horse racing	Walking	Volunteering	Fashion	Politics/world affairs
	Travel	Disease prevention & treatment	Rugby	Motor Sport	Economic & community development	



Other activities/topics that interest you not listed above:

Matched with _____

Introduction date _____



Appendix 2

RCM *New Members Mentoring Program*

Mentee Matching Form

To be completed by Mentees

The information gathered from this form will be used to assist the RCM Mentoring Coordinator to match you with an existing Rotarian (Mentor) to ensure you are both as compatible as possible.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1.0 Background

1.1 Why do you want to join the Club?

1.2 What do you hope to get from your membership?

1.3 Will you be able to attend the scheduled Club meetings and how often do you anticipate you will be able to attend?

1.4 What is your current situation?

Working full time (paid employment) ☐ Working part time (paid employment) ☐

Retired ☐ Semi Retired ☐ Other ☐ -see below

Other – further details



1.5 Which Committees and/or club activities do you think will be of interest to you?

2.0 Availability

2.1 What days/times would suit you best to meet with your Mentor face-to face?

Monday ☐ Tuesday ☐ Wednesday ☐ Thursday ☐ Friday ☐
Saturday ☐ Sunday ☐

2.3 Identify the time/s that best suit you on those days:

Day	Times

3.0 Participation in the Program

3.2 What do you hope to achieve from your participation in this program?

3.3 Are you willing to commit to the program and to your Mentor for a 6-month period depending on your needs as a new member?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If no, please advise how long you would be prepared to commit.



4.0 Personality and Interests

Circle any of the words below that you think describe your personality.

honest	hardworking	caring	funny	quiet	spiritual
optimistic	risk taker	sensitive	moody	happy	confident
talkative	withdrawn	outgoing	sad	angry	forgiving
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	Travel	Disease prevention & treatment	Rugby	Motor Sport	Economic & community development	