



"Our inability to reverse our membership decline is due not to a lack of knowledge, but a lack of will."



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I have used this quote many times to open my membership presentations, and the longer I spend on my Rotary membership journey, the truer that quote becomes.

Introduction

The *Fit for Purpose* program concept was born from my frustration that clubs were not willing to try proven club improvement initiatives. I knew ten years ago when serving as a District Membership Chair, well before I started the process that would eventually see the Rotary Club of Seaford chartered, that there were innovative and flexible ways to operate Rotary clubs which would increase their capacity for impact and make them a magnet to would-be members. Year after year I would speak at district membership and training events, and whilst confident that the attendees were inspired to initiate a process of innovation in their clubs, the transformations we desperately needed were exceedingly rare. The Rotary Club of Seaford was my proof of concept. I led a team that built a contemporary, flexible club from scratch and attracted a new generation of volunteers. So, why couldn't we transform existing clubs with these ideas? There have always been attractive versions of Rotary; great examples of best practice on offer. Sharing these examples and success stories has always been my passion. If only I could find a way to transform a collection of good clubs with the will to become great clubs, that would act as a shining example to the rest of Zone 8 and indeed the rest of the Rotary world of what was possible.

The Zone 8 Regionalisation Pilot provided this opportunity. My idea was to enrol 100 clubs across Zone 8 into an intense club transformation process. Our organising committee would run a Club Transformation Workshop featuring the best keynote speakers on membership topics we could find, and set participating clubs up with a Club Fitness Coach to mentor and support their transformative journey. A delegate from each club would attend the workshop, and with the assistance of their coach, prepare a Club Fitness Plan to transform their club over the length of the program, which would conclude at the end of the Regionalisation Pilot on June 30, 2026. In order to participate, the board of the club would have to sign a participation agreement in which they would be expected to **implement the Club Fitness Plan in full**. The last thing I wanted was to invest all this time, money and effort into providing 100 clubs with the tools for rejuvenation, only to have them refuse to use them. Watching clubs wither on the vine because they refused to change was precisely what I'd been doing for over 15 years. If clubs refused to sign the agreement, they would not get into the program.

The concept of "**fit for purpose**" refers to the idea that a product, service, or process should be suitable and effective in meeting the intended purpose or need for which it is designed. We clearly have amongst us a lot of Rotary clubs which do not currently meet this definition. Since July 1, 2022 at least 100 clubs have handed in their charter. Had those clubs been fit for purpose, that wouldn't have happened. I quite deliberately used comparisons to the personal fitness industry in promoting the program. I proposed the scenario of someone who wanted to improve their own fitness and engaged the services of a personal fitness instructor. A professional in that industry would first ask a few questions about their client's goals. Did they want to improve their fitness to a level whereby they could chase after their grandchildren, or were they looking to climb Mt Everest?

With a goal in mind, and a clear understanding of the client's current fitness level, a path could be plotted from A to B. This might include a change in diet, exercise, sleep patterns, posture, alcohol and/or drug intake, mindset, etc. I would suggest that any client who followed their instructor's plan to the letter would end up in a much fitter and healthier condition twelve months down the track. But if they gave up after a few months, nothing would change.

This is precisely the example I wanted to set for clubs considering this program. We would obtain an overview of the club's current position, ask questions about their goals, and with the mentoring of a Club Fitness Coach, prepare a Club Fitness Plan to get them from A to B. But I didn't want them throwing in the towel halfway through because it was all too hard.



Eligibility

This program was never going to be suitable for all Rotary clubs. We recognised there were clubs (clearly not enough) which were already performing well, and didn't need to be involved in Fit for Purpose. Likewise, there were a lot of clubs which were not capable of benefiting from a program like this. I went to great lengths to explain this when I first introduced the program in a zone wide membership webinar on April 7, 2024, but had to regularly reinforce that **this program was not designed to turn dysfunctional clubs into functional clubs**. It was designed to turn good clubs into excellent clubs. Whilst our primary objective was to transform the participating clubs, we also had a secondary objective. We wanted to show the rest of the zone, in fact the rest of the Rotary world what is possible when clubs **actually**

implement meaningful change, rather than just talking about it. The ideal scenario would see 100 transformed, active, attractive and growing clubs acting as a positive example to others, which is why we needed to select the clubs **most likely to succeed**.

Prerequisites

A number of additional expectations were placed on clubs wanting to join the program. These were all outlined in communication sent to all club leaders across the zone and spelled out in multiple webinars prior to opening the application window. In my mind it was not possible that a club could apply to join the program without fully grasping what was expected of them, and just to make sure, the aforementioned participation agreement outlined a number of expectations over and above that of implementing a fitness plan. One such expectation was that clubs had a president appointed for the following year. With the program spanning across two Rotary years, we didn't want to see progress grind to a halt due to a lack of leadership continuity.

We also expected clubs to be 100% compliant with gender and age demographic reporting to the RI database. Gender reporting is not a major issue in Zone 8, with only 0.6% unreported. But age reporting has been an enormous challenge for RI for many years, with over 38% of Rotarian ages unreported in Zone 8 in 2024.

We reminded clubs that every aspect of the pilot was being measured, none more than membership statistics. The Fit for Purpose program would be closely scrutinized, and if the membership statistics for clubs entering the program were not accurate at the start, we would not be able to accurately measure their progress across the period of the program.

Clubs had to nominate a delegate to attend the Club Transformation Workshop, and pay for their travel costs, although we did offer a generous travel subsidy scheme to support some of those costs. They also had to agree to a schedule of quarterly progress reports with their Club Fitness Coach.

The entire concept had been workshopped with elements tweaked, components added, and some requirements relaxed over a number of months by my team. We finally thought we'd ironed out all of the bugs and were ready to launch the program. I had promoted the Fit for Purpose concept in the April webinar, advising more details would follow within a few weeks.

There was a strong push from certain quarters that rather than selecting the 100 clubs most likely to flourish in the program, we should instead select a club from each of the 105 Rotary Community Groups. The rationale behind this was that if every RCG contained a participating club, the benefits of the program would be shared evenly across the zone. But there must still be a place for meritocracy in Rotary. If the overall success of the program was to be prioritised, only the most suitable clubs with the best prospects for success could be selected. If that meant some RCGs had multiple participants (my own RCG had four) and some had none, then so be it.

I was finally given the green light to initiate a promotional campaign on June 4th, 2024, and enquiries started flooding in. My phone did not stop ringing, and my inbox was overflowing. I had numerous conversations with Rotarians asking all manner of questions, some very keen on the program, some not so much. It became evident that we needed to provide more detailed information, so I fronted another webinar to cover the program in more detail, and respond to a number of concerns that had been raised.

The Application Process

I had always hoped 100 clubs would participate. After extending the application deadline we received 92 applications, and after an extensive selection process, accepted 84 clubs into the program; 67 from Australia, 16 from New Zealand and one from Vanuatu. Seven applications were rejected by our selection committee for multiple reasons and one club withdrew its application. The primary reason for rejecting applications was we considered clubs too small to benefit from the program, with 12 or fewer members. A number also indicated in their applications internal conflict and resistance to change. One missed the application deadline, and although granted a further extension, still failed to provide the necessary information. We then initiated a process to prepare 84 delegates for the program and plan the Club Transformation Workshop. The table below lists the 84 selected clubs and their districts. *Unfortunately, the delegate from the Rotary Club of Maungakiekie, D9910 was unable to attend the workshop due to a last-minute flight cancellation, and as a result the club withdrew from the program.

Clubs had a number of tasks to complete in the lead up to the Club Transformation Workshop. A registration fee had to be paid, partnership agreements had to be signed, surveys had to be completed, the aforementioned age and gender statistics needed updating, and accommodation and dietary needs had to be provided. Our team spent weeks chasing clubs on these tasks, time which we should have been spending preparing for the workshop.

9423 Como	9675 Dapto	9800 Camberwell
9423 Palm Beach	9675 Sutherland	9815 Lilydale
9423 Karrinyup	9685 Karing Somersby	9815 Rowville-Lysterfield
9465 Greater Bunbury	9685 Norwest Sunrise	9815 Phillip Island and San Remo
9423 Greater Geraldton	9685 Carlingford	9815 Emerald & District
9510 Morphett Vale	9685 Castle Hill	9815 Warrandyte Donvale
9510 Murray Bridge	9685 Chatswood Roseville	9815 Box Hill Central
9510 Glenelg	9685 Kincumber	9815 Waverley
9510 Seaford	9685 Turrumurra	9815 Boronia
9510 Goolwa	9685 West Pennant Hills and Cherrybrook	9815 Warragul
9510 Morialta	9685 Windsor	9830 Hobart
9510 Gawler Light	9685 Ryde	9910 Henderson
9510 Strathalbyn	9685 Upper Blue Mountains Sunrise	9910 Kerikeri
9510 Edwardstown	9705 Bathurst	9910 Bay of Islands
9510 Modbury Golden Grove	9705 Gungahlin	9910 *Maungakiekie
9560 Hervey Bay Sunrise	9705 Jerrabomberra	9910 Port Vila
9560 Cairns Sunrise	9705 Ginninderra	9920 Remuera
9560 Darwin South	9705 Orange	9920 Auckland Korean
9640 Jimboomba	9705 Griffith Avanti	9930 Havelock North
9640 Ashmore	9780 Alfredton	9930 Lake Taupo
9640 Beaudesert	9780 Geelong West	9940 Whanganui
9660 Dubbo South	9780 Colac West	9940 Feilding Oroua
9660 Charlestown	9790 Diamond Creek	9940 South Wairarapa
9660 Scone	9790 E-Club of Change Makers	9940 Upper Hutt
9660 Dubbo West	9790 Numurkah	9999 Lincoln
9675 Campsie	9790 Albury North	9999 Dunedin Central
9675 Padstow	9790 Southern Mitchell	9999 Whakatu
9675 Corrimal	9800 Brighton North	9999 Christchurch South

Club Fitness Coaches

Rather than attempting to micro-manage the 84 clubs in the program, I appointed 14 Club Fitness Coaches to each mentor 6 clubs. These were all experienced Rotarians, many of whom were current, past or incoming District Governors. Their role was to sit with the delegates attending the workshop, assist with their Club Fitness Plan preparation, and mentor and follow up with clubs after the workshop on a quarterly basis to ensure the Club Fitness Plans were implemented in full. They also assisted with the follow up of tasks prior to the workshop.

Initially, I only wanted people in this role that I personally knew for their membership experience, and had hoped to fill all coaching positions from my membership team. My challenge was that I couldn't appoint all of the coaches until we knew how many clubs were participating in the program. Once we knew that 84 clubs would be participating in the program, I had to find 14 coaches who would each mentor 6 clubs. I did have a few challenges when some of my team members who had previously committed to take on this role had to pull out at late notice. I then had to find qualified Rotarians from around the zone who were willing and able to attend the workshop and commit to a near two year role at relatively short notice. I personally rang at least 10 people who turned down the role, and then asked for suggestions from my team. Fortunately, we were able to get our full team together including three coaches from New Zealand, one from Fiji, and the remaining ten from Australia. Two coaches also had to be replaced after the workshop.

Club Dossiers

In preparation for the Club Transformation Workshop, we compiled a detailed dossier on each participating club. But the way we went about this was very innovative, and a first for me. We acquired data from clubs from three different sources.

- **The application process** was via the aforementioned Qualtrics survey. In addition to information about club leaders and the contact details, we asked a series of questions about club strengths and weaknesses. Clubs were asked about their meeting format and frequency, online presence, receptiveness to change, capacity to serve their community, culture, leadership style, fellowship, flexibility, inclusion, reputation in the community, goals and barriers to achieving them, and most importantly, why they wanted to participate in the program.
- **The RI database** provided detailed information about member movement, age and gender profile, retention, reason for terminations.
- **A member satisfaction** survey was also sent to each club, giving each member the opportunity to respond.

We then used artificial intelligence to summarise all data collected into a club dossier for each participating club, which was forwarded to the Club Fitness Coaches to help their preparation for the Club Transformation Workshop, and to assist the construction of the individual Club Fitness Plans. Special thanks to Hamish Jones for his assistance in this task.

The Club Transformation Workshop – October 12-13, 2024

After an intense campaign of planning and data acquisition, we finally arrived in Sydney for this major event. We were delighted with the service from the hotel. The conference facilities, catering, accommodation were all first class.

The rubber was about to hit the road, and all of our planning was about to be tested. Unfortunately, one delegate was unable to make the trip from Auckland as a result of a late flight cancellation, but 83 of the 84 clubs in the program were represented. Club Fitness Coaches were each seated with the delegates from the six clubs under their mentorship.



Day one was our “Discovery Day”, a full day of presentations from an amazing array of keynote speakers. It was very important that we made sure this wasn’t just another seminar where the audience is lectured to all day. We went to great effort to include learning activities between each presentation and reflection time to give our delegates an opportunity to digest what they had just seen and heard.

Presentations 1 through 11 were delivered on day one. Day two was called our “Planning Day”; and commenced with presentation 12 about change leadership. Every presentation was outstanding, and we decided to have them all recorded to create a lasting resource for clubs both in and outside of the program. After the change leadership presentation all participating delegates under the supervision of their Club Fitness Coach worked on their Club Fitness Plans. The first hour delegates focused on internal club issues, such as Membership, Meetings, Administration and Culture. The second hour focus was on external issues, including Public Image, Promotion, Service, Partnerships & Fundraising. Delegates were provided Club Fitness Plan Worksheets to document every change they wanted to see implemented in their club.



Some initiatives were about changing or removing current practices, and some were about implementing new ideas. We stressed that nothing should be off the table, and delegates have been empowered by the board to be bold and adventurous. Of course, each delegate knew the specific challenges faced by their own club, and when this knowledge was combined with the members surveys and RI membership data, plus the inspiration and new ideas they received from the previous day's presentations, they had plenty of material to work with.

Delegates had to indicate the expected implementation timeline and anticipated resistance of each initiative. At the end of the workshop, the Club Fitness Coaches collected all worksheets and typed them up. The typed-up copies were emailed back to the participating clubs, and we kept them in a database with a view to keeping clubs accountable.



The Club Transformation Workshop was an outstanding success. Many months of planning and hard work by the organising committee had paid dividends. So many people had contributed to the success of the event. I want to recognise our presenters, Club Fitness Coaches and all delegates for making this event so memorable. Special thanks to our Program Treasurer and Hotel Liaison PDG David Barton, Accommodation Registrar Leole Malama-Prasad, MC DG Stephen O'Connell and Learning Director Carolyn O'Connell. The venue was spectacular, the presenters were outstanding, and I felt a genuine sense of excitement and anticipation that the Fit for Purpose program was off to a great start. We conducted a survey of all delegates to acquire feedback on the success of the weekend, and with the exception of a few comments about accommodation difficulties, the feedback was overwhelmingly positive. But I knew this was only the start of the journey. Experience tells me that delivering an outstanding program of membership development content does not guarantee implementation and club transformation. If ever there was a moment where words needed to turn into action, this was that moment.

After the Club Transformation Workshop

We went to great lengths to make it clear before the application process commenced that this program was about action. We only wanted to be working with clubs that were serious about transformation. The last thing I wanted after putting so much effort into this program and spending so much of Rotary's money was for clubs to disengage. Shortly after the conclusion of the Club Transformation Workshop this was reinforced with all participating clubs. The ball was now firmly in their court, and we expected club fitness plans to be implemented in full as per the agreement all participating clubs signed. I was responsible for delivering other membership programs and resources across the zone, and had empowered our team of Club Fitness Coaches to mentor their clubs and keep track of their progress.

Video Presentations

As promised, all presentations were recorded, edited and uploaded to a website for the benefit of all clubs across Zone 8, not just those in the Fit for Purpose Program. At the time of writing this report, videos from this collection have been viewed a staggering 3,092 times by 622 unique viewers. 220 of these views have been from countries outside of Zone 8. This suggests to me firstly that the quality of the presentations was extremely high, and secondly that there is a high demand for innovative and relevant membership development content. I expressed that each of the videos could be used at club meetings in lieu of a guest speaker.



President Elect Learning & Development Seminars (PELDS) 2025

For the first time, as part of the Zone 8 Regionalisation Pilot, the delivery of learning and development content to club presidents elect was to be consistent across every district in the zone (except D9620 which is not participating in the pilot). I was asked to prepare membership content for these seminars, and created that content with key learnings from those presentations at the Club Transformation Workshop. Whilst only 83 clubs participated in the program, it was very important that discoveries and resources produced by the program were available to assist membership development right across the zone.

Mixed Messages

Anecdotal feedback I was receiving was wide-ranging. I was invited by some of the Club Fitness Coaches to participate in zoom meetings with club representatives discussing their progress, and on most occasions the feedback was positive, and I had personally received some extremely encouraging messages. But there were also reports of clubs struggling to implement their club fitness plans, and refusing to engage with coaches. Whilst attending the RI Convention in Calgary (June 2025) I was approached by two Rotarians who were members of clubs participating in the program. The first member was incredibly thankful for the opportunity presented to their club, commenting that they had implemented their Club Fitness Plan in full and were reaping the rewards. The club learned so much from the workshop held last October and had been reinvigorated, witnessing substantial growth. It was “a fun place to be” again. This filled my heart with joy, but that joy soon evaporated when the second Rotarian raised concerns that their club had not implemented any elements of their plan, and nothing had changed.





Club and Coach Surveys

After returning from Calgary, I thought it was time to survey the participating clubs to gain an overview of the success of the program thus far. With the program running concurrently with the Zone 8 Regionalisation Pilot, we were approaching the half way mark. Upon mentioning this, one of our Club Fitness Coaches suggested it would be a good idea to survey the coaches as well to gain an additional and more objective perspective. Surveys were distributed to clubs in late July, with a request to respond by August 10. Despite multiple attempts to chase the responses, only 59 of the 83 participating clubs and 9 of the 14 coaches had returned their surveys at the time of producing this report. It's possible some had technology issues, but this follows a frustrating pattern 12 months prior when we had to chase a large segment of clubs for registration fees, participation agreements, accommodation details, member surveys and member age data.





These surveys asked a combination of questions, some multiple choice and some requiring written responses. In order to provide the best overview of responses, I have listed the multiple choice questions first, and then with the assistance of ChatGPT have provided summaries of common threads from the written responses in the following pages. On balance, the responses might be considered generally positive, but I feel it is likely that the 24 clubs which did not respond have disengaged with the program. Had their responses been included, the feedback may well have appeared generally more negative.







Prior to sending a delegate to the Club Transformation Workshop, was the club membership base fully committed to a program of cultural transformation?

			
Yes. 100%. We all recognised the need to reinvigorate the club.	Mainly. The majority of members understood things needed to change.	A small segment of the club was enthusiastic for change, but realised that others would need convincing.	Not really. Someone thought the Fit for Purpose program would be a good idea, but they didn't do a good job of building consensus.
11 (19%)	34 (58%)	11 (19%)	3 (4%)





In retrospect, do you feel your club was a good fit for the Fit for Purpose program?

			
Undoubtedly. We were precisely the type of club that could benefit.	We were fairly confident this program was what we needed.	Things needed to change, but we probably weren't ready for real transformation.	I don't know what we were thinking. We don't do change well.
21 (36%)	29 (49%)	9 (15%)	0 (0%)





How quickly was the Club Fitness Plan presented to the members?

			
We had a comprehensive presentation within a month of our delegate returning from the Club Transformation Workshop.	It was discussed by the end of January 2025.	We only just got around to it towards the end of the 2024/25 Rotary year.	It still hasn't been discussed.
42 (71%)	13 (22%)	2 (3%)	2 (3%)

How do you feel your Club Fitness Plan was received by your fellow members?

			
Really well. They were very excited with the proposed innovations and eager to commence an implementation process.	Some elements were well received. Others required some workshopping.	Generally poor response. It was very hard to bring our members on this journey, but we expect to implement some initiatives.	Very negative. I don't know what the club was expecting, but it wasn't happy with the plan presented.
13 (22%)	37 (63%)	7 (12%)	2 (3%)

How well has the Club Fitness Plan been implemented?

			
Extremely well. There were no objections at all, and every component has been successfully implemented.	Reasonably well. Some elements have not been implemented, but most have.	Not so well. It has been a struggle so far, but we have been able to make a few changes.	Dreadful. Nothing has been implemented so far.
3 (5%)	35 (59%)	17 (29%)	4 (7%)

Question 1

Describe components of the Club Fitness Plan that been implemented and have had a positive effect.

Meeting format made more flexible/less formal — mentioned by 31 clubs

“Less formal meetings integrated social and service activities... improved internal communication.”

“Changed meeting structure — last meeting of month devoted to service... now all club members involved.”

“A more flexible meeting strategy — less frequent, joint meetings...”

Website refreshed/updated — 22 clubs

“Website rejuvenation — to be completed within the week...”

“Website update completed and stepping up advertising.”

“Media — website developed, various improvements...”

Governance / committees strengthened — 20 clubs

“A team has been selected to review every part of our club... some things implemented but more work needed.”

“Membership Committee was strengthened... majority of coordination done by the chair.”

“Every avenue has a director and deputy; all members involved in identifying projects.”

Internal communications & processes improved — 18 clubs

“Improved records management using Dropbox; improved internal communication.”

“Process changes and better communication with our mentor.”

“Weekly screen presentation for all to view and share over dinner.”

New members / membership growth focus — 18 clubs

“Membership engagement — increasing social activity and recruitment.”

“Presented an overview of membership paths; there are some prospects.”

“New membership program... aspects of mentoring—work required.”

Public image / branding / visibility — 17 clubs

“Refreshed and improved Rotary branding to better promote the club.”

“Raised our profile in the community by making sure projects are visible.”

“Renewed T-shirts, vests, signs and banners to improve visibility.”

Fundraising & events executed — 16 clubs

“Art Show and other events delivered strong results.”

“Addressing Classroom Hunger launch held in a shopping centre.”

“More community events and markets to increase impact.”

Social media & promotion — 15 clubs

“Facebook posts stepped up; advertising increased.”

“More consistent social media presence to support projects.”

“Using web page redesign alongside social media push.”

Community needs assessment — 8 clubs

“Community needs assessment for homelessness.”

“Identified priority local issues to guide projects.”

“Listening exercise to align projects with community needs.”

Domestic violence initiative — 7 clubs

“Domestic violence project established.”

“Support and awareness campaign launched.”

“Partnerships formed to address DV locally.”

Strategic planning implemented — 5 clubs

“Development of a 3-year strategic plan — member responses positive; implementation is key.”

“SWOT activity and analysis completed.”

“Plan helps align projects and committees.”

Question 1 Summary

Most clubs report tangible positive effects from making meetings more flexible/less formal and improving their digital presence (website refresh, social media), supported by stronger governance/committees and better internal communication. These efforts commonly connect to membership engagement & growth and public visibility, with several clubs highlighting events/fundraising and targeted initiatives like domestic violence projects. Overall, clubs are combining operational tweaks (meeting formats, comms/processes) with outward-facing improvements (branding, website, social media) to lift impact.

Question 2 - Describe initiatives that have not been implemented yet, but you expect will be implemented eventually and the reasons they have been delayed.

Club capacity / resourcing — 24 clubs

“There is no club interest in the program.”

“Rotary Information Event not implemented yet, but scheduled this year. We are a very busy club so lacked manpower.”

“Succession planning to develop new member skills; not enough resources to make this happen.”

“Will” (plans pending, intentions) — 15 clubs

“New web site under development... lack of volunteers led to delay... aim to be in place by end August.”

“Other service projects identified but suffered from apathy and lack of volunteers.”

New member induction / support — 14 clubs

“We had planned a new member induction program but weren’t able to find the time to carry it out.”

“New member material and process — underway... new promotional material — underway.”

New members (growth targets & onboarding) — 10 clubs

“New membership target has not been set... community needs survey not designed.”

“We have not yet developed a formalized onboarding program to guide new members...”

“Still working on ‘signature’ programs to extend what the club will be known for.”

Strategic planning not yet complete — 4 clubs

“Next meeting will allocate members to implement remaining actions in strategic plan.”

“1. Strategic plan 2. Revise governance.”

“Phasing in initiatives like Alumni program and Social Media Strategic Plan... require 3–6 months.”

Question 2 Summary

The most common barrier mentioned was club capacity and resourcing (24 clubs), followed by general plans still pending and specific new member induction/onboarding programs. Strategic planning delays were also cited. Overall, most delays stem from limited manpower, competing priorities, or pending organisational work, though clubs generally expect to deliver these initiatives in time.

Question 3 -Describe any elements of the Club Fitness Plan that were rejected by the members and why.

It was common for responses to start with

“No elements of the Club Fitness Plan were rejected by members, but:”

Followed by:

- “The issue is an aging membership who are becoming less physically able to participate in events.”
- “it has been very difficult to engage them (members)”
- “(it) just might take a bit longer to implement. Don’t want to change too drastically at once.”
- “The members were very slow to get onboard.”

The topic of resistance to a change of meetings formats, timing, traditional vs new was a recurring theme. Comments included:

- “Changes to meetings times, etc., will be difficult.”
- “Differences exist on frequency of meetings.”
- “Change in meeting frequency to fortnightly was not well received, reverted to weekly meeting in traditional format.”

There were plenty of comments about acceptance of change and new ideas, but I would stress again that 29 clubs did not return their surveys, suggesting a bias towards clubs experiencing positive results.

Positive comments include:

- “Our program has shifted to favour less formal meetings focused on socialising and project work. This approach aims to foster engagement and adapt to the new operational style.”
- “Most members are happy to accept change, even though many aren’t willing to be specifically involved... embarking on improving profile on website and social media.”
- “There are different views on some possible ideas — e.g., how often our club meets and what that looks like. We will work closely with members and gradually introduce changes.”
- “No elements of the Club Fitness Plan were rejected by members. The plan has been well received...”
- “All initiatives were described and adopted at a general meeting of Club Members.”

Question 3 Summary

Even with broader examples, the story remains consistent: most clubs did not formally reject any part of the plan. Where hesitation arises, it’s around meeting formats/times and general reluctance to change, often tied to tradition or member engagement. Many responses emphasised that initiatives were actually well received, though in practice adjustments and delays occur.

Question 4 -Describe any positive changes your club implemented during this period that were not part of the Club Fitness Plan.

Membership initiatives — 8 clubs

“Membership is going well and the team are finding new members. Small changes have made a difference but bigger ones coming.”

“We have implemented a process of building a database of people who have shown an interest in our projects... They will receive a welcoming email and regular updates.”

“Membership drives / stalls at markets and information days signed up four new members. Always had a strategic plan, reviewed after attending Fit for Purpose but hasn’t been implemented.”

Rotary promotion / engagement — 7 clubs

“We held a fine dining event where we presented information about Rotary International and our club to our members and their families.”

“Continue to partner with other Rotary Clubs.”

“Created a funding source for projects: local supermarket screen with advertising, community notices and Rotary information (\$40k revenue).”

New members (events & pathways) — 6 clubs

“A ‘Rotary Revealed’ Evening generated 4 new members... we plan to repeat it in May/June 2026.”

“Membership is going well... small changes have made a difference but bigger ones coming.”

“Stalls at markets and information days signed up four new members.”

New projects (innovation, community focus) — 3 clubs

“New project of mock interviews at a local school — had the benefit of all club participation.”

“We are developing a new project in a field not previously involved in, which could increase public image.”

“Strategic review led to a new project calendar to manage time commitment and prevent burnout.”

Question 4 Summary

The strongest pattern was membership activity (drives, recruitment, and tracking interest), alongside Rotary promotional events and initiatives for new members. Some clubs reported new projects that strengthened community visibility and internal planning. While small references to the Club Fitness Plan appeared, the emphasis was on clubs taking their own complementary initiatives.

Question 5 - Describe anything that you have learned from this process so far – good, bad or indifferent.

Rotary experience & culture — 15 clubs

“It was a great year for our club. Over the past year, our members have become more confident and engaged in Rotary activities. Five of our members attended the 2025 Rotary International Convention in Calgary, Canada...”
“The secret to our success was keeping the members informed... Now they are fully involved in the transformation of our club.”
“Club members did not want to change the way things are done... meeting venue and the traditional format preferred.”

Process (planning, governance, change management) — 9 clubs

“I think our club hasn’t done strategic planning well... The process has provided an opportunity to strengthen our leadership.”
“This process has shown that while some people hesitate to pay to volunteer, modernising our approach has positioned us to better attract new members.”
“It is a challenge to bring club members along, it seems slow because there is some apathy.”

New members (recruitment, challenges) — 9 clubs

“Key members who are ageing have shrinking opportunities to invite new members. Change is slow!”
“The target market for new members should be those just retired or close to retirement.”
“Flexibility and reduced formalities have positioned us to better attract new members... ensuring Rotary remains welcoming, relevant, and impactful.”

Attracting new members (visibility, outreach) — 5 clubs

“It would have helped if there had been promotional activity of Rotary within the Zone at the same time...”
“We can stem the loss of members by remaining visible in our efforts to serve the local and international communities.”
“Putting the correct posts on Facebook can attract potential members... It’s a bit of a catch-22.”

Club members (motivation, apathy, engagement) — 5 clubs

“From the FFP we have a set of tools to assist in inspiring club members and move the club forward.”
“It is great to be motivated yourself, however motivating others to change is a challenge.”
“Our club members have some great ideas, just not the energy to implement them.”

Takes time (slow change, patience) — 5 clubs

“It takes time and not just one big change but lots of little ones.”
“Trying to find where WE fit takes time, it is not easy and the progress has been slow to date.”
“Need to keep everyone on track — can’t be one person’s job.”

“Good / Bad ...” (explicit reflections) — 3 clubs

“Good - members have been receptive. Bad - until now we have still been reliant on too few.”
“Good - there is goodwill to change... But when one person attends a program, it’s hard to pass on the vision.”
“Good - the event and connections at the FFP weekend were great. Not so good - the follow-up was poor.”

One person (over-reliance on individuals) — 3 clubs

“Needs to have more than one person involved to actually make change.”
“It takes time. Need to keep everyone on track — can’t be one person’s job.”
“Overestimated my ability to drive change - would have found having a partner at the summit extremely beneficial.”

Question 5 Summary

The strongest theme was Rotary culture and experience (15 clubs), with members reflecting on traditions, conventions, and engagement. Many insights focused on the process (governance and change management), the challenge of attracting and supporting new members, and the recognition that meaningful change takes time. Clubs also noted risks of relying on just one or two individuals, and the importance of collective motivation.

Question 6 -Describe why, as a result of participating in the Fit for Purpose program, your club is in a better, worse, or similar position to before.

Change (acceptance, resistance, adaptation) — 20 clubs

“Being in the FFP Program has made us more accountable to make some changes. We may have gotten there anyway eventually, but this way we have had a bit of a kickstart.”

“Members are accepting change because they now better understand the consequences of doing nothing... less resistance.”

“We are a traditional Club that does not have the capacity to change... membership costs are high, no new members in the last 2 years, and very little innovation.”

New members (recruitment, induction, readiness) — 11 clubs

“We now have a strategic plan incorporating F4P actions... new web site, induction process for new members...”

“In order to attract new members we also have to change.”

“Our club is in good heart... in a good position to welcome new members.”

Membership (engagement, fees, participation) — 9 clubs

“Membership has increased and change is starting build. It has not translated into new membership yet.”

“Feedback highlighted resistance to paying membership fees and a preference for less formality.”

“The Fit for Purpose program gave us the idea of the Judy Ford membership night...”

Purpose program (impact, guidance, conflict resolution) — 6 clubs

“Our club is diverse, with a nearly equal gender split... guided by the Fit For Purpose program.”

“Coming to terms with conflict within the club and taking action to remove trouble makers has left us with a much better club.”

Rotary year (tracking progress) — 3 clubs

“We have inducted 5 new members in the last Rotary year... but also lost 3.”

“8 new members since the Fit For Purpose... net increase of 4 members over the Rotary Year.”

“A nett loss of 5 members in the past Rotary year has convinced some of the club that we need to change.”

12 months (time horizon for change) — 3 clubs

“Since we attended FFP in October 2024 we have grown from 22 members to 33...”

“It has been less than 12 months since I attended Fit for Purpose, it takes time to implement change.”

“It has taken 12 months to turn the club around.”

Club transformation (culture shift, structured planning) — 3 clubs

“The Club transformation process is going to take a longer time and purposeful effort by members.”

“Our insights are directly attributable to several key aspects of the F4P program... SWOT analysis, workshops, and mentorship.”

“Engaging a younger, dynamic new Membership chair has been key to transformation.”

Younger members (targeting demographics) — 3 clubs

“Attempts to form a younger, more diverse leadership team were roundly rejected by members.”

“We were in a solid position to attract members... idea of the Judy Ford membership night... now in our thinking.”

“A couple of new, younger members I had hoped would drive change have left the club.”

Question 6 Summary

The most common theme was change (20 clubs), with reflections ranging from enthusiasm and accountability to resistance and tradition. New members and membership engagement were strongly linked themes, showing how clubs view growth as central to success. Many clubs referenced the Fit for Purpose program as a framework for positive transformation, though progress is uneven and often takes 12 months or more. Targeting younger members emerged as a goal, though not always successfully achieved.

Question 7 - Please feel free to make any other comments about the level of support from your Club Fitness Coach.

Fitness coach role/value — 10 clubs

"I didn't want to choose Poor as we have pretty much just grab the bull by the horns and got it done. It's not our Fitness Coaches fault... we just got on with it and didn't need him much."

"I really don't understand what the fitness Coach's role has been other than providing advice. I think our Club would benefit from a Coach that can meet with Clubs and provide guidance and support."

"Our Club Fitness Coach has been available to support us when needed and has been responsive to requests."

Contact (frequency, accessibility) — 10 clubs

"[name omitted] has been away a fair bit and therefore has not made a lot of contact. We had a Zoom that clashed with our club meetings so I was unable to attend... the Facebook page and updates keep me enthusiastic."

"Our coach is aware of the approach we are taking and has been available if required without interfering. However, being based in NZ makes it harder — geography matters for face-to-face contact."

"We have submitted updates but no direct contact (e.g., phone calls) has been made to check in."

Clubs (comparisons, cross-learning, support) — 9 clubs

"Judy was great at the initial meeting at the Transformation Workshop... outside support didn't seem necessary but she was a great support as we went through the process."

"Our Club Fitness Coach support has been sporadic... expected sharing of ideas with other clubs through the CFC has not been met."

"I am wondering why I have never heard from the Fitness Coach. Even this survey came through another club member, not direct to me."

Club fitness (explicit mentions) — 5 clubs

"Support has been sporadic, mostly group emails. Expected quarterly mentoring has not occurred."

"Feedback is crucial for refining this pilot program."

FFP program references — 3 clubs

"Some actions by members of the group we were part of but nothing else. No comments on the draft plan that was sent to the coach."

"We get contact when the FFP program requires something, not much at other times."

"We would welcome the opportunity to meet again in person with our Coach, as well as with other Clubs that participated in the FFP program."

Question 7 Summary

The strongest theme was feedback on the Fitness Coach role and value (10 clubs), with mixed experiences ranging from appreciation to uncertainty about purpose. Contact frequency and accessibility was equally important (10 clubs), with many clubs highlighting irregular or geographically limited interaction. Some noted the lack of cross-club learning opportunities. Overall, while individual coaches were praised, clubs wanted more structured, consistent engagement aligned with the FFP program's expectations.



Question 8 - Describe any specific areas where your club would like extra support.

- “Media, social media, website development and plan. This ideally would have our own local emphasis but would include links to district, international, further club options etc. Detailed examples of membership initiatives that have worked for other FFP clubs.”
- “It would have been useful to get our Coach's group together – with high attendance – maybe Zoom – to discuss issues we may all have been feeling or learning techniques and options/ideas from other clubs.”
- “When we implement our membership evening next year we would love to have the person that presented to the fit for purpose conference to talk to our club.”
- “Project ideas. Collaboration with other clubs - although we have just done a big joint fundraiser. Also, have only had one meeting within our RCG.”
- “If anyone has ideas to make corporate memberships work, we would love some advice. Also we have had no feedback back on our website and that would be good feedback.”
- “Fundraising ideas - there should be a better process where clubs can share fundraising ideas/events with other clubs. At district assembly I heard of some great ideas and am trialing the car boot sale idea.”
- “Members feedback is essential to be able to ascertain if and where we would like extra support. That has not been done.”
- “We would value extra support in developing collaborative, user-friendly websites that link clubs and make information easier to access and share.”

Question 8 Summary

The most common theme was membership support (10 clubs), particularly around recruitment events and sharing successful initiatives. Clubs also highlighted a desire for ideas exchange (fundraising, collaboration, corporate membership) and clearer extra support mechanisms, especially in digital tools and inter-club collaboration. A few responses repeated generic phrases without detail.





Fit for Purpose - Club Fitness Coach Feedback

I asked all of our Club Fitness Coaches to complete the survey, but at the time of writing I had not received all of their responses. I asked coaches to respond to seven multiple choice questions about each of their six clubs, then asked for comments.

Question 1

Did this club meet the initial criteria for a club that could benefit from the Fit for Purpose program?





(A good club which could transform into a great club. Strong enough to be able to implement meaningful change, but not so strong that they didn't need to participate.)

			
YES – 100%	Sort of.	Unsure.	No.
62%	27.6%	6.9%	3.4%

The majority of coaches (nearly two-thirds) firmly believed their club was a strong candidate. A further quarter thought the club only “sort of” fit the criteria, while a small minority expressed uncertainty or outright disagreement.




Question 2

Do you feel on balance that the whole club understood the expectations of the Fit for Purpose program?

			
YES, my understanding is the entire club was well aware of what was expected.	Most of the club understood what was expected.	Club leaders understood what was expected.	Only very few members fully understood what was expected.
32.7%	31%	15.5%	20.7%




Perceptions of understanding were mixed. While one-third of coaches felt the entire club was well aware of the program's expectations, another third judged that only “most” understood. Roughly 1 in 5 thought very few understood, and 15% said awareness was limited to leaders.

Question 3 - Was the delegate well prepared and fully engaged in the Club Transformation Workshop?

		
Yes, they were the perfect person for the job.	I think they meant well, but maybe were not the best choice.	They were not a great fit for the role.
69%	25.6%	5.2%





Most delegates were praised as being the “perfect person” for the role, though a quarter were seen as less than ideal, and a small number as outright poor choices.

Question 4 - Do you feel the Club Fitness Plan prepared by the delegate was:

		
Ambitious but workable.	Reasonable/Pragmatic.	Underwhelming.
33.3%	57.9%	8.8%





Over half the coaches judged the plans to be pragmatic, a third described them as ambitious but still workable, and less than 10% found them underwhelming.

Question 5 - Since the conclusion of the Club Transformation Workshop in October last year, how have you found the communication and responsiveness to your efforts to interact?

			
Brilliant! Couldn't ask for more	Appropriate.	Struggling to engage.	Have failed to respond to all efforts.
35.6%	39%	20.3%	5.1%





Coaches were split: while nearly 40% said clubs’ responsiveness was appropriate and over a third described it as brilliant, more than a quarter reported struggles or complete failure in communication.

Question 6 - How enthusiastically was the Club Fitness Plan implemented?

			
Amazing! The club has shown genuine transformation.	Reasonably well. The club has implemented some changes which are starting to bear fruit.	OK. It has been a struggle, but the will is there to push forward with the plan.	Poor. The club hasn't really made much progress.
12.5%	33.9%	33.9%	19.7%

Most clubs were seen as making some level of progress, either steadily or with effort. However, one in five clubs had made little progress, while just over 1 in 10 were described as showing genuine transformation.

Question 7 - How is the club currently travelling compared to their position prior to entering the Fit for Purpose program?

			
Rapid improvement.	Slow and steady improvement.	No change.	Things are getting worse.
10.5%	54.4%	29.8%	5.3%

A majority of clubs were seen as improving slowly but surely, though nearly a third were viewed as unchanged. Only a small proportion were reported as rapidly improving, while a minority appeared to be deteriorating.

Coaches' General Comments

Engagement and Communication

Positive: Some clubs maintained good two-way communication, with coaches describing delegates as responsive, proactive, and collaborative.

Negative: Many comments highlighted lack of responsiveness — delegates not returning emails or calls, or relying entirely on the coach to initiate contact.

Mixed: A few coaches reported initial enthusiasm that tapered off over time, leading to weaker ongoing engagement.

Insight: Communication is one of the biggest differentiators between successful and stagnant clubs.

Delegate Quality

Strong Delegates: Praised as motivated and influential leaders who could mobilise their clubs.

Less Effective Delegates: Described as abrasive, poorly chosen, or disengaged.

Observations: Sometimes two delegates shared responsibility with mixed results. Collaboration wasn't always smooth.

Insight: The choice of delegate was frequently identified as the make-or-break factor.

Implementation of the Club Fitness Plan

Positive: Some clubs actively implemented changes and saw results.

Challenges: Others treated the plan more as a document than a working guide.

Frustrations: Many clubs had good intentions but lacked momentum, often due to leadership or buy-in issues.

Insight: The best results came from clubs that integrated the plan into their culture.

Club Culture and Membership

Positive: Clubs with engaged members, supportive presidents, and strong community ties were praised.

Negative: Apathy among members or resistance to change slowed progress.

Trends: Clubs with more active members or strong executives moved further ahead.

Insight: Culture and membership strength often determined success.

Progress and Outcomes

Success Stories: A handful of clubs were described as genuinely transforming.

Slow Burners: Many clubs showed modest progress, usually 'slow and steady'.

Failures: A minority showed no change or worsening, often tied to disengaged delegates.

Insight: The program is delivering progress for most, but pace and scale vary widely.

Overall Comment Themes

Communication gaps were the most frequently cited shortcomings.

Delegate selection was pivotal: strong leaders accelerated progress, ineffective ones stalled it.

Implementation enthusiasm was uneven across clubs.

Cultural and membership factors either strengthened or undermined transformation.

Outcomes ranged from exemplary transformation to stagnation, with most falling in between.



Membership Outcomes

The table below lists all of the clubs participating in the Fit for Purpose program with their membership at the start of the Regionalisation Pilot on July 1, 2024 compared to August 31, 2025. I wish to clarify that membership numbers can never be the sole measure of the health of a club, or an organisation, but they are a strong indicator nonetheless. The primary mission of the Fit for Purpose program was to grow the membership of the participating clubs through cultural transformation, and in so doing present the rest of the zone, and indeed the Rotary world with a blueprint for growth. I am very excited that some clubs have experienced growth over this period, but these figures represent a nett loss of 53 members across the participating clubs, which is disappointing. Some of the losses in clubs are due to external factors, and some of the gains may well be due to factors unrelated to the Fit for Purpose program, and as has been reported elsewhere in this report, some clubs are thriving as a result of this program, but these figures suggest results have been mixed.

	1-Jul-24	31-Aug-25	Difference		1-Jul-24	31-Aug-25	Difference
Albury North	48	47	-1	Hervey Bay Sunrise	28	26	-2
Alfredton	23	22	-1	Hobart	51	47	-4
Ashmore	24	23	-1	Jerrabomberra	21	24	3
Auckland Korean	18	27	9	Jimboomba	18	16	-2
Bathurst	12	11	-1	Kariong-Somersby	27	25	-2
Bay of Islands	23	24	1	Karrinyup	38	37	-1
Beaudesert	25	20	-5	Kerikeri	32	33	1
Boronia	47	46	-1	Kincumber	14	16	2
Box Hill Central	36	33	-3	Lake Taupo	26	19	-7
Brighton North	42	36	-6	Lilydale	21	18	-3
Cairns Sunrise	37	35	-2	Lincoln	52	52	0
Camberwell	52	49	-3	Modbury Golden Grove	20	23	3
Campsie	12	11	-1	Morialta	34	35	1
Carlingford	37	34	-3	Morphett Vale	15	11	-4
Castle Hill	49	36	-13	Murray Bridge	37	38	1
Charlestown	27	24	-3	Norwest Sunrise	19	19	0
Chatswood Roseville	40	37	-3	Numurkah	29	46	17
Christchurch South	27	22	-5	Orange	28	28	0
Colac West	19	20	1	Padstow	27	26	-1
Como	34	34	0	Palm Beach	31	38	7
Corrimal	38	36	-2	Phillip Island and San Remo	41	48	7
Dapto	32	33	1	Port Vila	26	25	-1
Darwin South	11	11	0	Remuera	31	27	-4
Diamond Creek	29	24	-5	Rowville-Lysterfield	37	46	9
Dubbo South	39	41	2	Ryde	26	25	-1
Dubbo West	28	30	2	Scone	13	12	-1
Dunedin Central	27	25	-2	Seaford	21	23	2
eClub of Changemakers	18	23	5	South Wairarapa	44	46	2
Elizabeth	18	11	-7	Southern Mitchell	25	24	-1
Emerald & District	44	42	-2	Strathalbyn	25	24	-1
Feilding Oroua	38	33	-5	Sutherland	20	24	4
Gawler Light	31	32	1	Turrumurra	39	34	-5
Geelong West	26	30	4	Upper Blue Mountains Sunrise	22	22	0
Ginninderra	17	17	0	Upper Hutt	20	18	-2
Glenelg	28	30	2	Warragul	35	28	-7
Goolwa	18	23	5	Warrandyte Donvale	18	15	-3
Greater Bunbury	87	85	-2	Waverley	23	24	1
Greater Geraldton	27	23	-4	West Pennant Hills & Cherrybrook	41	35	-6
Griffith Avanti	24	19	-5	Whakatu	40	36	-4
Gungahlin	20	23	3	Whanganui	26	25	-1
Havelock North	23	26	3	Windsor	24	21	-3
Henderson	44	44	0				

Personal Reflections

Steering the Fit for Purpose program has undoubtedly been the most challenging project of my Rotary journey. Whilst I am enormously excited that a number of the participating clubs have made the most of this rare opportunity, I am deeply disappointed at the number which thus far have not. I came to this role with over 15 years' experience in the membership development sphere. That journey has been largely about leading horses to water, and we all know how the rest of that proverb goes. That's why I was so determined that this program would be different. That's why I went to so much effort to explain our expectations up front and acquire data from clubs which would allow us to select only those most likely to flourish. That's why we demanded club boards sign agreements to empower their delegates to produce a plan and implement it. Was I naïve, or just extremely hopeful?

There have thus far been some outstanding successes as a result of this program. I am 100% convinced that we could not have done a better job at the Club Transformation Workshop. The content was exceptional, and the atmosphere, morale and enthusiasm on display at that event was extraordinary. But I've felt that sense of excitement after many membership events before. So many times, I've seen light bulbs switch on in an audience and Rotarians leaving a venue full of inspiration. But inspiration without implementation cannot lead to innovation.

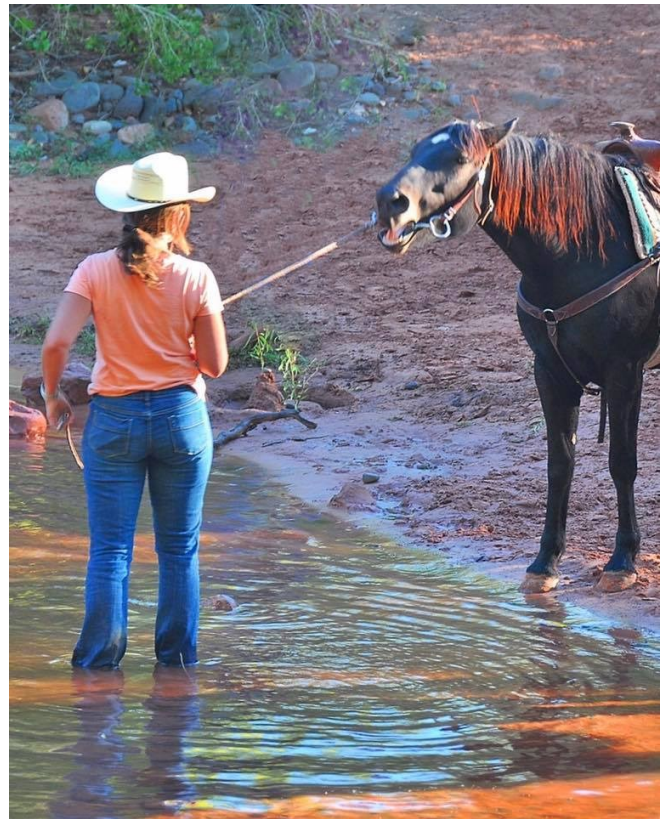
Whilst I do feel there is a generally positive feel to a lot of the feedback, despite numerous reminders we still only received 59 survey responses from 83 clubs. Whilst I acknowledge the possibility that technical difficulties may have had a role to play, I feel those absent responses tell another story.

I must wholeheartedly congratulate those clubs who have had the courage to implement their Club Fitness Plans and commence a process of cultural transformation. Change is not easy, but fortune favours the brave ones who step out of the comfort zone. I am cautious of portraying a glass-half-empty outlook, and I know the hard work of my team has seen some positive results, but I want to make the best attempt possible to reflect on why this specific program has thus far failed to deliver the results I was hoping for.

Key contributing factors which have compromised the success of the program.

- Some clubs simply **did not fully understand what this program was about or their obligations**. We were able to control the messages that were delivered to club leaders, but can never control how those messages are conveyed to the key stakeholders in those clubs and how they were interpreted.
- A number of clubs sent very **new and inexperienced members as their delegate**; members who didn't have a comprehensive understanding of their club's history, culture or challenges, or the influence to build consensus.
- Clubs **without a solid majority of members eager to adopt change** and help with the transition were always going to struggle in this program. Club boards signed an agreement to empower and support their delegates to write a plan to transform their club, and subsequently implement said plan, but many of those delegates returned to their clubs only to find the same boards rejecting all or most of their initiatives. We often learned that the delegate who attended the Club Transformation Workshop seemed to be the only member trying to drive change, and if they were absent for any reason all progress ground to a halt because no other members were committed to the program objectives.
- It would appear some clubs thought the Club Transformation Workshop at the start of the program was the program itself, i.e., **just another seminar to send someone to in order to get a few ideas**, rather than the introduction to a transformation process lasting 21 months.
- Some clubs were **not prepared to do their homework**, such as the tasks set for them in the lead up to the Club Transformation Workshop. For example, one task was to have all members to fill out a survey in order that our Club Fitness Coaches could get honest and frank feedback on club culture, strengths and weaknesses. I know of some clubs which just had a board or one or two members fill it out instead.

Note: The majority of clubs did respond to every request and did complete their task by the deadlines.





“What if we don’t change at all ...
and something magical just happens?”

- It appears **some clubs were looking for a magic wand.** They were hoping for one “silver bullet” idea which would turn their club into a volunteer magnet without any level of cultural transformation required and without anyone stepping out of the comfort zone

Unfortunately, many potentially transformative ideas were not even trialled.
- Some clubs reported a **lack of support and follow-up from their appointed Club Fitness Coach.** Given the number of clubs which did not respond to their surveys, it’s hard to know the extent to which coach selection may have impacted outcomes, and without receiving survey responses from all of my coaches, we may never know.

- On reflection, **some clubs simply didn’t fit our original criteria** for a suitable club. We certainly did not receive the number of applications we were hoping for, and as a result accepted some clubs into the program that in hindsight should have been rejected.

Closing remarks

In closing, I acknowledge that we are all volunteers with lives and commitments outside of Rotary. That is the case for leaders, delegates and members in participating clubs, for my organising team, our coaches and presenters, district leaders, Rotary Community Leaders, and everyone involved in driving the Zone 8 Regionalisation Pilot, myself included. Sometimes we can fail to recognise that.

The program still has almost nine months to run. I am hopeful some of our clubs which haven’t quite seen the results they were hoping for thus far can turn things around and witness some growth through transformation. At a recent meeting of our organising committee it was noted by one coach that the installation of a new president on July 1, 2025 reinvigorated the club and saw a subsequently reengagement with the program objectives.

The team also agreed to a review of club and coach alignment to ensure the clubs which have shown the greatest engagement with and commitment to the program have the greatest access to support.

Below is a summary of the expenses and revenue for the Fit for Purpose program’s Club Transformation Workshop, and on the following page is an executive summary of this report prepared by ChatGPT.

Thank you to everyone involved for your **Service Above Self.**

Mark Huddleston.

Expenses	AU\$
Office Supplies	133.86
Professional Fees	1,350.00
Realised Currency Gains	82.12
Venue rental	22,145.11
Volunteer Accommodation	29,159.09
Volunteer Airfare and fees	11,468.22
Volunteer Auto/Taxis/Other Transport	422.84
Volunteer Meals	23.27
Volunteer Travel Other	139.09
Delegate Travel Subsidy Scheme	14043.73
Total Expenses	78,967.33
Revenue	
Income from Club Registrations and Charges	43,320.95
Contribution from Regionalisation Pilot Membership Portfolio Budget	35,646.38
	78,967.33

Executive Summary: Lessons and Strategic Guidance from the Fit for Purpose Half Time Report

This executive summary distills key insights and forward guidance from the Fit for Purpose Program Half Time Report, focused on leadership, culture, and transformation strategy.

Lessons for Leaders

1. Change Requires Will, Not Just Knowledge

Awareness alone does not create transformation. Clubs with genuine commitment, strong leadership buy-in, and readiness to act achieved real progress. Those without remained stagnant. Commitment must extend from leadership through to every member.

2. Leadership Continuity and Delegate Quality are Non-Negotiable

Delegates who were credible, empowered, and persistent drove successful outcomes. In contrast, inexperienced or unaligned delegates failed to influence their clubs. Transformation requires trusted internal champions with sustained influence.

3. Culture Eats Strategy and Process for Breakfast

Formal plans and documents are insufficient. Clubs that embedded transformation goals into their cultural practices and day-to-day habits saw lasting results. Transformation must become cultural, not procedural.

4. Engagement and Communication are the Key Differentiators

The strongest differentiator between thriving and stagnant clubs was communication. Open, two-way engagement with members and coaches sustained alignment and momentum. Lack of communication quickly led to disengagement.

5. Measurement Without Mindset Misses the Point

Membership numbers are important but lag behind cultural health. True progress appeared as better morale, participation, and innovation before numerical growth followed. Leaders should track cultural indicators alongside membership metrics.

Strategic Guidance for Future Cultural Transformation

1. Select for Readiness, Not Representation

Target participants who demonstrate willingness and capacity for transformation rather than focusing on geographical or structural representation. Motivation drives results.

2. Build Leadership Pipelines and Succession Plans

Develop leadership continuity through multi-level training and mentoring to ensure transformation momentum extends beyond single terms or roles.

3. Mandate Accountability and Reinforcement

Implement structured reporting, peer accountability, and milestone reviews. Agreements must be actively monitored and supported to ensure sustained progress.

4. Invest in Coaching Quality and Consistency

Prioritise alignment between coaches and engaged participants. Ensure regular, proactive communication and structured mentoring touchpoints.

5. Shift Focus from Events to Embedded Habits

Workshops create enthusiasm but not lasting change. Leaders must translate learning into routine practices, behaviours, and governance structures.

6. Celebrate and Share Wins Publicly

Recognise and showcase successful transformations as examples to inspire others, reinforcing a growth-oriented culture.

Executive Takeaway

Transformation succeeds when culture, leadership, and accountability align. The Fit for Purpose experience demonstrates that no process or system can substitute for willpower, engagement, and communication. Leaders must focus on building the cultural muscle: habits, expectations, and shared ownership that sustain transformation over time.