



Redistricting Survey Results and Actions

April 2017

Background

As noted in our report on “The New Rotary” sent to all clubs in December, the aim is to have a reasonably equivalent number of Rotarians (and to a lesser extent clubs) in each district. As the number of Rotarians world-wide is not increasing the Board of RI is not prepared to increase the number of Districts, but to “redistrict” existing ones. That is, to have smaller districts merge to form fewer larger districts.

Over a number of years, the RI Board has considered 1,100 to be the absolute lowest number of Rotarians that should be in a district for some form of equity. In Australia (and in North America and Europe) we have seen the numbers of Rotarians decline over several years, while the Rotarian membership in Asia, Africa and South America has been increasing.

I, as DG, DGE George, and DGN John attended the special districting meeting of NSW districts on 15 December 2016. The outcome was that we, and the D9700 board agreed to conduct a poll/survey of District members regarding their attitude to a future change of districts. This Report gives the results of the Survey and provides an update on the process and actions taken since.

Results

I have summarised the results as follows:

| Topic/Question | Summary of responses |
|--|--|
| Response coverage | <p>Overall, we had 22 Clubs respond, being 55% of members</p> <p>The representation across the District was reasonably well spread; the number of Clubs in each Group responding as a percentage of all Clubs, shows that Groups 2 and 4 were marginally over represented in the responses, while the Group least represented on the per cent base was Group 3 (they were 9.1% of the responses, but made up 18% of the clubs).</p> <p>All responding Clubs answered all questions.</p> |
| How important to your Club is the future boundary of the District? | <p>Just under half (45%) responded Extremely important and only 5% said not important. With a further 14% rating the importance highly, this gives a 59% rating for importance. The balance of the respondents (41%) didn't give that much importance to the boundary issue.</p> |
| Preference for how our current district is treated in the new structure | <p>There was an overwhelming 1st preference vote (55%) was to keep the District as one. This suggests just over half, however of all the 1st preferences for the different options, it is 3 times preferred to the next 1st preference.</p> <p>Given that the 1st preferences of the other three options would be distributed into second preferences it is fair to look at the 1st and 2nd preference votes and compare the results. In this case Clubs staying as part of the one District in the restructure remains the top preference (39%), however the next preference would be to split the district (30%). Interesting in 31% didn't have a preference or it doesn't matter. This could be interpreted that whatever the outcome there will be one third of Clubs disappointed!</p> |

| Topic/Question | Summary of responses |
|--|---|
| Preference for Options | Using the same process as above and jumping straight to the relative positions of the 1 st and 2 nd preferences, the results for each preference are, and ranked are: 41% - Join with D9710 18% - The D9700 clubs north of say Young join with D9670, and the Clubs south of, and including Young, join with D9710 16% - Join with both D9670 and D9710 14% - None of the above 11% - Join with D9670 |
| Club Comments/ Questions | Responses to the questions/comments is at the end of this report (names of clubs have been omitted for privacy reasons, although some issues were raised by a number of Clubs). |
| Differences between "North" and "South" Clubs | This assessment was to see if there was a difference between the Northern Groups of Clubs – 1, 2, 6 and the Southern Groups 3, 4, 5. There was no bias in either group for or against splitting the district as their second preference. There are individual clubs which feel strongly about splitting to the north (eg Parkes is not in favour) and others that don't really care. |

Actions to date

1 D9700 Board

These results were reported the D9700 Board in February, which resolved:

- 1 That the District Board hold the following position regarding redistricting:
 - a That, as a first preference, the Board endeavour to have the existing District as a whole join with other Districts
 - b That, the preference for joining another district would be, in the first instance, with D9710
 - c That, if b above is not achieved, the District be broken up.
- 2 That the DG, DGE and DGN inform RI Director Noel Travaskis of the D9700 position
- 4 That a report be brought back to the Board once there has been discussion with the other Districts in NSW.

2 College of Governors

During the District Conference, we held the traditional College of Governors assembly – all Past District Governors (PDGs) and the current Governor, Governor-elect and Governor-nominee – and among other things I sought their views and collective knowledge to help us prepare a solid case based on the results above. We were also fortunate to have PDG Neville Parsons (attending as the RI President John Germ's representative for the Conference), who was able to provide additional support and perspective.

3 Discussions with D9710

It was agreed that the proposition we put needed to be a written submission, stating our case, and have the support of the other District, 9710, with whom we were seeking to join to form a new District. We (George, John and me) spoke with our counterparts in 9710 and sought their comment on our submission, some points were adjusted, and we ended with an agreed position that D9700 and D9710 would join to create a new and stronger District of Rotary International.

4 Meeting of Governors (and DGEs and DGNs)

On Monday 3 April 2017, the same representatives who met in December 2016, met again, and discussed the submission we presented. The result is that RI Director Noel Trevaskis will present this to the RI Redistricting Committee as one of a number of proposals to reduce the District number in Australia. We expect to hear something in the next month or so.

What is likely to Happen if the decision is for D9700 and D9710 to join?

In the submission, we identified that, over the next few years, both districts appoint a joint Transition Project Team to prepare the ground for:

- a timetable to map out the transition to the new district
- a set of tasks to be completed to ensure the transition is effective
- a new administrative structure to support the new district
- agreed protocols for transfer of assets and liabilities
- the winding up of the existing district organisations, and
- the preparation of the new district's constitution and bylaws
- and many others matters that will emerge!

Your Board is keen to ensure that our Rotarians and Rotary Clubs get the best outcome possible.



Michael Milston
District Governor

Attached – Responses to your Questions/Comments

| Item | Comment | Response |
|------|--|---|
| 1 | <p>I think the District is right as it is. But it would be better for the southern clubs to go with Canberra and the South Coast, and the northern clubs to go north.</p> <p>I fear for the chances of getting future District Governors when the district is too big.</p> <p>I fear Executive training will suffer if the venue means one or two overnight stays?</p> <p>Main concerns - travel distances to be covered, transport connections, mainly as these impact on RYLA, Youth Exchange...</p> | <p>It is true that the new District will be bigger, and it is also true that getting Rotarians to consider taking on District roles can be a real challenge, even now with our current District boundaries.</p> <p>These challenges will require the new District to consider ways to build that communication, both in person and electronically.</p> <p>One of the reasons backing up the joining with D9710 was that a number of youth programs are already jointly developed with D9710. It is true of course that other programs will require attention to ensure solid cross-district presentation.</p> |
| 2 | Our members have no appetite for merge with the Northern District or splitting our District. | This comment is reflected in the stance taken and so far achieved. |
| 3 | <p>If 9700 were to be split, it would be good to know the proposed change.</p> <p>Any thought that we move to another district that includes Albury and neighbour Holbrook?</p> <p>Distance is a factor in our current and proposed districts.</p> <p>Suggestion to consider having EAST/WESTERN split of district, as well as north/south.</p> | <p>No split being considered, unless RI refuses our submission.</p> <p>The placement of Albury and Holbrook in a NSW-Victorian based district is not part of our submission. However, we have requested that RI undertake a solid review of the best District layout for Australia for the next 25-40 years. This might be undertaken within the next 10 years.</p> |
| 4 | Please leave District as a country-based unit! | The proposed merger of D9700 and D9710 is still predominantly 'country'. |
| 5 | Option 4 -Those clubs along the border of the split be given the option to decide which district they join based on their communities of interest | During this redistricting, there is a possibility for Clubs to consider moving into another district (however, all clubs within a town/city would need to agree) and the move would need to be supported by the district into which club(s) which move. |
| 6 | <p>Some club members (past DG) want to maintain status quo.</p> <p>Most understand that this is not a likely outcome.</p> <p>Does it matter - is what the District does critical to continued operation of Clubs?</p> | The survey results do recognise that a number of clubs have little daily connection to the District. Notwithstanding this, the District holds an important role to support and empower Clubs to operate effectively, helps fund projects and build local capacity, and provide public image support. |
| 7 | Not really. Without knowing what the proposals are across the board, i.e. the proposals affecting other districts, it is difficult to be more decisive in responding. | All we know is that RI wishes to see the reduction of district numbers over the next 3 years. D9700 and D9550 (North Qld and NT) have a Rotarian base of under 1100, and there are a few others where the trend is down and they could be below 1100 in a year or two. Consider the comment in 3 above regarding the longer term. |
| 8 | This matter has been discussed at District level for some time. It's time to get on with it so we can move ahead. | This is happening |
| 9 | Redivide the entire state with new boundaries - larger districts. | See response 3 above |
| 10 | A large sustainable District is required, so that we are not going through this exercise again in our lifetime. Splitting | This is happening. The new District (9700+9710) will have a solid base of 85+ Clubs and 2200+ Rotarians |

| Item | Comment | Response |
|------|---|---|
| | the District is not an option, rather we would like to see us move as a whole to the south. | |
| 11 | <p>State wide zones? link to Current political boundaries ie States sized districts Will ADG still function at same level ? 6 clubs per ADG? Some selections above seem to overlap in qns 3 and 4 Not many club members function above club level so not affected by change</p> | <p>State-wide Districts should be part of the mix in 3 above Function of the Assistant Governor roles in the District would be the same, and the number of clubs may be reviewed as part of the transition</p> |
| 12 | Use of technology to reduce Governor's expenses which may allow structure to stay the same. | Should be considered as part of the transition activities. |
| 13 | <p>Make Districts & RI more financially viable with existing numbers. ie remove cost from overheads, eg DGs appointed for 2-3 years, no trips to US, use technology to communicate, national insurance etc. A simple business focus restructure of RI & Districts</p> | <p>All valid points; however, the likelihood is that RI will keep the annual Governorship (although some of us would like to see the new structure to provide the DG, DGE and DGN with more equal roles as representatives of RI across the District) and the value of the US training is to give the incoming governor a real feel of the internationality of RI, and a number of district use the event to network and seek partners for their local projects. We currently have national insurance and when we pay our District dues these include the insurance levy per Rotarian. The idea of a restructure is covered in 3 above.</p> |
| 14 | <p>We feel it is important that RI appreciates the distance covered by these three Districts. Even by joining all or part of the Districts, there are 100s of km between boundaries. If this change is to happen and RI are the decision makers, someone should physically visit the Districts in question.</p> | <p>The issue of distance is important as both a financial and time cost. And while there are much greater distances other Districts have, in some cases they have the benefit of air travel, but not all. It will be necessary for the new District to consider different forms of communication as in response 1 above</p> |
| 15 | <p>Along with selecting the preference for D9700 as a whole to join with D9710 we would like to suggest that the new District be given a new number so that all clubs in the new District can identify with the change. To ensure that the Rotarians in D9700 are not swallowed up in the merger, we suggest that the new District adopted a new Constitution and By-Laws so that it is a fresh start for everyone.</p> | <p>New Districts are always given a new number, and the new District would need to be incorporated and will have its own Constitution and Bylaws, which will use the two existing documents as strong guides – no point reinventing the process.</p> |

| Item | Comment | Response |
|------|--|---|
| 16 | <p>Where did the "magic number" of 1100 members come from.</p> <p>Has an economic rationalisation been done so that justification of new boundaries can be proven to be beneficial financially and club wise.</p> <p>I was told that at the last boundary change Gundagai, was a very strong club, is now no longer in existence.</p> <p>If the districts are increased in size, fellowships between clubs will be decreased due to distance.</p> <p>Does RI understand the sparseness of our district with regards to population?</p> | <p>The "magic number" is considered the lower limit for future District effectiveness. The nature of the algorithm is unknown, however, if you were to divide the total number of Rotarians (1.2 million) by the number of District (535) the average size of a district would be around 2,200, so if the District falls below half that number (hence the 1,100) and the trend show a gradual decline, the sustainability of the District is a source of concern, and hence some type of remedial action.</p> <p>Future fellowship between clubs will only be maintained if Rotarians in these clubs continue to make the effort, and forging new relationships is also possible.</p> <p>We don't know if the 'sparseness' of our population is known to RI in the USA, however, they have an Office in Parramatta and would be aware of all the localities.</p> |
| 17 | <p>None; as our members feel that the decision is already made. Overall they would prefer to stay as we are. On the whole they do not believe that it makes a great deal of difference for our club's future.</p> | <p>The 'decision' that has already been made is that there be a consolidation of Districts in Australia. We questioned the 'decision-been-made' issue around the outcome of the D9700 change and were informed that there was no decision; the outcome of the 3 April meeting is evidence that, at least so far, there was no preconceived outcome/decision.</p> |