



## **Busting the Myths about Rotary**

It is common for many people that don't always fully understand what we do and who we are in Rotary. There are a number of myths about Rotary that we need to debunk. So we thought we'd share with you some answers to the TOP 10 myths we bump into out there in the community.

### **Myth 1 – Rotary is for men only**

Rotary International began in 1905, and for the first 84 years of its existence, it is true that women were not admitted into membership. But as the prevalence of female business leaders began to grow, and in response to a ground swell of demand for female admission, Rotary changed its legislation in 1989 to admit women. Today women represent approximately 17% of Rotary membership in Australia, yet leadership positions filled by women are well above this percentage. Women are welcome in Rotary, and we are desperately keen to increase our female membership.

### **Myth 2 – Rotary is for old people**

Some believe that one's age is just a number, and it is one's attitude that is important. So I guess that depends on at which age you believe "old" cuts in, but you can join Rotary at 18 or 118!. Either way, Rotary welcomes "younger" members with open arms. We are depending on them to keep our organisation vibrant.

### **Myth 3 – You have to attend every week**

Rotary International has removed this requirement. We prefer that you get involved in some capacity that fits your bandwidth and lifestyle. In addition to regular club meetings, Rotarians have other ways to become involved, such as fundraising activities, community service projects, leadership training events and social activities. We prefer to focus on being a fun humanitarian group.

### **Myth 4 – Rotary is only for Doctors, Lawyers and CEOs**

Rotary's membership base is a broad cross section of people from diverse backgrounds, cultures and professions. Our diversity is our strongest asset. Teachers, bankers, accountants, retailers, students, plumbers, electricians, health care workers, farmers... you name it, they are all represented in Rotary. Work from home? Just starting out in business? Moving up through the ranks? Made it to the top? Retired? There is a role for you in Rotary.

### **Myth 5 – Membership is by invitation only**

Anyone can visit and join a Rotary club. We accept members from all walks of life, and have no cultural or religious barriers or expectations. Meetings are open and everyone is welcome.

### **Myth 6 – Rotary is a religious organization or a secret society**

Rotary is non-religious and non-political. We have no secret handshake, no secret meetings and no secret rituals. It is an open organization of men and women who simply believe in helping others.

### **Myth 7 – All Rotarians do is cook barbecues**

Yes, we cook the world's best sausages but soon you'll realise that's not the only thing we do. Rotary clubs adopt many initiatives for raising funds to support their projects. Barbecues are a part of life in Australia, and it's true that they are one of the more visible methods by which Rotary clubs raise their funds, but behind the scenes there are many less obvious ways that hard working Rotarians raise their funds and contribute to the community.

### **Myth 8 – You've seen one Rotary club, you've seen them all**

There are over 34,000 Rotary clubs in the world (over 1,100 in Australia) and no two are the same. They are all unique, with unique members, unique projects, and unique culture. Each has its own board of directors who administer the club autonomously. One of them is just right for you!

### **Myth 9 – You cannot discuss your business or profession in Rotary**

The first ever Rotary meeting, 1905 in Chicago, was initiated to serve the professional and social interests of its members. But as Rotary grew, members began pooling their resources and contributing their talents to help serve communities in need. Rotary is now the world's premier humanitarian service organisation, but its roots are firmly embedded in business networking.

### **Myth 10 – Rotary is an “old fashioned” organization, with boring and ritualistic meetings**

As a century old organization, it's reasonable to expect that there are some long observed traditions in some clubs. But the very highest levels of Rotary leadership, both at global and local level, are encouraging clubs to innovate and become more progressive in the way they do things. Every club is different. Some are more progressive, and some have a more traditional culture. But let there be no doubt, Rotary is changing for the better. Give Rotary a go TODAY!

**We think these myths have been totally busted! Why don't you try us and join an organization that's been going 44years. Contact our President Elect at [potomacrotaryprez22@gmail.com](mailto:potomacrotaryprez22@gmail.com).**