

FAQs – RI Board Outcomes January 2026

Overview

- On 16 January 2026, the Regional Council and Steering Group of Rotary South Pacific put forward four requests to Rotary International’s (RI) Board related to the future of the Zone 8 Regionalisation Pilot.
- The requests were to:
 1. agree to extend the Zone 8 Regionalization pilot through 2027-28;
 2. direct the districts in Zone 8 to pause elections for District Governor 2028-29 to allow Director Scott to convene a working group that will propose new districts starting 1 July 2028;
 3. by a three-quarters vote, approve US\$149,941 from RI Reserves to fund dedicated pilot staffing in Australia for 2026-27;
 4. agree to reallocate a portion of the district funding in fiscal year 2026-27 to the Zone 8 Regional Council in the amount of US\$176,823.
- The Board approved all four items.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q: Why has the pilot been extended?

A: The request to extend the pilot followed General Secretary John Hewko’s advocacy and strong support for the Regionalisation Pilot and the Rotary South Pacific Conference in 2025. In short, to fully achieve the Pilot’s aims to increase membership, enhance Rotary’s brand and create a lasting impact in our region, we need more time to achieve these outcomes, as well as sufficient time to undertake a comprehensive evaluation of the pilot.

Q: Why did this decision go to the Board, instead of asking Rotary Clubs to vote to extend the pilot?

A: The Council on Legislation authorized the RI Board to conduct the two regionalisation pilots, without an end date noted. The RI Board is authorized to extend the pilot, under the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding between RI, the Steering Group and the Regional Council. The original club vote was important to ensure support for the pilot to begin, and future club feedback will be important to evaluate the success of the various aspects of the pilot and to determine the future structure of our region.

Q: Why does our Zone need to be redistricted?

A: Unfortunately, membership has declined over the past 10+ years, and Zone 8 currently has several districts under the 1,100 member minimum for a district. Rather than being redistricted by Rotary International, the leadership in the zone considered a more collegiate approach to take into account legal jurisdictions, geography and culture. A redistricting working group is being established to consult and develop a pathway to be submitted to the RI Board later this Rotary year.

The long-term vision for our Zone was to review the best organisational structure needed for the ongoing success of Rotary in our region.

Q: Why is the RI District Funding being reallocated to Regional Council?

There has been reallocation of funding for the last two years to support the transfer of some of functions and workload—from districts to the Regional Council. The Regionalisation Pilot business case has always included funding from reallocation of RI Governor funding.

Q: How is the RI District Funding reallocation decided?

A: Each year, each district governor-elect submits a funding estimate. RI has considered the needs of each district and reallocated funding based on needs, with no district receiving less than 50% of its possible funds.

Q: Why does the Pilot need staffing?

A: The Regionalisation Pilot is led by volunteers and supported by Rotary International staff. Two dedicated staff in the Sydney office have been instrumental in supporting many volunteers to ensure coordinate the Regionalisation Pilot and its communications.

How does the redistricting effort affect my District?

A: The specific impact on each district is not yet known – some districts may not be impacted, some will receive new clubs, and some districts will be merged. The Rotary South Pacific leadership team aims to provide appropriate transitional support and updates to navigate the changes. The Chair of the Redistricting Working Group, Jennifer Scott, will provide an update on timelines and working group composition to the District Governors.

Q: How does the redistricting effort affect my Rotary/Rotaract Club?

A: Your club will not immediately be impacted and can continue operations as normal. Clubs within the new redistricting boundaries, which are yet to be determined, will receive updates to help them understand the changes closer to the time when it occurs.

Q. Who is part of the Redistricting Working Group?

A. The Redistricting Working Group is chaired by RI Director Jennifer Scott. It will include a representative from the Regional Council, the Pilot Steering Committee, from each class of Governors and key staff.

Q. Why is there a need to pause governor elections for the 2028-29 Rotary year?

A. The new district structure is to take effect on 1 July 2028. As there will likely be a reduction in the number of districts in the zone, it would be unfair to select district governors for districts that may no longer exist, or may be a different size and geographic makeup that we have today. The Redistricting Working Group understands that governors will need to be selected as soon as possible in order to attend the South Pacific Conference in Melbourne in October 2026.