



## Feasibility of Restarting Youth Exchange in Rotary District 9820

With the lifting of covid restrictions, Rotary International and local authorities have approved the restart of the Youth Exchange! We need your help to determine how we can restart the program in our district.

We want to gauge the feeling of Clubs and members about Youth Exchange – please refer to the information in this document and then complete the [Questionnaire](#) by following this link <https://forms.office.com/r/ag9R86RKdK>. This questionnaire is for both individual club members wanting to be involved, and Club Officers on behalf of their club. Even if your club is not interested in Youth Exchange, it would be greatly appreciated if you could still please complete the questionnaire. This questionnaire will close on 14 October 2022.

## Do you think we should resume?

If we do, Youth Exchange needs four things to make it work:

*(Click the links for further information below)*

1. [Secondary school students \(15-17 years old\) wanting to go on exchange](#) *(This is the easy part!)*
2. [Clubs willing to sponsor \(outbound students\) and host \(inbound students\)](#)
3. [Families willing to host students](#)
4. [A District Youth Exchange Committee of 10-12 people with a range of skills](#)

**Students:** The Rotary Youth Exchange Australia website <https://ryea.org.au/> is the avenue for applications by student – and they come in regularly. Traditionally, Youth Exchange is long term (12 months), and some districts have run Short Term Exchange Programs (STEP) usually up to 12 weeks, while some others have had 6 week ‘twin’ exchanges with New Zealand districts.

**Clubs:** Are you and your club interested in being a part of Youth Exchange? Will you Sponsor an Outbound student and Host and Inbound student? And... No, we’re not too old to host – they can be our host-grandchild not our host-child.

If we restart, the earliest we anticipate resumption of exchanges is July 2023.

**Host Families:** Often the best host families are club members – because they connect the student with the club, but it doesn’t have to be so. Other families can be host families – especially ones whose teens have undertaken exchange and are keen to continue their involvement. We need a minimum of 3 families per Inbound student.

**Youth Exchange Committee:** The committee needs a minimum of 10 members: Chair, Deputy Chair, Immediate Past Chair, Secretary, Trainer, Inbound and Outbound Coordinators, Protection, Camps/Catering, Apparel/Merchandise, Archives/History and Rebound (Alumni). Traditionally, the District Treasurer Elect is Treasurer. While Youth Exchange has been in hiatus, our Youth Exchange Committee has been gradually reduced to just one person – Chair Barry Rogers and if the feeling from clubs is positive, we are keen to re-establish the committee. Barry will continue to support the new committee as it re-establishes, becoming the “Immediate Past Chair” and working with the new committee chair.



*What we need:*

## 1. Outbound Students

Many young people are very interested in a Youth Exchange year and make their Expression of Interest via Rotary Youth Exchange Australia's website [www.ryea.org.au](http://www.ryea.org.au)

Each applicant, together with their parents meets informally with club members (Youth Director, President, and President Elect). Club members assess the young person's suitability to undertake exchange and provide this information to the District 9820 Youth Exchange Committee.

Outbound Students are sponsored by a Rotary Club. The clubs appoint a counsellor who maintains independent contact with the student during their preparation time and whilst away. They support the student by attending parts of the training weekends, helps parents with planning, and aids the young person as they collate all documents etc. required and build their skills towards their exchange.

Clubs provide some financial support to outbound students – paying for student blazers and hoodies, and for meals when the students and their parents attend a club meeting to speak about their preparations for their upcoming adventure. Sometimes, a student and their family may find the cost of exchange or tours whilst away to be a difficult, and clubs have in the past supported the student financially.

Assuming this process results in Youth Exchange restarting, the District Youth webpage <https://www.youth.rotary9820.org.au/exchange> will be updated to with information for students, parents, and clubs.

What we need:

## 2. Support from Clubs

Youth Exchange is initiated at club level – your club agrees to sponsor (to support an outbound student) and to host (to care for an inbound, to include and make them a part of the club). Clubs appoint a Youth Exchange Counsellor who is the student’s advocate, mentor, supporter, and helper. The counsellor and the club’s Youth Director and Protection Officer liaise with the District Youth Exchange Committee.

Youth Exchange, like many other youth programs is a wonderful way for Rotary clubs to recruit new members. The students’ parents, family friends, and host parents can be an excellent avenue to attract new club members. Youth Exchange students are known as Rebounds. They’re young people who have enjoyed their year away and are very connected with Rotary. Often Rebounds are granted ‘honorary’ membership by many clubs which seek to maintain the engagement of this group and to foster membership.

The club counsellor leads the process of identifying a school for inbound students, helps open an Australian bank account, arranges for a telephone SIM, and meets the student for a hot chocolate every one to two weeks. To support the student as they settle into a new culture and family.

Inbound students spend the first week with the Counsellor and their family before moving on to the first host family.

Inbound Students receive a minimum living allowance equal to USD\$120 per month. Students are responsible for their own toiletries, clothing, and phone service charges (most bring their own phone and will only require a SIM and activation). Generally, students have financial support from their parents.

District 9820 has a very high commitment to Child Safety. All members of clubs that are sponsoring or hosting students should hold a current Working With Children Check (WWCC) and complete relevant Rotary forms. Club members who work with the student need a current WWCC and submit the *District 9820 Youth Volunteer Information and Declaration Form* (Form 3).

A further description of Youth Exchange is available at the District’s Youth webpage <https://www.youth.rotary9820.org.au/exchange>.

*What we need:*

### 3. Host Families for Inbound Students

Students will have 3-4 host families during their year in Australia. The student is treated as a part of the family. Families and club members include students in regular activities such as trips, holidays, movie outings, etc. Trips outside the District (and interstate) require approval from the District Youth Exchange Chair. Students can be expected to pay for an activity of their own choice (a specific tour or helicopter flight etc).

All family members aged 18 and over need to have a current Working With Children Check and the *District 9820 Youth Volunteer Information and Declaration Form* (Form 3).

In our clubs, there are several common misconceptions:

- We are too old to host a student – ‘our kids have left home’
- It is too expensive
- Young people of today are different to when my kids were young, I don’t know what to do with them

These are not the case. Host families generally gain significantly from hosting a young person. Host families greatly enjoy making new friendships, a chance to introduce and guide the young person as they settle into Australian culture and connecting with the overseas families of the young person.

What we need:

## 4. District Youth Exchange Program Committee

The District Governor has established a Youth Exchange Program committee and appoints members to it based on the advice of the committee chair and the Youth Programs Chair. The committee members work together to plan the Inbound and Outbound programs and to support and debrief Rebound students post their exchange. Committee members attend selection days, training camps and other activities.

Youth Exchange is licensed by the Victorian Regulation and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) and is subject to rigid conditions and regular audits. The VRQA deals with Rotary Youth Exchange Victoria (RYEV), a committee established by the 5 Victorian Rotary Districts. RYEV has a website which holds most documents used in Youth Exchange <https://rotaryyouthexchangevictoria.org/>. Youth Exchange must comply with relevant Victorian Child Safe Standards.

The committee needs a minimum of 10 members, we are seeking expressions of interest for the following roles:

### *Training Leader*

- For outbound students: attends selection interviews, training camps, and online sessions
- For inbound students: attends debrief sessions

### *Outbound Student Coordinator*

- Assists students to nominate preferred countries and selecting the international Rotary Districts
- Continues to be a major support of the student once they are in-country by communicating regularly, and ensuring the monthly report is received from students and sponsor club

### *Inbound Student Coordinator*

- Maintains regular contact with the students, the hosting club and District personnel
- Meets and farewells students (with other members of the committee) at the airport

### *Protection and Database Administrator*

- Verifies WWCCs and Form 3s are current for all involved (from DG and leadership, YEP Committee, club members and host family members)
- Manages input of data in the historical database
- Assists with planning of activities by advising Child Safe Standards requirements

### *Camps and Catering Coordinator*

- Identifies potential venues, makes arrangements for accommodation, and catering needs etc.

### *Rebound Student Coordinator*

- Ensures ongoing connection between this important group of young people – who are the potential standard bearers for the future of Rotary
- Liaises with sponsor clubs and with clubs where the student lives post their school education
- Assists training events by getting rebound students to attend and share their experience

### *Apparel/Merchandising*

- Arranges fittings and supply of blazers, hoodies, nametags, business cards and other common items

### *Archives/History*

- Ensures compliance with privacy requirements regarding student and host family data
- Works with the Youth Exchange database admin to ensure current and relevant data is available
- Works with District Youth Programs Chair and Alumni Chair to promote other Rotary Youth Programs

### *Rebound (Alumni)*

- Supports young people after they return from exchange, assisting them to adapt to a more normal life (many Youth Exchange outbounds find themselves to be special – exotic in their new country/club/family and school, and returning home can be a shock)

## The Work of the Youth Exchange Committee

### *Inbound Selection, Hosting and Support*

Overseas Districts that we have reciprocal exchange agreements with nominate students. Inbound students' applications are reviewed by the committee and matched with a club which has indicated it wishes to host. (Clubs regularly host and sponsor simultaneously).

### *Outbound selection, training, and preparation*

The committee interviews, observes the student and their family, and speaks with the sponsor club before selecting outbound students.

The committee provides a very comprehensive suite of training (including language acquisition) to students.

All students (Inbound, Outbound and, where possible Rebounds) attend a minimum of 3 overnight camps each year.

### *Care and Support for students*

The committee supports students while they are on Exchange and undertakes debrief sessions with Rebound students.

The Committee supports and organises social activities for students, providing an opportunity for young people to get together and share their experiences with others who understand the pressures and highlights of their time in Australia.

Safari – an optional tour of Central Australia and the east coast (Gold Coast etc) is arranged in conjunction with other districts, and is often one of the biggest highlights of the students' year in Australia.

## Training for all involved

The Rotary International website has further information under the 'Learning and Reference' section <https://my.rotary.org/en/learning-reference/learn-role/district-committees>.

### Youth Exchange

Through Rotary Youth Exchange, Rotary empowers young people to develop leadership skills while promoting global understanding and peace. Your committee promotes youth exchanges by:

- Coordinating inbound and outbound youth exchange activities in your district.
- Communicating regularly with Rotary, your district governor, and clubs sponsoring exchange students.
- Protecting youth participants from physical, sexual, and emotional abuse by making sure exchanges operate in accordance with Rotary requirements and local laws.

Learn more in the [Youth Exchange Handbook](#) and the [Rotary Youth Protection Guide](#).

Go to the Learning Centre to take the [Protecting Youth Program Participants](#) course (My Rotary login required).

This course should be taken by all members of the committee.

## Next Steps

- Discuss restarting Youth Exchange with your Club President, Club Youth Director and Club Members
- Complete the questionnaire to assist District in restarting Youth Exchange – please complete this by Friday 14 October 2022
- Check the Rotary District 9820 Youth webpage <https://www.youth.rotary9820.org.au/exchange>
- If you have any questions, please contact:
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