



# Draft Strategic Plan

## 2025-2028



## Introduction

Rotary Australia World Community Service Ltd. (RAWCS) is a registered charity established to facilitate Australian Rotarians, Rotary Districts, and Rotary Clubs in assisting disadvantaged communities and individuals through humanitarian aid projects.

We offer essential back-end systems and project services, including project accounting, donations and fundraising support, regulatory compliance, volunteer assistance, and marketing.

Our work encompasses:

- **Project Support:** Enabling volunteer work teams and funding for Rotary projects on local, national, and international scales.
- **Rotarians Against Malaria:** Providing supplies, equipment, and volunteers to aid in the global elimination of malaria by 2030.
- **RARE:** Collecting and transporting surplus goods from Australia to destinations where they are urgently needed.
- **Communications:** Actively showcasing Rotary's impactful actions to the public, corporate sector, philanthropists, and governments while connecting Rotarians and Clubs with RAWCS initiatives.

RAWCS also administers three Tax Deductible funds:

1. **Rotary Australia Overseas Aid Fund:** Currently supporting 387 overseas projects, delivering humanitarian aid in 130 countries.
2. **Rotary Australia Benevolent Society:** Providing compassionate grants to Australians in need.
3. **Rotary Australia Relief Fund:** Rapidly responding to major appeals by accepting donations and disbursing funds to aid projects.

As Australians, we back doing good by serving others and creating goodwill and friendships, through high ethical standards, and assisting disadvantaged communities and individuals with humanitarian and relief projects.

## Vision, Purpose and Values

**Vision:** To make a positive and lasting impact on communities in need, both in Australia and developing countries overseas.

**Purpose:** To facilitate and strengthen the efforts of Australian Rotarians, Rotary Clubs and, in partnership with other Australian community organisations, assist communities and individuals in need by delivering comprehensive project support services.

**Values:** Service, Leadership, Diversity, Integrity and Fellowship.

## Strategic context

The context ahead is a challenging one with anticipated trends creating both uncertainty and potential opportunities:

- Rotary membership is rapidly ageing and declining. The average age of Australian Rotarians is 67 years old with the majority being retired members of the community.
- Rotary Club project activity has remained subdued during 2022-23 and whilst new project registrations are at similar levels to 2021, they represent less than half the numbers pre-Covid.
- Overall, the proportion of Australians who undertake formal volunteering is declining, with more than 80% of volunteer-reliant organisations needing more volunteers (and 10% requiring drastic increases in the near future). The decline in volunteers was exacerbated by Covid. The ACNC reported a drop of some 600,000 volunteers between 2018 and 2021 from the Charities sector – offset in part by small increase in paid staff.
- Over the next decade, millennials (now aged 27-42) and generation Z (currently aged 11-26) combined will become the biggest voting group in Australia. For Rotary, this means adapting to engage with and appeal to these younger generations by focusing on their values, using digital and social media, and potentially seeing a shift in leadership roles. Rotary may also need to diversify its projects to align with the interests of millennials and generation Z.
- The rates of volunteering among young people are not sufficient to reverse this rate of decline. Young people are intensely invested in the pursuit of more equitable, just, and sustainable worlds, but are contending with study demands, insecure and unpredictable work, and financial pressures that make formal volunteering difficult, if not impossible
- While overall charitable and philanthropic contributions in Australia remain steady, the proportion of taxpayers who donate appears to be declining (from a peak reached in around 2011).
- Cost of living pressures have resulted in rapidly increasing demand for relief and charities are being stretched to their limits as they try to meet the growing needs of individuals and communities in the face of economic challenges and increased demand for their services.
- The nature of innovation in NFPs has also changed to be focused on the customer, with solutions and product-differentiation seen in increasingly competitive human services and supporter markets. RAWCS may need to adapt to this evolving landscape of NFP innovation, by reimagining projects, adopting technology and exploring collaborations to remain effective and relevant.

## Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats Analysis

In advance of the strategic planning session a consultation project was undertaken with various stakeholders including staff and members of the Executive. Through this exercise, a view of the organisation’s key Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats was obtained:

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding projects is within our capabilities.</li> <li>• We maintain responsiveness in our operations.</li> <li>• Efficient distribution of funds is a strong suit.</li> <li>• We possess a dedicated and experienced team.</li> <li>• RAWCS adds value by handling essential back-of-house tasks.</li> <li>• We have a history of providing timely support to project managers.</li> <li>• Volunteer executives and activity managers contribute substantial time.</li> <li>• Our project and volunteer management databases function smoothly.</li> <li>• Consistent collaboration with Rotary Clubs, even during the pandemic.</li> <li>• Successful major fundraising appeals.</li> <li>• Employment of a CEO/General Manager.</li> <li>• Strong commitment to regulatory and legislative compliance.</li> <li>• Government recognition and success in securing government funding.</li> <li>• We’ve raised \$45 million for Rotary projects from external sources.</li> <li>• The Rotary brand and the variety of causes we support set us apart in the NFP sector.</li> <li>• Continued support from Rotarians for existing and new projects.</li> <li>• Positive feedback on the support provided by RAWCS.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heavy reliance on volunteers is a vulnerability.</li> <li>• Lack of documented knowledge and succession planning for critical roles.</li> <li>• Challenges in communicating effectively with key stakeholders, including Rotary Clubs.</li> <li>• Limited understanding within Rotary of RAWCS's offerings and operations.</li> <li>• Weak connections with Rotary Clubs and Districts.</li> <li>• Insufficient marketing resources and promotional efforts resulting in low visibility and donor attraction.</li> <li>• Limited penetration with Australian Rotary clubs (only 21% usage among 1,008 clubs).</li> <li>• Need for continued focus on system improvement and investment.</li> <li>• Communication challenges have led to misunderstandings, conflicts, and inefficiencies within the organisation.</li> <li>• Dependency on key individuals, making RAWCS susceptible to single points of failure.</li> <li>• Structural complexity linked to a historically Rotary-focused fundraising base that has evolved to include various causes and activities.</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognition by various state governments as a trusted Rotary partner provides an opportunity to enhance reputation with government bodies and donors.</li> <li>• Potential to further develop and standardise response capabilities to raise funds for various causes.</li> <li>• Exploration of revenue generation from activities like MediShare.</li> <li>• The potential for growth lies in hands-off international projects, reducing reliance on hands-on volunteers.</li> <li>• Collaborative partnerships with like-minded organizations in Australia and overseas for fundraising and project implementation, even considering a partnership with RFA.</li> <li>• Expanding the RAWCS Service to organisations outside Rotary, creating opportunities for additional revenue.</li> <li>• Opportunity to secure recurring government funding through ACFID and DFAT accreditations.</li> <li>• Competitive advantage over RFA due to RAWCS's extensive history of successful fundraising and project implementation.</li> <li>• Willingness of RAWCS board and executives to diversify revenue sources and enhance fundraising and marketing activities by hiring a fundraising manager, creating a professional fundraising plan, and developing a marketing plan with promotional materials.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rotary Regionalisation</li> <li>• Lack of younger generation coming through.</li> <li>• Rotary clubs took a hit during covid and now their focus has changed. There are fewer projects.</li> <li>• “Don’t see projects growing at the rate they used to”</li> <li>• Clubs are moving their funds in other directions</li> <li>• Rotary is struggling.</li> <li>• “If we don’t have the projects – we don’t have the funds”</li> <li>• “Decline in Rotary membership – a lot of people who have projects are older and getting older”.</li> <li>• District Chairs have not been communicating about RAWCS</li> <li>• RFA duplicating what RAWCS is doing - highly likely that both organisations will approach the same corporates or philanthropy creating confusion and potential damage to reputations of both.</li> <li>• Achieving the desired ACFID and DFAT accreditations will require significant investment in to become compliant across a whole range of areas including policies, procedures, governance structures, systems, project monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements. Without adequate human resources there is a risk accreditation will not be achieved.</li> <li>• As RAWCS has traditionally drawn its funding from Rotarians and their connections, declining membership is an existential threat to RAWCS.</li> </ul>

# Strategic Priorities & Goals

## Strategic Priority 1: Organisational Renewal

*Goal: To achieve organisational renewal in order to safeguard our long-term success and adaptability.*

We will do this by:

1. Prioritising investment and resources to systematically assess and revamp our organisational structures and governance to align with the high standards set by the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) in order to gain accreditation. This accreditation will increase our access to funding and partnership opportunities and enhance our ability to make a meaningful impact in international development.
2. Developing a skills matrix and succession plan to ensure smooth transitions in leadership roles.
3. Proactively engaging with the Regionalisation Pilot to harness opportunities and also developing and implementing contingency plans to minimise any potential adverse effects on RAWCS operations resulting from the Regionalisation Pilot.

## Strategic Priority 2: Financial Sustainability

*Goal: To successfully secure support from a variety of sources to ensure revenues are diversified, stable, and sufficient to achieve our purpose, long-term goals and strategic direction.*

We will do this by:

1. Resourcing and implementing our fundraising plan.
2. Increasing project activity by engaging with clubs, activating regional and district coordinators and developing projects and campaigns that are appealing to younger people.
3. Establish a new charitable trust fund and create dedicated fundraising initiatives for environmental and wildlife conservation projects and exploring partnerships with environmental NGOs or wildlife protection agencies to expand our reach and impact.
4. Transparently evaluating our service fee structure to ensure fairness, competitiveness and alignment with market conditions while maintaining trust and openness with clients.
5. Developing a business plan to identify revenue growth opportunities for Medishare/RARE.
6. Exploring the possibility of extending our services beyond Rotary to collaborate with other organisations in the community.

### **Strategic Priority 3: Engagement and Communication**

*Goal: To consolidate our brand, build on our reputation and foster stronger engagement and effective communication with stakeholders.*

We will do this by:

1. Increasing awareness of RAWCS and its initiatives through targeted marketing and outreach efforts.
2. Leveraging our past successes and partnerships to reinforce the credibility and trust associated with the RAWCS name.
3. Investing in compelling, professional content and utilising various channels, including digital media, social platforms, and in-person events, to reach our diverse stakeholders effectively.
4. Strengthening connections with regions, districts, regional coordinators and project managers for better collaboration and support.
5. Providing resources, training, and recognition to regional coordinators to re-energise their engagement with the organisation.
6. Developing a calendar of key Rotary and non-Rotary events to identify relevant engagement opportunities.

### **Strategic Priority 4: Operational Excellence**

*Goal: To build an environment of trust, transparency and accountability to deliver long-term organisational success and growth.*

We will do this by:

1. Investing in improved systems and processes to enhance efficiency and effectiveness.
2. Valuing workforce diversity and striving for excellence in staff recruitment, supervision, support and development.
3. Ensuring a skilled and dedicated Board for effective governance and leadership.
4. Creating a safe and healthy work place.
5. Establishing and implementing a Board development plan including training and performance evaluation.
6. Developing a framework for evaluation and measuring social impact.

# Success indicators

## **Strategic Priority 1: Organisational Renewal**

1. ACFID and DFAT accreditation achieved by 2028.
2. Board structure transformed to be more advisory in function with sub-committees.
3. Key staff roles filled by paid personnel reporting to the CEO.

## **Strategic Priority 2: Financial Sustainability**

1. Diversified funding sources and increased corporate support.
2. Self-sustaining business lines identified.
3. Achieved a sustainable percentage of turnover accruing to reserves.
4. All administrative costs covered by external sources.
5. Increased number of projects.

## **Strategic Priority 3: Engagement and Communication**

1. Greater engagement by clubs.
2. Increased awareness and positive perception of RAWCS within Rotary and the broader community.
3. Successful collaboration agreements/MOUs with relevant organisations.
4. Recognition and engagement with relevant Commonwealth and State government agencies.
5. Improved relationship with Rotary International and other Rotary organisations.

## **Strategic Priority 4: Operational Excellence**

1. Streamlined project registration processes for increased user-friendliness.
2. Seamless, efficient and secure systems and processes have been implemented.
3. Positive working environment with loyal, productive staff.
4. Focus on social impact measurement, communication, and evaluation.