





Salisbury City  
**Rotaract** 

## **ROTARACT LEADING THE WAY:** *Diversity, Equity & Inclusion*

Damien Walker



Hello everybody. Thank you for having me today.

Before we begin, I would like to acknowledge that the land I am presenting from is the home of the Kurna People of the Adelaide Plains. I recognise the strength and resilience of the Kurna people past, present and emerging and First Nations' people everywhere.

# DAMIEN WALKER

## About Me



Food & Textiles  
Technology  
Teacher

Personal Values  
• Authenticity  
• Purpose

A Founding Member of  
Salisbury City Rotaract  
• President  
2018/19 & 2019/20

Rotaractor, Rotarian, RYLarian  
• Rotaractor - 8+ Years  
• Rotarian - 3 Years  
• RYLA 2014  
• Team Leader, Coordinator (2015-20)

Diversity Equity &  
Inclusion Director  
Public Image Director

[www.salisburycityrotaract.org](http://www.salisburycityrotaract.org)

Come As You Are | Give What You Can

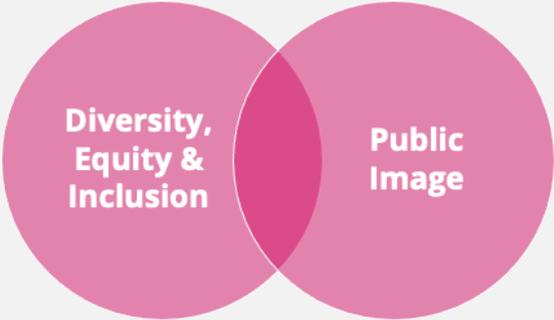
Read from the screen.

**THIS SESSION**

Salisbury City  
**Rotaract** 

**Intentions**

- Show how DEI has been applied at Salisbury City Rotaract.
- Provide examples of actions my club has taken and the outcomes that have arisen.



[Links Like This Are Clickable](#)

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Today

- Show how DEI has been applied at Salisbury City Rotaract.
- Provide examples of actions my club has taken and the outcomes that have arisen.

When I talk about Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, I tend to overlap it with Public Image.

DEI:

- Value peoples Perspectives.
- Provide equity in opportunity.
- Empowerment & Voice

Public Image

- The way you communicate you values and actions to the community.
- How your organisation is viewed/perceived.



**Our Journey**

As the public image director for the Rotaract Club of Salisbury City in Australia, my job is to tell my club’s story. I share how we are a dynamic club that provides the entire Rotaract experience without the need for additional, outside commitment; how we ask our members to come as they are and give as they can; and how we are social club that volunteers and values fellowship and friendship.

But how did we get to this point?

Today, I will talk about my club’s journey with diversity, equity, and inclusion and how it has enhanced our club. This journey began officially for our club in around 2018, this is despite us chartering in 2013/14. Until 2017, we had just been floating along in harmony. As we progressed through, we realized that we needed to be more adaptable and provide a point of difference.

**BRANDING**  
Modern Brand for a Modern Club

Salisbury City  
**Rotaract** 



*Modern Brand for a Modern Club, Rotary Voices (Damien Walker, September 2022)*

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## Branding

Very early on in our journey, we made the decision to move to the modernised Rotaract logo whole heartedly.

By comparison, the more traditional, legacy Rotaract/Rotary logos continue to carry negative connotations in our community, alluding to a time where the Rotary family was an exclusive, male-dominated and business-only body. That's not us and doesn't align with our values.

We have a long history of providing a voice to those who have not always had one: First Nation people, the LGBTQI+ community, and people living with a disability.

<https://blog.rotary.org/2021/10/13/a-modern-brand-for-a-modern-club/>

# NEW KNOWLEDGE

## *Personal learning*



Our membership base & their interests changed.

Personal Lenses widen.

- Built knowledge, understanding and empathy.

As a Club of focus shifted to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

- (Passions; Social Inclusion and Human Rights).

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### **New Knowledge**

- Our Members were changing and so were the interests they had.
- Knowledge and understanding was growing, we were hearing about things in the world that were occurring.
- Our focus here began to shift to addressing and supporting injustices in the world (social justice/inclusion).
- Members were clear that we wanted to change the focus of our club.



Around the time of this shift, was also around the time my 2 year term as president started.

With this provocation of Our Club Inspired by Diversity, Promoting Acceptance – this shift began.

## IT BEGINS...



- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Director on the Club Board.
- LGBTQI+ Support
  - Public Statement
  - Pride March 2022



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### Passions / new Direction

With this shift in focus and passions, we added a Director of Accessibility and Inclusion (now Diversity, Equity and Inclusion).

We threw our support around the LGBTQ+ Community and published a statement surrounding community attitude and the rights we should all have. This year we also began to walk in the Annual Adelaide Pride March with all the Rotaract Clubs in our District. Something that meant a great deal to several of our members who identify as part of that community.

For myself, as someone who is queer, this was the first time I really felt acknowledged and seen within our Rotary Community. The community was brought together, not only did Rotaractors, Rotarians and Friends come to the march as a Diverse Inclusive Rotary, but the DG drove the Rotary Vehicle.

**HARD DISCUSSIONS**  
Purposefully adapting...

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**Membership had changed.**

- It was more diverse, time poor (full time work, study, family etc.)

**Considered what participation looked like?**

**We had hard discussions & completely flipped the script.**

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### Hard Discussions

Further through 2018/19: we acknowledged even further the need for change as a result of a decrease in membership retention.

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Together we had a hard discussion about WHY we do what we do and HOW we could better meet the needs of our members/community. With this we rewrote our mission, vision and restructure our club around our member passion for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

These sorts of discussion, can be suited to challenge club traditions like Fines, Projects and attitudes towards people who don't turn up to meeting.

## WHO ARE WE!

### Vision

Salisbury City Rotaract Club is for young people, aged between 18 and 30, who are looking to develop themselves and give back to the community. We believe in strength in diversity and that no matter where a young person comes from, they are deserving of opportunities to learn, develop and lead.

We provide unique opportunities that assist our members in becoming the community, business and professional leaders of tomorrow, alongside enabling young people to make lifelong friends and give back to both the community they live in and the wider world around them. We are a network of like-minded young people and provide membership at a low cost.

### Mission

Salisbury City Rotaract Club provides an opportunity for young people to develop the knowledge and skills that will assist them in personal / professional development and to address the physical and social needs of their communities. Additionally, supporting and promoting better relationships between all people worldwide through a framework of friendship and service. We are young people who desire to help the community, to learn and develop, and to enjoy what we do through a social and collaborative environment.

### Core Values

1. DIVERSITY
2. COMMUNITY
3. SERVICE
4. FRIENDSHIP
5. GROWTH

LBGTQ+ COMMUNITY

BLACK LIVES MATTER



## Who are we?

### OUR MEMBERS

- Come from all walks of life.
- Are valued for their character, skills, talents and experiences that make them individual and authentic.
- Are seeking a life/work balance.
- Are looking for employment.
- Desire to develop themselves and to find a sense of direction in life (has the want for professional and personal development).
- Are constrained by time and finances.

Membership base has a desire to serve and create change.

However, a lack of capacity to do things outside of Rotaract Time may exist as a result of outside pressures:

- Work.
- Study.
- Employment Seeking.
- Other volunteer communities.
- Rotary Involvement.
- Family commitments.

OUR MEMBERS

## Why are we here?



Our members view the club as a vehicle for creating action. Our members want to be people of action. The need for professional development is also a major driver for why people are involved in Rotaract.

Our members want meetings to be purposeful and be more than just a check-in style event. However, our members also see the socialising and check-in that happens during a Rotaract Meeting a clear element of our club and an integral part of our offering to members and to our club culture.

## What we do?

Rotaract has an object of **Help - Learn - Enjoy** and so will our meetings. We operate on a cycle wherein a period of 3 meetings, the following is achieved:

### HELP



Highlighting our ongoing projects and focus areas as a club alongside allocating time to engage with hands-on projects, such as Days for Girls and tree planting. These meetings will also accommodate for project planning, adapting to our

### LEARN



Getting down to business, raising professional development seminars and workshops that uplift our members and the community. We engage with experienced speakers, from external guests to members of the Rotary family.

### ENJOY



Social check-in events, reinforcing our club culture. We proudly claim that our fellowship is our club's greatest asset. Board game nights are the go!

# ACTIONED OUR MOTTO



This became front & center to our structure...

***Come As you Are & Give What You Can***

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**Come As You Are** | *Give What You Can*

We fully embraced the motto which is proudly scattered across our banners and web presence:

Come as you are and give what you can.

# NEW STRUCTURE

## A Social Club, Who Volunteers



- More time for socialising.
- Help, Learn & Enjoy within the Club meeting Experience.
- 18-35 year olds.

### GIVE WHAT YOU CAN...

Engagement looks different for everyone

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## New Structure

With this embracing of our motto, this framed our point of difference.

A club that offered a flexible model and engaged members on the social aspect before service.

Our website clearly articulated that we acknowledge the difference in our members and that we have an experience that is catering for and is adaptable to all. We purposefully advertise our self as a social club who volunteers. Strategic planning is really useful to support this.

<https://www.salisburycityrotaract.org/>

[https://www.salisburycityrotaract.org/uploads/1/3/0/0/130062349/strategic\\_plan\\_2020-2023\\_final\\_web\\_version\\_2\\_.pdf](https://www.salisburycityrotaract.org/uploads/1/3/0/0/130062349/strategic_plan_2020-2023_final_web_version_2_.pdf)

## **INCREASED ENGAGEMENT**

### **+ New Members**

- The result of being Diverse Inclusive.
- Addressing the needs of our diverse community.
- Creating a safe space.



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### **Increased Engagement**

As a result of these changes we made, our membership changed, we suddenly opened our doors to a number of people within the community and that saw Rotaract more than ever as a vehicle for personal and professional growth and a way to connect with our community.

We have sustained 15 members since these changes. Our club is made up of a number of members who identify as LGBTQI+, who have ASD (Autism) and dyslexia, who have heritage outside of Australia, who have high levels of anxiety, and varying levels of physical mobility and live with Tourette's. Our youngest member is 20 and our oldest is 33.

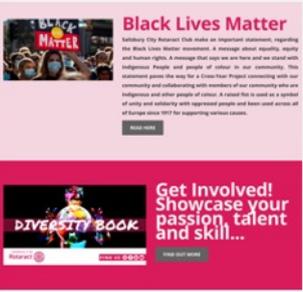
The common things that bind us together are our need for a social connection and our want to give back.

# DEI AT THE FOREFRONT

## Simple actions for a big impact

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**BLM SUPPORT STATEMENT**



**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**





**Hard Discussions**

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### DEI at the forefront of our club:

- Racism Stance
- Use of a formalised Acknowledger of Country
- Member Spots – Autism, Torrettes, Cerebral Palsy to understand what our members live with and how we can best support them/people in the community
- STEPtember – a member passion project – where since 2018 we have have raised close just over 20,000 dollars
- Diversity Book - <https://www.salisburycityrotaract.org/diversity-book.html>
- We provide constructive feedback to our Rotary Clubs about practices that they do that may not be appear to be inclusive and in the spirit of Rotary today.

## STEPtember

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- Pride March
- Wear It Purple Day – Member Lead Professional Learning
- We provide constructive feedback to our Rotary Clubs about practices that they do that may not be appear to be inclusive and in the spirit of Rotary today.

As we changed our structures and our service focus our membership also diversified and STAYED.

## NEXT STEPS



### Our Future

- Creating a Diversity and Discrimination Policy to support our values.
- Pronouns on Club Badges.
- Further rebrand to be a Social Justice Focused Club.
- Be strong advocates.
- Execute the Diversity Book.

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### Next Steps

This is a process we are going on:

- Creating a Diversity and Discrimination Policy to support our values.
- Pronouns on Club Badges.
- Further rebrand to be a Social Justice Focused Club.
- Be strong advocates.
- Execute the Diversity Book.

## SOME FOOD FOR THOUGHT



**"It's women, the diversity of races, cultures, beliefs, skills, ages and the recognition of our LGBT brothers and sisters that keeps Rotary relevant and what makes us the thriving organization that we continue to be. The history of Rotary will have to be rewritten again and again." - Brian Rusch**

Paul Harris said in 1935: 'This is a changing world; we have to be prepared to change with it.'

**"A diverse environment encourages a diverse member base". - Robert Hedley, Member Since 2016.**

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Things to consider when approach changing attitude and diversity in Rotary/Rotaract.

I asked a friend and one of our club members

"why does our diverse inclusive environment encourage people to thrive?"

his response was simple:

'A diverse environment encourages a diverse member base'.

We provide the space for people to be who they are and express themselves openly. Our space is a space for growth, change and our number one value is acceptance and diversity. The changes we have made over the year have lead us to be a club that matches the values/needs of our membership base.

**TAKE AWAYS**  
**Things to action/remember**

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 Focus on member/community needs.

 Widen your lens.

 Build understanding and empathy... to be a better advocate.

 Ask Questions and Have Hard Discussions.

 Challenge tradition.

 Make it visible.

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## Take Aways

- Focus on the needs of your members/ the community your serve – adapt and understand this.
- Widen your lens.
- Ask questions – what we are doing, why are we doing this. If it does not serve a purpose or is causing harm – change it.
- Research and build knowledge, understanding and empathy about the experiences of minority groups.
- Challenge traditions.
- Live out your values, make it visible.



**Damien Walker**  
(Facebook & LinkedIn)  
**@thedamos**  
(Instagram)



**CONNECT WITH US**



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[/SalisburyRotaract](https://www.facebook.com/SalisburyRotaract)



[@SalisburyCityRotaract](https://www.instagram.com/SalisburyCityRotaract)

Thank and invite to connect.

**LEADERSHIP & DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR**  
18-19 JUNE 2022

Rotaract Australia  

Rotaract Oceania  