



A Service for Rotary

Probus clubs serve a growing population of retired leaders. They have no formal ties to Rotary International and little name recognition in big swaths of the Rotary world. But Probus clubs comprise the fastest-growing Rotary club-sponsored organisation today, attracting a burgeoning population of retired and semi-retired business and professional people.

The first Probus (professional and business) club was formed by an English Rotary Club in the mid-1960's to allow retired professionals to meet together for fellowship. The first Australian Probus club was Hunters Hill in 1976.

Although sponsored by Rotary clubs, Probus clubs enjoy autonomy once they have been established. Clubs meet monthly but have no attendance or service requirements, and membership fees are nominal. Members may and do belong to other organizations, including Rotary.

Some Rotary clubs retain ties with the Probus clubs they have sponsored, but the ties are informal. While Probus has minimal organization, centres in at least half a dozen countries staffed by volunteers provide advice on getting started and issue newsletters or directories to clubs. Rotary International commends the role of Probus centres in administering Probus clubs in their areas and encourages those centres to register with Rotary International.

The involvement of a Rotary sponsoring club with a Probus club varies. Rotary clubs typically approach retired or semi-retired candidates in their community and organize the formation of a club. Once established, the club becomes an autonomous organisation and its members take over leadership. Potential Probus members are not required to be past members of Rotary. Fewer than 10% of Probus members are former Rotarians.

Since 1985, the Rotary International Board has encouraged Rotary clubs to initiate projects that address the needs of a growing senior (over age 60) population. At subsequent meetings, the RI Board reaffirmed its commitment by urging Rotarians to organize and support Probus clubs as a commended community service activity.

The founding of Probus was begun by Rotary sponsorship and thousands of Rotary Clubs worldwide have followed suit by the simple process of providing a "HOW TO" manual and acting as sponsor.

Hats off to Rotary ...