

Exchange Information - www.youthexchange.asn.au

Each year thousands of young people worldwide are given an opportunity to experience the cultures and accomplishments of people in other countries. During your exchange, you will grow considerably in self-confidence, tolerance and self-reliance.

You'll also learn to accept greater responsibility in your everyday life.

"My youth exchange year was one of incredible change and growth for me. In addition to seeing so much of the rest of the world and making such wonderful friends, I changed in ways I never knew was possible. Thankyou Rotary for the best year of my life."

You will have to adapt to unfamiliar and different surroundings and ways of life that are different from home.

For some this will be the first extended period of separation from their family. This will bring about many trials and tribulations which you will need to overcome and by so doing develop many "survival skills".

To live away from home for the 50 weeks' duration of the exchange is a demanding yet rewarding experience. It is not always smooth sailing and requires a great strength of character, tolerance and an understanding of the acceptance of personal responsibility.

The exchange provides a unique opportunity for young Australians to experience at first hand the many cultures of a different country, a new way of life and in some instances another language. Often, the friendships they make will be lifelong and important in achieving the aims of the exchange - the building of goodwill and understanding between countries.

As a Rotary Youth Exchange Student you'll have an opportunity:

- to develop your personal self-confidence and maturity
- to develop a lifetime of international friendships
- to develop a real understanding of many different cultures
- to develop new language skills
- to develop a base for future education and career goals
- to develop in many ways

Important dates

January - Applications Open

March/April – Applications Close

Learn a lot about yourself

As a Rotary Youth Exchange student, you'll spend up to 12 months living and studying overseas.

During your exchange you'll learn a lot about yourself, the culture of your adopted host families and the diversity of your host country.

"It's an amazing, life-changing experience"

Make life-long friendships



Rotary Youth Exchange provides a unique opportunity to experience first-hand the many cultures of a different country and a new way of life. Often, you will make life-long friendships with the families, Rotarians and fellow Exchange students you meet,

"Helping to build goodwill and understanding between countries"

Gain your independence



In your host country you will experience different foods, study different subjects, enjoy a new culture and a new way of living and most likely learn a new language.

During your Exchange you'll learn a lot about yourself,

"become more confident, mature and independent."

Expand Your Horizons



Exchange Destinations

Rotary Youth Exchange Australia maintains hosting arrangements with over 30 countries worldwide.

Frequent Host Countries



Please note that Country options may change from year to year.

Students have the opportunity to nominate a preferred country of exchange available to that District. However, as there are limited places in any one country, a preparedness to accept an exchange in any of the other available countries is necessary.

The District committee decides the final country of destination.

See www.youthexchange.asn.au for more information.



Program Costs

The Rotary Fee is \$6,800.00 (2019), and includes:

- Administration expenses
- Return airfares, as arranged by Rotary, to the country of exchange
- Travel Advice
- Visa Fees
- Personal/Travel Insurance, as defined by Rotary International
- Initial Briefing & Training
- 2nd Briefing/Training weekend Camp
- Manuals including printed & electronic
- Debrief on Return
- Rotary Jacket
- Rotary Polo Shirt
- Rotary Hoodie
- Rotary Backpack
- Business Cards
- Professional Group Photo

Rotary also provides:

- Rotary approved host families who provide a family environment for the student
- Schooling and the payment of normal school fees and expenses
- A monthly allowance of approximately \$100 to the student
- A student counsellor, both here and in the host country
- Back up support and counselling for the family of the student

The student's natural parents or guardian provide for all of the following costs:

- Rotary organised Optional tours
- Language Courses
- Day to day living expenses of the student, postage, phone calls, personal items, clothing, footwear etc.
- An emergency fund approx. \$500.00AUD (redeemable at conclusion of exchange, if unused)
- Amounts vary but we suggest you allow approximately \$5,000 to \$8,000.00 for additional expenses throughout the year.

Naturally, you have to consider these amounts against what it normally costs to keep you for 12 months living at home.

How are students prepared for the exchange?



The District committee arranges training in a wide range of areas.

These include personal development, public speaking, communication skills, cultural awareness and financial management. This is to prepare the student as much as is possible for the exchange year. Parents are required to be involved in this training and therefore gain an appreciation of the many issues, which will confront the student during the year.



Rules & Obligations

While Rotary Districts and Clubs run their programs in accordance with the policy of Rotary International, each will have their own specific rules that may vary slightly, for students to follow.

Students are required to adhere to the laws of the host country at all times, the rules of the program, as defined by the hosting and sponsoring districts. These are based on common sense and relate to personal behaviour, safety and the expectations of being an ambassador for their country, their family, themselves and Rotary.

Students must return to Australia on completion of the exchange by the most direct route as arranged by the district committee.

You are required to attend school

All students are required to attend a secondary level school for the duration of the exchange, this is a requirement of your student visa. This is even if you have completed year 12 before leaving.

Rotary District 9455 is registered/approved by the W.A Dept. of Education to provide secondary student exchange programs, attendance at school for the duration of 12 months is a primary objective and mandatory condition of the program and your Visa.

Rotary Policy

Rotary International, in line with its objective to provide the best student exchange program has developed a worldwide Certification process for all participating clubs and the necessary infrastructure of the program. As part of its working with youth policy, the Board of Rotary International has made the following statement as a Code of Conduct:

Rotary International strives to create and maintain a safe environment for all who participate in Rotary activities. Rotarians, Rotarian Spouses and Partners and other volunteers must safeguard the children and young people they come in contact with and protect them from physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

Application Process

The Rotary Youth Exchange program is open to Australian high school students.

The first step is visiting www.youthexchange.asn.au (How to Apply), or email the District 9455 Rotary Youth Exchange Committee clearydj@bigpond.net.au to indicate your interest.

All applicants and parents are initially interviewed by local Rotary Clubs, and if selected, will then be required to complete a more comprehensive final application before a further interview by District 9455 Rotary Youth Exchange Committee. Successful applicants will then be allocated an overseas Rotary District Committee for their consideration.

This official application provides the following details for a potential host Rotary club:

- Personal particulars and background
- General information relating to the applicant
- Applicant's school activities
- Principal's report
- Medical and dental reports
- Endorsement of sponsoring Rotary club and district
- Guarantee form signed by applicant and parents
- Parental/guardian release form

FAQs

If you have any further questions, please get in touch with your local Youth Exchange committee.

clearydj@bigpond.net.au

Am I eligible to be a Rotary exchange student?

The Rotary Youth Exchange program is open to high school students between the ages of 15 and 18 on the date of departure.

It does not matter whether your parents are members of a Rotary Club - the program is open to children of Rotarians and non-Rotarians alike.

Exchange student candidates must be outgoing, self-confident, friendly, adaptable, and adventurous, willing to learn a foreign language, with above average grades in school.

What is the long-term program?

For a truly amazing, life-changing experience, there is nothing like the long-term exchange. Students spend a year in another country, becoming fluent in the language and immersed in the culture, and developing friendships that will last a lifetime.

Participants attend high school, and may or may not get credit back home for courses taken (but Universities may recognize the value of exchange programs, with credit for language ability and greater acceptance rates!). Each student will likely have more than one and usually up to three or four host families through the year, to broaden the experience and see the variations that exist in all cultures.

It takes a very special teen to consider him or herself capable of spending a year abroad, but the rewards and experiences are unlike anything you may ever know again. If you think you can do this, don't let the opportunity pass you by.

Do I get to choose my country?

A very popular question. And the answer is... yes and no.

The countries we exchange with are those we know run top-quality programs and are Rotary International Certified, and we re-evaluate them each year. There are a limited number of exchanges available with each country, and we will not overload any country in either direction, inbound or outbound.

When allocating countries we take into account the Hosting Countries specific requirements as well as your preferences.

We ask you to select five preferred countries. The majority of students will get one of their five choices. But remember, flexibility is a vital characteristic for a successful exchange student, and that starts right at the beginning.

Do I need to speak another language?

No, not at all. Naturally, it would help to have some familiarity with the language of the country you go to, but we don't limit the program to those who are already bi-lingual. In fact, one of the great benefits of the program is quickly gaining fluency in another language.

Typically, our students have some fluency in 3-4 months, even without any previous knowledge of the language! But we strongly recommend that all participants start learning their target language as soon as they are selected for the program. The more of the language you know up front, the better your experience will be.

Will I get school credit for my exchange year?

This is always a tough question because it varies from school to school and country to country. You should sit down with your school counsellors when you apply and when you know what country you are going to for your year. Pre-planning makes a big difference.

Is there any future advantage?

By completing a full year exchange in another culture you are showing that you have the "right stuff". Future employers may take a favourable view of your years' experience, not to mention the benefits of becoming bi-lingual or bi-cultural.

What if I have problems during my exchange?

The design of the Rotary Exchange program is such that if you have problems we have the resources to help you solve the problems, starting with a Rotary Club right in the community in which you are living. You will have multiple avenues of help available to you to resolve any problem that might come up.

Rotary International and Rotarians in general take very seriously our responsibility for the safety and security of all Rotary exchange students, both inbound and outbound. In November, 2002, the Board of Directors of Rotary International adopted the following Statement of Conduct for Working with Youth:

"Rotary International is committed to creating the safest possible environment for all participants in Rotary Activities. It is the duty of all Rotarians, Rotarian Spouses and Partners and other volunteers must safeguard the children and young people they come in contact with and protect them from physical, sexual and emotional abuse".

Do my parents have to host an inbound student?

Parents of long-term outbound students are not required to host. However, we certainly encourage it.

Many, of course, choose to do so, partly because they have an empty room, but also so they can experience some of what their son or daughter is going through. We encourage that, but we also recognize that not all families are able to host.

In reality it is the other side of exchange and for parents often the most rewarding part. Quite often you will have lifelong links with students from other countries who have stayed with you.

We do ask outbound students and their families to help find host families in their own communities, to accommodate the inbound student that will be hosted by their Rotary Club.

After all Rotary Youth Exchange relies heavily on the goodwill of people all around the world. That is why it is an exchange!

Check out what past exchange students and their parents have to say

Students Talk About Their Exchange
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AJ3tDQ4cpcE>

Parents Talk About Their Exchange Experience
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BJNxe4xsn8>





Maybe enjoy A European Winter?



Prized possession...Your Rotary Blazer



Perhaps a visit to Greece on a Rotary Euro Tour?



Discover history you never knew existed



Maybe Italy is your choice destination?