

Attract and Retain Members

A GUIDE TO STRENGTHENING MEMBERSHIP



ATTRACTING NEW MEMBERS

Every club needs new members in order to be vibrant and active. New members introduce new ideas, bring fresh perspectives and extend your club's reach in the community.



PARTNER WITH LOCAL ORGANISATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS TO IDENTIFY POTENTIAL MEMBERS

WHO ARE YOUR CLUB'S POTENTIAL MEMBERS?

Ideal potential members are women who embody VIEW's values and want to improve the life outcomes of disadvantaged children and young people as well as give back to the community. Friends, neighbours and business/work acquaintances could be a good fit for your club. Reconnect with those who have attended your club's meetings but never joined, along with former members who have resigned. Members often leave for a short time but may return if they are invited.

THE MAIN REASON WOMEN JOIN VIEW IS TO CONNECT WITH OTHER WOMEN LOCALLY

Continue to, ask club members to identify potential members. This simple activity gets members to think about people they know in the community who might be good club members.

If you find a potential member but find that your meeting time or location for example, is not a good fit recommend them to another VIEW Club. The VIEW website: view.org.au has all VIEW clubs contact details otherwise email National Office: view@thesmithfamily.com.au

Remember even if the potential members you identify do not join, it's worthwhile to engage them as volunteers, donors, and friends of your club so you can inform them of upcoming events and activities they may like to support or attend.



INVITE A POTENTIAL MEMBER TO A CLUB MEETING OR EVENT SO THAT SHE CAN SEE THAT YOUR CLUB ACTIVELY IMPROVES THE LIFE OUTCOMES OF DISADVANTAGED AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE.

ASSIGN A MEMBER TO CONTACT THE POTENTIAL MEMBER AFTER THE EVENT.

HOW DO YOU APPROACH POTENTIAL MEMBERS?

Potential members may be your friends, business/work acquaintances, family members or even someone you have just met.

Prepare an information pack to be handed to potential members (or local Real Estate Agents to distribute to new local residents) about your club, eg time, day and place of meeting and contact details.

Consider hosting an information day at 50+ lifestyle villages.

Keep your message simple. Don't try to tell potential members everything there is to know about VIEW before they have attended a club meeting or an event.

Explain how VIEW has had a meaningful impact on your life and friendships, and how VIEW supports The Smith Family who provide long-term educational support for disadvantaged Australian children and young people. Although facts and figures are useful, personal experiences and stories connect people on an emotional level. Once you have told your story, ask them what they would look for in a VIEW club. They may be interested in making new friends and raising awareness and advocating for disadvantaged Australian children. Once you know what they are looking for, you can show how your club can fill that need.

HOW DO YOU COMMUNICATE THE BENEFITS OF JOINING YOUR CLUB?

In talking to potential members, consider their interests and needs when explaining the benefits of VIEW membership. Here are some popular benefits that VIEW members have associated with being a part of a VIEW Club:

- Making a positive and lasting impact on disadvantaged Australian children and young people by improving their educational outcomes.
- Establishing connections with other like-minded women and building lasting friendships.
- Developing professional skills such as event planning, public speaking and fundraising.
- Creating a network of friends especially when travelling throughout Australia.
- Mentioning any special interest groups your club has such as a book club, theatre group, gardening or walking groups.

The following scenarios show how you can use a potential member's interests as a starting point for introducing VIEW.

COMMUNITY

Arrange a luncheon/dinner event inviting members of other service clubs/organisations to share in the day. This can be a good way to promote our own organisation and connect with others.

Invite members of your community to special fundraising events such as a fashion parade or soup and slice luncheon, High Tea etc in support your *Learning for Life* students.

Organise a "Walk with VIEW" which is another way of spreading the word of VIEW to the wider community especially when members are all wearing their purple tops / ponchos or carrying their VIEW umbrellas.



MAKE A LIST OF THE BENEFITS OF VIEW MEMBERSHIP, AND DISCUSS THEM WITH YOUR MEMBERS. REFER TO THE KEY VIEW MESSAGES. WE HAVE LISTED SAMPLE MESSAGES FOR CLUBS TO USE WHEN TALKING WITH POTENTIAL MEMBERS

CONNECTING WITH OTHERS

Your colleague has recently retired and is feeling a bit isolated. Explain to her how membership in VIEW has kept you active in the community, informed you on topics you wouldn't otherwise have encountered and resulted in lasting friendships. Invite her to your club's next meeting, social event or community activity.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Your neighbour may be looking for ways to involve her children/grandchildren in activities that have a positive impact. Explain how VIEW supports students through scholarships on the Smith Family's *Learning for Life* program providing long-term educational support of disadvantaged Australian children and young people. Invite your neighbour to the next VIEW meeting to learn more about VIEW and The Smith Family and refer her to their websites to see the many ways they can volunteer.

AUSTRALIA – WIDE FOCUS

A member of your community is looking to increase her charitable contributions and participate in the local community. Tell her how VIEW clubs will expand her interests and abilities as she becomes informed and meets new people, building strong friendships.

HOW TO ENGAGE WITH POTENTIAL MEMBERS

Members who join a club without some knowledge of VIEW are more likely to leave within a year or two.

It is important to talk to potential members before they join about what it's like to be a member of your club. Hold coffee mornings/information sessions to give them an opportunity to learn about your club's activities and the benefits of membership. Refer them to our website: view.org.au, provide them with a "Become a member of VIEW today" brochure and recent VIEW Matters Magazine. Ask current members to share their experiences to give potential members a sense of your club's culture. Be sure to tell them about meeting times, local and National activities, such as VIEW's Biennial National Convention and how they can be involved. Let them know how proud VIEW Clubs is to be The Smith Family's largest community sponsor of *Learning for Life* students.

VIEW KEY Messages this section needs to be updated

VIEW is a national women's organisation with over 14,000 members in close to 300 communities exclusively supporting education charity The Smith Family. Members sponsor students, volunteer, fundraise and advocate to improve the life outcomes of disadvantaged Australian children and young people.

VIEW is The Smith Family's largest community sponsor of *Learning for Life* students. It supports the educational outcomes of more than 1,4800 disadvantaged children and young people. Through its connection with The Smith Family, VIEW is proud to enable better futures for young Australians.

Through its supportive network, VIEW women build lasting friendships, empowered and connected by the common purpose to support The Smith Family and make a difference to disadvantaged Australian children and young people.

VIEW members dedicate more than 70,000 volunteer hours each year to The Smith Family. They generously give their time to:

- read to children in schools,
- help at The Smith Family's after school Learning Clubs,
- mentor students; and
- use their craft skills to make school resources for students in need.

Community and national activities organised by VIEW Clubs raise vital funds for The Smith Family, contributing more than \$1.1 million every year to the charity's programs for young people in need.

VIEW raises awareness about and advocates for disadvantaged Australian children. The collective power of the organisation's 14,000-strong national voice helps more Australians learn about The Smith Family's work.

Current Key messages can be found at <http://view.org.au/media/9366/60plus-years-key-messaging-final-120121.pdf>.

HOW CAN MY CLUB CREATE A DIVERSE MEMBERSHIP?

The strongest and most effective clubs reflect the demographics of their communities and may include a representative mix of women from different age groups, professions and ethnic groups. The potential to increase the number of younger women, professionals and members of various ethnic groups should be part of every club's planning.

Ideas for attracting younger women:

Increasing younger members is essential for the future of your club. However younger women often have hectic schedules, family obligations, and financial limitations that make it difficult for them to commit to VIEW. Make club membership more attractive and more feasible for younger members:

- Create a satellite club with an alternative meeting time or format that is more convenient for potential members with young families. Consider a breakfast or evening club.
- Reduce meal expenses or make meals optional. Some clubs have a coffee meeting and an option to stay for lunch.
- Create social and networking activities that are interesting and convenient for younger women.
- Invite groups of younger women to join at the same time to make them feel more comfortable.
- Highlight opportunities to volunteer with The Smith Family.
<https://thesmithfamily.com.au/get-involved/volunteer>
- Assign a welcoming VIEW member to serve as a mentor ensuring new members feel welcome. Many women join VIEW to make personal connections.
- Encourage them to become involved. Young women are creative and eager to generate new ideas for solving persistent problems. Could they host a session for members on how to connect with others through social media.
- Find out about their abilities and interests and find ways to use their skills in your club. Members who have a role to play in the club are more engaged and more likely to remain.



Younger women are not the only target group. Recent retirees may be looking for ways to stay connected in the community, and could share their skills and expertise with your club.

Promote an upcoming social activity on Facebook, for example a Literary or International Women's Day luncheon. This is a good way to connect with people in your community who are not familiar with VIEW and may be interested in getting involved.

Keep your VIEW webpage updated with your club's information to showcase the work you are doing to assist disadvantaged children as well as your club's upcoming

events. This information can also be posted on your Club Facebook page together with photos of recent events or activities



ORIENTING NEW MEMBERS

The moment a person joins VIEW should be special for both the member and the club. Whether you choose to mark this event with a special ceremony or induct new members at a club meeting, **make sure you**

acknowledge and celebrate their involvement in VIEW.

Organise a coffee/morning tea shortly after induction. Give new members an understanding of the benefits of membership in your club. Include an overview of your club's recent accomplishments and upcoming activities, and ask how they would like to be involved. Direct them to [VIEW Club Handbook](http://view.org.au/resources) (view.org.au/resources).

NEW MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

Research shows that members become more committed and connected to their fellow members, their club, and the organisation as they become more involved in VIEW activities. Ask new members what if any expertise they bring to the club, activities that interest them, and give them an active role so they immediately feel a sense of connection to your club.

Don't assume that a new member will be interested in a role that's related to her profession or previous profession. For example, an accountant may not want to keep the books for the club just because that's her area of expertise. She may be looking for a different experience.

Apart from connecting with women, another key reason women are drawn to VIEW membership is the fact that VIEW exclusively supports the education charity The Smith Family. Members sponsor students, volunteer, fundraise and advocate to improve the life outcomes of disadvantaged Australian children and young people. VIEW Clubs can offer opportunities for involvement, eg volunteering, homework clubs, learning clubs, making members feel that they are contributing to an important effort- making a difference to Australian children in need.

VIEW EVENTS

In addition to monthly club meetings, invite new members to VIEW activities/ events:

- Zone Conferences,
- Zone/Area training events,
- Area Galas,
- VIEW National Convention (biennial event)

RETAINING MEMBERS

ENGAGING YOUR CLUB'S MEMBERS



Attracting new members to your club is important for growth and new perspectives, but the key to a strong membership is retaining current members. Engaged members readily participate in club activities, meetings, events, and club leadership. They feel a strong attachment to their club because they enjoy the strong friendship and benefits, both social and educational, that evolve from

VIEW membership. They are motivated to put extra effort into club activities and are proud to tell others about the impressive work their clubs are doing.

ENGAGING CURRENT MEMBERS

Think of your members as your best customers and work hard to deliver an experience that keeps them engaged and excited about VIEW. It is well known that engaged members are more likely to stay with your club, so be sure to show your appreciation regularly and make sure they have a variety of options for becoming involved and staying active in your club:

- Make members feel appreciated by recognising their achievements and celebratory occasions, such as club membership milestones and birthdays.
- Acknowledge member's achievements by nominating them for a Making a Difference Award.
- Develop a formalised mentoring program for involved members to support less active or newer members.
- Invite non-committee members to be involved in club activities such as assisting with the selling of raffle tickets, registering members at monthly meetings, *Learning for Life* liaison, Facebook/website coordinator, organising trading table and book stall, etc.
- Reach out to members with low attendance or those who have stopped attending, to ascertain reason for non-attendance and help them re-engage.
- Seek regular feedback from members to confirm that they are experiencing the benefits they anticipated when they joined.
- Encourage them to take on club committee positions that suit their skills or interests.
- Give members a clear sense of your club's goals to continue and grow their support of *Learning for Life* students
- Invite them to attend a Zone Conference, Area Gala and IWD event
- Poll members on their interests and incorporate these topics or activities into club meetings or events.
- Feature photographs of your members at recent club events on your club website and Facebook page and in newsletters to recognise their contributions.

Use the [member satisfaction survey](#) to gauge what's working and what's not.

EVERYONE'S OPINION COUNTS

Interviewing club members — especially those who are leaving — can yield information that is useful for your retention efforts.



The member satisfaction survey is designed to tell you what club members like most about your club and what they believe could be improved. Ask members to complete the survey, and share the results at a future club meeting. Discuss the findings with your club members, talk with them about changes that can be made, and involve them in implementing those changes.

Ask departing members to complete the [exit survey](#) to help VIEW prevent such resignations in the future. If members are relocating or leaving your club and would like to continue being members of VIEW and transfer to another club, complete the adjustment to database form located on view.org.au/resources/forms

COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR CLUB

Research shows that keeping members informed with up-to-date information can increase a club's overall retention rate. Establish a communication plan to determine what you want to communicate with members and how to achieve this. Club e-newsletters, websites and social media pages are useful communication tools. Recognise that different members use different communication tools, and offer information using more than one method.

Members might enjoy learning about:

- Club information — activities, news, and events,
- Club financial reports,
- VIEW's online resources and how members can access them,
- The Smith Family news highlights and recent research,
- Social Media - how to connect via Facebook and/or Instagram,
- Learning about Zoom and how to connect via this method

Regularly communicate to your club members about:

- Opportunities to:
 - Take on leadership roles
 - Attend club functions, Zone conferences, Area galas, workshops and International Women's Day events,
 - Participate in events and activities in your Zone or Area
- VIEW activities
- Strategies for attracting new members
- The goals and initiatives of the club and club committees

- Progress toward membership and other goals

GET TO KNOW YOUR MEMBERS

VIEW members value the relationships that are formed within their clubs. This is one of the primary reasons that women stay in VIEW. Encourage members to learn about their fellow members.

Make an effort to understand your members' backgrounds and interests:

- Feature a different member in your newsletters.
- Introduce and interview a different member at each meeting.
- Ask members to take turns sharing their VIEW moments at your monthly meetings.
- Listen to your members and act on their concerns.

Review the member satisfaction survey results to be sure that you are actively seeking out their opinions and that their voices are being heard. Take prompt action to address the concerns of your members so that their experience in your club is positive.

YOUR CLUB COMMITTEE

In order to accomplish your Club's goals, you'll need a strong team to develop and implement your plans. Club committee responsibilities may include:

- Developing an action plan to improve member satisfaction that includes surveying members and responding to their feedback by initiating changes.
- Conducting club assessments to see that membership development and retention efforts are successful.
- Creating an image of your club that is attractive to potential and current members, as well as the community in general.
- Setting club membership goals for the coming year and how to achieve them.
- Informing members about the importance of attracting and engaging members.



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