



District 72 Newsletter

October 2020

District 72

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Tēnā koutou District 72 Members

Welcome, new Toastmasters, and welcome back to everyone who has signed on to continue your Toastmasters journey to improve your confidence and competence as speakers and leaders. We are living in interesting times; times where being part of communities like your Toastmasters club becomes even more valuable.

Enquiries and renewals

The number of enquiries about Toastmasters this year is positive! We are getting a steady stream of messages at District and our website is currently receiving up to 150 hits a day. We will be looking to ramp that up. We will also look to attract interest through Facebook and Meet Up.

Besides more enquiries, the great news is that renewals, despite the disruptions, remain high. Following on from being in the top three last year, though unconfirmed, District 72 is currently in the top 10% around the world. Thank you to those members who renewed on time; I'm sure your Club Executives appreciate it. Let's see how well we can go for the next nine months and beyond, strengthening and developing our clubs and ourselves.

Members stay when they get what they need from our clubs. Let's make you club meetings the best place to be each time they are held! Check that those who don't know about your club can find you and contact you easily by ensuring meeting information and contact details are up-to-date.

Some clubs, especially in the corporate sector, have had disruptions. For those who have found their home clubs unable to continue, there are many other clubs looking forward to having you as a member. A list of all clubs has been developed and can be found at <http://www.toastmasters.org.nz/findaclub>. It's important to note that clubs and members have life cycles in Toastmasters and those cycles are related to providing value.

Pathways

So far this Toastmasters year, members have earned 293 awards. These include **Level 5 awards** for Khorshed Irani (Wainuiomata), Bichitra Panigrahy (Mid City), Leighton Nicholls (Speak-Easy) and Diane Isherwood (Wainuiomata). Congratulations! A lot of effort goes into completing level 5 and we look forward to celebrating more successes in coming newsletters. Please note, if we do not acknowledge your name, you might have opted out of having your name listed.

Pathways adoption rates are up too – thank you!

As at 14 September, this is where District 72 sits:

Members: 83.37% (Active members who have selected a path.)

New Members: 66.67% (Members who've joined within the previous six months.)

Officers: 91.55%

Congratulations to the 12 clubs who have 100% results in all categories as at 1 October: Airwaves, Aranui, Avon, Coastmasters, Dunedin, Island Bay, Newlands, NZ Transport Agency, Ohariu, Public Service, Toast Health, U-CAN-SPEAK. There are 35 clubs with 100% of new members registered on Pathways as at 1 October. Our goal is 100%. If we can help in anyway, let us know.

Pathways is becoming more user-friendly and intuitive and the District website is providing all the basic information for your paths and projects. We will continue to make enhancements as the year progresses. Members can see what projects each path entails at <http://www.toastmasters.org.nz/pathways>. Online drop-in sessions are being run to ask any question you like. There's no need to register. Sessions can be found at <http://www.toastmasters.org.nz/calendar> and http://www.toastmasters.org.nz/district_training.

The faster new members are introduced to Pathways and choose their path, the quicker they can start their journey. There's a lot to take in when joining a new club. Understanding what other members are doing helps everyone understand how Toastmasters works.

District Training and Meetings

Last weekend, 26-27 September, saw District Officers gather in Blenheim for training, the District Executive Committee meeting and the District Council meeting. The pandemic was a challenge to navigate but we were determined to assemble the team so we could get to know each other better and that we did. Blenheim was not only the cheapest option but, logistically, the only option.

Feedback from the 37 officers who attended reflected that in-person training is greatly appreciated. Getting to meet one another strengthens our bonds and enables us to gain knowledge, ideas and support to take back to our areas and divisions.

Thank you to the Club Presidents, Vice Presidents Education and District Officers who attended the **District Council meeting** to represent your clubs, areas and divisions. We appreciate daylight saving meant you missed an extra hour of sleep but I'm sure getting through District business in 75 minutes was appreciated.

Special thanks go to our technical team, Bailey Wood and Tim Law. There is a lot of work to prepare for these meetings and, having watched the recorded meeting, it was one of the best online meetings I have seen from an audio and visual perspective. Also, a special mention goes to District Parliamentarian, Carol Mitchell, for her work on the day and before as Credentials Manager.

These meetings cannot proceed without a quorum, so we do need your support. To those clubs who were not involved, please let us know if there is anything we can do to help next time.

Thank you also to the District Officers who attended the **District Executive Committee** the evening before. These meetings are crucial to ensure District Officers are informed, heard, and any business presented to Council is clarified and understood. The minutes of both meetings will be posted under District Documents on the Toastmasters New Zealand website by 31 October 2020.

The **District Budget** was passed. Philip Smith, District Finance Manager, did a fine job creating and presenting this fundamental document in a clear and easily understood manner. Thank you also to David O'Brien, Programme Quality Director, Kathryn Duncan, Club Growth Director, and Tianyuan Qu, Public Relations Manager, for their input into its creation.

With a far smaller revenue estimate than most previous years, considerable work was involved in identifying where to cut expenses and direct resources to achieve District goals. Toastmasters International (TI) has placed expenditure limits on all categories this year, which limited flexibility and autonomy. Despite this, having online contests means that we are able to allow for Divisions to conduct in-person events should they choose to do so, and it was decided the District Service Charge **will not** now be levied this year. Of special note is the 5% of revenue limit to conduct all Area, Division and District speech contests. This was a challenge that might not be easily overcome in future years without either TI rescinding the limit or door charges being required. The budget can be found online at: <http://www.toastmasters.org.nz/files/docs/d72%20promotions/new%20budget.pdf>.

The **District Success Plan** is complete. This document formed the basis of the budget and gives the District clarity and direction for the year. It can also be found at <http://www.toastmasters.org.nz/files/docs/dsp.pdf>. One of the centrepieces of the plan is regional opportunities to showcase Toastmasters in Dunedin, Christchurch and Wellington. These are likely to commence from February to April 2021. We're planning to demonstrate our Toastmasters skills to the public and the business community by teaching speaking and leadership skills. This will double as a great networking opportunity so we can get to know them, they can get to know us, and we can enhance the brand and relevance of Toastmasters. If you are interested in helping plan, organise or present, please fill out this form <https://bit.ly/3cWHNPa>. This promises to be a fun way to meet other Toastmasters and learn new skills.

District Conference

Regrettably, the 2021 Upper Hutt-Silverstream Conference has been cancelled. All prepayments have been refunded or are in the process of being refunded. With Toastmasters International requiring contests be online, it was agreed an in-person Conference as we know it was not likely to be viable. The conference committee of Karen Lynley, Genevieve McLachlan, Glen Pearce, Glenys Brown, Steve Brown, Philip Smith and Kendall Eade deserve a massive thanks for their hard work, and we share in their disappointment.

An alternative is being planned, likely to be an online or hybrid event based in Wellington in May. We are seeking expressions of interest from people who would like to help plan, organise or present either a workshop or keynote. Please register your interest here: <https://bit.ly/3cWHNPa>

Events

The District Calendar is on the website at: <http://www.toastmasters.org.nz/calendar> and contains dates of all contests and events. Contact the Webmaster to have your Area, Division, District or significant club event listed. Note, this can include contests, workshops, Speechcraft and Youth Leadership Programmes.

When planning your events, please consider lead-in time, other events (avoid clashes), what additional information attendees should know or even whether you would like to announce your event and ask for people to be involved in some way. We can create a webpage with all relevant information, preferably with an accompanying pic of some sort.

This month, there are:

- 4 Oct – Speak to the Camera Workshop (5pm), Pathways Drop-In session (7pm)
 - 5 Oct – Area E6 and E5 contests
 - 8 Oct – Area E3 contests
 - 10 Oct – Area H3 contests
 - 15 Oct – Area G4 contests, Panel Discussions with Judges and Winners (7pm)
- and much more.

On 31 October, the 2019-2020 District 72 Awards Dinner will be held in Mosgiel. Last year's District Director, Diane Isherwood, has sent invitations to all current members. This event celebrates member successes. Diane will present awards from the 2019-2020 year, including Toastmaster of the Year. This will be a great opportunity to watch online and network with Toastmasters in person from Otago and Southland and those visiting.

<http://www.toastmasters.org.nz/news/d72awardsdinner>

Training

Keep an eye on the District Training page for details of online training from the District Trainers, Helen and Kath, plus any associated resources. There are Pathways drop-in sessions and Zoom drop-in sessions. You may ask any question you like around Pathways, online meetings and online contests, and probably many other things too.

http://www.toastmasters.org.nz/district_training.

Opportunities

As you've read, contests at Area level and above are online. This gives District 72 members an opportunity to not only attend these events, meet other Toastmasters, hear new styles, and learn from events all over the District but also to be involved. If you're interested in judging or taking other roles in these contests, please fill out the form at <https://bit.ly/3cWHNPa>

Kathryn Duncan, our Club Growth Director, is looking for members who are at the point of their Toastmasters journey where they want to give back as coaches and District Committee members to help grow and strengthen clubs. To take advantage of this opportunity, contact Kathryn directly on thrynka.d@gmail.com.

International Convention Votes

As District Director, I voted on behalf of 78 clubs at the Annual Business Meeting (ABM) at the International Convention in late August. Before voting, David O'Brien, Kathryn Duncan and I read the bios, asked each of the International Director candidates a series of six questions via email, and interviewed the local, Region 12, candidates. Quite an interesting experience getting to know each candidate and contemplating what is in the members' best interests. Candidates found the written questions challenging but the answers were insightful. I would recommend this exercise for any future Trio. Our decisions were based on the 2-minute live presentation at the Annual Business Meeting. Most of our selections were elected.

There were two proposals put forth. Proposal A, which decreased the number and increased the size of regions, I voted against. I did not believe it was in the best interests of diversity and effective member representation on the Board of Directors or of governance in general. It was defeated.

A significant number of club officers took the rarely presented opportunity to attend the ABM and vote on behalf of their clubs. Well done! The overall uptake of proxies was over 80%. Compared to the international average, this is very good. However, we are a communication organization and we lead by example. To those clubs who did not assign proxies or vote themselves, please let us know what difficulties you may have encountered so we can try to assist in the future.

Website

Work continues on the website and a transition to the new Wordpress platform is approaching. However, we continue to make improvements to the current site. If you have suggestions for how to make the site more useful to you or your club, please send us an email at info@toastmasters.org.nz, putting "Website suggestion" in the email title. As the result of one such suggestion, a directory will be up on the website soon to help you contact District Officers.

The District is us – the members, the clubs. We are heading in the right direction.

In the coming months, when seeking to help our members, our clubs and ourselves let's use Peter Blake's simple strategy:

This thing we are about to do, or not do, "will it make the boat go faster?"

Let's start paddling 😊

Ngā mihi
Rob Woolley
District 72 Director