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# DISTRICT 17 DISTRICT COUNCIL MEETING #2 2025- 2026 MINUTES

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May 16, 2026



## Table of Contents

|     |                                                     |    |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1.  | Call to Order and Welcome.....                      | 3  |
| 2.  | Welcome .....                                       | 3  |
| 3.  | Inspirational Opening .....                         | 3  |
| 4.  | Reading of District Mission .....                   | 3  |
| 5.  | Motion to Amend Agenda.....                         | 3  |
| 6.  | Credentials Committee Report .....                  | 3  |
| 7.  | Explanatory Remarks.....                            | 4  |
| 8.  | Review & Adoption of Agenda .....                   | 4  |
|     | 8.1 Vote on Amendment to Agenda .....               | 4  |
|     | 8.2 Adoption of Agenda as Amended .....             | 4  |
| 9.  | Apologies.....                                      | 4  |
| 10. | Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting .....       | 5  |
| 11. | Business Requiring Adoption .....                   | 5  |
|     | 11.1 Profit & Loss Report .....                     | 5  |
|     | 11.2 Audit Committee Report .....                   | 6  |
|     | 11.3 Alignment of Clubs in Areas and Divisions..... | 6  |
| 12  | . Business Not Requiring Adoption .....             | 7  |
|     | 12.1 District Director Report .....                 | 7  |
|     | 12.2 Program Quality Director Report.....           | 7  |
|     | 12.3 Club Growth Director Report.....               | 8  |
|     | 12.4 District Public Relations Manager.....         | 8  |
|     | 12.5 Immediate Past District Director Report .....  | 9  |
|     | 12.6 Division Director Reports .....                | 9  |
|     | 12.7 Area Director Reports .....                    | 9  |
| 13. | Additional Reports.....                             | 9  |
|     | 13.1 District Leadership Committee Report .....     | 9  |
| 14. | Election of District Officers .....                 | 10 |
|     | 14.1 District Director .....                        | 10 |
|     | 14.2 Program Quality Director.....                  | 10 |
|     | 14.3 Club Growth Director .....                     | 10 |
|     | 14.4 Central Division Director .....                | 11 |
|     | 14.5 Northern Division Director .....               | 11 |
|     | 14.6 Southern Division Director .....               | 11 |
| 15. | New Business .....                                  | 12 |
| 16. | Announcements.....                                  | 12 |

|     |                         |    |
|-----|-------------------------|----|
| 17. | Next Meeting .....      | 12 |
| 18. | Meeting Adjourned ..... | 12 |

# District 17 Minutes DECM # 2

## May 16, 2026

### 1. Call to Order and Welcome

District Director, Tom Bielski, called the meeting to order at 1.30pm.

### 2. Welcome

District Director, Tom Bielski then welcomed all and thanked attendees for their commitment to the District. He gave an Acknowledgement to Country, stated it is his pleasure to be presiding over this meeting. He then introduced the District Team.

### 3. Inspirational Opening

Central Division Director, Ian Pickens gave the Inspirational Opening saying he knows that all Presidents and Vice Presidents Education present today are working hard to have their club achieve the goals they set at the beginning of this Toastmasters year. He inspired us to begin this type of work at the beginning of the year and to see how much faster we achieved our goals, how much easier this time of year would be and how much higher our club could achieve. He encouraged us to make Toastmasters no longer the secret society it is today. He concluded by saying it is always his pleasure to watch members grow in Toastmasters. You can be the person who does this too.

### 4. Reading of District Mission

Club Growth Director, Desmond Miranda, read the District Mission.

### 5. Motion to Amend Agenda

District Director, Tom Bielski moved the motion to amend the agenda - to move the Credentials Report and Explanatory Remarks to before the Review of and Adoption of the Agenda.

**Motion seconded:** Program Quality Director, Maree Pickens.

### 6. Credentials Committee Report

District Parliamentarian, Gavin Hyslop, offered the Credentials Report as follows;

- Club Votes - 50 of 116, 39 was minimum to meet
- District Votes - 15
- Total Votes - 65

**A Quorum is met.**

## 7. Explanatory Remarks

District Parliamentarian, Gavin Hyslop, offered Explanatory Remarks to explain that this meeting would follow Robert's Rules and that we will not vote on items only requiring adoption.

## 8. Review & Adoption of Agenda

### 8.1 Vote on Amendment to Agenda

District Director, Tom Bielski, presented the amendment to the agenda as presented to delegates in Item 5, be adopted.

**Moved;** District Director, Tom Bielski

**Seconded:** PQD, Maree Pickens

**Votes For** 56

**Votes Against** 1

**Carried**

### 8.2 Adoption of Agenda as Amended

**Votes For** 61

**Votes Against** 0

**Carried**

## 9. Apologies

District Administration Manager, Robyn Richards, announced that she had received 10 apologies via email and this list was uploaded to the chat.

She then called for any apologies from the floor.

Jeff Zhang, Immediate Past District Director

Usha Ramen, Area C2 Director

Andrea Powell, President Young Guns

Jessica Gough, President Toasting Human Energy

Grace Young, President CPA

Paul Version, President Mount Hawthorn

Scott Post, VPE Mount Hawthorn

were tendered from the floor.

**Apologies were accepted.**

## 10. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

District Administration Manager, Robyn Richards, moved that the minutes of the previous DCM which had been on the district website and distributed via email be accepted.

**Moved:** Club Growth Director, Desmond Miranda

**Seconded:** Central Division Director, Ian Pickens

**Votes For** 58

**Votes Against** 2

**Carried**

**Discussion:** Nil

## 11. Business Requiring Adoption

### 11.1 Profit & Loss Report

District Finance Manager, Kalavathy Govindarajoo, submitted the Profit & Loss Report for the year up unto Month end February 2026 as distributed via email to delegates and on the District 17 website for confirmation. (See Tabled Report)

Questions from the floor were called for by District Finance Manager, Kalavathy Govindarajoo

Vice President Education Swan Toastmasters Club, Bill Hewitt asked if the District Conference had its own line in the report.

District Director, Tom Bielski took this question and advised that Toastmasters international require District Conferences to be cost neutral, there fore there was not a separate line in the Profit & Loss Report, however members could be assured that the conference ran at cost neutral and District ran according to Toastmasters International Governing Documents.

Vice President Education Northern Gourmet Toastmasters Club aske why there was \$1200.00 in the District Reserve Account. What did this line mean?

District Director, Tom Bielski advised that according to Toastmasters Internation Governing Documents, they held in a Reserve Account in the U.S. a percentage of the District funds in case of being required should the District run at a loss etc.

As there were no further questions from the floor, District Director, Tom Bielski thanked District Finance Manager, Kalavathy Govindarajoo for her Report.

**Motion:** That the District 17 Profit & Loss Report for the year up unto Month end February 2026 as distributed via email to delegates and on the District 17 website be adopted.

**Moved:** Vice President Education Swan Toastmasters, Bill Hewitt

**Seconded:** Vice President Education Northern Gourmet Toastmasters, Kevin Sansome

**Adopted**

(See Tabled Report)

## 11.2 Audit Committee Report

District Director, Tom Bielski, advised that our Audit Committee had not finalised their deliberations and that the Report would be furnished to him at the earliest convenience. The Report will then be uploaded to the District 17 website and distributed ASAP.

## 11.3 Alignment of Clubs in Areas and Divisions

District Club Growth Director, Desmond Miranda explained the Tabled Report and asked for question from the floor.

President Swan & Banyanda Toastmasters Clubs asked why there were 5 Areas in Southern Division and only 4 in the other two Divisions, when all divisions had almost the same number of clubs?

District Club Growth Director, Desmond Miranda advised that the alignment committee had tried to allow for growth in all Divisions and because of the geographical layout of Southern Division the Alignment Committee saw this as the best way to allow this growth.

Vice President Education Carpathian Toastmasters Club asked was it relevant the Carpathian now have 27 members not 22 as stated in the report?

District Club Growth Director, Desmond Miranda advised that the numbers in clubs on the report were merely to try to establish the number of member in each Area & Division. This allowed the committee to align roughly an even number of clubs and members to each Area and Division. He didn't think a rise of 5 members would disturb the balance in the Area.

President Habla Hispanic Toastmasters Club asked why her club had been realigned to Area C1 from C4, since all the other clubs in Area C4 met in the same geographical area?

District Club Growth Director, Desmond Miranda advised that the committee had endeavoured to even the Areas with the number of clubs and members and since so many clubs met in the same geographical area, it was prudent to move one to an adjoining area.

**Motion:** District Council approves and adopts the Realignment of Clubs and Divisions in District 17 for the year 2026-2027 as distributed and discussed today.

**Moved:** District Club Growth Director, Desmond Miranda

**Seconded:** District Public Relations Manager, Angela Booker

(See Tabled Report)

District Director, Tom Bielski thanked the Alignment of Clubs and Divisions Committee for their work and report.

## 12. Business Not Requiring Adoption

### 12.1 District Director Report

District Director, Tom Bielski, stated that he is so proud of our district and the way clubs have been carrying on their business this Toastmasters year. He explained that further to the report he submitted for distribution and on the District Website, he wanted to advise that our District currently is the third highest district in membership growth in the world and is now ranked in the top 10 Districts in the world. He advised that during the month of April, we added more new members than we had in the 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> quarters of this year.

He asked delegates to go back to their clubs and thank the members for their dedication and work in building your club and our district.

He asked delegates to work with their other club officers and members to keep working towards achieving Distinguished Status.

He congratulated the 4 clubs who have already achieved this status along with Area Directors, Judith Allen and Mariana Paliu, for achieving Distinguished Area status.

He gave his thanks to every member and wished the members great success to finish this year strong and continue that strength into next Toastmasters year.

#### **Accepted**

(See Tabled Report)

### 12.2 Program Quality Director Report

Program Quality Director, Maree Pickens, was excited to report that with only 6 weeks to go in this Toastmasters year, our district is looking fabulous, but there is still work to be done. She reiterated District Director, Tom's words about continuing to work towards Distinguished status with submitting Levels in Pathways and adding new members when they join.

Turning to the upcoming District Conference, she is pleased to announce that all contestants, judges and officials have been confirmed or appointed, so the contests look like being a huge success.

We are aiming for 120 bookings by May 18<sup>th</sup> and at that time, bookings will be closed as we will have met the venue capacity.

The Conference team are working on planning a Saturday night event. Watch this space.

Since the appointment of the District Pathways Champion, Karen Passamani, they have run 18 sessions across the 2 Monday holidays over Easter and Anzac Day, which has helped numerous members understand Pathways and Base Camp much better.



She reminded delegates to point out the Vintage Paths now available for members who would like to try their hand at training manuals from the past. Remember that members must have completed at least Level 1 in another current path before purchasing a Vintage Path.

She has been helping CGD, Desmond with Demonstration Meetings and visiting smaller clubs to help strengthen them and encouraging all members to continue working until the end of this year. She is certain we can achieve at least Presidents Distinguished District Status and would love to see us attain Smedley Distinguished Status. She believes this is possible.

**Accepted**

(See Tabled Report)

### 12.3 Club Growth Director Report

Club Growth Director, Desmond Miranda stated that this year has been a whirlwind for him. The goals the Trio set at the beginning of the year scared him a little, but he has come to terms with it as the year went on.

He is pleased to announce that we have already added 4 new clubs and even though we have 1 club Not in Good Standing, he feels sure we can finish the year strong. We have another club almost ready to Charter which only requires 1 more member.

There are still a couple of clubs still in the pipeline that he and the team are working with. They include; Rio Tinto, Yugo, Home City Church and City of Canning.

Regarding Membership Renewals, we are sitting well currently, we are almost at Presidents Distinguished level for payments. He is aiming for Smedley Distinguished level.

He concluded by encouraging all delegates to return invigorated to their club ready to push to the very end of this year to achieve our best result possible.

**Accepted**

(See Tabled Report)

### 12.4 District Public Relations Manager

District Public Relations Manager, Angela Booker stated she has had a wonderful time this year and has learned so much whilst promoting district events and supporting clubs with stimulating events which enhanced the member experience for all members.

Her key points she wished to outline are;

The launch of "Every Club Add 1 More Member before June 30" incentive. She encouraged all clubs to take part in this.

She gave an overview of the new carousel on the District website. She stated this was a huge learning curve for her, but she is excited with the result and hopes all members love it as much as she does.

She wanted to celebrate all club Vice Presidents Public Relations for upping their Social Media presence. It had been refreshing to see the growth in this area.

The success of the Matagarup Bridge Walk social event. This exceeded expectations and she hope it will be a continuing annual event on the district calendar.

She concluded by encouraging all clubs to just take some small steps to increase awareness. Sometimes it the small things that bring more success than big events.

**Accepted**

(See Tabled Report)

## 12.5 Immediate Past District Director Report

In the absence of Immediate Past District Director, Jeff Zhang, District Director, Tom Bielsk went over the report he had received.

He asked that the report be accepted.

**Accepted**

## 12.6 Division Director Reports

District Director, Tom Bielski asked that the Division Director Reports as Tabled be accepted.

**Accepted**

(See Tabled Reports)

## 12.7 Area Director Reports

District Director, Tom Bielski asked that the Area Director Reports as Tabled be accepted.

**Accepted**

(See Tabled Reports)

# 13. Additional Reports

## 13.1 District Leadership Committee Report

District Director, Tom Bielski, gave the report in the absence of Immediate Past District Director and District Leadership committee Chair, Jeff Zhang. The report is not complete even though we have nominations for all roles. He explained that for Central Division we only received 1 nomination, and we are required to have 2, however all other roles met or exceeded requirements. He congratulated the members for their commitment to our District and the Committee for their diligence in attaining these nominations.

**Motion:** That the District Council delegates accept the District Leadership Committee Report as issued to District Director, Tom Bielski be accepted.

**Moved:** District Director Tom Bielski

**Seconded:** Central Division Director, Ian Pickens

## 14. Election of District Officers

### 14.1 District Director

1 nomination received: Maree Pickens

As this role is uncontested, District Director, Tom Bielski asked District Administration Manager to cast 1 vote.

District Administration Manager, Robyn Richards cast 1 vote for Maree Pickens

**Maree Pickens declared District Director 2026-2027**

### 14.2 Program Quality Director

1 nomination received: Desmond Miranda

As this role is uncontested, District Director, Tom Bielski asked District Administration Manager to cast 1 vote.

District Administration Manager, Robyn Richards cast 1 vote for Desmond Miranda

**Desmond Miranda declared Program Quality Director 2026-2027**

### 14.3 Club Growth Director

District Director, Tom Bielski read the 3 nominations for Club Growth Director and stated that they would be offered the opportunity to speak to their nomination for 2 minutes, in alphabetical order of their surnames.

**Speaking Order:**

Souzy Theophilopoulos

Cassie Walraven

Ross Wilkinson

**Votes:**

|                       |        |
|-----------------------|--------|
| Souzy Theophilopoulos | 35%    |
| Cassie Walraven       | 33.33% |
| Ross Wilkinson        | 31.67% |

District Director, Tom Bielski explained that a majority is required and as there was not a majority, a second vote would take place where the 3<sup>rd</sup> person would be removed.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vote:**

|                       |        |
|-----------------------|--------|
| Souzy Theophilopoulos | 61.02% |
| Cassie Walraven       | 38.98% |
| No Vote               | 20.27  |

**Souzy Theophilopoulos declared Club Growth Director for 25026-2027 year**

## 14.4 Central Division Director

1 nomination received: Mariana Paliu

As this role is uncontested, District Director, Tom Bielski asked District Administration Manager to cast 1 vote.

District Administration Manager, Robyn Richards cast 1 vote for Mariana Paliu

**Mariana Paliu declared Central Division Director 2026-2027**

## 14.5 Northern Division Director

District Director, Tom Bielski read the 2 nominations for Northern Division Director and stated that they would be offered the opportunity to speak to their nomination for 2 minutes, in alphabetical order of their surnames.

**Speaking Order:**

Eloyise Braskic

Jo Parker

Votes:

|                 |       |
|-----------------|-------|
| Eloyise Braskic | 45.9% |
|-----------------|-------|

|           |       |
|-----------|-------|
| Jo Parker | 54.1% |
|-----------|-------|

**Jo Parker declared Northern Division Director for 25026-2027 year**

## 14.6 Southern Division Director

District Director, Tom Bielski read the 2 nominations for Southern Division Director and stated that they would be offered the opportunity to speak to their nomination for 2 minutes, in alphabetical order of their surnames.

**Speaking Order:**

Frank Crisafio

Suthan Mayilvaganam

Votes:

|                |        |
|----------------|--------|
| Frank Crisafio | 77.97% |
|----------------|--------|

|                     |        |
|---------------------|--------|
| Suthan Mayilvaganam | 22.03% |
|---------------------|--------|

**Frank Crisafio declared Southern Division Director for 25026-2027 year**

District Director, Tom Bielski thanked all those who nominated and congratulated all those elected. He is proud that our district has members always willing to put their hand up to lead. He then invited District Director Elect, Maree Pickens to give her acceptance speech.

**District Director Elect, Maree Pickens acceptance speech**

I accept this role with gratitude and gratefulness for your trust in me to lead our district. I wish to thank Jeff and Tom for setting up our district for this success and congratulate Desmond for his growth this year.

I wish to thank Ian and the many others who have influenced me throughout my leadership journey. You have been wonderful Mentors and volunteers to our district.

This district success belongs to every member. We exceeded our expectations and I will be forever grateful for the support I have received.

I'm not going to stop working in my role as Program Quality Director until the very last day of this Toastmasters year, but I will also be preparing for the year ahead with excitement.

Our district is flourishing and I urge you to be a part of this. We need many roles filled to support our District Leadership Team. Please consider putting your hand up for one of these roles.

We are special in District 17, and I am proud to be a part of a wonderful district. Finally, I would like to thank you for your trust in me to lead our district for the next year.

## 15. New Business

No new items of business were submitted.

## 16. Announcements

District Director Tom Bielski announced that it has been his pleasure to have worked with all of you and thanked you for the support he has received. He is grateful for every member who gave support throughout the year.

He thanked Votapex for their support in running the meeting, especially Danni for staying the length of the meeting in case we needed support.

He thanked every President and Vice President Education for the support to all members of our district and encouraged them to keep up the great work.

Finally, he encouraged all clubs to hold their election of new club officers ASAP and as well as submitting them on Club Central, to please advise the trio in order for Club Officer Training notifications to get to the right people.

## 17. Next Meeting

The date, time & venue for the next meeting would be advised ASAP.

## 18. Meeting Adjourned

District Director, Tom Bielski, adjourned the meeting at 3.25pm.