



District 17

District Executive Committee Meeting

District Executive Committee Meeting #1 – 2026-2027

Minutes

5 September 2026

DRAFT



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1. Call to Order

District Director, Maree Pickens, called the meeting to order at 1.01pm.

2. Welcome

District Director, Maree Pickens, welcomed the District Executive Committee by name and gave an Acknowledgement of Country.



She shared District 17's achievement of Smedley Distinguished for the 2025-2026 year. She acknowledged the challenges the District will face this year, noting that they are not insurmountable in achieving the goal of Smedley Distinguished for 2026-2027.

3. Inspiration

Area S34 Director, Isaiah Eringo, offered the Inspiration. He shared that each leader is the spark, and that their influence is bigger than their title. When sparks come together, they become a fire, and that fire lights the whole District.

4. Explanatory Remarks

District Parliamentarian, Gavin Hyslop, offered Explanatory Remarks, explaining that this meeting was by invitation only and that Robert's Rules would be followed.

5. Apologies

District Administration Manager, Melanie Jackson, announced that she had received 2 apologies via email from:

- Area N22 Director, Jill Kadota
- Area C4 Director, David Sawyer

She then called for any apologies from the floor. As there were none, the apologies were accepted.

6. District Mission

Club Growth Director, Souzy Theophilopoulos, shared the District Mission.

7. Credentials Committee Report

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

Total Votes This Year	23
Simple Majority	9
Quorum (50% + 1)	13
Attendees	17

A quorum was met.

8. Review & Adoption of Agenda

District Administration Manager, Melanie Jackson, moved a motion to adopt the following amendments to the Agenda:

1. That Item 18(a) be moved to follow Item 9, and be renamed from "Area Directors based outside of District 17 geographic area" to "Enabling Participation of Remote District Leaders in District 17".



2. That Item 11 be amended to “Review” only.
3. That Item 12 be amended to “Review” only.
4. That Item 13 be amended to “Review” only.
5. That Item 14 be amended to “Review” only.
6. That the DEC Meeting be closed after Item 19.
7. That an additional item be added to Item 18 Other Business, being “Discussion on GST changes”.

Seconded: Immediate Past District Director, Tom Bielski

ADOPTED

District Administration Manager, Melanie Jackson, then moved a motion to adopt the Agenda as amended.

Seconded: District Finance Manager, Kala Govindarajoo

ADOPTED

9. Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting

Immediate Past District Director, Tom Bielski, moved a motion to adopt the Minutes of the District Executive Committee Meeting held on 18 April 2026.

Seconded: Program Quality Director, Desmond Miranda

ADOPTED

9A. Enabling Participation of Remote District Leaders in District 17

Club Growth Director, Souzy Theophilopoulos, moved a motion that the District Executive Committee supports District 17 enabling Members to serve as Remote District Leaders, both Fully Remote and Partially Remote.

District Director, Maree Pickens, shared background to the motion, including that the District has not yet adopted participation of Remote District Leaders.

Seconded: Immediate Past District Director, Tom Bielski

ADOPTED

10. Confirmation of Appointed Officers

District Director, Maree Pickens, presented the list of appointed officers to be put forward to the District Council Meeting for formal endorsement.

11. District Budget Review

District Director, Maree Pickens, submitted the District Budget to date, as distributed via email, for review.

She shared insights into the draft 2026-2027 budget, including the budget breakdown, Policy maximums, and the break-even position.

12. District Profit & Loss Statement Review



District Director, Maree Pickens, invited District Finance Manager, Kala Govindarajoo, to report. She explained that the Profit and Loss statement cannot be finalised at this stage, as the District is awaiting Toastmasters International approval.

13. Audit Committee Report Review

District Director, Maree Pickens, invited Immediate Past District Director, Tom Bielski, to report. He explained that the audit has not been completed at this stage.

14. District Success Plan Review

District Director, Maree Pickens, reported that the District Success Plan is in progress and will be presented for review prior to the District Council Meeting. The District Success Plan will be approved at the District Council Meeting and submitted to Toastmasters International prior to 30 September.

15. Presentation of Reports on Progress Towards District Success Plan

15a) District Director's Report

District Director, Maree Pickens, announced that District 17 is aiming to achieve Smedley Distinguished this program year. 35 clubs achieved Distinguished last year, and the District is aiming for 38 Distinguished clubs this year.

Maree encouraged District leaders to delegate to their leadership teams in order to grow the District Leadership as a whole.

15b) Program Quality Director's Report

Program Quality Director, Desmond Miranda, reported that the District is targeting Smedley Distinguished, noting that enhancing the member experience results in the achievement of Club, Area, Division and District goals.

On Club Officer Training, every club achieved a minimum of 4 officers attending training. He acknowledged the assistance of Area and Division Directors in completing Club Officer Training.

15c) Club Growth Director's Report

Club Growth Director, Souzy Theophilopoulos, reported that the District has started strongly, with growth in both club numbers and membership.

She reported a strong participation rate in the World Cup Challenge, and that a large number of clubs have trained 5 or more officers.

A large Open House will be held in October, and Officers are encouraged to participate and support the event. New incentives are to come.

15d) District Public Relations Manager Report

District Public Relations Manager, Mairia Te Are, discussed the aim to support the District 17 vision, inform members, and grow public interest beyond clubs, built around themes of belonging, warmth, growth and human connection.

She reported on the work of the Public Relations group, noting that the four-step campaign for renewals was a success, and that there has been growth in Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Meetup members.



With Division contests coming up, she appealed to Division Directors to work with Public Relations on promotion of the contests and the Open Night.

15e) Immediate Past District Director Report

Immediate Past District Director, Tom Bielski, asked to be appointed as District Leadership Committee Chair for 2027-2028.

He noted that the District is strong and encouraged the team to plan for District leadership next year.

16. Division Director Reports

16a) Central Division Director Report

Central Division Director, Mariana Paliu, reported that the Division is well organised and that all Area Directors have completed their club visits.

35 new members have been added and contests are underway. There are 2 leads for new clubs, with a demonstration meeting planned for October. 60% of clubs have submitted a Club Success Plan.

16b) Northern Division Director Report

Northern Division Director, Jo Parker, reported on plans for growth with at-risk clubs and on increasing the visibility of Northern Division, including placing pamphlets in libraries and booking stalls in shopping centres.

There are 2 potential new clubs: Edith Cowan University, and a new rising leaders club.

16c) Southern Division Director Report

Southern Division Director, Frank Crisafio, reported that Club Officer Training in Bunbury was well received, and that the Southern Division newsletter has been released. Contest dates have been set.

45% of clubs in Southern Division have 7 officers trained, and 67% have submitted Club Success Plans.

Southern Division is taking on the organisation of the Quiz Night. A committee has been established, with its first meeting on 6 September. The Quiz Night will be held on Saturday 14 November 2026.

17. Area Director Reports

Area reports were submitted for all Areas with the exception of Area S33. Attending Area Directors each gave a brief one-minute highlight of their report.

18. Other Business

18a) Triple Crown Criteria Adjustment

District Director, Maree Pickens, asked District Parliamentarian, Gavin Hyslop, to present this item.

He explained that the District's Triple Crown criteria are not aligned with Toastmasters International, and that it is proposed to change the criteria to align with Toastmasters International. This will be tabled at the District Council Meeting.

18b) Criteria for Awarding Toastmaster of the Year Award



District Director, Maree Pickens, explained that District 17 is proposing that the Toastmaster of the Year award only be able to be awarded to a member once. This will be tabled at the District Council Meeting for approval.

18c) GST Announcement

District Director, Maree Pickens, explained that Toastmasters International has formally advised every member of the GST change, effective 15 September (US time).

More than half of our clubs collect dues from members. GST is only applicable on Toastmasters International fees paid online; clubs are not required to collect GST on money they collect for club activities, room hire and similar expenses.

Eight countries are now subject to local taxes for Toastmasters International products. The FAQs on the Toastmasters International website were highlighted, and Toastmasters International is proactively researching tax compliance requirements worldwide.

19. Next Meeting

Saturday 28 November 2026

- DECM – 10:30am–1:30pm (hybrid – online or face-to-face at Curtin University, TBC)
- Club Officer Training – 2:00pm–5:30pm (face-to-face at Curtin University, TBC)
- Christmas Sundowner – 5:30pm–7:00pm (Milky Way Bar, Curtin University, TBC)

20. Close of DEC Meeting

District Director, Maree Pickens, reminded attendees of the District Council Meeting on 19 September, with login from 12:30pm for a 1:00pm start.

District Director, Maree Pickens, adjourned the meeting at 3.25pm.