

Frequently Asked Questions about Toastmasters

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[What is Toastmasters?](#)

Toastmasters is a training and educational organisation which teaches its members communication, leadership, training and management skills, and builds their self-confidence and leadership skills through public speaking. It is the largest and most successful organisation of its type in the world.

[How long has Toastmasters been around?](#)

Toastmasters International was founded in 1924 and now has more than 332,000 members in over 15,400 Clubs in over 100 countries around the world. There are over 700 clubs and 13,000 members in Australia, with over 300 of these clubs being in NSW or the ACT. As a Toastmaster you will be welcome in any of these Clubs.

[Why do people join Toastmasters?](#)

People join Toastmasters in order to:

- Practice public speaking and enhance their presentation skills
- Develop the skills to persuade and convince others
- Learn to put their ideas across clearly and with conviction
- Improve their self-confidence before a group of people
- Learn to think quickly and clearly under pressure
- Learn to listen effectively and critically
- Learn to supportively evaluate someone else's presentation
- Train to become a good leader

What are club meetings like?

Each club is different in its own way with some meeting in the evenings while others meet during lunchtime or in the mornings. Some meet weekly while others meet fortnightly or monthly. Some are corporate clubs from specific organisations while others have diverse memberships from throughout the community.

Meetings run to a set agenda with each role allocated to a member and given a specific timeframe. This usually includes impromptu speaking called “Table Topics” in Toastmasters and some prepared speeches from the communications manuals. Other speaking roles may include welcoming guests, giving a toast and running the meeting, or being the ‘Toastmaster’ for the meeting. Everything in Toastmasters is evaluated in a friendly and supportive manner using a system of commendations as well as recommendations for improvement to assist member development.

Regardless of the style and program, guests are always welcome to come and see if it is right for them with no obligation. Guests are often surprised at how supportive club meetings are and how much they learn from their first visit.

What specifically will I learn to do as a Toastmaster?

In a Toastmasters Club you will learn, by doing,

- How to give an impromptu speech
- How to give a prepared speech
- How to evaluate what you hear
- How to introduce speakers
- How to be a more effective leader of people
- How to Chair and run meetings
- And grow in Confidence

How do I learn these skills?

When you join a Toastmasters Club you receive a complete training kit covering all aspects of speaking and evaluation. This kit includes both a Communication manual and a Leadership manual. These manuals reflect the years of experience Toastmasters has in helping people just like you. They take you step by step through the art of making and evaluating speeches and developing leadership skills. br />

In particular you learn by doing with your efforts evaluated by your fellow Club members. You will be gradually introduced to the various roles within a Toastmasters meeting. Gaining proficiency in these helps build up your communication and leadership skills.

How soon will I be an expert?

People all progress at their own pace. Some move faster than others but everyone who joins Toastmasters and participates in the program can be sure they will become a competent speaker. Your skills develop gradually. As you proceed you will find that situations that once terrified you, now hold no fears for you.

Is it expensive?

No. In fact in comparison to various courses, seminars, programs, cassette and video kits offered through the media, Toastmasters is the least expensive and in our opinion the most effective way to learn public speaking and to develop confidence and self esteem. The initial joining fee is normally around \$50 and \$70 Semi Annual Dues

Who can join Toastmasters?

Anyone over the age of 18 years may join Toastmasters. With over 300 clubs in New South Wales and the ACT, there is sure to be a club near you! You can find details of Toastmasters clubs by clicking the Find a Club link.

What do I need to do to join Toastmasters?

You need to visit a Club. Visitors are always assured of a friendly welcome at every Toastmasters Club. Visitors may attend one or more Clubs a number of times to see the Toastmasters program in action without any obligation. Clubs differ in size, culture, types of venues, meeting times and lengths and meal arrangements, so "shopping around" is sometimes necessary to find a suitable Club.

How do I choose a club to visit?

Go to toastmasters.org.au and click on [Find a Club](#) section to find details of the Clubs in your area. Please use the contact phone number or email address to contact a Club before you visit them. This ensures that you will be expected and enables the Club to explain any special aspects of their next meetings.

In this area there are the following clubs:

- Port Macquarie Toastmasters, 1st, 3rd & 5th Wednesdays, 7 – 9 PM, Tenison Woods Centre, Lochivar Place, Port Macquarie
- Hastings Morning Talkers, every 2nd week, 7 – 8:30 AM, TGs Inn, Horton St, Port Macquarie
- Taree RSL Toastmasters, 2nd & 4th Thursdays, 7:30 – 9:30PM, Club Taree, Wingham Road, Taree
- Great Lakes Speakers Club, 2nd & 4th Tuesdays, 7 – 9PM, Club Forster, Strand St, Forster

What is the difference between our short public speaking courses and joining a club?

Toastmasters conducts a number of [intensive public speaking courses](#). A number of our experienced Toastmasters members run community and corporate “**Speechcraft**” courses for adults and “**Youth Leadership**” courses for people of school age. Each is generally of about **6-8 weeks** in duration with **2-3 hours time requirement per week**, and might have **10 participants** – all working through a **structured programme of learning**. Courses offer an opportunity to learn and practice both impromptu speaking (speaking without preparation time) and prepared speeches.

For many these intensive courses are the boost they need but often people who take an intensive course join a club after to continue their development. Those joining clubs often get ‘credit’ in their new manuals for the speeches completed in their intensive course.

By [joining a club](#) members get to experience the benefits from a Speechcraft course, but through a regular **ongoing involvement** as part of a **broader club with a mix of experience levels**. You **proceed at your own pace** and learn alongside others by participating in the club meetings. Each club meeting has an agenda, with members allocated particular roles to practice and increase their skills – providing opportunities for all members whether they are new members or have been associated with Toastmasters for many years. You will have the support of club members and may have a mentor appointed to provide personalised assistance.

Toastmaster **clubs also offer leadership opportunities**. There are elected club officer roles as well as a defined leadership track that can help you advance both professionally and personally.

Club members can also move through to **more specialised and advanced manuals and programs** as they develop.

[What do I do if I need more information?](#)

Ring me (Justyn Phillips) on 0412 288 320

phone 1300 653 876 or

Go to toastmasters.org.au and click on [Find a Club](#).