

## **DARLING DOWNS TOASTMASTERS CLUB INC**

Club No. 3574 in District 69

Based in [Toowoomba](#), Queensland, Australia on the famous Darling Downs.

**TOASTMASTERS** ([Toastmasters International](#)) is a nonprofit educational organization that operates clubs worldwide for the purpose of helping members improve their [communication](#), [public speaking](#), and [leadership](#) skills. Through its thousands of member clubs, Toastmasters International offers a program of communication and leadership projects designed to help people learn the arts of speaking, listening, and thinking. The organization grew out of a single club, Smedley Chapter One Club, which would become the first Toastmasters club. It was founded by [Ralph C. Smedley](#) on October 22, 1924, at the YMCA in Santa Ana, California, United States. Toastmasters International was incorporated under California law on December 19, 1932. Throughout its history, Toastmasters has served over four million people, and today the organization serves over 292,000 members in 122 countries, through its over 14,350 member clubs (see TI Wikipedia entry).

### **Darling Downs Toastmasters description**

Darling Downs Toastmasters Club is one of over 14,000 clubs world-wide that come under the umbrella of Toastmasters International, based in Rancho Santa Margarita, California. As a Toastmasters club, it is a volunteer non-profit service organization, which aims to assist people to attain self-confidence, speaking and communication skills, leadership and listening skills. This is achieved by assisting members to work through educational manuals which outline different types of speeches and the art of presenting these speeches. Each new member is allotted a Mentor who ensures the Mentee understands and performs the assignments to the best of his/her ability. Members learn basic meeting procedure, with the reference book for correct official Meeting Procedure in Australia being *Guide for Meetings and Organisations* <sup>[1]</sup> by N. E. Renton, 8th Edition (in use as at 2014). For more information on the system of Toastmastering, refer to the Toastmasters International entry under the title "Educational Program".

### **Darling Downs Toastmasters Club History**

The Darling Downs Toastmasters Club (DDTC) has been in operation for over 50 years, having celebrated its 50th anniversary on 1st June, 2013. The first Toastmasters Club was formed in USA in October, 1924, having been the brainchild of Dr Ralph C. Smedley. It took almost 4 decades for it to find its way to Australia where it was first introduced by Doug Power of Toowoomba, Queensland. Doug had seen it at work in Canada, so on his return home, he started The Toowoomba Toastmasters Club. Within a very short time other clubs were being formed in Australia, and the first to charter was Woolloongong, New South Wales, in August, 1957. The Toowoomba Club chartered in February, 1958. Each club then set about starting up more new clubs. DDTC was sponsored by Toowoomba Toastmasters Club. On 15.03.63 a demonstration meeting was convened by Leslie Hooper, a leading Toowoomba businessman and a member of the Toowoomba Toastmasters Club. On 02.04.63 the first meeting of the "club in formation" was held with John Shilliday being elected President. The DDTC chartered on 01.06.63 and the Presidency in that first year was shared by Ian James and Clive Munro. DDTC was the fourth club to join the Toastmasters Council of Australia which was the body overseeing all of Australia prior to the introduction of

Districts in 1973, at which time, Districts 69 and 70 were formed. District 69 (D69) included part of northern [New South Wales](#), [Queensland](#), [Northern Territory](#). So DDTC was now part of D69. Because of the growth in numbers of clubs, the D69 has since been divided into Divisions, and then into Areas, and DDTC is in Western Division, Area 1. The parent club, TTC folded (but has since revived), and DDTC is now the oldest continuous club in Area 1, and the second oldest in Queensland. In the early years, from 1963 to 1977, there was a strict dress code with jackets and ties being expected. However, in the heat of the summer, February 1977, it was resolved that shorts, long socks, and open necked shirts would be the dress code for spring and summer. In 1973, Toastmasters club membership was opened to women, as it had become clear that many women had already joined under male pseudonyms. However, Darling Downs Toastmasters Club did not allow female members until 16.08.83 when a motion was put by Bill Griffin to make it a mixed club. This caused much concern at the time, standing orders were suspended, and an animated discussion ensued. However, before long it was finally passed and put into practice. The club now has a very strong core of female members, as well male. As at June, 2014, Bill Griffin is the longest serving member of the club with continuous membership of over 45 years. He was presented with Life Membership at his 40th anniversary.

Before the admission of women members to DDTC, the all-male club organized and conducted the District 69 conference at Cherrabah resort, Warwick (Qld). This was a major event, and was the first occasion in Australia when all attenders were housed at the resort, made necessary by a major rain event which saw them flooded in for a few days.

DDTC sponsored clubs in surrounding districts as follows:

- Dalby Toastmasters Club was chartered in September 1966. This involved an hour's driving each way for DDTC members to attend.
- Stanthorpe Toastmasters Club chartered in October 1972. This was a 1.5 hours' drive for DDTC members to attend.
- Garden City Toastmasters Club in Toowoomba chartered in May 1976.
- Southern Cross Toastmasters Club in Toowoomba chartered in June 1982.
- Business Focus Toastmasters Club chartered in September, 1999.

Other clubs which were sponsored by DDTC members were at Tenterfield (NSW) which was a 3 hour drive each way, and [Kingaroy](#) (QLD) also about 3 hours away. It was common place in the early days for DDTC members to travel long distances for social and official visits to clubs.

In 2002, DDTC was awarded a \$20,000 [Living in Harmony](#) Grant by the Australian Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs. This grant allowed the club to promote the benefits of Toastmasters amongst the indigenous and multicultural communities in Toowoomba, thereby assisting harmony in the broader community, and giving those people a voice to make themselves heard. Three Speechcraft courses were held in 10 months, and all Toowoomba Toastmasters clubs assisted in this project, organized by Jan (Peacock) Griffin. It is understood that this was a world-wide first, and an obvious advantage to the aboriginal people in the district who are now their clan spokesmen. This was not continued when the government did not renew the grant the following year.

In 2007, DDTC joined the internet world by setting up a Club website, [www.darlingdowns.toastmasters.org](http://www.darlingdowns.toastmasters.org). This has been expanded each year, and in 2014 a Facebook page was created for the club. For more information on Darling Downs Toastmasters Club Inc, visit Website [\[1\]](#)