DISTRICT DIRECTORS' REPORT - 27 August 2021

Déjà vu

We had gone 160 days in an environment which was so close to normal and then New Zealand was struck with the Delta virus. We watched the devastation around the world and now we are under the same threat. As a District we need to be completely in line with the advice of the Government - to stay in our bubbles and follow all the conditions under lockdown Level 4. This will test us all and as we have been there before, the skills that we had obtained previously can be applied.

A notice went out to the district team advising all Areas not to run any online contests without notifying the District Director, as this will affect the balance of all remaining District contests. I had contacted WHQ to seek dispensation to their directive, and today that was declined. There will be no ability to revert to in-person contests if we switch to online contests. I strongly recommend and urge all clubs to complete their contests, even if it will be online. You will be advised as soon as a window of opportunity arises for Area contests to be held. We are all aware that this is not ideal, however, this gives those who are your club champions the chance to practice and sharpen their skills.

All Division Directors have been allocated a Division Zoom account. This is to ensure that all Area and Division Council meetings are catered for and if we end up with online contests, then the accounts are available. Speak to your Division Directors. Please watch this space as we do our very best to maintain in-person contests voiced by the members and determined at our July DEC meeting.

Resignations & Appointment

We have received a resignation from Hasnaa Ahmed, Area Director L2. We wish her all the very best for her toastmasters' journey, and welcome Hamish van Lier as her replacement. I welcome Hamish to the District team and ask that you give him all the support he needs as he will be starting on the backfoot.

Taupo Conference 2022

We have made a couple of changes to the conference in 2022. The venue has changed from Wairakei Resort to Suncourt, still in Taupo. The former venue has its challenges and in the interest of the District the decision to change venues was made. Another change is Wendy Booth from Rotorua has taken on the role as conference Chairman, assisted by Sean Walton. The Taupo Conference team is full of energy and will deliver a conference that we have missed over the last two years. Further updates and information to follow soon.

Virtual International Convention 2021

The International convention held 23 -29 August has been spectacular. The opening keynote speaker, Robyn Benincasa - adventure sports athlete, had an amazing story that you must hear to believe.

This year we had the election of the International Directors and Vice President candidates to vote for, and after an extensive interview process of the candidates we carried the votes of 141 clubs, both assigned and unassigned. I hope that the clubs that decided to vote on their own behalf, registered with credentials and cast their votes. At the time of writing the results had not been released.

International Training

The trio took this very seriously and completed all the pre-session work and this was to our advantage. It was evident that many of our fellow District officers had not, which was evident by their lack of participation. I am proud of our efforts and that of our fellow Region 12 Directors as we stood out in the training.

Kind and caring

These are hard times for all of us and it is important to keep an eye and ear out for your fellow toastmaster family members. We all react in different ways and suggest you call someone soon to see how they are doing. I had a couple of calls from members doing that exact act and was pleasantly surprised. We will get through this experience better and stronger as toastmasters. Help those who may have challenges with the technology as I am certain they will all appreciate the kind act.

Verbal Update as presented on 11 September 2021

The district recognises the changes in the Delta Alert Level from Level 4 to Level 2 for areas North and South of Auckland. This means that Area K1, Divisions P, Q & R can proceed with Area contests in person. The balance of the District will need to remain in Level 4 bubble conditions.

Alert 2 allows us up to a maximum of 50 people at a venue, and all need to wear masks. The Ministry of Health had been contacted and we have been advised that a speaker or contestant in a speech contest can remove their mask to speak and replace it as soon as they have given their speech. All conditions under this alert level MUST always be adhered to.

Stephen Budai DTM
District Director 2021-2022
0275 854 084