



Meets Weekly – Visitor Welcome!



70 minute high quality meeting!



Award Winning Community Club!



Contributions

Many thanks to Verica Kostova , Ali Bitaraf, Pragma Nandan, Jan Whitten, Mark Smallcombe, Linda Kang, Melanie Cheong, Mike Kano-McCallum and Amanda Hiu for the information supplied

Big thanks for photos shared by Amanda Hiu, Cecilia Cheong, Melanie Cheong, Anthony Lau, Julie Macken, Mike Kano-McCallum, Mark Smallcombe, and Linda Kang,

Mission: We provide a supportive and positive learning experience in which members are empowered to develop communication and leadership skills, resulting in greater self-confidence and personal growth.

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Editor

Amanda Hiu, VPPR

Welcome new members: Mark Smallcombe, Linda Kang, Karen Wong and Jessica Baaphy

Vice President Public Relations' Editorial Board

**2020 was a
phenomenal
year, and 2021
will be a year of
full of
possibilities.....**

2020 was phenomenal for me as I took on my new role as VPPR (Vice President Public Relations) in CER. I feel so privileged to be chosen for this role and absolutely love every minute of it! My journey has been incredible so far. The role keeps me committed, motivated and passionate in my toastmasters journey.

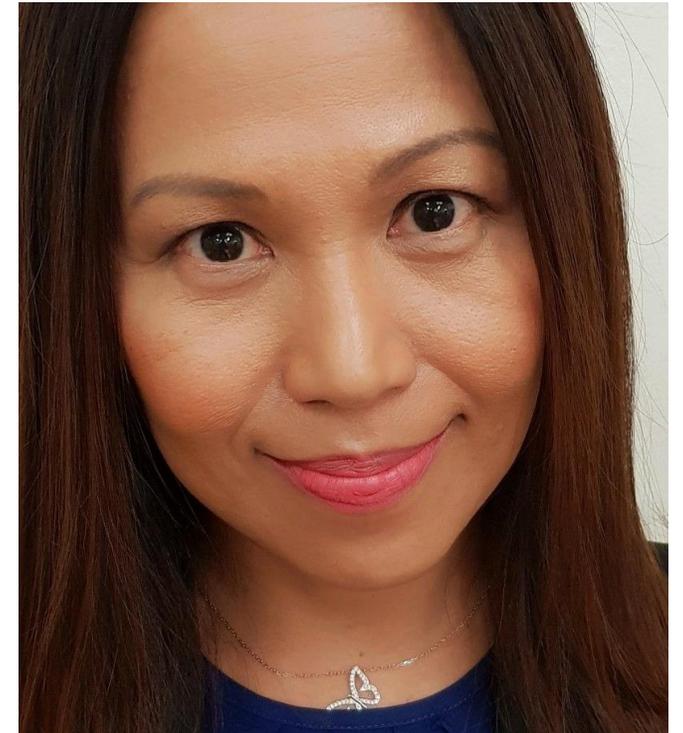
I love the possibilities of using my imagination and creativity to my fullest potential. I have learned so much especially from:

- Working together with the PR team in preparing and organising for promotional activities related to the International Toastmasters' Virtual Visit in November;
- Setting up a new Eventbrite registration page as a channel for visitors to register for the above event and future club meetings;
- Setting up new LinkedIn page in addition to the existing social media pages;
- Updating Chatswood Early Risers' (CER) websites; and
- Shooting and compiling YouTube videos

For the new year, I am looking to contribute by bringing exciting news and posts regarding CER / toastmasters, promoting the club via YouTube videos, as well as any other club promotional and member activities.

I welcome any feedback or comments on what you would like us to cover in next newsletter, club meetings, social media updates and CER activities.

Amanda Hiu, VPPR



From the Presidential Desk

2021 is a year to look forward to practicing speeches back on the podium, in front of a live audience.....

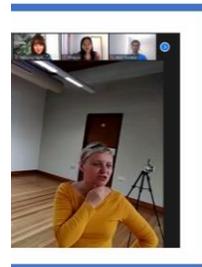
I love, love, love the New Year celebrations. For me, this a perfect time to acknowledge the past year and greet the new possibilities of the year to come.

What I am most looking forward in my Toastmasters journey for 2021, is to be able to practice speeches back on the podium, in front of a live audience.

Don't get me wrong. I immensely enjoy our clubs weekly Zoom meetings. Regardless if we meet on Zoom or in-person what makes our club meetings amazing are our wonderful and incredibly supportive members.

But wouldn't be just fantastic to be able to say thank you for all the support and encouragement with a warm handshake and applause?

Verica Kostova, President



Vice President Education's (VPE's) Report

Being a VPE at Chatswood Early Risers Toastmasters Club (CER):

Traditionally the role is fulfilled by two members due to the loads and responsibilities requires to be done week in week out.

A weekly routine for a VPE at CER

Tue: Morning before 7am, quickly check the emails and inform Chair about any changes in roles. At the end of the meeting during the general business, review the agenda for coming weeks with members and ask for their contributions, and also update about upcoming educations, recognise members for achievement.

Wed: Receiving emails from members and sending emails and ask members whether they would like to take any specific role.

Thur: Putting an agenda together for the upcoming session, try to mix and match and involve new and experienced members. This includes choosing a theme for meeting and assign roles to members.

Fri: Release the agenda and receiving feedback from members on whether they can fulfill the role or not.

Sat: update the agenda if it is required, approve educational award, planning for educational training, and organising club contests, debates and area training.

Sun: Off work- Rest and Relax

Mon: Last-minute changes on agenda, send an agenda to guests

Above is a week life of VPE however there are still more to it. VPE needs to monitor members' progress and encourage them to move forward and upward. Attending to executive meeting and provide an educational report to the president. Attending to area training, planning for club contests and coordinate the roles. And finally, as toastmasters members prepare and deliver speeches and take on some roles!

Ali Bitaraf, VPE



Report from the Co-Vice President Education (Co-VPE) **Looking forward to new challenges in 2021!**

What an incredible journey it has been for me with the Chatswood Early Risers Toastmasters club (CER)! 2020 despite being a very difficult year for everyone, CER toastmasters had an exciting year and honestly, helped our members stay positive during these adverse times.

The energy in our club is terrific! We are a group of eclectic passionate people who support each other to bring out the best in each person! Personally, it has been a wonderful experience for me. I joined the club in October 2019 and took up the role of VPE in July 2020. I have absolutely enjoyed the role so far. It is a challenging yet extremely satisfying role offering immense opportunities to grow leadership skills and support people in achieving their goals. It is exhilarating to be a part in people's journey towards achieving their goals and witnessing people finding their voices!

Through covid we hosted the International Toastmasters President, we had club contests, and exciting club debates. Who knew debate on zoom could be so interesting? It's fascinating how we adapted with the new environment, an experience that helped many of our members adapt to the new norm of online working.

Our club is extremely lucky to have 3 members who achieved triple crowns for 2019 - 2020 period. I am tremendously proud of all our members' achievements! I look forward to the new challenges in 2021 and making CER Toastmasters an enjoyable experience for everyone!

Wish all a very Happy New Year! Thanks!

Pragya Nandan, Co-VPE



From the Vice President Membership (VPM)

Chatswood Early Risers Toastmasters Club Membership - Half Term Report

Our membership statistics are among the strongest in the wider Hawkesbury Division. Castle Hill, Parramatta and Newcastle clubs are the only ones with a signed up membership greater than Early Risers. We have 30 members signed up currently.

As you will recognise, there is a reality check between the list of paid up members and those who attend meetings on a regular basis. The year 2020 provided a test of the loyalty of members when we moved to Zoom meetings and away from the Dougherty Centre. It has been significant that the members attending online have been consistently higher than we typically have had in our meeting room at the Community Centre, that is around the 20 - 23 mark.

The Executive have recognised that there have been a few members who just prefer not to Zoom - work meetings probably satisfy their appetite for the medium. Like them, the Executive is watching and waiting to return to the Real Thing. We have welcomed four new members in the past six months, Jessica, Karen, Linda and Mark. In the same period we lost nine members due to the usual baby arrivals, job moves interstate, sheer pressure at work and that trap of "getting out of the habit". I have followed up where I can but I do urge all the executive to make sure our members are achieving their personal objectives in terms of opportunities to speak and to take on all the roles our meetings and wider contests offer.

One of the TI half yearly goals is for the club to recruit 4 new members. This we have done in the first half. Prospecting for the second half has begun. And to all members, do jump up and down and be noticed when you want to book in for any role! The VPES love having enthusiastic volunteers to create dynamic meetings. There is a recognised balance between our overall membership numbers and the opportunities to speak. Yes, with our weekly format, we provide twice the number of meetings more than most other Clubs. It seems, however, that the arrivals and departures at Chatswood Early Risers mostly achieve a workable balance for the benefit of all members.

Jan Whitten, VPM



New Member Profile ~ *Mark Smallcombe*

Why do you join toastmasters?

I normally manage engineering teams in person but recently have been managing remote teams, so I am getting out of practice talking and presenting. I've always avoided speaking opportunities (when possible unfortunately) but will need to do more after COVID. I want to get much better at speaking to large crowds (for conferences, University, etc).

What do you do for work?

I manage software development for <https://www.xplenty.com> (part of a US based private equity company that buys and sells SaaS companies). I'm getting more into security having just passed my [CISSP exam](#) and will be starting a (part time) Masters in Cyber Security at UNSW in February. Here's my [LinkedIn profile](#).

What's your motto in life?

Do or do not. There is no try. – Yoda, from Star Wars

Your Ice Breaker's speech was sensational. Can you please share with everyone?

Sure. The title of the speech is called "Three Times In America". See the following two slides attached.



Image source: https://starwars.fandom.com/wiki/Yoda%27s_species



Mark's sensational Ice Breaker Speech - *Three times in America (Page 1 of 2)*

Introduction

I was a tall, awkward, basketball loving university student living in the UK, desperate to visit America. I discovered a library book on summer camps, applied and to my surprise was accepted. I arrived in New York City in the 80's. It was gritty, dangerous, and hot from the summer heat. My room was in the YMCA and it was the tiniest room I've ever seen. It was a closet with a bed and a sink. As I walked down the street, I saw a man, in a loud suit, prying the hubcaps off a Cadillac in broad daylight. Everyone just kept walking by to avoid any confrontation.

First Time in America

Summer camp was amazing, with world class facilities where we coached teenagers during the day and played basketball in the evening with the other councillors. Many NBA players came by to run coaching clinics, my idols. I learnt, just do it, no barriers, there is uncapped opportunity in the US. This was the first time I lived in America.

Second Time in America

The second time I lived in America, I joined a Los Angeles based startup, CitySearch, to lead their software development team. I got to travel across America and work with leading newspapers who were our partners. There were 1,500 smart, accomplished, passionate people, no problem too hard. Days were long but highly productive. I learnt the power of talented teams and winning. We went IPO. It was intoxicating and fun.

In 2001, the tech crash humbled me. I limped back to Australia to recover. As I struggled to find work in Sydney, I watched the World Trade Centre attack on TV - and felt my career had collapsed like the towers. I eventually landed a corporate job at Deloitte and shelved my entrepreneurial dreams. After a big health scare, I realised I needed to get back to my passion – start-ups.

Third Time in America

The third time I lived in America, I joined a startup in LA called Insider Pages (a Yelp competitor). We moved the company from Los Angeles to Silicon Valley, hired a new development team, replaced the technology, all within 4 months of landing in the country. And then sold the company a year later. It was wild, fast and I was hooked! And in Silicon Valley.

Mark's sensational Ice Breaker Speech

- *Three times in America (Page 2 of 2)*

Next, I received a call from an investor who had a comedy video startup that was going viral (Funny Or Die). Their site was struggling under the load and desperately needed help scaling the site. I jumped in and two weeks later joined the company full time, taking it from zero employees, no revenue to 150 people and more than \$100M in revenue. We became an international brand, working with top celebrities & politicians to create comedy videos.

Silicon Valley is the home of start-ups. World class teams and unbelievable talent everywhere. A highly competitive environment.

I hopped from startup to startup. Wildly different businesses

- * Comedy Videos with Will Ferrell
- * Streaming Hollywood movies online
- * Social Bookmarking
- * Private Jet management software

In the 12 years, I learnt how to move quickly, fail fast, and have a passion for problem solving and ideas. An education on how to grow and scale companies. I'm now back in Sydney with my wife, 3 children and too many pets. I'm semi-retired from fast moving, venture backed start-ups but still work remote for a private equity company.

Conclusion

Start-ups have been my passion for the last 20 years. I love their energy and speed.

I'll leave you with a quote from Seth Godin
"The only thing worse than starting something and failing is not starting something."

Thank you,
Mark



Image source: pinterest.com.au

New Member Profile ~ Linda Kang

Why do you join toastmasters?

Toastmasters is a unique testing environment for practicing speaking skills in public, leadership skills and working as a team. It works for me because of the constructive feedback from diversified team members. It encourages me to continuously develop my interactions to relate to my audiences better and purify my value-add to others.

What do you do for work?

I work as a software consultant specialising in Marketing technologies. It requires the well-structured & highly engaged approach to win client's trust in a timely manner. Toastmasters activities really benefit me to be more considered when interacting with people (not just my clients).

What's your motto in life?

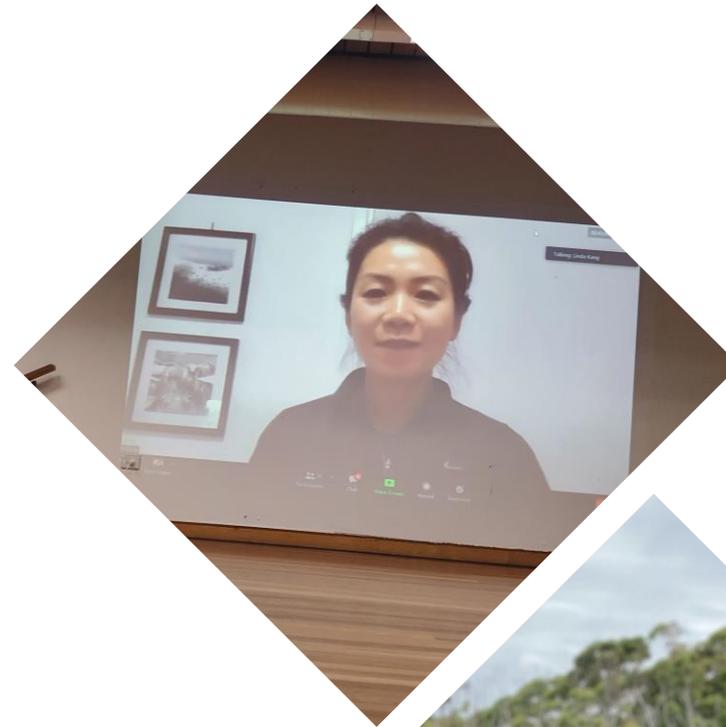
My motto in life does vary at different stages in order to motivate and ground myself, however, one core value statement stays consistent. That is from Simon Sinek "People don't buy what you do, they buy why you do it." That keeps me being relatable.

What are your goals in the new year for toastmasters?

My 2021 goal for toastmasters is to sharpen my spontaneous ability to engage people around me. That includes activities such as impromptu speaking, improvising ability, thinking on my feet. So table topics – here I come, hit me 🙏

Any message for any potential new members?

Here is the thing. We go to water to solve the thirst. We go to food to feed the hunger. We go to gym to get fit in body. We go to the loved ones to feel heart warmed. So come to TOASTMASTERS to gain the communication skills!



Highlights in 2020 - Club and Individual Awards

Club Awards in first half of 2020

Congratulations to the club, again in **President Distinguished (with 10 out of 10).**

We also have two District specific awards, for particular DCP points by particular dates. The club attained both the 1/3/5/7 and 2/4/6/8 awards.

CER also attained two new Toastmasters International awards. The Gold Ovation award – net club growth during the year.

Individual awards

Triple Crowns for Brian Johnson, Louise Rigby and Ali Bitaraf.

Our District also recognises those attain a Triple Crown for three years in a row: A Diamond Triple Crown for Melanie Cheong.

We also congratulate Brian John for attaining a DTM.

I'm very proud of Chatswood Early Risers and congratulate you as a club and as members for all of your achievements last year, and encourage everyone to aim even higher for this year.

Acknowledgement by Divisional Director, Mike Kano-McCallum

In CER club meeting 17th Nov 2020



Toastmasters Pathways learning ~ Educational Achievements by CER members



Massive congratulations to CER members who completed the following Pathways Learning and awards:

- ❖ Brian Johnson – Pathways Dynamic Leadership Level 5 award
- ❖ Melanie Cheong – Pathways Dynamic Leadership Levels 3 and 5 awards
- ❖ Amanda Hiu - Pathways Dynamic Leadership Levels 1 and 2 awards
- ❖ Pragma Nandan - Pathways Dynamic Leadership Level 1 award
- ❖ Brian Johnson – Levels 2, 3 and 4 Completion - Presentation Mastery
- ❖ Janet Whitten - Level 1 Completion - Presentation Mastery
- ❖ Louise Rigby – Level 2 Completion - Motivational Strategies
- ❖ Carol (Xiaoyi) Chen - Level 1 Completion - Motivational Strategies
- ❖ Melanie Cheong - Level 1 Completion - Engaging Humor
- ❖ Selina Hiew - Level 1 Completion - Visionary Communication

Key Activities/Events in the last six months of 2020

- Annual Change Over Dinner – P14
- Humorous Speech Contest Training – P15
- Table Topics Competition Training – P16
- CER Club Debate – P17
- CER Humorous Speech Contest – P18
- CER Table Topics Competition – P19
- District 90 / Area H06 Humorous Speech & Table Topics Contests – P20
- Toastmasters International President's Virtual Visit – P21
- Hybrid meetings OCT to NOV 2020 – P22 to 24
- Christmas Lunch – P25
- Calendar of Upcoming Events – P26
- Hone your speaking and networking skills via delivering Ice Breaker Speech multiple times – P27

Annual Change Over Dinner of New Executive Committee 10 JUL 2020

We welcome our new executive committee via the Annual Change Over Dinner on 10 July. The new Executive Committee for 2020 – 2021 is comprised of:

- ❖ President - Verica Kostova
- ❖ Vice President Education - Ali Bitaraf / Pragya Nandan (co-VPEs)
- ❖ Vice President Membership - Janet Whitten
- ❖ Vice President Public Relations - Amanda Hiu
- ❖ Secretary – Tae Rim Han
- ❖ Treasurer - Mel De Castro / Estelle Renard (co-Treasurers)
- ❖ Sergeant at Arms - Maon Catzel / Louise Rigby (co-Sergeant at Arms)



Training to prepare for Humorous Speech Contest 29 SEP 2020 by Katrina Turner, Toastmasters Leader / Coach

We would like to express our appreciation to Katrina Turner, an outstanding toastmaster leader/coach in District 90, for investing her valuable time in providing training, insights and prepared all those who will competed for the Humorous Speech Contest at club level on 13 October, 2020. As a result, CER members who played various roles in the Humorous Speech Contest (e.g. evaluators, judges, contestants) knew the specific areas to focus on for the contest. Our club representative (Selina Hiew) also won a third place in the “District 90 - Area H06 Humorous Speech Contest” subsequently on 13 November 2020.



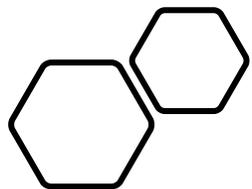
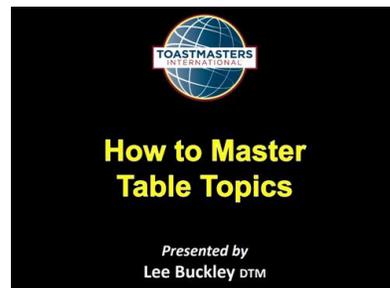


Table Topics Training Session OCT 2020 by Lee Buckley DTM



A great leader, Jack Welch once said , “Before you are a leader, SUCCESS is all about growing yourself. When you become a LEADER, success is all about growing others”.

In preparation for the Table Topics Contest 27 October, we were lucky to have the magnificent DTM, Lee Buckley, who provided a training session on “How to master Table Topics” prior to that earlier in the same month.

Table Topics (TT) is Toastmasters’ way of teaching impromptu speaking skills and is the perfect way to inject serious fun into a club meeting.

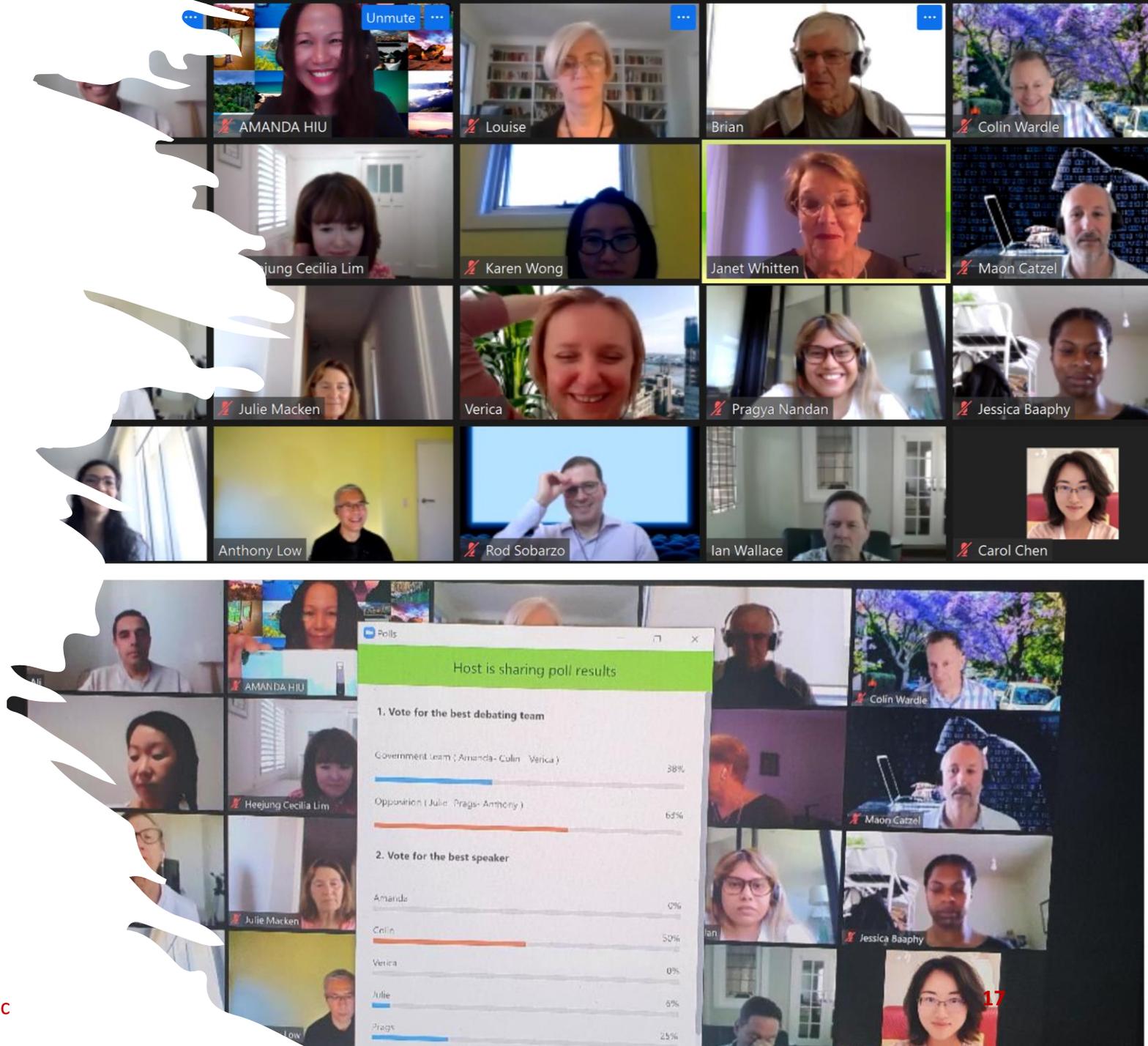
We are grateful to Lee who was so generous in devoting her valuable time to help develop the less experienced toastmasters members in this club, to become more proficient in impromptu speaking.

Consequently, there was a lot of vigour in table topics contest at club level and it was a success. Highly collaborative teamwork was observed between various roles including evaluators and judges. Our club representative (Melanie Cheong) also won in the “District 90 - Area Contest” on 13 November 2020 and made us proud!

CER Club Debate 22 SEP 2020

Massive congrats to **the winning team, the opposition team (Julie-Pragya-Anthony), who beat the government team (Amanda-Verica-Colin) by 38%**, by proposing that International Travel is better than Domestic Travel post covid-19.

Also congrats to the star for the day, Colin for winning the majority of the votes (50%) from the audience as the best speaker in the debate team! Amazing Colin! Why am I not surprised at all?!



CER Club Level Humorous Speech Contest 13 Oct 2020

Winners – First (Selina Hiew), Second (Melanie Cheong), Third (Carol Chen)

Big thanks to all the participants (Ian-Amanda-Louise) who displayed great efforts and courage in this contest too!

The audience were definitely amused!

Special thanks to the judges, and also the executives who organised and made the execution of this event seamless.

Winners - Selina Hiew, Melanie Cheong, Carol Chen



Participants – Amanda Hiu, Ian Wallace and Louise Rigby



CER Club Level Table Topics Competition 27 Oct 2020

Winners: First – Melanie Cheong, Second – Cecilia Lim, Third – Tae Rim Han



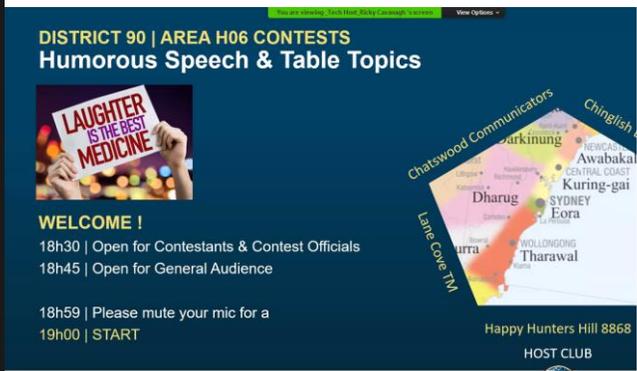
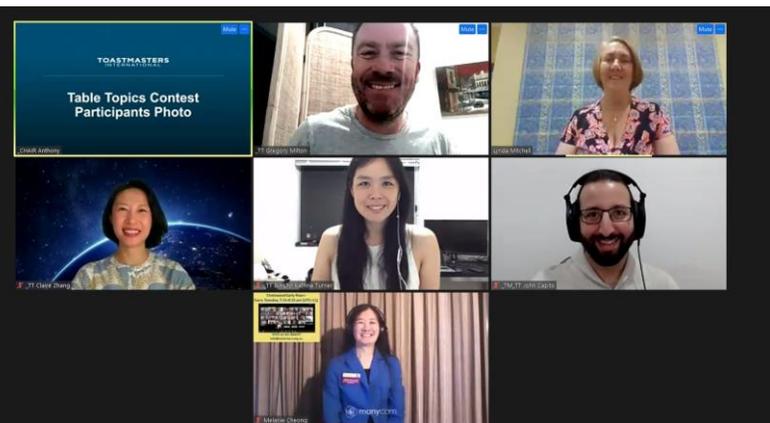
Participants – Verica Kostova, Amanda Hiu, Colin Wardle and Linda Kang



Congratulations to the winners (Melanie – Cecilia – Tae). Special thanks to the fabulous participants who gave their best (Verica – Amanda – Colin – Karen).

Impromptu speaking is one of the most terrifying speeches you'll ever do. To stand in front of a group of audience without any prior preparation can be very daunting even to the most seasoned toastmaster member. I am so glad that I participated and had the chance to give it a go. Definitely want to keep practicing this in future club meetings too in the most supportive and friendly environment like CER.

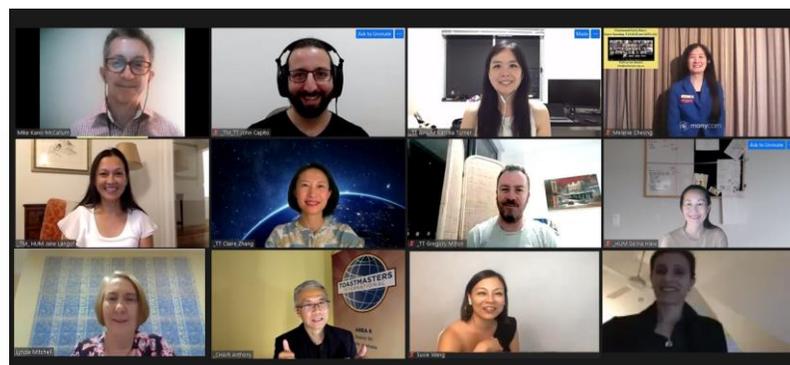
Pic 1: Table Topics Contest Participants - Melanie, Claire, Katrina, Lynda and Gregory



Pic 2 – Humorous Speech Contest Participants - Lynda, Katrina, Jo, Susie and Selina Hiew



Pic 3 – Contestants, Chief Judge, Contest Chair and Toastmasters



District 90 – Area H06 Contests – Humorous Speech & Table Topics

Information source: *Divisional Director, Mike Kano-McCallum*

Extract from Mike’s Facebook post 13th NOV:

Congratulations to all who took part, and to the great team, with Anthony (Area Director), Ricky (Tech Host), Jane and John (Toastmasters), Nadia and Tae (Timers), Mark T and Mark V (Counters), and Silvana (SAA). Well done to the team, and thanks to the anonymous judges from across Sydney. We peaked at 54 attendees, our largest, so really well done.

Winners:

Table Topics (*Topic - Sunshine is free, what brings joy in your life*): **1st - Melanie Cheong (Chatswood Early Risers)**, **2nd - Kat Turner (Chinglish)**, **3rd - Claire Zhang (Lane Cove Toastmasters)**.

Humorous - **1st - Susie Wang (Chatswood Communicators)**, **2nd - Kat Turner (Chinglish)**, **3rd - Selina Hiew (Chatswood Early Risers)**

Thank you Chief Judge Mike, Contest Toastmasters Jane and John, Timers Nadia and Tae, Counters Mark and MarkV, Sergeant Silvana, Zoom host Ricky and Happy Hunters Hill Host Contest Organizer John H & Club Pres Mark V and all Anonymous Judges for all your important support!

Additional: Lynda is from Happy Hunter Hill, Jo from Lane Cove; Gregory from Chatswood Communicators

International President's Virtual Visit 17TH NOV 2020

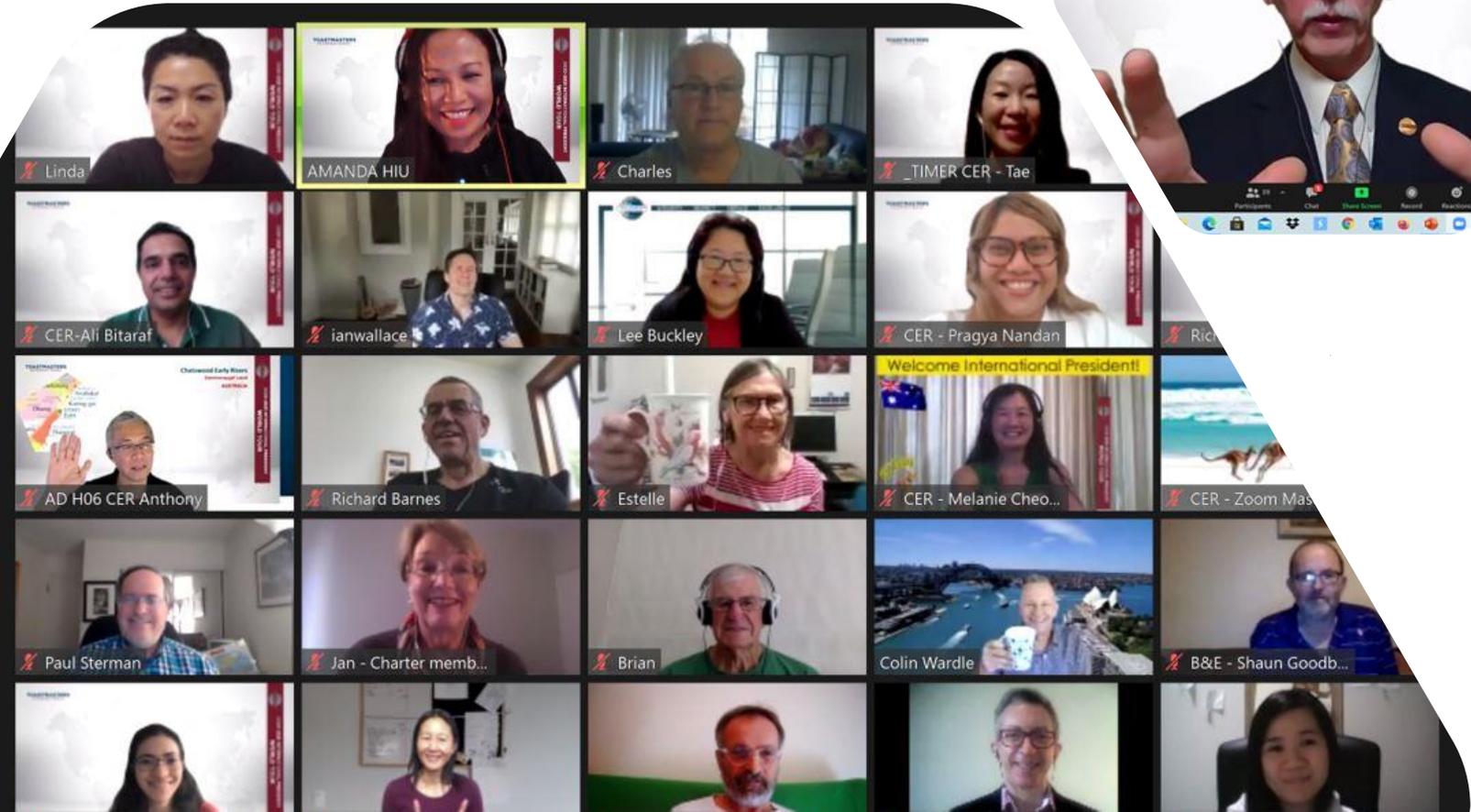


We are very honoured and proud to be chosen as the only stopover in Australia on 17th Nov, by the Toastmasters International President, Richard E. Peck. We are also astounded to hear from Richard that we are the 10th club he visited in his virtual world tour to every country in the world!

40+ attendees tuned in for this special event. They included past and present Division Directors (Lee and Mike), past and present members, as well as visitors from overseas (e.g. Thanh from Budapest, Hungary; and Craig from Frankfurt, Germany). This shows how resilient and adaptable toastmasters are, and how well we connect globally as a worldwide community via online event like this, a testament of the content of Richard's enlightening keynote speech.

Testimonial from a past member:

- ❖ We are also delighted to receive a testimonial from a past member (i.e. Ian from Melbourne), who is still active in toastmasters, that CER is still like how it was when he left in 2014, i.e. the club meeting is full of energy and is a great way to start the day!





First Hybrid Meeting 20TH OCT 2020

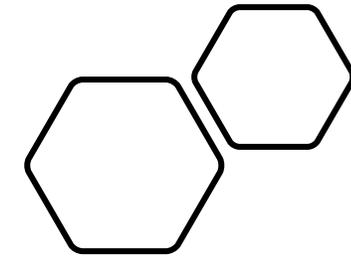
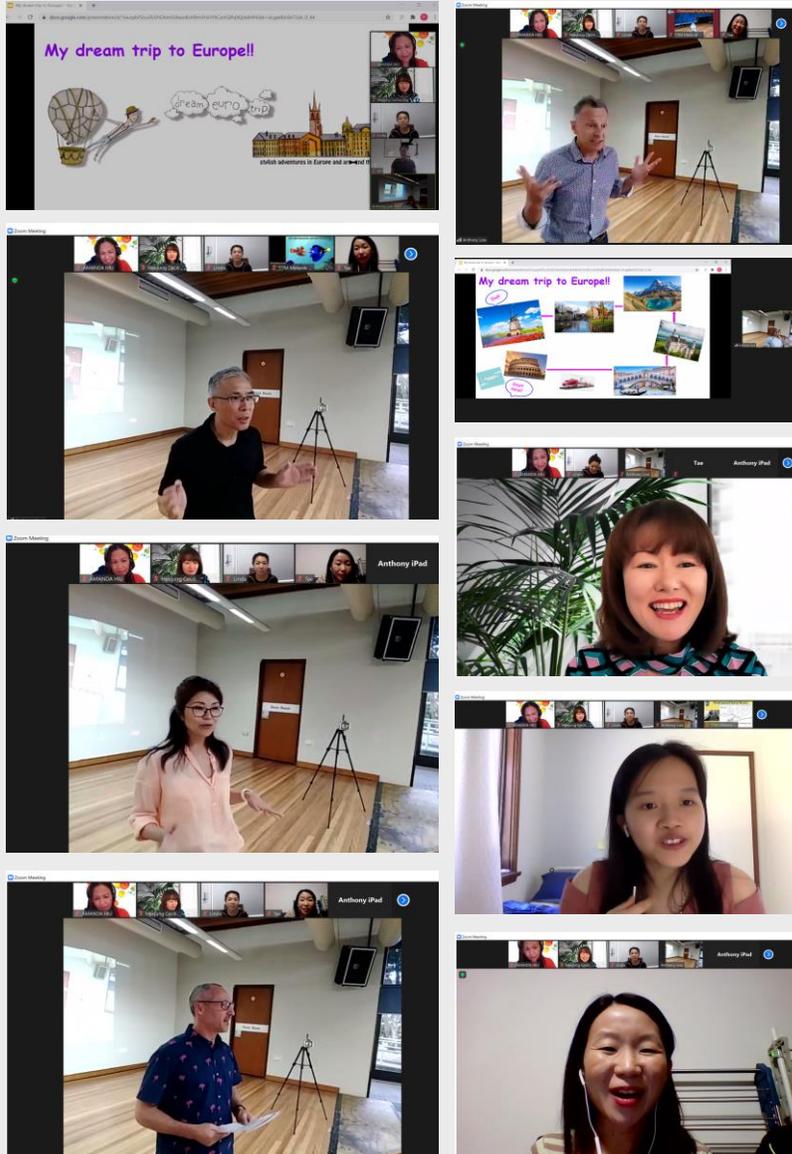
- We had our 1st hybrid (face to face onsite and Zoom online) club meeting on 20th OCT. It was a huge success!
- Enormous amount of work was put into this, before and during the event. This goes to show the passion and dedication our executive team and club members have in toastmasters.





Second Hybrid Meeting 3RD NOV 2020

- Our 2nd hybrid meeting on Cup Day was another remarkable success!
- Love the vibrant coloured hats and laughter in this club meeting.



Third Hybrid Meeting 8TH DEC 2020

The third hybrid meeting continued to be a tea, success. CER members were getting the hang of this and the whole session was so interactive and engaging. We really enjoyed the whole learning experience!



Christmas Lunch 13TH DEC 2020

We had a fabulous Christmas lunch at the Wakehurst Golf House restaurant on 13 December 2020. It was a great day to celebrate a great year with the CER members before the festive holiday.

Calendar of Upcoming Key Events

S/N	What?	When?
1	Time Role Training	12 th Jan 2021
2	International and Evaluation Contest Training	19 th Jan 2021
3	CER Club Evaluation Contest	2 nd Feb 2021
4	Club Debate	9 th Feb 2021
5	Area 6 International and Evaluation Speech Contest	5th Mar 2021

Key:

CER - Chatswood Early Risers Toastmasters Club



Hone your speaking and networking skills via delivering Ice Breaker Speech multiple times

Don't overlook the opportunities that Ice Breaker lead you.....Pathways requires you to deliver Ice Breaker multiple times in all paths. I always wondered why and this link to the [toastmasters magazine Jan 2021](https://www.toastmasters.org/magazine/magazine-issues/2021/jan/ice-breaker-opportunities) tells us why and the key benefits.

<https://www.toastmasters.org/magazine/magazine-issues/2021/jan/ice-breaker-opportunities>

Opportunity to deliver a speech, assess your development and learning - By delivering the Ice Breaker speech over and over again, you have the opportunity to assess how far you develop on every path you are required to complete, learn from evaluation and feedback. In the above article, **Sue Stanley, senior instructional designer for Toastmasters International**, explains that an Ice Breaker is simply an opportunity to deliver a speech, e.g. in a story format.

She also believes that the Evaluation and Feedback speeches, given after the Ice Breaker, are the most important projects in the entire Pathways program. "That's because you have to give a speech, take feedback, then deliver it again applying that feedback," she says. "Constructive feedback will always help people; learning to receive it and apply it are at the heart of every path."

How to connect with others using Ice Breaker - There is also a video in the link which tells you how to use Ice Breaker as a technique to "Break The Ice" when you connect with a group or person in social functions. Be sure to view the video.

Amanda Hiu, VPPR