

THE PARRANATTA

PARRAMATTA TOASTMASTERS CLUB

"Helping people, help themselves, develop the skills, to help other people"



SPECIAL EDITION

In celebration of our 1500th meeting held on the 19th January 2023



President's Welcome

Welcome to this special "1500th Meeting" edition of the ParraNatta. On the 19th of January 2023 we celebrated our history and all those who have contributed to it. That included 42 past and present members who were in attendance on the night, and 610 members who were not.

What a night! This was a meeting that is sure to be talked about for years to come!

This was a once in a generation event! The last time we had an event like this, our 1000th meeting, was in 2004 and the next one, our 2000th meeting, will be in 2042!

Our club is arguably one of the most successful Toastmasters clubs in the world today. This would not be possible without you, the members... both past and present. Whether you attended the meeting or not, YOU are part of this club's history, and its success. Strangers who have come together as family, encouraging and supporting each other, creating a culture of excellence that is the envy of the Toastmasters world. A culture of excellence that shone through every aspect of this meeting.

Congratulations Parramatta. Sit back and enjoy as we reflect on this significant milestone in our club's history



Wendy's tribute to Gary and Gary's response



Wendy Salutes Gary:

Parramatta Toastmasters can honestly say that a lot of our success has come from the dedication and hard work of the Grandfather of our club – Gary Wilson!

Gary first walked through the door at PTM in October 1969 - joining in January 1970. He has been a continuous member of our club for 53 years!

His achievements at club level speak for themselves – winner of International Speech contest 4 times, winner of Humorous Speech and Evaluation Contests twice – even winning Evaluation at District! Winner of Toastmaster of the Year 7 times, Peter Poulson Best Speech twice – and our President 3 times.

When I asked Gary a few days ago what his proudest moments were over the last 53 years of being a Toastmaster, Gary shared that it was receiving his first ever Toastmaster of the Year award, his Presidential citation, and his OAM, because they were a tangible recognition by his peers for his work, dedication and accomplishments.

As District Governor, Gary wrote:-

“In any task we undertake, we need to strive to do it to the best of our ability. Near enough and “she’ll be right” may be satisfactory adages for some in Australia, but they are contrary to all that Toastmasters stands for”.

This statement made by Gary 41 years ago clearly shows his personal values.

Always striving to do his best, and also his best for others.

Which is why, Gary is a Living Legend and personification of mentorship, dedication and achievement.

Congratulations Gary on being a Parramatta Toastmaster for 53 Years! We are all honoured to have shared some part of your journey with you. Gary Wilson, Distinguished Toastmaster, VERY Distinguished Gentleman, Treasured friend!

Gary Responds:

They say that you should never ask a question at a meeting unless you already know the answer. So I took a risk when conducting a straw poll at Meeting No. 1500, asking all past and present members to indicate whether;

- a. They were asked or persuaded to join the club, or
- b. They asked the club to let them join.

Even I was staggered when over 90% present indicated b.

It was clear evidence of the success of the “Parramatta Way” of running a Toastmasters Club. In summary:

- Generate a strong stream of visitors through an effective website.
- Present them with a packed 3 hour formal but fun educational meeting with high quality speakers and evaluators that people would wish to emulate.
- Let the visitors plead to join but put them through Speechcraft first to prepare them and test their commitment.
- Ensure this is possible by having reliable club officers immersed in this culture before they take office, dedicated to getting the little things right as exemplified by the Moments of Truth.
- Keep the membership large with a touch of elitism, such as maintaining a dress code.

I was happy to remind everyone of the secret to our 22-year run of success in the DCP. We just do things the “Parramatta Way”.

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Above: Some members of the current Executive cut the cake



Above: Debbie Murphy



Above: Charles Rickards and Ivor Baptiste



Above: District Director, Dr Mark Walker.



Right: Neil Monteith, President in 1971

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Parramatta Toastmasters Meeting

1500

19th January 2023

6.30pm

Call to Order by the Town Crier - Tom McDonald

Master of Ceremonies - Peter Steinhour

President's Opening Address - Rob Tibbertsma

Welcome - Sabesh Sitsabesan

Inspiration - David Griffiths

Rant - Ron Marriott

Toast - John New

Table Topics - Matthew Jay

History of the Club - Kirsten Linklater

Business Session - Michael Said

District Director's Address - Dr Mark Walker

Cake cutting - Club Executive

7.45pm Break

8.15pm

Call to Order by the Town Crier - Tom McDonald

Master of Ceremonies - Peter Steinhour

Larfmaster - Rob Tibbertsma

Speaker 1 - Wendy Lipski

Speaker 2 - Gary Wilson

Speaker 3 - Tom Woods

Speaker 4 - Monique Tonna

Wrap-up/Epilogue - Barbara Mifsud

9.30pm

Close of Meeting - Rob Tibbertsma

1500

Parramatta Toastmasters Celebrating 1500th Meeting!

2010

THE PARRA-NATTA

VOLUME 41 ISSUE 37 www.parranatta.com.au MEETING 1188 - 12 JUNE

1 December 2011
District 70 Parramatta

Parra Natta

Meeting No. 1184

2013

PARRA NATTA

Memorial of Parramatta Toastmasters Club No. 2214 - Area 18 Western Sydney - Oct '12

1 March 2012
District 70

Parra Natta

Meeting No. 1205

2022

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Never wins anything, until now

Wendy Nielsen will no longer be able to make the claim "I never win anything" after winning big at the changeover meeting. Wendy took home the President's Encouragement Award. Wendy certainly deserved this award after a year of enormous growth and development.



Wendy Nielsen, now a winner

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1500

Parramatta Toastmasters
Celebrating 1500th Meeting!



Monique Tonna doing her Icebreaker Speech.



David Griffiths & Michael Said



Kate Linklater & Linda Snalam



Two beaming presidents Damian Cooney and David Griffiths



Kumi with Best Table Topics Award

1500

Parramatta Toastmasters
Celebrating 1500th Meeting!



Here is a photo from the archives. District 70 Conference in 1973 in Victoria. We are toasting receiving the trophy as Champion Club for the 5th successive year. Three club officers, Neil Monteith, Pres 1971, Gary Wilson, Pres 1972 and Dennis Eyrini.

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"Reflections" and overview of 1500th meeting:

The timing wasn't great: within a month of our Christmas meeting we had to deliver our 1500th meeting! The objective of the organising committee was simple (it had to be!) - to make the meeting "memorable". But we ended up with something that was "unforgettable". Forget the fact that we could not get the Ballroom... we filled the Steeds Room to capacity! Forget the fact that we were late to organise it. The troops rallied and we got it done!

What was unforgettable was the speaking program and the audience! Let's begin with the audience. 37 past and present members with a combined membership of 417 years. One with 53 years of continuous membership and two who had only joined last year. Yet, an average of 11.25 years between them. One foundation member who joined the club in 1966 (four years BEFORE Gary Wilson) and was President in 1971. 12 past and present Parramatta Presidents were present! At least one from every decade. 10 member/past member attendees with DTMs.

The speaking program was top shelf – five unforgettable speeches from five past Presidents:

- A short history of the club (Kirsten Linklater – President 2007-2008)
- A heartfelt tribute to a legend of the club and the organisation, Gary Wilson (Wendy Lipski – President 2019-2020)
- An emotional response and insight into *why* Parramatta has been so successful... by doing the little things right... consistently! (Gary Wilson – President 1972, 1992 and 2000-2001)
- A speech about camaraderie and the importance of Speechcraft (Tom Woods, President 2006-2007)
- An inspirational story about Monique's journey from Ice Breaker to prison (Monique Tonna, President 2015-16 and 2021-22).

Every speech – flawless!

So many quotable quotes:

"I was sent to gaol" – Monique Tonna

"I've got more out of Toastmasters than I've put into it" and "I am not past my use-by date, I am past my best before date" – Gary Wilson

"Parramatta Toastmasters is my *family* (the friends I choose to be my family)" - Peter Steinhour

"For years, Glenbrook Club tried to emulate what Parramatta does" – Dr Mark Walker

Lest We Forget – we went to the break with a dedication to members past, present and those who are no longer with us – "Toast to the ones who are with us today. Toast to the ones we lost along the way" (Maroon 5 – Memories).

And a pre-recorded inspirational from David Griffiths that looked like it was delivered live.

Plus... Table Topics, where our membership got to see all of our past members in attendance strut their stuff.

The night was a fitting celebration of the Club's achievements, friendships forged and what it means to be... a Parramatta Toastmaster! The most common feedback received from members of the executive and past Presidents was that they felt immense pride in being part of the Parramatta legacy and looked forward to continuing that legacy for the betterment of the community.

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Did you know? A concise history of Parramatta Toastmasters by Kirsten:

- Our inaugural meeting was held on February 28, 1966.
- Parramatta Toastmasters Club was chartered September 15, 1966
- In mid-1990, the club voted to admit women
- Parramatta has dominated the club championship and distinguished club scene for more than 3 decades.
- We are one of only a handful of clubs to achieve 10/10 DCP points for 22 years in a row.
- The club has provided:
 - 47 Area Governors/Directors
 - 17 Division Governors/Directors
 - 6 District Governors/Directors
 - 2 members that have served on the International Board of Directors
- 25 of our members have achieved the ultimate Toastmasters award (DTM) and our membership has consistently remained over 40 since 1992

Table Topics:

Matthew Jay (aka "The Executioner") called up 9 "victims" for the Table Topics session with the following:

- 1) Tell us about a proud moment in your life – Neil Monteith (President 1971)
- 2) During your TM journey, who did you look to for inspiration and why? – Tom Ware (on-again, off-again member since 1974)
- 3) When was a time you were able to overcome a life setback? – Tahir Omeri (President 1987)
- 4) How has your Toastmasters experience prepared you for success in your professional life? - Charles Rickards (President 1992-93)
- 5) What was your proudest moment in Toastmasters – Ivor Baptiste (past member 1994-2002)
- 6) What is something that you wish you'd done differently in the past? – Steve Wieczorek (past member 1994-2002)
- 7) What is something you've learnt about yourself from Toastmasters – Debbie Murphy (past member 1999-2004)
- 8) How has Toastmasters prepared you for a leadership role in your personal or professional life? – Tom Woods (past member 2001-2020; President 2006- 2007)
- 9) What is something you used to believe that you no longer do? – Jennifer Buenconsejo (past member 2019-2021)

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Testimonials and feedback

Comments from Tom Ware (Past Member):

Yes! I don't know how I can do it justice! What a meeting! What a reunion! I'm writing about Parramatta Toastmaster Club's 1500th meeting.

On my desk before me is the program with the letters "1500" printed in huge gold letters. The theme "Reflections," 19th January 2023, right underneath. Inside, the three-hour program which covered so much nostalgia, history and wonderful times gone by.

We had over fifty current and past members in the room, members who were representative of every decade since the club was formed back in 1966 until the present day. Neil Monteith, from the 1960's, still looking fit and well, was there. Also, Gary Wilson, a club legend and member since 1970.

It seemed the room was filled with Parramatta Club past presidents - so many in attendance. Many of these, of course, went on to 'higher office' including not only Area, Division and District Governors/Directors, but even to *International* Director Level. An outstanding membership in deed.

What was not mentioned were the numbers of clubs that have actually come into being due to the actions and support of Parramatta Club - there are many.

At the table where I sat, on one side of me was a new member, attending his third Toastmaster meeting ever, on the other, a past member I'd known for thirty-five years. It was that sort of get-together. And the theme was spot on, "Reflections." How wonderful the night: the memories, the camaraderie, the laughter. I'm so grateful I had the honour, the satisfaction, and the joy of being able to be there.

Well done! Well done to all the members, both old and new. Well done Parramatta Club! You're the tops.

Letter from Neil Monteith (President 1971):

Dear Rob,

It was indeed a pleasure to be able to attend the Parramatta Toastmasters 1500th meeting last Thursday evening.

As a foundation member of this great club, it was good to see and hear that the camaraderie, enthusiasm and community service provided still exists as it did when I was a member of this club, some 50 years ago.

May the tradition continue.

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Comments from Ian Lipski (President 2014-2015)

The Parramatta Toastmasters 1500th meeting, for me, was one of the most significant and memorable celebrations that the club has hosted.

Parramatta Toastmaster's Club has a long and distinguished history of consistent achievement and the celebration of the club's milestone 1500th meeting, by our Parramatta Toastmaster's family, past and present, was awesome to behold.

From the opening Town Crier's 'Call to Order' to our President's 'Close' the warmth, wit, humour, camaraderie and professionalism of all the presenters and speakers shone through, making this heart-warming event so much fun.

A highlight for me was the eulogy to Gary Wilson and his self-deprecating 'Right of Reply', both of which were greeted with a standing ovation.

The 1500th meeting was a unique opportunity to witness the considerable legacy that is Parramatta Toastmasters, and celebrate an evening with our Parramatta Toastmaster's family past and present.

Comments from Barbara Mifsud (Treasurer 2022-2023)

I felt extremely proud to be a Parramatta Toastmasters member on that evening. Special evenings like that remind us that joining this club is not only about personal development and growth, but that we are part of something much larger. As Tom Woods said, you realise that you are standing on the shoulders of giants. Throughout our 55+ year history, this club has created a community of excellence, empowerment, and leadership. It is a legacy that we are continually building and passing on.



Above: Ivor Baptiste



Above: Kirsten Linklater



Above: Peter Steinhour



Right: Monique Tonna

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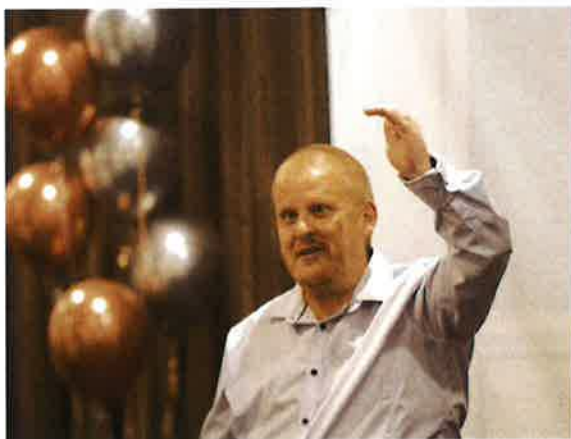


Above: Parramatta Presidents photo

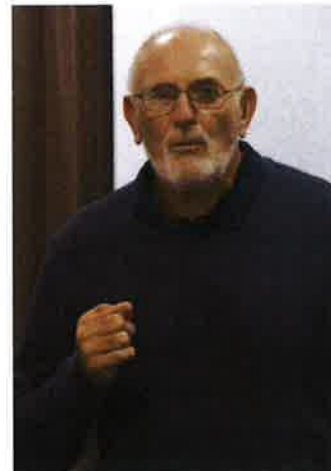
Back (L-R): Tom Woods (2006-2007), Gary Wilson (1972, 1992 and 2000-2001), Neil Monteith (1971), Rob Tibbertsma (2022-2023), Peter Steinhour (2016-2017), Ian Lipski (2014-2015), Michael Said (2004-2005 and 2008-2009), Tahir Omeri (1987).

Front (L-R): Kirsten Linklater (2007-2008), Monique Tonna (2015-2016 and 2021-2022), Wendy Lipski (2014-2015).

Present at meeting but not in photograph: Charles Rickards (1992-1993).



Above: Ron Marriott



Above: Steve Wiczorek