



# **CENTRAL DIVISION CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN'S GUIDE**

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

The highlight of the year for every Toastmaster Division around the world is their annual speech contests finals. This is usually a combination of the International, Humorous, Evaluation or Table Topics. Each Division is different and each has its own culture in how they organise and run their contests, however, apart from Toastmasters International rules governing the formula for running of contests there is no 'correct' way. This is the guide for Central Division.

## **The purpose of this guide is:**

- To cover the range of activities that could be run at the Central Division Conference.
- To save the Division Conference Committee from re-doing the normal tasks required so they can focus on improvements.

## **A Good Conference:**

- Runs smoothly and on time.
- Offers a variety of activities, both educational and social for both presenters and attendees.
- Is affordable while at the same time offering good value for money.
- Allows attendees time to mingle.
- Caters for individual needs, e.g. dietary requirements or special disability needs.

## **Central Division Overview**

As of the 2016-2017 Toastmaster year, South Australia has only one Division with approximately 450 members. I expect this will grow to two Divisions by 2020 due to the rapid growth of new clubs and members in South Australia.

Central Division hosts all four of these contests at the one event, however, it is far more than just a day of contests. In Central Division we refer to it as a conference because we add other elements to the day, e.g. keynote speakers, workshops, member awards, and entertainment and of course meals. The conference is held on the third week of March each year.

The combination of the different activities which make the Division Conference enjoyable and at the same time educational don't just happen by chance, it takes planning. A successful Division Conference is the result of an organised and diligent working relationship between

- The Conference Committee
- The Division Director
- The organising host club members or group of clubs in an Area or the Division
- The management of the venue where the conference is held

I have been to many Central Division Conferences and each one has its own vibe, however one thing that is common to all is the passion and commitment shown by the Conference Chair. I have no doubt that every Conference Chair who takes on the role has been inspired to do so by their Toastmaster experiences and attending previous Conferences

## 2. CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

The Division Conference Chair is the 'Events Manager' and as such is responsible for all aspects of the conference. However, organising an event like the Division Conference is a big responsibility and far too much work for one person; it is an ideal opportunity to form a committee and organise the event as a High Performance Leadership Project (HPL). A HPL committee usually consists of the HPL Coordinator and four members, each member will be tasked with a specific duty. It is a good idea to have someone on your committee who has been involved in organising a previous conference and can offer advice. Other Toastmasters may also be involved, e.g. Division Director, however, I suggest your key team be kept to a maximum of six. Whoever is on your team, it is important to remember that not everyone is the same; each member will and should have different skill sets to bring to the Division Conference.

### Committee Member responsibilities

The duties of each member of the committee will depend on many things, such as where the event is being held and who is involved, e.g. a single host club or several clubs from the Division working together.

An example of some of the duties and responsibilities of each member could be:

- **Conference Chair:** The Conference Chair is the Events Manager and is responsible for all aspects of the conference. They are responsible for designing the program or agenda and assisting the Division Director in promoting the event.
- **Member one: Contests Coordinator**  
The Contest Coordinator organises the Contest Chairman, Judges, Counters, Timers and other officials. Liaises with the Area Directors on who the contestants are from each Area for the contests and assists in organising the Test Speaker for the Evaluation Contest.
- **Member two: Venue Coordinator**  
The venue coordinator arranges the venue and the physical setup of the event, e.g. catering, table and seating plan, stage setup and lectern, Contestants and Officials briefing rooms, etc.
- **Member three: Audio and Technical Coordinator**  
The Audio and Technical Coordinator arranges the audio and technical setup, e.g. microphones, timing lights, stop watches, etc.
- **Member four: Entertainment Coordinator**  
The Entertainment Coordinator organises other entertainment such as guest speaker, workshop presenter or entertainer and the raffle.
- **Division Director:** The Division Director has the overall final decision in all matters relating to the conference and therefore should be involved in any discussions or committee meetings. The Division Director is also responsible for organising trophies and certificates and promotion of the event throughout the Division and the District.

## 3. THE VENUE

Finding a suitable venue is the first thing the Conference Chair should be doing. Ideally the venue location should be central to all Toastmasters living in Adelaide; therefore I recommend something within a 5 km radius of the CBD.

The venue should have a stage or a portable raised platform approximately 4m x 1.8m x 0.5m with a lectern to one side and a fixed microphone attached for use by the Toastmaster and Contest Chair. The raised stage needs to be in clear view of everyone and not blocked by things such as pillars or other fixed structures. Most professional venues will provide a lectern for you.

The venue should be able to seat 80 to 100 people comfortably in either theatre or cabaret style. It should have disabled access and be capable of catering for a buffet style menu or a two course a la carte luncheon catering to dietary requirements. It should have a lobby large enough for the registration desk and any advertising displays.

### 3.1 Selecting the right venue

One of the first things you will need before a final decision is made on the venue is to prepare a feasibility assessment of the proposed venue. You should make a list of what the venue provides in terms of location, rooms, physical area, disability access, AV equipment, stage setup, lecterns, catering and furniture e.g. types of tables, etc. You should then discuss this with your committee and the Division Director at your first committee meeting.

### 3.2 Time and Date

It's never too early to start planning; March is a busy time in Adelaide with such things as Clipsal 500, Adelaide Fringe, Womadelaide, etc. Since the Division Conference is held on the third Saturday of March each year, venue location and available parking will play a big part in your decision. Many hotels will also be hosting events and may be filled to capacity. If you are expecting interstate visitors this must be taken into consideration. To avoid any of these problems, I suggest you book the venue early, by at least the first week in December.

It is important that you confirm with the venue's management that your event will be the only one held on the day booked. Some large venues offer dual use and problems can arise when another organisation has booked an event to coincide with yours in either a different room or immediately after your event which may affect your scheduled closing time.

### 3.3 The Contract

Some large professional venues may require you to sign a contract. The responsibility for this officially lies with the Division Director; however the Conference Chair may also do this if the Division Director is unavailable. In its basic form the contract will likely have:

The date and time of the Conference, the (estimated) numbers of attendees, the setup style of the room, the cost and payment method e.g. your first deposit and other subsequent payments, cancellation policies and menu. It is important that the contract be checked at least twice by two people on your committee before being signed.

You may also need to supply the venue with the current District Public Liability Insurance Certificate which is available on the District website.

### 3.4 Seating Plans

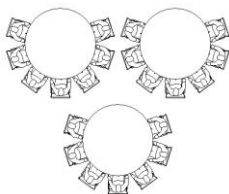
A good seating plan can make all the difference to your conference and there are several plans you can choose from, e.g. Theatre, Banquet, Cabaret, U shape, etc. The most important thing to consider is the communication between the speaker and the audience and the interaction of the audience with each other. Each of these styles has their own pros and cons; however for a Toastmaster audience I have concentrated on Cabaret and Theatre styles.

What you choose will depend on a number of factors:

1. The type of venue, e.g. a hotel with function room or a Community centre.
2. The Venue facilities and floor size
3. The type of meal served, e.g. a la carte, buffet.

#### 3.4.1 Cabaret style

A hotel with a function room that can cater for 80-100 people seated in cabaret style for a la carte dining is ideal. Cabaret style seating is set up as round tables scattered around the room with seating for approximately 8 people, however there is an open end so the audience is seated in an arc facing forwards. Pros: The open end allows for all members of the audience to have a clear view of the presentation area. Cons: Inefficient use of floor space, with seating capacity reduced.



**Cabaret style seating**

### 3.4.2 Theatre style

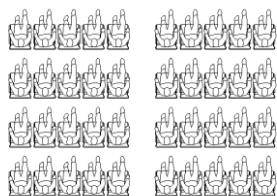
This is the simplest style, similar to the seating found in a theatre or cinema with chairs aligned in consecutive straight rows. This is ideal if you are having buffet meals in a separate room from the contests or the venue has insufficient floor space.

Pros: All of the seats are facing forwards towards the front of the function room.

Maximum seated capacity is achieved for the function room.

Cons: The audience is closed in, needing to push past other audience members to enter or exit.

There is no provision for note taking or consumption of plated food and beverage.



**Theatre Style seating**

Generally the venue staff will do the basic set up of the room according to the plans you send them.

Please see Appendix 1 for detailed example of seating plan

### 3.5 Physical & Audio Requirements

One of the most important aspects of the conference is a suitable and appropriate sound system. If the venue cannot provide a suitable system, you will need to hire this from another source.

In some circumstances a dropdown screen and projector may be an advantage.

There should be a lectern with a fixed microphone and a minimum of two lapel microphones for the contestants which can be tuned into the amplifier, a separate handheld microphone may also be a useful advantage. If the venue is providing the audio/visual display equipment, they will probably want their staff to handle it; however they will need guidance in when sound should be on or off..

### 3.6 Storage room

A separate room should be available to store Division supplies such as trophies, certificates, timing lights, whiteboards, laptop computer, printer, contestant's props, etc. This room will also be used by the Judges and Officials for the briefings and for the Chief Judge and Tally Counters to tally the results and print the certificates, etc. If the room is out of hearing range from the stage, the contestants in the Evaluation and Table Topics contests may also use it when required to leave the contest area. The Evaluation contestants may also make use of this room for making notes during their five minute deliberation.

If the room is in a public area it is important that there is provision for it to be locked when not in use.

### 3.7 Furniture and other equipment

The following items are required for the Central Division Conference

- Professional sound system or amplifier with speakers
- Stage or a portable raised platform approximately 4m x 1.8m x 0.5m
- Fixed lectern for Toastmaster and Contest Chair
- Light weight lectern, e.g. music stand to be used for Evaluation Contestants
- Two sets of timing lights (one set is used as a backup)
- Timing cards
- Two stop watches
- Two lapel microphones
- Timers table (approximately 0.76m x 0.76m)
- Conference registration table (approximately 1.8m x 0.76m) situated in the lobby area with 2 chairs

The following equipment may also be used:

- Display table for trophies, prizes, etc. (approximately 1.8m x 0.76m)
- Laptop computer
- Printer (for printing certificates)
- High quality certificate paper
- Electrical extension leads and powerboards
- Portable spot lights

## 4. CONTESTS

There are four major contests held each year in the Division Conference: International, Humorous, Evaluation and Table Topics. Although other events may take place, the contests are the main feature of the program and should be advertised as such.

It is interesting to note that although the Central Division traditionally holds all four of these contests, the International is the only one that is mandatory for all districts, therefore I is the only one required for the Division, the other three are a bonus to the event.

The contests may also attract non-Toastmasters, such as general members of the public; therefore it is a good idea to take this into consideration during your promotion of the event.

Most contestants will request a time before the contest to rehearse their speech, this should take place as part of their briefing and on the stage where their contest will be held. Therefore it is important that the stage be set up well in advance of the scheduled contest time. All contestants should have the same opportunity to rehearse their speech on the stage; however no contestant may request a private rehearsal time, for example early in the morning or the day before.

Although one member of the committee will be tasked with organising the contests, it is the responsibility of the Conference Chair and Division Director to oversee this.

### 4.1 Contest Officials

The following officials are required for each Division Contest:

- 1 Chief Judge
- 7 Voting Judges
- 1 Tie Breaking Judge
- 3 Tally Counters
- 2 Timers

The Toastmaster Rulebook (2016) states that *“there shall be an equal number of voting judges from each area in the division, or a minimum of seven voting judges”*. Please note that because there are only six areas in Central Division (as of 2016) the *“minimum of seven voting judges”* rule applies.

Please also note that *“No Chief Judge, Voting Judge or Tiebreaking Judge shall be a member of any club in which a contestant is a member”*. This makes things very difficult when trying to get judges in Central Division as many contestants and officials are members of several clubs. Therefore I recommend that you contact the District Director and request the assistance of judges from outside the Division. This will usually be the District Director, Program Quality Director or Club Growth Director.

Further information of contest officials can be found in the Toastmasters International Contest Rulebook, item 1171. The Speech Contest Rulebook operates from July 1 to June 30 each year.

### 4.2 Who are the Judges?

Although TI rules state that all judges other than the Chief Judge must not to be announced, in most instances it is obvious to all who the judges are, this especially stands out when only seven hands are raised at the end of the contest for the Tally Counters. One way of overcoming this is to have several extra copies of the judging forms available for other members of the audience. When the Tally Counters collect the official judges' forms, they also collect the judging forms from the other members in the audience who have been given forms. All forms are collected by the Tally Counters giving the impression that there are more than only seven judges. The Tally Counters will know who the official judges are and these can also be highlighted in some way, however only the official judges forms are reviewed, all others are discarded.

### 4.3 Additional Officials

In addition to these officials there should be two Sergeant at Arms appointed.

**Sergeant at Arms 1:** Although Contestants are ultimately responsible for arranging their preferred setup of the lectern and microphone; it is the responsibility of the Sergeant at Arms to ensure that this runs smoothly. They are responsible for the stage setup for each contestant in regard to their personal props. Personal props are such things as a lectern, whiteboard, projector or other furniture requirements, e.g. table, chairs etc. Personal props should be collected from the contestants by the Sergeant at Arms at the briefing or before. At the end of the Contest, the same Sergeant at Arms should re-arrange the stage to the requirements of the Contest Chairman for the presentation of the participation certificates and for the presentation of the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place getters.



**Sergeant at Arms 2:** Responsible for directing the contestants in Evaluation and Table Topics away from the speaking area and out of hearing range, in some cases such as a large room an assistant may be required. They are responsible for attaching the lapel microphones and ensuring they are turned on or off at the appropriate time. Depending on your budget a sound technician will be available to supervise this work or the venue staff will provide someone if it their equipment. They are also the custodian of gifts (e.g. wine, chocolates, flower arrangements, etc.) to Guest Speakers or other Presenters. A lot of time is lost with breaks going overtime, so it is important that the Sergeant at Arms ensures people return on time.

#### 4.4 Contest equipment

The following equipment is required for each contest and should be organised well in advance:

- Professional sound system or amplifier with speakers
- Stage or a portable raised platform approximately 4m x 1.8m x 0.5m
- Fixed lectern with microphone for Toastmaster and Contest Chair
- Light weight lectern, e.g. music stand to be used for Evaluation Contestants
- Two sets of timing lights (one set is used as a backup)
- Timing cards
- Two stop watches
- Two lapel microphones
- Timers table (approximately 0.76m x 0.76m placed no further than 3.5 metres from the centre of the stage)
- 10 Manila style folders (used by Judges and officials)
- 7 size 'DL' envelopes (used by judges to seal their results)

#### 4.5 Duration of Contests

The timing of each contest is critical to ensure the day's event to run smoothly. It is important that the correct procedure for presenting awards is adhered to and is consistent throughout all contests. There has been a tendency recently by the Contest Chairman to announce "A two minute silence" after the last speaker has completed their speech, it is generally believed that this is the time needed for judges to finalise their votes. Please note that although this may be written in some Contest Chair scripts, there is no ruling for this under the Toastmasters International Contest Rulebook. The Contest Rulebook states "When the last contestant finishes speaking, the contest chair will ask for silence until the ballot counters have collected all ballots." This procedure should be followed regardless of how long the judges take to finalise their results.

For all contests, each Contest Chairman should present the participation certificates while the Chief Judge is out of the room with the Counters tallying the results. Toastmaster International rules state that where two or more contests are being held at the same event and venue no further contest may begin until the previous has been finalised. Therefore all results must be announced immediately after the Chief Judge knows the result.

After the participation certificates have been awarded, all contestants should return to their seats before the Contest Chair announces the results. It is the responsibility of the Contest Chair to announce the results of the contest – not the Chief Judge. Only 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place should return to the stage. It is a good idea to have the highest ranking District Officer present awards, usually the Division Director, however if the District Director or visiting District Officer is available, they should present the awards.

##### 4.5.1 International & Humorous Contests

Both of these Contests will take approximately 1 hour 15 minutes for six speakers.

Use the following to calculate the time for each contest:

- Introduction and explanation of rules - 5 minutes
- Contest Speakers - 54 minutes  
(7½ minutes per speech which includes the maximum disqualification time, plus 30 seconds introduction of each speaker, plus 1 minute silence between each speaker)
- Chief Judge's Adjournment -10 minutes
- Presentation of 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place - 5 minutes

#### 4.5.2 Table Topics Contest

This contest will take approximately 40 minutes for six speakers.

Use the following to calculate the time for this contest:

- Introduction and explanation of rules - 5 minutes
- Contest Speakers - 21 minutes  
(2 minutes per speech, plus 30 seconds introduction of each speaker, plus 1 minute silence between each speaker)
- Chief Judge's Adjournment - 10 minutes
- Presentation of 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place - 5 minutes

#### 4.5.3 Evaluation Contest

This contest will take approximately 1 hour for six speakers.

Use the following to calculate the time for this contest:

- Introduction and explanation of rules - 6 minutes  
(Includes introduction of Test Speaker)
- Test Speaker - 7 minutes
- Contest Speakers adjournment - 5 minutes
- Speakers - 27 minutes  
(3 minutes per speech, plus 30 seconds introduction of each speaker, plus 1 minute silence between each speaker)
- Chief Judge's Adjournment - 10 minutes
- Presentation of 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place - 5 minutes

## 5. ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

As explained in the introduction, the Central Division Conference usually adds other elements to the day, e.g. workshops, keynote speakers, entertainers, etc. These performances are generally used as a "warm up" for the audience; therefore they should be scheduled in the first part of the meeting. One member of the committee should be responsible for organising these additional events.

**5.1 Guest Speaker:** If a Guest Speaker can be arranged, it can enhance the program at the Conference. This person is usually someone other than a Toastmaster and while it is not necessary for a guest speaker to deliver a workshop, they should offer value to a Toastmasters audience by the quality of their presentation. The presentation should be a topic that is focused on attracting the audience's attention, e.g. inspiration, motivational or even humorous.

Ideally the speaker should be programmed in the first part of day and before the Humorous Speech Contest as 'a warm up' for the audience, this can get the conference off to a great start. The speaker should firstly be approved by Division Director before any invitation is sent out.

If a non-Toastmaster speaker cannot be found, a suitable Toastmaster, who is not a contestant in any of the contests, may present a workshop. As South Australia consists of only one Division and many members are known to each other, I recommend you contact Toastmasters from interstate for this role.

It is important to note that Toastmasters International Constitution prohibits us from raising funds for other organisations therefore a speaker should not be considered whose major subject is fund raising for themselves or any other charitable organisation (no matter how worthy they might be). Please note that a speaker may promote their products; however this may not be done during their presentation.

As every Toastmaster knows, timing is very important, however if your guest speaker is not a Toastmaster, they may need to be made aware of the importance of time and how the timing lights will be used.

The length of their presentation should also include any question time.

The guest speaker role should not last longer than 20-30 minutes.

### **5.2 Workshop Presenter:**

When choosing workshop presenters it is important that, as with the Guest Speaker this person should also be approved by the Division Director first. All presenters should be proficient in the topic that they are presenting and be experienced presenters. Considering that Central Division holds many workshops throughout the year at the EDC, it is recommended that the presenter has an alternative topic to the usual workshops members would normally attend.

The workshop should not last longer than 20-30 minutes.

If workshops are to be run it is recommended that correspondence be sent at least three months in advance asking for submissions by members interested in presenting a workshop. The call for submissions should also be put up on the Central Division website. It may be possible for the venue to provide workshop equipment such as projector, whiteboard, etc. however much of this will depend on your budget. It should be noted that Presenters will need to supply their own equipment, e.g. laptop computer, etc. Any costs for printing of handouts lies with the presenter.

### **5.3 Entertainer**

When we think of a 'Guest Speaker' the first thought is someone presenting a motivational or Inspirational type speech but it doesn't mean the speaker shouldn't also be entertaining and humorous. There is no reason why an entertainer like a comedian or magician or other performing act can't be hired. During March in Adelaide there are many acts performing at the Adelaide Fringe and there may be an opportunity to use some of these acts. However, it is important to ensure that whatever act you choose it is appropriate for a Toastmaster audience.

### **5.4 Debates and similar activities**

An alternative to a guest speaker or workshop presenter is to organise a debate between members. Ideally the members on each team would be from different clubs rather than the same club which would give more people the opportunity to compete. The topic should be light hearted and fun. As with the Guest Speaker or Workshop Presenter the session should not last longer than 20-30 minutes.

### **5.5 Raffles:**

It has been a tradition of the Central Division Conference to hold a raffle and although it is not compulsory, it is a fun part of the conference. If you do decide to go ahead with a raffle you need to plan well ahead of the conference date in order to source prizes.

The prizes or prize can be organised in several ways, in the past clubs have been asked to donate a prize or money towards a prizes. You should also allow for a raffle in your budget in case clubs can't or don't want to donate. When conducting a raffle it is important to only include gifts that are in hand, not goods that have been 'promised', but not received prior to the raffle.

### **5.6 Banner Display or Parade:**

A show of club banners around the room adds a touch of vibrancy and colour to the day. If planned well in advance, each club attending would bring their banner to the Conference and they would then be displayed around the room. However this will depend on whether the venue has the facilities to provide this. If you would like clubs to bring their banner to the conference, it needs to be communicated to the President of each club at least two months in advance.

Regardless of whether clubs display their banners, the Division banner should always be on display, the Division banner is available from the Division Director.

At the International Convention and some district conventions around the world a banner parade is organised as part of their opening ceremony. Although I haven't seen this at Division level, I feel it could be a fun part of the day if managed well. The idea would be to have a representative of each club attending the conference joining in a parade with their club banner as an 'opening ceremony' and then displaying the banners around the room during the conference. Strict time allocation needs to be taken into consideration if this is to be included, since the logistics of organising a representative of each club in Central Division to bring their banner and join in a parade would likely take longer than the time allowed.

## **6. AWARDS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **6.1 Toastmaster of the Year Award**

There are several awards presented to Toastmasters each year and these are generally awarded through the Toastmasters International Educational program, however the Central Division Toastmaster of the Year Award is very different. This award is presented to a Toastmaster in Central Division that has done something significant and outstanding within the Division over the 12 months since the previous Division Conference and unlike many other awards, the Central Division Toastmaster of the Year Award is decided upon by their peers, meaning every club member is given the opportunity to vote on who they think is eligible for this award. The trophies and awards are organised by the Division Director. The award is presented towards the end of the day's event by either the Division Director or another Toastmaster appointed by the Division Director.

### **6.2 Judges and Officials' gifts**

At some contests gifts are presented to judges and other contest officials as a form of thank you, e.g. chocolates, a bottle of wine, etc. Although a small gift in appreciation is always welcome, presenting such gifts is up to the Conference Chair and there is no requirement under Toastmasters International rules for such presentations to be made. Much will depend on your budget and you will need to allow for such gifts in your early planning.

If thank you gifts are to be presented I suggest that these should be for guest presenters and the test speaker for the Evaluation Contest. An email to thank others for their assistance is also appreciated.

### **6.3 First Timer**

This award is designed to add an element of fun to the event and is by no means an obligatory part of the conference; it has been done for previous Central Division Conferences in a similar manner to the District Convention. As members register for the conference they indicate whether it is their first time attending the conference, a questionnaire form is given to them on arrival with questions relating to Toastmasters and Central Division. Each 'First Timer' is asked to complete the questionnaire and the winner is presented with a prize. This is also dependent on your budget.

See Appendix 2 for an example of a First Timers Quiz.

### **6.4 Club Awards**

At the District Convention there are awards for individual clubs, e.g. the club with the most members attending. As far as I know this has never been done before at Central Division but it doesn't mean it shouldn't be tried. If you are going to do an award like this you will need to announce it very early.

### **6.5 Other special awards**

There are sometimes special presentations that need to be made in honour of a Toastmaster in our Division. For example if a member is very ill or has passed away. Of course it's not always appropriate or necessary but if something like this is done then it should be done by either the Division Director or a close friend of the person and kept as brief as possible at the end of the program.

It doesn't have to be a sad occasion, there are birthdays, weddings, etc.

## 7. THE PROGRAM

The scheduling of each item on the program and the order of their presentation is up to the Conference Chair and their team in consultation with the Division Director. The following is an example only.

As a way of warming the audience and motivating them for the day's events, I recommend that the Humorous Speech contest be scheduled first before the morning tea break with any additional activities, e.g. guest speaker, workshop presenter, etc. prior to this contest. This should be followed by a 'shorter style' speech contest, e.g. Evaluation or Table Topics to be held just prior to lunch.

As the International Speech contest is regarded as the more important contest it is recommended this be held immediately after the lunch. The final contest of the day should be another 'shorter style' speech.

Toastmaster International rules state that where two contests are being held at the same event and venue no contest may begin until the previous one has being finalised. Therefore it is important to allow time on the agenda for all results to be announced immediately after the Chief Judge knows the result.

Following the completion and presentation of all contests, other awards can be made, e.g. Toastmaster of The Year.

Raffle draws and final announcements should be made by the Division Director before the final close of the Conference.

### 7.1 Agenda example

The following example of a convention program shows the order of each contest and other activities:

1. Briefings for first contest
2. Opening by Sergeant at Arms or Toastmaster
3. Welcome by Division Director
4. Additional activities e.g. Guest Speaker, Workshop Presenter, Comedian, etc.
5. First speech contest (Humorous)
6. Short break of no more than 15 minutes, (used for briefings for second contest)
7. Second speech contest (Evaluation)
8. Lunch break (minimum of one hour, may also be used for briefing of third contest)
9. Third speech contest (International)
10. Short break of no more than 15 minutes, (used for briefings for fourth contest)
11. Fourth Speech Contest (Table Topics)
12. Other awards and Presentations, e.g. Toastmaster of the Year Award
13. Raffle Draw
14. Announcements by Division Director

The final program should not be printed or promoted until all the timing for each item has been checked by all members of your Conference Committee and by the Division Director.

See Appendix 3 for an example of a Conference Agenda.

### 7.2 Run Sheet

To ensure everything runs smoothly and on time, a run sheet should be prepared for the whole day. This should detail the time allocated for each speaker in each session and include the speaker's name. Every speaker (other than contestants) should receive a copy.

Please see Appendix 4 for an example of a run sheet.

### 7.3 Appointing Officials

It is important to remember that the Conference is a significant event on the Central Division calendar where the best speakers and presenters are on show; therefore all Toastmasters with a speaking role at the Conference, e.g. Toastmaster, Contest Chair, Sergeant at Arms, etc. should be experienced in the role they are performing. They need to be outstanding speakers and have a proven track record in the role they are doing and most importantly be able to keep it to time. Although our organisation prides itself on developing people in public speaking and leadership, the Central Division Conference is not the time for novice Toastmasters who do not have the experience to undertake the role. This becomes more important if you have a well-known keynote speaker, visiting Toastmasters from interstate or the general public attending. The Central Division Conference is an ideal time to showcase what Toastmasters in South Australia can achieve.

## **8. FOOD AND CATERING**

Food is a very important part of any conference and although you will not be able to please everyone attending, consideration must be given to those Toastmasters who are diabetics, vegetarians, gluten free or who have religious dietary constraints. This is usually not a significant problem in today's society; however care must be taken to ensure everyone is catered for. It is essential to include a dietary requirement section on the registration form. As a rule of thumb a two course menu is sufficient, either an entrée and main or main and dessert and works well in the time constraints allowed for the lunch break.

There are generally two options for meals, a la carte or buffet style. Your choice will depend on your type of venue. Most hotels will be able to cater for an a la carte style menu, however if you choose a community centre for the conference, an outside caterer may be needed to bring in a buffet meal. If you decide to have a two course sit down meal it is important that you inform the venue staff not to serve meals or interrupt a speaker while they are speaking.

The morning and afternoon tea breaks should have coffee, tea, juice and water available for all attendees. Some venues may offer extra such as biscuits and cake, etc. however this will depend on your budget. Morning (and afternoon) teas are usually a self-serve, however if there are more than 50 people you may need two separate service points to avoid long queues.

### **8.1 Timing and length of a break**

Ensuring well run timing of contests and speakers is critical however networking is an equally important part of any Toastmaster meeting, so to ensure this happens the length of the refreshment breaks need to be scheduled long enough to allow guests to mingle but not to the detriment to the speaking sessions. The morning and afternoon tea breaks should be a minimum of 20 minutes

### **8.2 Different varieties of food**

I have written this guide as an advice only, therefore I'm not going to tell you what you should or should not have for meals; rather, it is a suggestion of the types only.

Firstly I believe the morning and afternoon tea breaks should have a variety of hot and cold drinks. Brewed coffee should include a caffeine free choice and a variety of herbal teas would also be desirable. Fresh orange juice and iced water are always welcome. Any further snacks such as biscuits or cake will depend on your budget but should be kept to a minimum with a mixture of sweet and savoury.

The lunch menu needs careful thought, particularly if you are having a la carte. At an average price of \$20 to \$30 per head, most hotels will only provide two choices as an 'alternate drop'. It is a good idea to include a 'healthy' option, e.g. chicken salad, however avoid pairing this with something like a chicken schnitzel. I suggest two different types of meat or a fish and pasta.

A buffet by its very name offers more variety and usually has a selection of hot and cold meats and salads, however too much variety may also cause problems.

Although the meal is only a small part of the Conference, it needs to be seen as an enjoyable break from the formal proceedings and allows Toastmasters to mingle and network.

### **8.3 Catering for special diets**

As mentioned previously, consideration must be given to those Toastmasters who are diabetics, vegetarians, gluten free or who have religious dietary constraints. The problem lies when having a la carte and the hotel wants to alternate just two choices of main or sweets. It is important that the registration form has a section for people to mark their special dietary needs. This information then needs to be provided to the hotel as soon as possible so the kitchen has plenty of time to prepare. It is a good idea to indicate an earlier cut-off time for dietary needs.

## 9. BUDGET

A major part of a successful conference is a well organised budget. Although location is an important aspect when deciding your venue, the venue hire cost is another key consideration. Toastmasters and particularly South Australians have shown that they will not pay excessively high registration fees; however, if the fee is too low, it may result in a loss, whereas if the registration fee is too high it may result in poor attendance numbers, and you will incur a loss.

Most venues have a standard room hire price, however this may be reduced depending on the number of attendees and the type of catering used. Care must be taken if you are going to set a separate reduced price for students and pensioners, although this may increase your attendance numbers you will need to advertise it appropriately otherwise you may find people may abuse this.

A comprehensive breakdown of the fixed and variable costs for the complete conference is essential so an affordable fee is charged for attendees.

I suggest preparing a budget with three different scenarios based on numbers attending and cost per head.

### 9.1 Conference Registration fees

The registration fees need to be set early, however there is some risk in setting a break-even number of attendees too early. If possible you should try and get statistics from previous Division Conferences to help you estimate the likely number to register. The average attendance at a Central Division Conference is approximately 80. Overestimating can cause problems with the venue and catering, particularly if you have been offered a reduced fee based on your estimated numbers but don't reach the numbers you expected. Underestimating can be just as problematic.

Usually a hotel will request an approximate number of attendees about 14 days before the conference and then ask for a guaranteed number of attendees 7 days before.

Charges are likely to be based on the number of attendees attending or the guaranteed number.

It's unfortunate that many Toastmasters wait until the last minute before they commit to registering and this is no doubt very frustrating. The fact is that they too have very busy lives and are not thinking about the Conference in the same way you and your committee are. Reminders of cut-off registration dates need to be emailed regularly, particularly in the last month.

In the past there have been different types of registrations, i.e. part registration for half day or contest only. Although this is a benefit for those who are unable to attend the whole day and perhaps appear positive in the bottom line of your registration numbers, it can be a nuisance when calculating your final budget. I suggest you keep things to full registrations only. The only Toastmasters that should be offered free admission are contestants for the competition part only, not catering.

There is a substantial number of Toastmasters in Central Division who will attend the Conference no matter what is on offer, but there is also unfortunately a larger number that will not attend. It is this larger number you need to persuade to come along, early and continued promotion is vital.

### 9.2 Fund Raising

Although the registration fees are your main source of income, there are also other ways of sourcing funds to help bridge any gap between the conference costs and the revenue raised by Registration Fees.

The annual Central Division Concert, raffles, trivia nights, donations from clubs and Speechcraft are great ways to raise funds. Fundraising can be done both before and during the conference, however if funds from other sources are included in your budget they should be a conservative estimate only.

The key to successful fund raising activities are that they are fun and interesting, however, none of that counts if they are not promoted well.

### **9.3 Venue**

The fixed costs will vary from venue to venue, but they will usually include venue hire, be sure to determine precisely what is included in the venue hire costs in terms of room availability, catering, AV equipment, continuous tea/coffee facilities, furniture items, etc.

High venue fees can be misleading because if a venue includes in its hire charges, the room hire, catering, AV equipment, tea and coffee, and furniture items, it may work out to be cheaper than an alternative venue which does not charge a hire cost but provides none of the particular equipment needed. This places a large amount of additional work on the Committee to source these items.

### **9.4 AV Equipment and other furniture**

If your venue is unable to provide a suitable sound system you will need to hire this equipment as a separate item, in some circumstances you will also need an audio technician.

Sufficient lighting is necessary to light the stage while the speakers are speaking so it may be necessary to hire spot lights. Although many venues will have a large enough room to host a Division Conference, they may not have a suitable stage; therefore you may also need to hire this.

The stage should be approximately 2.5m x 5m x 0.3m.

Costs for AV equipment and furniture should be established well in advance.

### **9.5 Catering**

Meals, morning and afternoon teas, etc. are normally quoted on a per person basis with a minimum total charge or minimum number of attendees. Prices will vary depending on what is included in the menu.

Unfortunately you won't know the costs of catering until you have your final attendance numbers in, most venues or catering companies will set a deadline of one week before the date for these final numbers.

### **9.6 Printing**

The cost of printing an agenda and advertising flyers, etc. can be a significant part of conference expenses, so this should be kept to a minimum. My personal experience is that generally people don't read flyers that are handed out at major events and in many cases they will be left behind after people leave.

I suggest a promotional flyer be designed and only one print run be made of no more than 20 per club, these are then given to each President to distribute amongst their members. A copy of the same flyer should be sent to all members.

A minimum of 100 copies of the Conference agenda needs to be printed. This can be as simple as a single A4 page in black and white to reduce costs; however a colour A5 four page booklet in gloss paper looks more professional. The front cover should show the Toastmaster logo with the name and date of the Conference, the inside pages will have the agenda spread across both pages and the back page will have acknowledgements, etc. Depending on the venue you may also need to print the menu.

### **9.7 Other Costs**

You may have to pay a small fee if you are going to have a guest speaker (other than a Toastmaster) and an official photographer. This should be negotiated well in advance.

### **9.8 Finalising Accounts**

Within a reasonable time after the Conference all (approved) outstanding accounts should be paid, however this should be managed by the Division Director.

### **9.9 Conference Report**

As previously indicated, taking on the role of the Conference Chair is also an opportunity for a HPL project and part of that is presenting a speech on your experiences. A report of the conference outlining your experiences that gives an honest appraisal of both the good and bad will be of benefit to everyone, in particular any Toastmaster who may be interested in taking on the role in the future.

The report should include a financial statement.



## 10. REGISTRATION

The registration form where attendees register for the conference needs to contain all the vital information that will ensure the conference runs smoothly.

It should have the following:

- Date of the conference
- Location and start time
- Cost
- Name of attendee and their club
- Their contact details, both email and phone
- Special dietary needs
- Cut-off date for registering
- Whether they are a member or guest
- If it is their first time to a Central Division Conference

As mentioned earlier, it's unfortunate that many Toastmasters wait until the last minute before they commit to registering. About a week before the cut-off date it is important that a reminder be sent highlighting the cut-off registration date of the conference.

## 11. PROMOTION

There is a saying "Build it and they will come" unfortunately they won't come unless they know it has been built. All the hard work of planning and care put into your Conference will be in vain if you don't get people to attend. Advertising of the conference needs to start early and continue at regular intervals increasing in frequency closer to the event.

The first notice should be done by the Division Director at a Division event that will attract a large number of Toastmasters, e.g. an Education and Training session at the EDC Hindmarsh sometime in November. The full details are not necessary; however, at a minimum it should include the date and location.

A further reminder should be done in December at a similar event.

Complete details such as the date and time, venue location, registration details, event activities, cost, etc. needs to be communicated to the members in January. The Division website should be a major means for informing the members about the Conference. This should be setup in early January with a link to a dedicated page for the conference that has all the details of the conference including a registration form. A promotional flyer advertising the conference should be designed and sent electronically to all members. There is nothing better than word of mouth and great advertising can be achieved by having members of your Committee or other representatives such as Area Directors make presentations at Club and Area Contests or other events.

Although the Conference is a South Australian event, it is a good idea to promote it in the District Newsletter and on the District calendar.

The Central Division Conference is also an ideal opportunity to promote Toastmasters to the wider community, particularly if you are having a well-known guest speaker or workshop presenter. If you intend encouraging public attendance, it is a good idea to promote the conference early to places such as libraries and local Service Clubs like Rotary, Lions, etc.

Please see Appendix 5 for an example of a promotional flyer.

## 12. REFERENCES

This document has been written as a guide to help Toastmasters in South Australia organize and manage the range of activities involved in running the Central Division Conference. Further information and downloadable forms can be obtained from the following websites:

**Toastmasters International Home:**

<http://www.toastmasters.org/>

**District 73 Toastmasters:**

<http://d73.toastmasters.org.au/>

**Central Division Toastmasters:**

<http://www.toastmastersa.org/>

**Speech Contest Resources:**

<http://www.toastmasters.org/Shop/Contests/Speech-Contest-Kits>

**Speech Contest Rulebook:**

<http://www.toastmasters.org/~media/3117F77BBF4D430B8A403ECECDD5F99F.ashx>

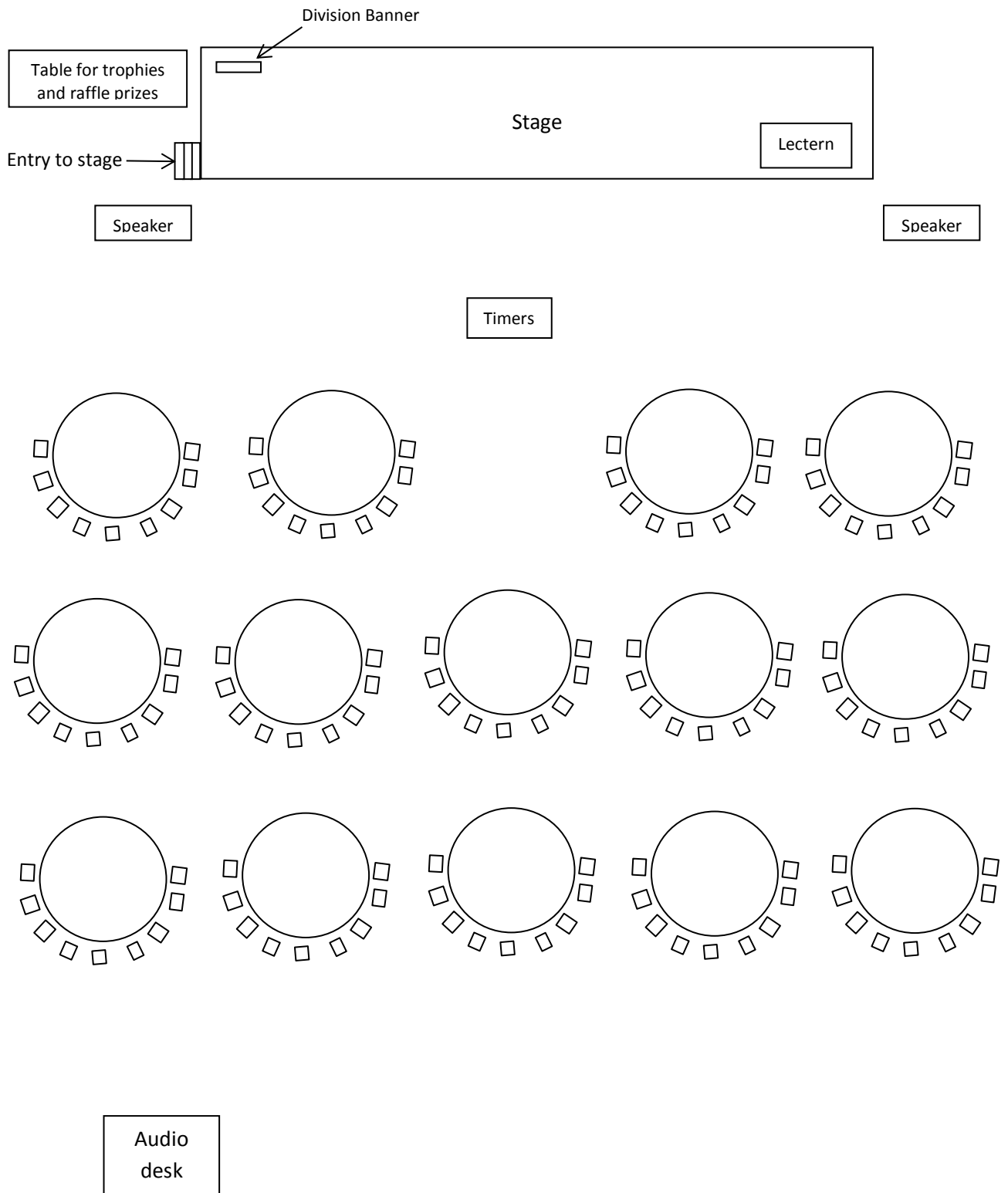
**Central Division mailing list, (Division Director, Area Directors and Club Executives)**

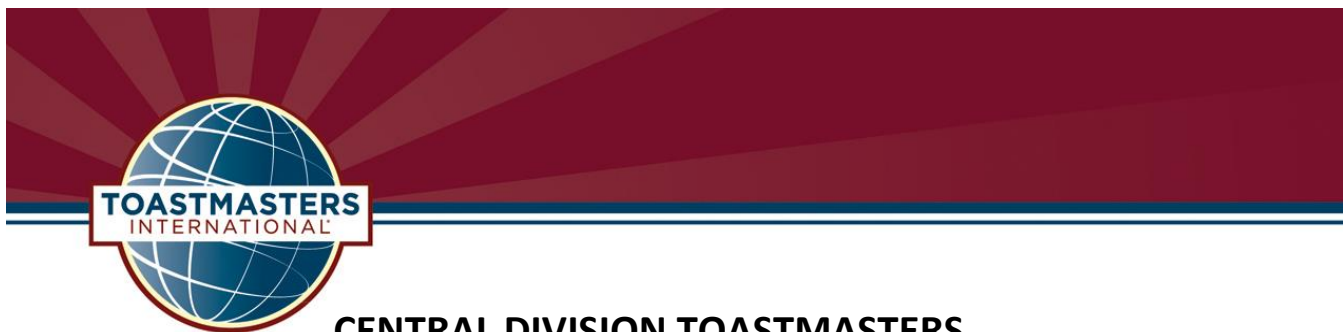
[divc-leaders@d73.toastmasters.org.au](mailto:divc-leaders@d73.toastmasters.org.au)

## 12. APPENDICES

Appendix 1

# Room setup for an a la carte meal





**CENTRAL DIVISION TOASTMASTERS  
Division Conference 20\_\_  
First Timer’s Quiz**

**Thank you for attending your first Central Division Conference.**

To help you meet people and be in the running for a great prize, please complete this quiz and submit it to \_\_\_\_\_ by 3.00pm. Please include your name, club and a contact details.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Club: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone or email: \_\_\_\_\_

1	Who is the current Central Division Director? Bonus point if you get a signature		Signature
2	Who is the Area Director of C11 Bonus point if you get a signature		Signature
3	Who is the Area Director of C8 Bonus point if you get a signature		Signature
4	Who is the Division Education and Training Officer? Bonus point if you get a signature		Signature
5	Who was the Division Conference Chair in 2016 and where was it held? Bonus point if you get a signature		Signature
6	What district is Central Division in?		
7	What is the name of the club that meets at the German Club?		
8	What Region is District 73 in?		
9	Who was the Central Division Toastmaster of the year in 2016?		
10	What Area does SA Governors club belong to?		
11	What Area does Tea Tree Gully club belong to?		
13	Where was the 2015 Division Conference held?		
14	Where are Educational & Training sessions traditionally held?		
15	What does the acronym EDC stand for?		
16	How many Toastmaster Clubs are in Central Division?	32	25 18
17	How many Club Officer Positions are there?		
18	In what year was Toastmasters founded and by whom?		
19	What does the acronym DTM stand for?		
20	Who won the Division International Speech contest in 2015		



**CENTRAL DIVISION TOASTMASTERS**  
**Division Conference 20\_\_**



Proudly hosted by  
 (name of club) Toastmaster Club  
 (name of venue) – (address of venue)  
 (date of conference)

<b>8.30</b>	Registration Desk Opens	25	
<b>8.50</b>	Briefings for Humorous Contest	10	(name)
<b>8.55</b>	Call to order by Sergeant at Arms		(name)
<b>9.00</b>	Sergeant at Arms Housekeeping Rules		(name)
<b>9.05</b>	Toastmaster		(name)
<b>9.10</b>	Welcome from Division Director		(name)
<b>9.15</b>	“Title of Guest Presentation”	20	(name)

**HUMOROUS SPEECH CONTEST**

<b><u>Contest Chair:</u></b> (name)	<b><u>Contestants:</u></b> C7 (name) C8 (name) C9 (name) C10 (name) C11 (name) C12 (name)	<b><u>Time Keepers:</u></b> (name) (name) <b><u>Tally Counters:</u></b> (name) (name) (name)
Contest Results		(Contest Chair)

**MORNING TEA**

<b>10.50</b>	Briefings for Evaluation Contest	(name)
<b>11.10</b>	Call to order –Sergeant at Arms	(name)

**EVALUATION SPEECH CONTEST**

<b><u>Test Speaker</u></b> (leave blank)	<b><u>Contestants:</u></b> C7 (name) C8 (name) C9 (name) C10 (name) C11 (name) C12 (name)	<b><u>Time Keepers:</u></b> (name) (name) <b><u>Tally Counters:</u></b> (name) (name) (name)
<b><u>Contest Chair:</u></b> (name)		
<b><u>Chief Judge:</u></b> (name)		
<b><u>Contest Sgt at Arms:</u></b> (name)		
Contest Results		(Contest Chair)

12.15

**LUNCH**

12.15 Briefings for International Contest (name)

1.15 Call to order - Sergeant at Arms (name)

1.20

**INTERNATIONAL SPEECH CONTEST**

**Contest Chair:**

(name)

**Contestants:**

C7 (name)

C8 (name)

C9 (name)

C10 (name)

C11 (name)

C12 (name)

**Time Keepers:**

(name)

(name)

**Chief Judge:**

(name)

**Tally Counters:**

(name)

(name)

(name)

Contest Results

(Contest Chair)

2.35

**AFTERNOON TEA**

2.35 Briefings for Table Topics Contest (name)

2.55 Call to order - Sergeant at Arms (name)

3.00

**TABLE TOPICS SPEECH CONTEST**

**Contest Chair:**

(name)

**Contestants:**

C7 (name)

C8 (name)

C9 (name)

C10 (name)

C11 (name)

C12 (name)

**Time Keepers:**

(name)

(name)

**Chief Judge;**

(name)

**Tally Counters:**

(name)

**Contest Sgt at Arms:**

(name)

(name)

(name)

Contest Results

(Contest Chair)

3.45

**PRESENTATIONS**

Toastmaster of the Year (Division Director)

Other special awards or presentations (Division Director or name)

Raffle Draw (name)

Final Announcements (Division Director)

4:30 Conference Close

Appendix 4

**CENTRAL DIVISION CONFERENCE – Run sheet for a 9.00am start  
SATURDAY, \_\_\_ MARCH 20\_\_**

Time	Event	Time	Action	Who
8.00	Room set up	30	Confirm setup of room: Lecterns, AV, Timers table, presentation/raffle tables, dining tables, registration table, etc.	Venue staff, Division Director, Conference Chair
8.30	Arrival	15	Members begin sitting at tables	All
8.45	Briefings for first contest	15	Chief Judge and Contest Chair take officials and contestants for briefing	Chief Judge and officials, Contest Chair and Contestants
8.45	Lunch menu on tables	15	Venue staff begin taking orders for lunch	All
8.55	SAA announces 5 minute warning	5	Attendees finalise lunch orders and prepare for days event	All
9.00	Call to Order and welcome by SAA	5	SAA gives brief welcome, announces housekeeping rules and introduces Toastmaster.	Sergeant at Arms
9.05	Toastmaster Opening	5	Opening by Toastmaster to set scene and explain the day's event. Toastmaster then introduces Division Director	Toastmaster
9.10	Welcome by Division Director	5	Division Director gives formal welcome and passes back to Toastmaster	Division Director
9.15	Toastmaster announcement	3	Toastmaster introduces Guest Speaker	Toastmaster
9.18	Guest Speaker	20	Guest Speaker presents talk on .....	Guest Speaker
9.38	Toastmaster	2	Toastmaster introduces Contest Chair for first Contest	Toastmaster
9.40	First Speech Contest (e.g. Humorous)	1h 15m	First Contest begins (Humorous) Contest Chair hands back to Toastmaster at end of contest	Contest Chair
10.55	Toastmaster announcement		Toastmaster announces morning tea break and gives reminder about raffle, etc.	Toastmaster
10.55	Briefings and morning tea break	20	Morning tea break plus briefings for second contest	Contestants and officials
11.15	Toastmaster announcement	2	Toastmaster calls to order from morning tea and introduces Contest Chair for second contest	Toastmaster
11.17	Second Speech Contest (e.g. Evaluation)	1h	Second Contest begins (Evaluation) Contest Chair hands back to Toastmaster at end of contest	Contest Chair
12.17	Toastmaster		Toastmaster announces lunch break and gives reminder about raffle, etc.	Toastmaster
12.17	Briefings and lunch break	1h	Lunch break: service and eating, no speeches during lunch. Briefings for third contest	Contestants and officials Venue staff serve meals
1.17	Toastmaster announcement	3	Toastmaster calls to order from lunch and introduces Contest Chair for third contest	Toastmaster
1.20	Third Speech Contest (e.g. International)	1h 15m	Third Contest begins (International) Contest Chair hands back to Toastmaster at end of contest	Contest Chair
2.35	Toastmaster		Toastmaster announces afternoon tea break and gives reminder about raffle, etc.	Toastmaster
2.35	Briefings and afternoon tea break	20	Afternoon tea break plus briefings for final contest	Contestants and officials for briefings



<b>Time</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Who</b>
2.55	Toastmaster announcement	2	Toastmaster calls to order from afternoon tea and introduces Contest Chair for final contest	Toastmaster
2.57	Final Speech Contest (e.g. Table Topics)	45	Final Contest begins (Table Topics) Contest Chair hands back to Toastmaster at end of contest	Contest Chair
3.42	Toastmaster announcement	3	Toastmaster introduces Division Director to present awards	Toastmaster
3.45	Division Director announcement	20	Division Director presents awards, (e.g. Toastmaster of The Year) and then hands back to Toastmaster	Division Director
4.05	Toastmaster announcement	1	Toastmaster introduces Committee member to conduct raffle	Toastmaster
4.06	Raffle Draw	15	Committee Member conducts raffle	Committee Member
4.21	Toastmaster announcement	1	Toastmaster introduces Division Director to make final announcements	Toastmaster
4.22	Final announcements	8	Division Director thanks everyone involved, gives final announcements and closes meeting	Division Director



## 20\_\_ CENTRAL DIVISION CONFERENCE

The 20\_\_ Central Division Conference  
Promises to showcase the best speakers in the Division

**Date:** Saturday, March \_\_

**Time:** \_\_am - \_\_pm

**Where:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Cost:** \$\_\_\_\_\_

Direct transfer to: \_\_\_\_\_

BSB: 123456 Acc: 987654321

**Contact:** Division Director

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

## THANK YOU

The idea of writing this guide book came about after I took on the role of Central Division Conference Chair for the 2016 Central Division Conference. Although I had been to many Division Conferences and was aware of the different activities that could be run to make a successful conference, there wasn't any definitive guide for me to follow. I also discovered that other Conference Chairs before me had the same concern; we needed a guide and instruction book on how to organise a Division Conference.

As I stated in my introduction, working on a project like this takes a lot of time and it is not something a Toastmaster can do on their own, it takes a team, so I used the opportunity to do another High Performance Leadership Project. I want to thank Angela Guidera, Helen Kubenk, Joe Moutakis and Clayton Pearson for being part of my HPL team. Thank you to Jim Bost, Central Division Director 2015-2016 for your support with the 2016 Conference.

I want to give a very special thank you to Sue Pederick, Central Division Director 2016-2017 for her help in editing this booklet.

The whole purpose of a HPL project is to learn leadership skills but it is also about passing on what we learn to others. I trust this booklet in some way will help with your planning. By putting in the time and effort you will reap the rewards and everyone will benefit.

The most important thing to remember is to have fun along the way.

An electronic version of this booklet is available on the Central Division website at [www.toastmastersa.org](http://www.toastmastersa.org)

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