

# THE STORY OF TOASTMASTERS

Since Toastmasters began, more than 2.5 million men and women have benefited from the communication and leadership programmes of the organization.

The first club was formed in October 1924, when a group of men assembled by Dr Ralph C. Smedley met in the basement of the Santa Ana, California YMCA to form a club "to afford practice and training in the art of public speaking and in presiding over meetings, and to promote sociability and good fellowship among its members".

The group took the name "Toastmasters".

A year later, a second club was started in Anaheim, California, followed by a third in Los Angeles. By 1930, it was apparent that a federation was necessary to coordinate activities of the clubs and to provide standard methods. After formation of a club in Victoria, British Columbia, the group became known as Toastmasters International.

Growth was slow during the early years, but the number of clubs increased steadily. The forerunner of today's C&L programme, Basic Training, was introduced in 1942 and has been expanded and updated many times since then to keep abreast of the times and members' needs.

Membership in Toastmasters International increased rapidly after the end of World War II, and by 1954 the number of Toastmasters clubs had approached 1500.

In 1962, World Headquarters offices were moved to a new building in Santa Ana, California, not far from where the first club began. World Headquarters remains there to this day.

## TOASTMASTERS IN NEW ZEALAND

The first Toastmasters club in New Zealand was formed in 1962 in Dunedin. Now there are about 200 clubs in New Zealand, of which at least 45 are based in Auckland. The first Auckland club was formed in 1963 and is still called the Auckland Toastmasters Club.

A member of Auckland Club, John Fauvel, served as International President of Toastmasters in 1987 and was subsequently awarded the MBE for his services to Toastmasters. Len Jury from the same club also served in this executive role, Toastmaster's highest, in 1998. The winner of the annual international speech competitions hosted in the USA is awarded the title, World Champion of Public Speaking. Auckland has produced two World Champions, David Nottage in 1996 and Brett Rutledge in 1998.

Northrise Toastmasters Club was chartered in 1990.

**Toastmasters International is the undisputed world leader in speaking training.**