

Valé Ray Toyer DTM

Toastmasters in Australia lost one of its greatest contributors when Ray Toyer passed away on 17th March 2019 at the age of 82. Ray joined Miranda RSL club at the beginning of 1966 and for 53 years was a valued friend and colleague who gave tremendous service to the organisation and its members. Ray was currently a member of Bankstown Sports and previously a member of Revesby Club.

After joining, Ray quickly became involved in leadership, becoming President of the fledging Toastmasters Territorial Council of Australia (TCA) in 1970/71. In that role he proposed the concept of dividing the clubs in Australia into two Territorial Councils, putting a detailed proposition for this to the Board of Directors. The outcome was not only a split, but the decision to give each Territorial Council full district status. Thus thanks to Ray, Districts 69 and 70 were formed.

Only 5 years later there was a further push to separate the southern states from District 70 and District 73 was born. That created a bit of a leadership vacuum locally and so Ray stepped into to serve again, becoming the reformed District 70's second District Governor in 1977/78. In that role he was a key player in the starting of District 70 Speechcraft, a program specifically targeted at the business community. This was a very successful venture that ran for 25 years and raised significant funds for the district.

The following year Ray took over a small supplies service that the District Treasurer had started and created District 70 Supplies, setting it up in an old caravan in his back yard. Making supplies available locally, at a time when nearly everything from the USA came by sea, was a major factor in the rapid growth of Toastmasters in following years. Ray was honoured in 1982 with an International Presidential Citation for his outstanding contributions to Toastmasters over the preceding 15 years.

Also in 1982 the District persuaded WHQ to sell us key parts to enable us to make and sell trophies, being Toastmasters medallions and unisex lectern figures. Using these Ray went on to create a large range of trophies which he made for over 30 years for selling through Supplies.

After running Supplies for 10 years, Ray passed it on to a succession of different people. But on his retirement, he took Supplies over again and ran it from 1996 – 1998 and then from 2000 – 2007 when a new team took over. A key feature of those years were the Supplies shops that Ray and his very supportive wife Rae ran at all District 70 conferences, a service appreciated by so many attendees.

With the Supplies operations of the other districts failing District 70 Supplies became a national operation in his time, morphing into the current Toastmasters Supplies Australia (TSA) under the control of District 90. Ray stayed on as a key member of the team, manufacturing and shipping out his trophies until ill health forced him to cease three years ago.

At this time, we acknowledge Ray for his drive and leadership in the 60s and 70s and for a lifetime of service to members through his running of Supplies and his trophy business. He leaves a wonderful legacy.

Gary Wilson, OAM DTM PID
District 90 Historian