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Rostrum Taking Action



Fmn David Matters President, Australian Rostrum



Perceptions are powerful

From the President

Why do many Rostrum women accept dated language which refers to them as “Madam Chairman”?

Women members recognise that some people inside and outside of Rostrum believe that it is worth asking this question. It's up to Rostrum Club women to say, “yes, I'd like to Move for change” and *not to be silent when I ought to speak*.

Rostrum is a modern progressive organisation that welcomes people from all walks of life.

In recent days I have been talking with a number of outsiders who are interested in Rostrum and what we do. After looking at our website they asked me about Chairman, Freeman and what sort of “discipline” do we mete out in Rostrum and under what circumstances? Their sources of definitions were found by Googling the terms. It hurt me a lot when I did the same and saw the resulting definitions which do little justice to “my” Rostrum or reflect how I feel about this wonderful organization. The old definitions of Freeman are particularly inappropriate, but not my concern in this letter.

Perceptions are powerful. Wrong impressions spread easily via social media. Rostrum prides itself on its long-time culture as an inclusive organisation.

Recent debate online and in traditional media has focused on inclusive language and behaviours. This is important to all Australians because of continuing efforts at anti-discrimination.

Additionally, while not meant to be sexist or discriminatory, perceptions around the use of certain words reinforces my view that they have the potential to create a poor image of Rostrum, discriminatory or not.

There is nothing wrong with words like Freeman and chairman; however some outsiders question the value of learning in organisations like Rostrum which persist with gender-specific terminology.

Let's not forget that our main product is learning public speaking and education for communicators.

The Tasmanian Department of Education issued 2017 guidelines* that state “*Inclusive language is language that is free from words, phrases or tones that reflect prejudiced, stereotyped or discriminatory views of particular people or groups. It is also language that doesn't deliberately or inadvertently exclude people from being seen as part of a group*”. Also, as per these T.D.o.E. guidelines, Rostrum could “(avoid) the term ‘Chairman’ when referring to the generic role of the person chairing a meeting and use ‘Chair’ instead”. Many Parliaments in our Commonwealth of Nations now mandate that the chair-person be addressed as the Chair.

I see that many Rostrum Clubs have now adopted “Coach”, as we hear that Club visitors perceive a negative connotation in the word Critic. Some Rostrum clubs have also adopted Chair instead of Chairman – again this occurs because of the perceived sexism of the suffix “man”, when a woman is in the Chair. It is immaterial to argue that the Latin root of “chairman” refers to Manus (hand) . Read this 2012 article; <https://www.smartcompany.com.au/people-human-resources/leadership/origin-of-the-species-is-chairman-a-gender-neutral-term/> .

SmartCompany claims that chairman is OK as long as female participants don't mind. Within Rostrum it's up to our female members to decide.

Rostrum traditions are important and should not be cast aside on a whim. Notice that long ago we ceased referring to the coach as “Speaker of the Last Word”, or treasurer as “The Purse Holder” or secretary as “The Scribe”. We also used “Chief Guardian of Order” to name the chair and then dropped this old-English term for what was common in the 1930's – chairman.

Our language and terminology must again adapt to modern times or Rostrum may become irrelevant.

My reasons are clear; Rostrum must look outwards to attract new and younger members. Half of these are women. In fact, the women I was talking with felt that such deliberations by Rostrum were attractive to them. It's hard enough for any visitor to decide to attend a Club without giving them reasons to stay away.

Rostrum is relevant today and is willing to listen and is willing to learn.

*<https://documentcentre.education.tas.gov.au/documents/guidelines-for-inclusive-language.pdf>

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Rostrum SA brings Voice of Youth to Darwin—over the internet

Rostrum Voice of Youth SA/NT

SKYPE Links South Australia to Darwin

Rostrum South Australia

In 2017, SA/NT Rostrum was contacted by a senior school in Darwin and by a student from another Darwin school regarding our VOY competition. They had learnt about it from the Rostrum web site.

Although we (sadly) no longer have Rostrum Clubs in Darwin, we were still able to have students from the schools enter our competition.

One afternoon, a video link was established via Skype and two students successfully presented their speeches to our Rostrum Adjudicators sitting in Adelaide.

One of the schools hosted the Heat and a teacher in Darwin performed as moderator to ensure e.g. 15 minute preparation time for the short notice segment.

The winner of the Heat participated in our Semi-finals competition in Adelaide. A pre-condition of entry was that the parents be prepared to fund travel to Adelaide for the Semi-final (and the Final, if required).



Fmn Einer Herringe

This year, the same teacher from the senior school (very keen) has made similar early contact, as has a student from a different school.

We are confident of conducting both a Senior and Junior RVOY Heats for Darwin students this year.

While the Skype technology did work, it was somewhat limiting, so we are currently exploring a different platform possibly "GoToMeeting".

Fmn Einer Herringe
Rostrum SA/NT

Letter to Editor—Rostrum Club 10 (Qld) - growth based on Club friendship

Rostrum Club 10 started in 1952 and we are proud that we are the second longest serving Rostrum Club in Queensland. Over 2017 we had a 40% increase in Membership. Three new members joined us this year, bringing our current membership to 20. The ideas in this letter came from our Club 10 members' contributions and articles for StepUP and 2017 Annual Report.

New members tell us they feel the friendly Rostrum Club 10 atmosphere straight away.

They see an opportunity to learn to improve their approach to speaking. Most of the new members found us from the Rostrum Website. Ellen Appelgren was awarded our Club 10 'most improved speaker' last year, shown receiving her award. Ellen is seeking to develop as a Trainee Coach in 2018.

The Club 10 Committee and members have a long-term approach. Our focus is on making the potential new member feel no pressure to join, but we do ask. We explain the Rostrum Club 10 protocol and fees. **We believe that we are friendly to ourselves and that our coaches help our speakers to improve.** We invite Coaches from other Rostrum Clubs, so that our learning is varied.

We are starting to look at developing an in-club feedback process for our Coach. 'Early days', but just as our speakers get feedback from the Coach at every meeting, we are looking at giving regular formal feedback to our Coaches. We seek a 'continuous improvement' approach.

We also encourage trainee coaches to have a long-term horizon for accreditation. Initially, there is the learning phase leading to the coaching course. After accreditation, our goal is to encourage a coach to seek self-improvement through regular formal in-club feedback.

We are willing to share our journey. Come and visit us on Thursdays at 1.10pm at the ground floor auditorium, BCC Library, George Street, Brisbane City, out by 1.50pm.

Keith Greenwood, President Rostrum Club 10 (Qld)



Ellen Appelgren receiving 'Most improved Club 10 Speaker' Award from President Keith Greenwood

New members tell us they 'feel' the friendly Rostrum Club 10 atmosphere.

Rostrum Voice of Youth 2018

Meg Olsson—RVOY National Coordinator — voy@rostrum.com.au

National RVOY Final—Perth WA on 28th July 2018



Online Rostrum Club—THE JOURNEY SO FAR

Fmn Phil Davis Rostrum SA/ACT



Online Rostrum Club – our heads in the Cloud

A Rostrum speech can have unexpected consequences.

At Woden Rostrum Club, ACT, in early 2017, I was looking for an idea for a speech about “The Future” and came up with what seemed a fanciful notion about running meetings Online. In a future online club, I suggested, members sit at home in front of their computers in different locations and speak or present to each other via the internet. It was delivered half in jest, but the club members were quite enthusiastic so it seemed like it might be an idea whose time had come.

The **driver** was the increasing use of **online meetings and webinars**. Meetings are now taking place online quite regularly. Like traditional meetings, they aren’t always run well. We at Rostrum have considerable accumulated experience in getting the message across effectively in the traditional speaking and meeting space. There is an opportunity for Rostrum to adapt our organisation’s meeting and speaking skills to make a similar contribution online.

Advance token to February this year and I had moved to South Australia. I bounced the online meeting idea off a few members around the country, and we decided to give it a go. The first of the trial online meetings was held.

My fellow participants were Fmn Roger Lines [ACT], Fmn Nick Ewbank [ACT], Fmn Einer Herringe [SA], Fmn Neil Murray [SA], Fmn Jenny and Fmn John Blain [Vic], Fmn David Matters [NSW], Fmn Paul Halliday [Qld].

My initial idea was to use Skype for these meetings, but it turned out that Rostrum had a licence for a product called GoTo Meeting, which appears to be marginally superior for our purposes.

It is by no means Rostrum’s first experience with online meetings. The Australian Rostrum Council and state webmasters regularly hold online sessions. Some clubs have experimented with having a **remote coach/critic for a meeting**. South Australia has also identified that online capability **supports RVOY entries from Darwin by linking them to experienced Adjudicators in Adelaide**.

Online, some things are different to a ‘face to face’ Rostrum Club. For example, applause doesn’t work, there is only limited benefit from body language, you need to rely more on voices (pace and modulation), and you have to look at the camera while speaking – you can’t see your audience so you don’t get any visual feedback.

And then, there’s the technology. GoTo Meeting is certainly a good product, but it can’t perform miracles when the internet is over-burdened. It allows a maximum of eleven participants per meeting, or more if people share a computer. We have experimented with how much audio and video we should permit from non-speakers. As you might expect, transmission becomes more likely to break up when you have many participants streaming their webcams (GoTo Meeting allows a maximum of six at a time) or having their microphones open (max 11). I’ve been taking the role of moderator (equivalent to a chairman at a traditional meeting) and that brings with it extra responsibilities to ensure the correct participants can speak or present from their computer screens at the right time. Then there is GoTo Meeting’s inbuilt Instant Messaging function – it’s useful, but we need to sort when and how it should be used. And, of course, people sometimes drop out or lose audio for unexplained reasons (fortunately this has been uncommon).

Where are we now? Some meetings have been better than others, but we have maintained our enthusiasm and I for one have enjoyed it. On the evidence so far, it does look like we could formalise the process and have an Online Rostrum Club in the future. The software and bandwidth will improve over time, so now we are looking to improve our online skills at the same time.

As well as allowing members to develop a skill that will likely prove valuable in future, an online club will allow members of Rostrum who have re-located and no longer live near a club to continue within Rostrum wherever they are in the world.

If you have an interest in becoming part of the on-line meetings, contact me via email online@rostrum.com.au or talk to your Rostrum Zone Webmaster. **All Rostrum members** are encouraged to participate in future meetings.

We are all busy, but this is a great opportunity to target attendance at on-line meetings over next six months and **develop the capability to understand the GoToMeeting technology**.

Fmn Phil Davis [ACT/SA] with assistance from the Editor.



Creating a better future, requires creativity in the present. — [Matthew Goldfinger](#)

Online Rostrum Club— OUTCOMES

Fmn Phil Davis Rostrum SA/ACT



KEY OUTCOMES

1. Online, some things are different to a 'face to face' Rostrum Club.

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2. Technology

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- As you might expect, transmission becomes more likely to break up when you have many participants streaming their webcams (GoTo Meeting allows a maximum of six at a time) or having their microphones open (max 11).
- I've been taking the role of moderator (equivalent to a chairman at a traditional meeting) and that brings with it extra responsibilities to ensure the correct participants can speak or present from their computer screens at the right time. Then there is GoTo Meeting's inbuilt Instant Messaging function – it's useful, but we need to sort when and how it should be used. And, of course, people sometimes drop out or lose audio for unexplained reasons (fortunately this has been uncommon).

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- As well as allowing members to develop a skill that will likely prove valuable in future, an online club will allow members of Rostrum who have re-located and no longer live near a club to continue within Rostrum wherever they are in the world.
- If you have an **interest in becoming part of the on-line meetings**, contact me via email online@rostrum.com.au or talk to your Rostrum Zone Webmaster. **All Rostrum members** are encouraged to participate in future meetings.

Fmn Phil Davis [ACT/SA]

The screenshot shows a GoTo Meeting session in progress. At the top, there is a grid of seven video thumbnails for participants: Einer Herringe, Jenny Blain, Phil Davis, Paul Halliday, Neil Murray, and Roger Lines. Below the grid is a large document titled "Agenda – all times AEDT". The agenda includes items such as "Meeting opening", "Apologies, Attendance and Technology check", "Introduce critic", "Enlist a meeting secretary", "Table Topics", "Speech without Graphics", "Speech with Graphics, and/or Audio/Video", "Reading", "Speech with Question and Answer Session following", "Pertinent Question", "Item of Training Business", "Business in Committee", "Critic's Comments", and "Meeting close". On the right side of the meeting window, there is a GoTo Meeting control panel showing "Talking: Phil Davis", "Attendees: 6 of 11 (max)", and a chat window with a message from Jenny Blain: "need phone numbers so we can call in people who drop off...".

Reflections on 63 years in Rostrum

Fmn Ron Jeffrey Rostrum NSW

The 70th anniversary of WA Rostrum this year made me reflect on my early period in Perth.

I was a member of the Dais Executive when the ARC Conference was first held in Perth. The cost factor was the reason WA did not host the annual meeting until 14 years after its establishment in 1948.

I had joined Rostrum in 1955 as a foundation member of Club 5 and was inaugural president of Club 19 a few years later.

The venue for the 1962 ARC Conference was Ocean Beach Hotel, Cottesloe and sessions took place during Thursday and Friday 12th and 13th April.

At that time there were 127 Australian Rostrum Clubs with 3559 members.

ACT Zone President Fmn Laurie Burgess was National President but as he was unable to attend the opening 2 sessions. WA President Fmn Don Watson took the chair and was later elected National President for the following year – a position he held for a further year. Very few National Presidents had more than 2 years in office until a constitutional change in 1981 precluded anyone holding dual zone and national presidency.

Don Watson was a dynamic leader and the executive that he formed in WA inspired me and my colleagues during the 1960's. This was reflected in the meticulous organisation of this ARC Conference as the following details will show:

Wednesday 11th April – every delegate from interstate was met at the airport.

Thursday 12th April - a mayoral reception was followed by an attendance at Club 1 with all delegates participating.

On the way back to the conference venue there was a visit to the new Empire Games Stadium and Village. Don Watson later hosted delegates, their wives and WA Executive members at his home for supper.

Friday 13th April - a gala dinner for the ARC delegates was held at the Palace Hotel in central Perth and all Dais representatives, members of Critics Council, Freeman and wives were invited.

It was a very memorable occasion for me as I was elevated to Freemanship with Ted Joll and John Perry in the presence of Founder Alan Crook, who was the long time National Secretary/Treasurer. I believe I was then the youngest Freeman of Rostrum – age 34.

Weekend 14th and 15th April – all interstate delegates attended the annual Convention of WA Rostrum Clubs on Rottneest Island.



Fmn Ron Jeffrey

The Dais Secretary flew 3 of the delegates in an Aero Club plane to the island, the remainder went by launch.

Numerous activities took place, including a mock local court, quiz session, sports, fishing and a bus trip around the island.

After moving from Perth to Sydney in 1970 I became even more involved in Rostrum and was NSW President for 4 years, National President for 18 months and later on National Secretary/Treasurer for 3 years.

Consequently I had the opportunity of attending 7 ARC Conferences.

Most of these were held in conjunction with a Voice of Youth National Final and the occasional National Speaking Competition. But the 1962 meeting in Perth set the gold standard, which was only surpassed by the 10 days of activities during the Golden Jubilee celebrations in 1980.

I plan to be present at Rostrum WA's 70th anniversary in July and suspect I will be the sole survivor of the historic event.

It would be great if some other stalwarts from the past could be located.

Fmn Ron Jeffrey



Ron at his 90th and his adult children.

“Be yourself; everyone else is already taken.” — [Oscar Wilde](#)

Rostrum Clubs and Members in action — linked by friendship and education

Rostrum Club 68 (Vic.)

'Gesture training'

Members relaxing in the business session after we had training on gestures.

Each of us spoke in turn for 30 seconds.

First with no gestures and a second time with exaggerated gestures.

Also a number of members spoke on readings, views on the news and prepared speeches.

Another interesting Rostrum meeting.

David Wajchman,
President Rostrum Club 68 (Vic)



Summer Series in 2018

Rostrum Club 17 (Qld)

For the third year in a row, Rostrum Club 17 hosted its Summer Series meeting to kick off another exciting year for the club.

Our leadership team, enthused by President Sue Worsley, seeks new ways to interest current and new members.

The night was chaired by Freeman Brian Korner and included the **Wordwright Report** by club member Anastasia Magriplis, **impromptu speeches** and other **fun activities** including the **Dictionary Game** and one centred **around unusual newspaper headlines** run by club member Chris Horacek.

Great fellowship occurred which included fresh hot pizza.

On the night around 20 people attended and there were representatives from Rostrum Clubs 3, 5 and 10 including the new Queensland Rostrum's President Doug Bates and his wife and Rostrum member, Roslyn Bates.

As a way to **attract new members to Rostrum** for 2018, the meeting was promoted on the [social events website Meetup](#) and it resulted in five visitors attending on the night.

They were impressed with what Rostrum had to offer with many expressing an interest in attending a regular club meeting.

Club 17 members have been energised by the fun and challenges of the 2018 Summer Series.

Chris Horacek, Vice - President Rostrum Club 17 (Qld).



Rostrum Club 17 uses IT in every meeting

Rostrum Club 3 Members (Qld) - 'on their bike' for 2018

On 1st February 2018 Club 3 Member George Row talked about the 'Bright Spot' of building his own "Penny-farthing Bike" which he then took to Tasmania for a penny-farthing racing competition.

Club 3 Members were enthused and got in on the act.

Rosalie Roberts, President Rostrum Club 3



One of the signs of passing youth is the birth of a sense of fellowship with other human beings, as we take our place among them.—Virginia Woolf

Rostrum in Australia since
21 July, 1930



Australian Rostrum

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National Secretary	secretary@rostrum.com.au
National Treasurer	treasurer@rostrum.com.au

www.rostrum.com.au

**Can you share your ideas on
delivering routine feedback to
the Critic/Coach?**

Contact the Newsletter Editor
newsletter@rostrum.com.au

Australian Rostrum Council (ARC) - 2018

ARC meets once a year face to face and each two months over the internet.

President Fmn. David Matters NSW

Secretary Fmn. Ross Hayes

Treasurer Fmn. Greg McKay

Webmaster Fmn. Jenny Blain Vic

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Youth**

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NSW Fmn. Edwin Chadbourne

Queensland Spr. Doug Bates

SA / NT Fmn. Rod Ellis

Tas. Fmn. Rod Fraser

Victoria Spr. Nick Tunbridge

WA Fmn. Sue Hart

Be the change that you wish to see in the world. — Mahatma Gandhi

Rostrum Taking ACTION Editor — Fmn Paul Halliday

*Thanks to all contributors and readers, its **YOUR** national magazine.*

Like many other publications, the Editor encourages Rostrum Clubs and members to develop articles and also helps in their refinement. It is part of the job. The key is that the magazine reflects your Rostrum.

We may be in different geographic locations, but our shared Rostrum friendship and learning becomes the **bridge** between us all. Thanks to Fmn Phil Davis and his team for the **great Online Rostrum Club contribution**. It is a **reminder** of the innovation and cooperation that was required to grow our Rostrum.

Please send a photo and simple article on the **activities of your Rostrum Club**, share with your members and Executive.

Letters to the Editor also brings your ideas to all members. **Rostrum Voice of Youth** will again bring opportunity for Australian youth.

Rostrum Taking ACTION Editor — Fmn Paul Halliday
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Deadline next Edition is 4th June 2018

Seeking your ideas on sharing Rostrum —reaching out to help people find their voice

