**RSL PROTOCOL**

*Speeches and Toasts*

**TOASTS**

**Introduction**

Toasts are normally proposed during the conduct of dinners. At formal occasions, the Loyal Toast generally takes place following the sweet course and before coffee is served. Other toasts then follow after a suitable delay. The number of toasts may vary however, as a minimum the following toasts are to be proposed:

* + 1. The Loyal Toast;
    2. Toast to ‘The RSL’; and
    3. Toast to ‘Our Guests”

Other toasts that may be proposed in certain circumstances are:

* + 1. Commonwealth Heads of State (not government), in alphabetical order, when a member of that nation is present;
    2. other Heads of State (not government), in alphabetical order, when a member of that nation is present; and/or
    3. ‘The Ladies” at mixed dinners.

Toasts are normally called for by the principal host (President) and proposed by the designated member. The exception is the Loyal Toast which is proposed by the principal host.

#### Method of Proposing Toasts

The Loyal Toast. The method of proposing the Loyal toast is as follows:

* + 1. the principal host brings the dinner to order, stands and says “Gentlemen or (Ladies and Gentlemen)”;
    2. all diners stand and glasses remain on the table;
    3. the band, if present, will play the first four and last four bars of the Australian National Anthem;
    4. once the music is completed or, if there is no band, once all diners are standing and quiet, the principal host will say “The King (Queen)”; all present raise their glasses and reply “The King (Queen)” (if a portrait of His/Her Majesty is present within the venue diners with their backs to the portrait should turn towards it before replying to the toast); then
    5. once the toast is completed the principal host resumes his/her seat, followed by all diners.

Other Toasts. The method of proposing other toasts is as follows:

* + 1. the principal hosts brings the dinner to order, then nominates the designated member to propose the toast, eg “Senior Vice-President (or member’s name) the President of the United States of America”;
    2. the nominated member will stand and say “Gentlemen” or (Ladies and Gentlemen)”;
    3. the diners stand and glasses remain on the table;
    4. the band, if present, plays the authorised version of the anthem of the United States of America;
    5. once the music is completed, or if there is no band, once all diners are standing and quiet, the nominated member will say “The President” all present raise their glasses and reply “The President”; then
    6. once the toast is completed the principal host resumes his/her seat, followed by all diners.

At a dinner where there are many foreign guests, representing a number of countries, the principal host may call for a toast to “The Heads of State of the Nations here Represented”. The person proposing the toast then says “The Heads of State”.

Prior to proposing toasts the principal host should ensure that all diners have a drink with which to toast. At formal occasions it is customary to toast with port.

Toasts are not to be embellished in any way by the proposer or diners when replying.

#### Replies to Toasts

Where replies to toasts are warranted they should follow immediately after the toast. Replies to a toast should not take the form of a speech but be an opportunity for the member replying, to reply to the toast proposed. The timing of replies must be kept to a minimum in the interest of not unnecessarily prolonging the dinner.

#### When Toasts are not Required

At less formal occasions e.g. Christmas parties etc toasts are not necessary however the principal host may welcome guests at the start of the function if desired.

**SPEECHES**

**Introduction**

The duration of speeches should always be kept to a minimum. In planning functions or ceremonies, particularly dinners, the principal host should be mindful of the length of speeches so as not to unnecessarily prolong the activity.

The brief sent to official guests (see Annex A to Chapter 3) should include the order for speeches and specify those who are requested to speak. It is not out of order to specify an approximate duration for the official guest’s speech in a brief.

#### Order of Speeches

The normal occurrence is for the principal host (President) to welcome the official guests in the order of precedence (see Chapter 3) and then invite selected official guests to speak. During a dinner this should occur after dessert and when the tables have been cleared. The junior official guest in the order of precedence should speak first, followed by the next senior, with the most senior official guest speaking last.

It is not necessary to have all official guests speak.

In the case where there are co-principal hosts the order of speeches should be as follows:

* + 1. the principal host;
    2. the junior principal host e.g. where a function is being held at a venue owned by another sub-Branch, the principal host will be the President of the organisation holding the function and the junior principal host will be the President of the sub-Branch who owns the facility; then
    3. the official guests as described in paragraph 6.3 above.

#### Introducing Speakers

When introducing official guests (see Annex B to Chapter 3) to speak post- nominals and initials **are not** used e.g. The District Council President, Mr Brian Bobbington, SC, AM would be introduced as “The District Council President, Mr Brian Bobbington

**Recognition of Official Guests**

At the commencement of a speech, the speaker should recognise the official guests in the order of precedence (see Chapter 3). At a sub-Branch function or dinner the speaker would recognise the sub-Branch President, any Vice-Regal Personage, then the State President etc in that order.

#### Acclamation

It is courtesy to acclaim speeches, once completed, by clapping.

#### Apologies

In welcoming the official guests the principal host should tender apologies from those official guests who were unable to attend the activity. Apologies should be presented in accordance with the order of precedence.