

NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2024

RTEA - Proud of its Union Heritage

Welcome to your June 2024 Newsletter

John Lane

Welcome to your June 2024 newsletter.

LAURIE FENTON

A highlight of the May General Meeting was our eventual catch-up with Laurie Fenton to present him with our OBN ("Over Bloody Ninety") award. We have been attempting to track Laurie down for some time. Laurie was pleased with the whole award ceremony.

You can only imagine the shock I received a couple of weeks later when I was informed that Laurie had experienced a couple of nasty falls and sadly did not survive the last one. I only knew Laurie through the Retired Members; I found him interesting and an all-round nice bloke. It is so tragic to lose someone under such unexpected and simple circumstances. I am sure members will join me in extending heartfelt condolences to Laurie's family. Vale Laurie Fenton.

Paul, our editor tells me that a tribute to Laurie will be held to our July 2024 issue. Along with the tribute, there will be an article about one of Laurie's adventures you are sure to enjoy.

MAY SOCIAL AT THE SPRINGWOOD SPORTS CLUB

It is pleasing to have many members attending our social functions and general meetings when we hold them away from Sydney.

Our Autumn Leaves lunch has been on our social calendar for a long time. We have lunch at the Springwood Sports Club. My predecessor, the late Denzil Fogarty, whom we lost twelve years ago, began this social. It provides our mates from the Blue Mountains and the Western Suburbs an opportunity to meet.



We also have a loyal contingent that will travel from Sydney by train for the day.

This year, we had thirty people attend. It looks like we will have the Autumn Leaves on our social calendar in May for many more years to come

Denzil's wife Cathy loves to join us at most social functions with her mate Margaret. How good is that! Don't you just love these snippets I throw in?

MAY 2024 GENERAL MEETING

It was terrific to see so many members at the May General Meeting. Like every year, we have held meetings in Woy Woy.

This year, the Woy Woy Hotel was generous in providing space for our meeting. We timed our meeting well, as the day after, the Woy Woy Hotel was closed for an extended period to facilitate significant renovations and upgrades.







RETIRED TELECOMMUNICATIONS EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

Guest Speaker From the University of the New Age JUNE 2024 GENERAL MEETING THURSDAY, 27TH JUNE 2024 Commences: 11.05 am

The General Meeting will be held at the Petersham RSL Club (301 Trafalgar Street, Petersham)
- The club is an easy 150m walk from Petersham Station.

Members can partipicate in the meeting via Zoom Video. However, you are encouraged to join meeting with us in person at the Petersham RSL. After the meeting you are welcomed to join with fellow members over lunch.



The Meeting will also be held via ZOOM Video Conference Meeting ID and passcode information will be emailed to members on Tuesday afternoon, 25TH JUNE 2024

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RETIRED TELECOMMUNICATIONS EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION



Thursday, 18TH JULY 2024

Our social function for July is lunch at the Manly Club with an optional visit beforehand to the Manly Art Gallery & Museum. The Manly Club is a short walk (3 minutes/200 metres) from the Manly Ferry Terminal. The club's address is 2 West Promenade.

Just before lunch, you may wish to join other interested members and visit the Manly Art Gallery and Museum (West Esplanade) then take a short walk to the Manly Club. It is a five minute walk, starting on the East Esplanade and walking 320m to your left from the ferrry terminal

VISIT TO MANLY ART GALLERY & MUSEUM

10.30 am to 12 noon

LUNCH AT THE MANLY CLUB

12.30 am



RETIRED TELECOMMUNICATIONS EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

Important Notice

We No Longer Accept Cheque Payments

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Retired Telecommunications Employees Association

Great Southern Bank:

BSB 814-282

eSaver Account No: 10642769



Welcome to your June 2024 Newsletter (cont'd)

Hopefully, we will have our general meeting at the same venue next year as the staff are excellent and the choice of meals and the plonk is quite reasonably priced. I have some hesitation around next year, as often renovations can take longer than predicted.

At the meeting, there was much discussion about various SCAMS. Members can spot more amateur scams, like text messages demanding payment of a toll fee. The more sophisticated scams that attempt to steal your money or identity are the concern.

This month's newsletter has an article on scams. The article describes the various scams and basic precautions you need to take.

FALLS

We keep being told to be more careful as we reach these twilight years, as it is so much easier for us to experience falls. I recall so many of our members who have had falls, and several have resulted in loss of life. I had a fall about a year ago and put it down to sheer carelessness and stupidity. Please, everyone, take that extra care and instil this into your loved ones.

Our newsletter is going to continue to remind you about falls. However, one area where I would like you to be more careful is at night. If you need to get up at night, turn on the lights and have a bedside lamp to see your surroundings before you step out of bed. Too many of our members have had falls at night.

JULY SOCIAL FUNCTION

Our social function for July (Thursday, 18th July 2024) is a trip to Manly; first, there is a visit to the Manly Art Gallery and Museum, and then there is a new venue for us, lunch at Manly Club. Both venues are close to the Ferry Terminal.

This month's newsletter has all the details.

ANNUAL TRIP AWAY

In the May 2024 Newsletter, we published the itinerary for our trip away to Coffs Harbour. The problem was we could not give you a price. The good news is that I now have the total cost of the trip: \$1,310 per person twin share with an extra \$350 single supplement. The price includes venue entries and meals (five breakfasts and four dinners at the motel). We will have one evening dinner away from the motel, which is not included in the price.

We now have an excellent tour with the same good bus driver we had on our Merimbula trip last year. Everyone on our previous trip away would agree that Nigel impacted our experience tremendously.

You may wonder why I chose to use a bus company that does not operate tour packages as their prime business model. I relied on experience. I have used this bus company on two occasions. They are trustworthy people, and I was hopeful they would come in with a reasonable price. I believe they have delivered on all counts.

Post-COVID-19, tourism is booming, and as you would be aware, accommodation and restaurant prices have soared. Also, accommodation is not always available, so the trip had to commence later than usual. Alan Bassman, our Treasurer, has neighbours who recently returned from a similar five-night tour of Coffs Harbour. Their price was \$2,198 per person, a twin share, and a single supplement of \$500. By comparison, our bus company does not charge overheads on accommodation and venue entry prices; they simply rely on the profit from their bus hire

I am calling on those interested in this trip to email me their intention. I know some members have already provided their names, but given the changes in dates and the absence of a previous price, could I ask anyone who has told me previously to do so again? Also, I have been made aware that the motel has called for a deposit, such is the demand for accommodation in this part of NSW. Hence, I also request that you pay \$100 per person, by bank transfer, as our Treasurer will soon receive a significant holding deposit invoice. You will find our banking details in the newsletter.

Remember, the departure date is Sunday, 10th November 2024.

Finally, I look forward to seeing you at the June General Meeting on Thursday, 27th June 2024, at the Petersham RSL. We have a guest speaker from the "University of the Third Age"

You will find a notice inside the newsletter.



SCAMS

Paul Rewhorn

My previous article on the scam subject was in our last newsletter for 2023. I wrote the article at the time warning of the perils of online shopping over the Christmas period. Many members spoke about scams currently doing the rounds at our May 2024 General Meeting on the Central Coast. A few referring to their personal experiences.

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) reported that Australians lost 3.1 billion dollars in 2022, a 55 percent increase over the previous year. The ACCC report comes from compiled data from Scamwatch, ReportCyber, major banks and money remitters, of which there were 500,000 reports. The average reported money loss was from \$12,742 in 2021 to



\$19,654 in 2023 (a 54 percent increase). The ACCC notes that the figures are understated as many scam victims do not report their loss.

Seniors (65+ Years) were the largest age group falling victim to scams. Their scam reports represented 25.5 percent of all reports to Scamwatch and 26.4 percent of the total dollar amount lost through scams.

Before I delve more into scams, I want to mention the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) top tips to avoid scams.

- STOP: Don't rush to act. Scammers will create a sense of urgency.
- **THINK**: Ask yourself if you really know who you are communicating with. Scammers can impersonate others and lie about who they are especially online.
- **PROTECT:** Act quickly if something feels wrong. If you have shared financial information or transferred money, contact your bank immediately. Help others by reporting to Scamwatch.

SCAMS ARE BECOMING MORE SOPHISTICATED

The growth in losses to scams continues to increase at an alarming rate. The increased losses are not simply because we make more financial purchases and transactions online. The main reason is that scammers use increasingly sophisticated methods to defraud you.

Examples of their new tactics are impersonating:

- official phone numbers,
- email addresses,
- faking websites of legitimate organisations,
- sending text messages that can appear in the same conversation thread as genuine ones.

The increasing sophistication requires us to educate ourselves on current scams continually. An excellent site to know more about scams is https://www.scamwatch.gov.au. You will find the site is easy to follow and understand.

Of course, individuals should not have to respond to scam attempts alone. Government, banks, online retailers and telecos all have a responsibility. According to the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC), there is clear evidence that companies should be doing more to protect their customers.

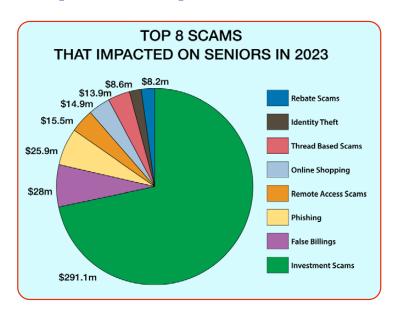
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SCAMS (cont'd)

For example, ASIC found that 31,100 customers of the big four banks lost more than \$558 million to scams in 12 months. However, the banks only paid about \$21 million in compensation to victims.

ASIC further found that because of poor resourcing, banks were not reviewing all red-flagged transactions as suspected scams. Only one of the big four banks had an institution-wide scam policy, and only one bank had thoroughly reviewed its scam prevention policies in the past three years.



In summary, ASIC recommended:

- There is a need to prevent scammers from reaching consumers by disrupting phone calls, SMS, email, social media messaging, or other ways scammers contact would-be victims.
- Make sure consumers are supported with up-to-date information so they have the best chance of spotting a scammer when contacted.
- Effective measures are in place to prevent funds from being transferred to scammers.

Online Scams (email, social media, or text messages)

Always be sceptical of unsolicited messages, heightening your suspicion if they ask for personal information or money. They will purport you have an outstanding amount owed, such as an unpaid road toll. Other messages will ask you to update your personal "MyGov" or "Medicare" information. Here, they are seeking as much information about you as possible to carry out financial fraud, you being their victim.

Here, you need to verify sources and personally contact the organisation using official contact information. Look for Red Flags: Poor grammar, urgent demands, and requests for payment via untraceable methods (like gift cards) are common red flags

Financial Scams

Financial Investment Scams

You will notice from the pie graph on this page that financial scams represent over 70 per cent of the economic losses attributed to scams and significantly impact seniors. Most people will seek a higher return on the money they invest. However, with a higher return comes increased risk. You must do:

Research and Verification

- Check registration and licensing. Check with ASIC and seek independent financial advice. It may cost you in the short-term but may prevent a later complete financial loss.
- Research the Company: Look for reviews, news articles, and user feedback. Check their track record and reputation in the industry.
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SCAMS (cont'd)

Website Security

- Verify Website Security: Ensure the website uses HTTPS encryption and has a valid security certificate.
- Beware of Phishing: Avoid clicking on suspicious links or emails claiming to be from the investment entity. Always go directly to the official website.

Online Payments and Banking.

- Regularly check your bank and credit card statements for unauthorised transactions. There have been two significant data breaches in Australia: Medibank and Optus. Credit card account details and personal information (driver's licence numbers) were stolen.
- Report the unauthorised transactions immediately to your bank institution. Likely, the first unauthorised transaction will not be the last.
- Self imposed restrictions your card limit.
 You may have a credit limit that you rarely limit. Banks allow you to temporarily lower your credit limit or the maximum amount of a single transaction via an app on your phone or online. This action can reduce your potential loss to a scam. Always turn on your bank's settings to notify you when there has been a transaction on your credit card or bank account.
- Look carefully when using an EFTPOS
 Terminal I need to mention this simple step before you use your credit card or mobile payment at the cash register. Often, a store person will show you their EFTOS terminal upside down, They can see the entered amount, not you. Ask them to turn the terminal around. A decimal point in the wrong place or another typo could cost you heaps.

Phone Scams

- Do not trust Caller ID: Scammers can easily spoof caller ID to make it look like they are calling from a legitimate source
- Hang Up on Robocalls:
- Use "Call Blocking" on your phone to reduce the number of scam calls. If you think the call might be legitimate but unsure. Tell the Caller you will call them back using the official contact information you have personally verified. A legitimate caller will not object; a scammer will offer excuses why calling back is not necessary.

Social Media Scams

- Avoid social media. Counter to the claims made by the owners of "WhatsApp" and "Facebook" and other social media, they are not doing enough to combat scams on their media.
- **Be careful with "Friend Requests":** Only accept friend requests from people you know and trust.
- Protect Personal Information: Avoid sharing too much personal information on social media, scammers will use the provided information to target you.
- Do not grant requests for financial help from friends over social media, emails or text messages; they are likely fake

Summary

- Stay Informed: Follow news reports and alerts from consumer protection agencies like Scamwatch.
- Use Strong Passwords: Use strong passwords and change them regularly. Consider using a password manager.
- **Enable Two-Factor Authentication:** Add an extra layer of security to your accounts.







Vale Keith Buttsworth

TThe Association is sad to report the passing of Retired Telecommunications Employees Association member Keith Buttsworth. Keith passed away on Saturday, the 8th of June 2024. Keith's funeral service was in Maitland on Monday, 17th June 2024 (Rutherford).

Keith was born on the 1st September 1931. He had been a member of our Association for close to 24 years.

Keith had a very long career working with PMG and Telecom. He worked at Workshops between 1955 and 1956, qualifying as a senior technician. He worked as a senior technician at Glenbrook, Lapstone, and Blaxland in the Blue Mountains between 1956 and 1957.

Keith accepted an appointment as the Officer-in-Charge of Narromine Telephone Exchange. He was the youngest Officer-in-Charge in Australia from 1958 to 1962. Later, Dick became the Officer-in-Charge of the Wellington Exchange, from where he retired in March 1992.

Some of Keith's workmates included Graham Neville, Colin Cross, Charlie Jones, George Newman and George Woodcock. In retirement, Keith lived at Wellington, Jewells (Lake Macquarie), Thornton, and the Fresh Hope Nursing Home in East Maitland.

Keith is survived by his wife, Patricia, his two daughters, Suzanne and Carol, three grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.

The Association extends its condolences and sympathy to Keith's wife, Patricia, his daughters Suzanne and Carol, his extended family and workmates and friends and the rest of his family and friends.

The Retired Telecommunications Employees Association wishes to thank Keith's daughter, Suzanne, for informing us of Keith's passing.



K Vale Patrica Martin



The Retired Telecommunications Employees Association is sad to report that Patrica Martin passed away on Saturday, 11th May 2024. Patrica's funeral service was in Port Macquarie on the 24th May, 2024.

Patrica was married to Association Member Ted Martin for 64 years.

Patrica was born in 1933 growing up on a farm near Coonabarabran. After leaving school, Patrica joined the PMG as a telephonist at the Coonabarabran telephone exchange and, by the mid-1950s, was a supervising telephonist. There, she met Ted, working in various locations in the country regions. Patrica later transferred to Broken Hill and then to Sydney. Ted was working in Sydney, where he met Patrica once again, and they were married in November 1959.

After Ted and Patricia were married, they moved to Port Macquarie. Ted was appointed to a position in Sydney in 1970, so they relocated to the Central Coast. Patrica worked at the Gosford Exchange until 1975 before they moved back to Port Macquarie.

In retirement, Ted and Patrica travelled extensively overseas and within Australia. Patrica enjoyed her garden and grandchildren and, with Ted, did volunteer work.

The Retired Telecommunications Employees Association extends its condolences and deep sympathy to Ted and his family.





Vale Greg Bryce



The Retired Telecommunications Employees Association is sad to advise that member Greg Bryce passed away on Sunday, 26th May 2024, in Brisbane.

Greg's funeral service was in Revesby on Thursday, 6th June 2024.

Greg was born on 24th December 1951 and was a member of our Association for over eleven years.

Greg's career with PMG/Telecom/Telstra began as a 1967 Technician in Training. His early years were with exchange maintenance in the Revesby area. Later, he worked at the Transmission Design Laboratory, Transmission Measurements, Line Plant Management, and Power Coordination. Greg retired in 2005.

In his early years, Greg enjoyed surfing and fishing. He also enjoyed a few quiet drinks with his friends.

The Retired Telecommunications Employees Association extends its sincere condolences and sympathy to Greg's wife, Pam, and daughters, Sandy Lee and Alyssa, as well as his grandchildren, former workmates, and friends.



The Association is sad to report that Eldred Leonard Davis (known by the first name Len) passed away recently.

Len's funeral service was on Friday, 7th June 2024, at Woronara Cemetery.

Len was a member of our Association for over thirty years and was the Officer-in-Charge of Pendle Hill Exchange. Len retired from the Parramatta EMG (Exchange Maintenance Group) in 1993.

Len would occasionally correspond with the Association, informing us that he was doing well and thanking us for keeping him in touch with goings-on with people and Telstra.

Following his retirement, Len moved to the South Coast with his wife Lola, living in Mollymook and at Fishermans Paradise just north of Milton.

The Retired Telecommunications Employees Association extends sympathy and condolences to Len's wife, Lola, family and his former workmates.



Vale Richard Woodcock



The Association is sad to report the recent passing of Retired Telecommunications Employees Association member Richard (Dick) Woodcock.

A ceremony was held for Dick at Narrabeen on Sunday, 16th June 2024.

Dick was born in 1932. Dick is survived by his two daughters, Clair and Elizabeth.

Dick has been a member of the Retired Telecommunications Employees Association since 1998.

Dick moved from the United Kingdom to Sydney in 1957.

Dick's entire career was with PMG/Telecom. He was a Senior Technical Officer at North Sydney and later the Officer-in-Charge at Harbord Telephone Exchange.

The Retired Telecommunications Employees Association extends its sympathy and condolences to Clair, Elizabeth, and other family members and friends.



Bob Speer - Remembers Terrence Martin Gravolin

Bob Speer

I would like to advise the Retired Telecommunications Employees Association members of the passing of Terrence Martin Gravolin; Terry was a 1957 Technician in Training.

Terry was born in Paddington, Sydney, on 23rd May 1940. He grew up in Stockton with two supportive parents, Grace (Gai) and Martin, and a sister, Patricia (Pattie), ten years older than Terry.

At the beginning of 2nd year as a Technician in Training, Terry transferred to the Newcastle Engineering Branch for field experience while he completed his training. In 1960, he moved to Country Installation. From 1960 until 1965, Terry worked around the country of NSW, setting up phone lines. In 1965, when he was 25 years of age, he headed out to Dubbo to act as a roadie for a local band. Terry ended up at a dance and spied a beautiful dark-haired woman named Jeane, spinning all over the dance floor with ease and exquisite grace. He immediately asked her to dance. Later, on the next day at her parent's farm in Trangie, the first thing upon opening the front door, Jeane's mother said to Terry was, "Jeane is a good cook, you know".

Jeane and Terry went horse riding that day, where Terry jokingly said to Jeane, "Do you want to marry me?" Jeane replied, "Yeah alright". Terry was a little shocked but pleasantly surprised and knew he had met the woman for him. They were married in Stockton on the 3rd of July 1965; they have been inseparable ever since.

Terry and Jeane had two children, Nicole Gai and Aaron Martin. Terry and Jeane lived in Stockton for some time before Jeane's health required them to move from the seaside to Scone, where they built their dream home. Terry worked at Scone for many years before being promoted to Technical Officer Grade 2 at Maitland, responsible to the Senior Technical Officer for a cell of operations to maintain an ARF terminal exchange and install computer equipment.

Sadly, Terry passed from a sudden heart attack on the 15th May, 2024, just eight days before his 84th birthday. Terry is survived by his wife Jeane, children Nikki and Aaron and grandchildren Alexander and Callan Denis.

Condolences to Terry's family and friends, and with grateful thanks to Nikki (Nicole) for the above antidotes.

A Reminder

Flu and Covid-19 Vaccinations

Flu and Covid-19 infections are on increase. In June, Covid cases have increased by 25 percent.

The flu is also on the increase.

You can have your Flu and COVID19 vaccinations at the same time - you no longer need two visits to the doctor.

They are both free for Seniors.





Day 1 - Sunday, 10th November 2024

We will begin our travel to Coffs Harbour and have morning tea alongside the coach. We will stop at Taree for lunch and have time to enjoy a stroll along the Manning River.

Continuing our journey, we will call into the Maria River Distillery to listen to a talk and have an opportunity to purchase from their range of gins and rum. Finally, we arrive at Coffs Harbour and settle into our rooms before dinner.

Day 2 - Monday, 11th November 2024)

Grafton and Woolgoolga

Today, we journey up the Pacific Hwy to visit the City of Grafton. Grafton is named the Jacaranda City because of the Jacaranda trees throughout town. Grafton celebrates a Jacaranda Festival every year.

We will stop at a sea park for morning tea alongside the coach. We will do a town tour of Grafton, including a stop at the old Grafton Jail, built in 1893 and now heritage-listed. Then, visit the Christ Church Cathedral, constructed in 1894.

On our return to Coffs Harbour, we will stop in the beautiful seaside town of Woolgoolga, and there we will have an afternoon before our return to our motel. Our visit to Grafton is





just one week after the Jacaranda Festival, so all the trees should be in blossom.

Day 3 - Tuesday, 12th November 2024

Dorrigo & Bellingen

During the morning, we drive up into the hinterland of the Coffs Harbour coast. Then, we drive across to

After working up an appetite, we head back to Bellingen, visit the old butter factory, and listen to a talk about the factory's history, which dates back to 1906. We will enjoy lunch at the factory and then have some free time to explore Bellingen before returning to the motel.

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COFFS HARBOUR TRIP AWAY (Cont'd)

Day 4 - Wednesday, 13th November 2024

Coffs Harbour

We will have a local day in Coffs Harbour, driving up (depending on road conditions) to the Sealy Park Lookout, 310 metres above Coffs Harbour. There, you will see spectacular views from the sky pier.

On our return, we will visit the Coffs Harbour Wildlife Sanctuary to learn about their work rescuing wildlife and enjoy the Dolphin show after a short drive to the Coffs Harbour jetty for lunch and a stroll around the harbour. We will take a walk along to the mutton bird lookout.

In the afternoon, we visit a piece of Holland in Coffs Harbour. Known as the clog barn, we explore this unique attraction that is not found anywhere else in Australia. Have the chance to explore the shop and see how they make clogs.

Day 5 (Thursday, 14th November 2024)

Urunga and Bowraville

This morning, we will take a drive down to Urunga. This town is the meeting point of the Kalang and Bellinger Rivers, where both empty into the Pacific Ocean. We take in these views while wandering along the elevated Urunga boardwalk.

Next, we visit today's sweet spot: the Urunga Honey place. We will see the world of the honeybee with the glass viewing area and have an opportunity to sample the local honey.

After lunch, we take a short drive up to the small town of Bowraville. We have the afternoon to explore the folk and military museums or the township before returning to the motel for our last night away.



Day 6 (Friday, 15th November 2024)

Return travel to Sydney with a refreshment break at a service centre. Lunch at Nabiac at the hotel or one of the other cafes before arriving back in Sydney in the late afternoon, after a thoroughly enjoyable trip away.

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RTEA SOCIAL CALENDAR June - November 2024



Tour of Manly Museum and Lunch at the Manly Club

There will be more details in the June 2024 Newsletter.



Annual Trip Away to Coffs Harbour

This month, the newsletter announced details for the annual trip away to Coffs Harbour. More information to follow.

AUGUST Thursday

Lunch at the Sydney Rowers Club

The Sydney Rowers is one of our popular lunches. After a tranquil ferry trip to Abbotsfort, we wil have lunch at the Sydney Rowers Club located adjacent to the wharf.



Christmas Lunch: Petersham RSL Club





August General Meeting at Emu Plains

Our August 2024 General Meeting will be at O'Donoghues Hotel, Emu Plains