



NEWSLETTER

Retired Telecommunications Employees Association

RTEA - Proud of our Union Origin - now celebrating 40 Years

MAY 2025

Welcome to your May 2025 Newsletter.

John Lane

Members have attended our previous two general meetings in large numbers, perhaps because of their interest in the topics of our two guest speakers. We had Roger Bamber speak at our March meeting and, more recently, Professor Ed Davies in April.

Emeritus Professor Ed Davies is a longstanding advocate for public broadcasting. He gave an insightful address on the critical role of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) in supporting democratic discourse and public knowledge.

Public broadcasters prioritise the public interest by delivering accurate and unbiased information, unlike commercial or state-controlled media, which are subject to the pressures of commercial profit or government influence. Professor Davies emphasised the importance of maintaining the ABC's independence, free from commercial and political pressures, to preserve its credibility and public trust.

He highlighted the significant challenges facing public broadcasters worldwide, including funding cuts, political interference, and the spread of misinformation. These pressures threaten the ability of trusted institutions like ABC to fulfil their mission.

Professor Davies noted that the ABC is critical to Australian society. It provides news, cultural programming, emergency alerts, and regional services. It serves not just urban centres but also remote and rural communities, often being the only reliable source of information in emergencies.

He stressed that the ABC's funding has been steadily reduced over the decades, impacting its ability to meet its charter obligations. Professor Davies discussed the impact of digital media giants like Amazon, Meta, and Netflix, which have changed how people access news and entertainment and are drawing audiences away from traditional broadcasters like ABC despite public broadcasting remaining a highly trusted source of news and information, representing exceptional taxpayer value at just 12 cents per person per day.

Towards the end of his presentation, Professor Davies acknowledged that ABC faces challenges in attracting younger audiences, adapting to digital platforms, and sustaining innovation. He urged continued public support for the ABC and warned that without appropriate funding and protection, Australia's democratic health could suffer. He encouraged members to actively support organisations like ABC Friends to ensure a strong, independent public broadcaster for future generations.

I thank Professor Davies for taking the time to address our General Meeting. Our Association has been a member

of *ABC Friends* for the past five years, and we encourage members to consider joining *ABC Friends*.

We want to continue having a regular guest speaker at our General Meetings who can speak on various subjects, particularly those relevant to seniors.

If you have a suggestion for a guest speakers please get in touch with me

NEIL BOWMAKER – RECEIVES AN OBE AWARD

After a series of misadventures and Neil changing his mind about attending some of our functions at the last moment, I finally had the honour of presenting Neil Bowmaker with our OBE (Over Bloody Eighty) Award at our April 2025 General Meeting.

Neil, together with wife June, are active members of our Association. Neil keeps himself fit these days, still playing tennis. Apart from our Association, Neil and June have enjoyed travelling around Australia, listening to country music, and attending the annual country music festival at Tamworth.

Congratulations Neil.



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MAY 2025

RTEA.NET AU



MAY 2025 General Meeting



Retired Telecommunications Employees Association

Thursday, 22ND May 2025

Starts at 11 am

Location

Woy Woy Hotel

33 Boulevard, Woy Woy



The Meeting will also be held via
ZOOM Access details
will be emailed to members
on Wednesday Afternoon
21ST May 2025

Retired Telecommunications Employees Association

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Warren Morley, Peggy Trompf, Lee Walkington.



Welcome to your May 2025 Newsletter (Cont'd).

WE NOW HAVE A DOCTOR IN OUR MIDST.

Most members of our Association would have completed their academic pursuits by their mid-twenties, then moved on to further their careers, have families, and pursue personal interests. However, member Christine Berle-Keys took a different path—embarking on a challenging PhD journey later in life, demonstrating remarkable dedication and resilience.



After years of committed study, Christine graduated from the *University of Technology Sydney* on Friday, 16th May 2025, proudly receiving her *Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)*. Her achievement is a powerful reminder that it is never too late to pursue one's goals.

Christine's late husband, Ross Keys, was a much-cherished member of our Association. We are sure he would be incredibly proud of Christine's accomplishment.

Members may remember Christine joining us last year on our trip to Coffs Harbour. With her studies now completed, we look forward to seeing more of her at future functions. No more telling us you cannot come out to play because you have an assignment to complete.

Please join me in congratulating Doctor Christine on this extraordinary and well-earned achievement. We are incredibly proud of you, Christine.

Member Greg Burgess is not well. If you want to inquire more or contact Greg, you can call Bronwyn Begley on 0447 984 345.

TOUR OF RAILWAY CONTROL CENTRE

Just recently, we had no social function in June. However, I have secured a visit to the Railway Control Centre near Green Square. The tour will take place on Thursday, 19th June 2025.

I still have to finalise the details, but I will let you know the tour will be limited to around twenty-five people. The tour of the centre will be broken into two groups, with a tour that will take around 90 minutes.

I should be able to finalise the tour in about a week. Once finalised, I will email members to confirm our booking. It will be necessary if you intend to go, to let me know in advance. Also, I will have to advise our tour guide on the names of members attending.

Watch out for our email.

TOUR OF THE GARVAN CENTRE

I may have advised members that we had decided to cancel our tour of the Opera House in September because of the cost and having to deal with Ticketek.

However, we have a replacement, thanks to Warren Morley's determination, and we have a tour of the Garvan Centre back again on our calendar for Thursday, 19th September 2025.

Our numbers will be limited to 24 persons. I will have more details for you in the coming newsletter issues.

SOUTHERN BORDER TRIP AWAY

I want to assure members that our planning for this year's trip away is well underway. It will be a seven-day coach tour in the best of springtime in southern New South Wales and north-eastern Victoria. The tour will depart from Sydney's Central Station on Sunday, 12th October 2025.

We will begin our journey by visiting *Canberra for the Floriade Festival*, one of the country's famous spring events. We resume our tour for an overnight stop in Cooma, which sets us up for a memorable highlight - an immersive visit to the *Yarrangobilly Caves in Kosciuszko National Park*. There, we will have a guided tour of these ancient limestone caves. A perfect natural contrast to the floral wonder of Floriade. *After we leave for our main base in Wangaratta, nestled in Victoria's High Country.*

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Welcome to your May 2025 Newsletter (Cont'd).

From Tuesday through Friday, we enjoy a series of relaxed day trips, each offering something different. In [Glenrowan](#), we will step into the world of bushranger Ned Kelly at the [Discovery Hub](#) and see the site of his final siege. At the [Winton Wetlands](#), a guided tour will explain the transformation of this vast landscape into an ecological and cultural site.

At [Beechworth](#), we'll explore its beautifully preserved gold rush architecture, visit the old gaol, and stop at the [Burke Museum](#) to glimpse early settler life. Then we have [Milawa](#), where we will enjoy a tasting at the renowned [Milawa Cheese Company](#), followed by time to browse gourmet stores and artisan produce.

[Benalla](#) offers a rich mix of visual beauty and history with visits to the [Benalla Art Gallery](#), [scenic botanic gardens](#), and the [lakeside walk](#). We will continue the regional art theme with stops at the striking [silo murals in Gooramab and Devenish](#), which tell stories of community and country. Included is a [lake cruise on Mulwala](#), offering a tranquil waterside experience. Later, we will have time in [Rutherglen](#) to visit the historic cellar doors and taste their celebrated fortified wines.

We return home on Saturday, 18th October, via the [Hume Highway](#), with stops for morning tea, lunch, and afternoon tea. There you have it—a perfect spring getaway.

There is still more planning and booking to arrange. Hopefully, soon, I will have the final itinerary and price for you.

MAY GENERAL MEETING AT WOY WOY

I hope to see many of you, particularly our Central Coast members, at our May General Meeting at Woy Woy this Thursday, 22nd May 2025. The meeting starts at 11 am.

A Reminder

Flu Vaccinations



This year, the flu season has hit earlier and harder than ever before. This April, cases are up by 40 per cent compared to the same time last year, with 62,548 cases recorded compared to last year's 44,323 flu cases.

Experts say influenza kills about 3000 older Australians each year. It is recommended that people aged 65 be vaccinated against the flu.

Also ask your doctor about a COVID19 vaccination. Flu and Covid vaccinations are free for Seniors.



Retired Telecommunications Employees Association

The May 2025 General Meeting on the Central Coast (Woy Woy)



The Meeting will be available via Zoom. Members will receive an email with access details prior to the meeting.

Thursday, 22ND May 2025
Meeting starts at 11 am

WOY WOY HOTEL
33 Boulevard,
Woy Woy

See train timetables below this notice

Sydney to Woy Woy

Central	Strathfield	Epping	Hornsby	Woy Woy
9.20 am	9.33am	9.45 am	9.56 am	10.31 am

Woy Woy - Return to Sydney

Woy Woy	Hornsby	Epping	Strathfield	Central
12.42 pm	1.19 pm	1.30 pm	1.42 pm	1.56 pm
1.10 pm	1.49 pm	2.00 pm	2.12 pm	2.26 pm
1.42 pm	2.19 pm	2.30 pm	2.42 pm	2.56 pm
2.10 pm	2.49 pm	3.00 pm	3.12 pm	3.25 pm
3.10 pm	3.49 pm	4.00 pm	4.12 pm	4.26 pm

Newcastle - Gosford - Wyong to Woy Woy

Newcastle Interchange	Hamilton	Wyong	Gosford	Woy Woy
9.21 am	9.24 am	10.16 am	10.34 am	10.42 am

Woy Woy - Return to Gosford - Newcastle

Woy Woy	Gosford	Wyong	Hamilton	Newcastle InterChange
12.31 pm	12.39 pm	12.56 pm	1.49 pm	1.53 pm
1.04 pm	1.16 pm	1.38 pm	2.40 pm	2.44pm
1.31 pm	1.39 pm	1.56 pm	2.50 pm	2.55 pm
2.04 pm	2.16 pm	2.38 pm	3.40 pm	3.44 pm
2.31 pm	2.39 pm	2.56 pm	4.02 pm	4.06 pm





Home Batteries - It's,Time!

Chris Cartledge

We've had solar panels on our roof for 15 years, waiting for the price of batteries to come down. We replaced the panels 12 months ago, but a battery was still not feasible.

All that has changed since the re-election of the Albanese Labor Government last Saturday (May 3, 2025). The promised "Cheaper Home Batteries Program" is now in play and on 6 May 2025, I signed a contract for a 20kW battery for an all-up cost of \$4,306.

This became possible because the \$370/kWh federal rebate can be 'stacked' with the NSW rebate of \$130/kWh to make a total rebate of \$500/kWh. A 20kW battery qualifies for a \$10,000 rebate!

A 20kW battery is twice the size we need based on our current usage however, there are other considerations. You only get one bite of the cherry for the federal rebate and it runs out in 5 years. We have recently gone all-electric, disconnecting our gas and purchasing a heat-pump hot water system and induction cooker. We also have ducted air conditioning, so I wanted to build in some redundancy. The payback time for our battery is estimated to be 4.7 years.

Oh, and there is one other consideration; "Australia is introducing a solar export tariff, often called the "sun tax", which will charge households for exporting excess solar energy to the grid.

Starting July 2025, solar customers in New South Wales will be required to pay 1.2 cents per kWh for energy exported to the grid between 10 AM and 3 PM. The goal is to reduce grid congestion and encourage homeowners to store excess energy in batteries or use it during peak times.

This policy has sparked debate, with critics arguing it penalises solar users who were encouraged to invest in renewable energy. Others believe it will help balance the grid and prevent energy wastage".



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Home Batteries - It's,Time! (Cont'd)

DETAILS OF THE CHEAPER HOME BATTERIES PROGRAM

“The Cheaper Home Batteries Program is a \$2.3 billion initiative by the Australian Federal Government, set to begin on July 1, 2025. It aims to reduce the upfront cost of home battery systems by approximately 30%, making solar battery storage more accessible for households and businesses across Australia.

KEY DETAILS:

- **Rebate Amount:** Around \$370 per kilowatt-hour (kWh) for eligible battery installations.
- **Eligibility:** Homeowners, small businesses, and community facilities installing batteries between April 6, 2025, and 2030.
- **Battery Size:** Systems ranging from 5kWh to 50kWh qualify.
- **Savings:** Households with existing solar could save up to \$1,100 annually, while those installing both solar panels and a battery could save up to \$2,300 per year.
Stackable Rebates: The federal rebate can be combined with state-level incentives in NSW and Victoria for even greater savings.
- The program is designed to support the installation of over one million new batteries by 2030, helping Australia reach its 82% renewable energy target.”

FURTHER READING:

[What is the home battery subsidy? Who is eligible, when does it start and what are the benefits of a battery? - ABC News](#)

[If you are looking for a supplier for home solar facilities CHOICE recommends SolarQuotes: Get Up To 3 Solar Quotes From Trusted Installers](#)

This article has been written with the assistance of Microsoft Copilot – an AI facility. Chris. Cartledge, May 7, 2025

Unfortunately, at this time, you cannot click on to open the above further reading documents. However, I have provided links in the email that accompanies this newsletter. Shortly, I will be using a new PDF document type that will allow you to click on links within the newsletter.



Social Functions for the Remainder of 2025



Tour of the Railway Control Centre

A visit to the Railway Control Centre located near Green Square.

The tour still has to be finalised. At this stage we know the tour will be limited to around twenty-five people. The tour of the centre will be broken into two groups, with a tour that will take around 90 minutes.

We should know more soon, then we will email members to confirm our booking.



Lunch at the Manly Club

We visited the Manly Club for the first time last year, and it turned out to be an exceptional find - a short walk from the ferry terminal with a nearby gallery to visit before lunch. The food and service was the first class. Well worth our second visit.



Lunch at the Sydney Rowers Club

Our highly anticipated early spring luncheon at the Sydney Rowers Club is always a favourite, drawing an enthusiastic group of members. Located in Abbotsford, the club is just a Rivercat ferry ride away to and from Circular Quay, with service conveniently running every twenty minutes. Once there, you will enjoy appetising dishes - especially the seafood - while you enjoy the waterfront views from the club's dining area.



Tour of the Garvan Centre

A tour of the Garvan Centre is back on our social calendar again on Thursday, 19th September 2025.

Our numbers will be limited to 24 people. More details will come in a later newsletter issue.

Annual Trip Away Sunday 12th October to Saturday 18th October



RTEA CHRISTMAS LUNCH

We are wrapping our 2025 social calendar in style with a festive Christmas Lunch at the Petersham RSL Club! Gather with fellow members for a delightful multi-course meal filled with holiday cheer and great company. To add a little extra sparkle, we will have exciting lucky door prizes up for grabs. Let us celebrate the Christmas season together!