

WELCOME TO YOUR JULY 2019 NEWSLETTER. WELL, IT WAS PLEASING TO SEE AN EXCELLENT TURNOUT FOR THE JUNE GENERAL MEETING. THERE WERE THIRTY-FIVE MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE.

We had John Hercum attend his first General Meeting. I was particularly pleased to see that John Walsh had brought you along. We hope to see you more often at our meetings.

Also, we had some members in attendance once again. It was good to see *Dave Dixon* again. We had *Col Wilson* with daughter *Ann* at the meeting. Col has been a regular attendee at our meetings over many years. Finally and not least, we had a surprise with *Ross Keys* in attendance. Ross is currently receiving extensive medical treatment, just after the meeting, he had an appointment for more treatment. At the end of the meeting, we all enjoyed one of his jokes. Ross, you brightened our day.

Donation to Gavan Institute

The General Meeting had an essential agenda item, a motion for the *Retired Members Association* to donate \$250 to the *Garvan Institute of Medical Research*. Warren Morely spoke to the motion and was seconded by Bob Hamblion. I was particularly impressed by what Dave Dixon had to say in support of the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

For over 50 years the *Garvan Institute* has made significant breakthroughs in the understanding and treatment of cancer, diabetes and obesity, neurological diseases like Parkinson's, hearing loss and eating disorders, osteoporosis, asthma and rheumatoid arthritis. Some of our members are suffering from one form or other of these chronic conditions.

The *Garvan* is affiliated with *St. Vincent's Health Australia* and *UNSW Sydney* and both are currently involved with several other organisations in the Australian Parkinson's Mission. This is a world-first program to enable faster delivery of effective treatments and enhance the understanding of this disease's underlying causes.

Many of our Association's members will do an organised tour of the *Garvan Institute's* facilities in August. We will make the donation to the Institute at that time.

Vince Haywood

A Slowing Economy

The government's pitch during the federal campaign was that they were better managers of the economy and boasted they would return the budget to surplus. The Prime Minister and treasurer often spoke as if the budget was already in surplus. Time will tell.

Now, they have been re-elected, there is the realisation that the nation's economy is not in good shape. Australia's GDP has grown just 0.3 and 0.2 per cent in the past two quarters. Private investment is anaemic, consumption has weakened, inflation is at zero, real wages are stagnant, productivity growth has flatlined, and living standards are going backwards.

The *Reserve Bank (RBA)* has reduced the official interest rate by 50 basis points in the last two months to stimulate the economy. The official interest rate reductions have given a \$3 billion dollar boost to banks' profits. True to form, the banks failed to pass the whole interest rate reduction onto those with home loans and in turn, dampen the intended economy stimulus. Current interest rates are one third lower than they were at the height of the *GFC* in 2008.

The Reserve Bank has told the government that there is little more it can do in monetary policy to improve the economy. The RBA has said the government needs to address the weak wages growth and spend more now on infrastructure if the economy is to grow.

I found it interesting that *Mr Phil Lowe, Governor of the RBA* reminded the government of what superannuants already know that it could borrow money on the long term loan market at one per cent over ten years or two per cent over twenty years to finance its infrastructure.



Retired Members Association

The July General Meeting will be held on:

Thursday, 25th July 2019 at 10.15 am.

Details for
August 2019
General Meeting at
Emu Plains are in this
month's newsletter

Notice Of Motion

The Retired Members Association
affiliate with COTA, the Council for the
Aging.

Moved: John McAuliffe
Seconded: John Lane.

Meeting Venue:

Financial Sector Union (FSU)
Level 2, 321 Pitt Street,
Sydney

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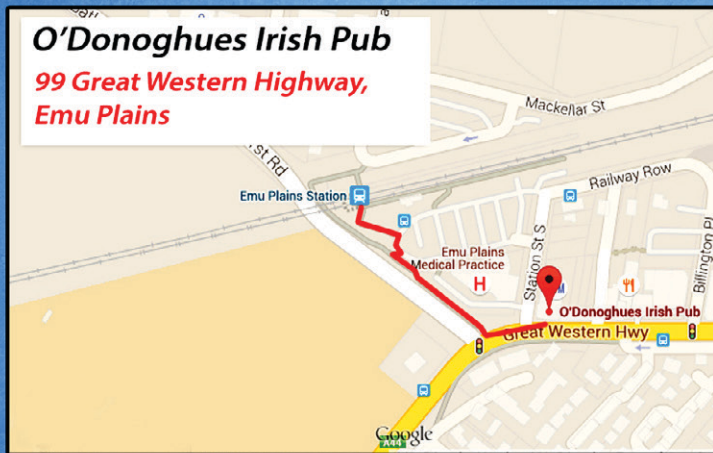
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Committee

John McAuliffe, Trevor Anderson, John Bryce, Allan Fairbairn, Steve Flynn, Terry Livingstone,
Col McQueen, Paul Rewhorn, Jim Spencer, Ron Milosh, Warren Morley, Alan Stevens.



August General Meeting - Thursday, 22th August at 10.30 am EMU PLAINS



O'Donoghues Irish Pub

99 Great Western Highway, Emu Plains
only 350 metres from Emu Plains Railway Station
(see map below)

The August General Meeting will be held at Emu Plains.
The meeting offers our members who live in Western Sydney and Blue Mountains the chance to attend a general meeting.
Many members travel from Sydney to Emu Plains each year for this meeting, they are again most welcomed.

The meeting offers friends and former workmates the opportunity to meet up.

We will have lunch at O'Donoghues after the meeting.

Train Timetables

Members travelling from Sydney can catch a train from **Central Station** departing at 9.18am, **Strathfield** at 9.31 am, **Parramatta** at 9.43 am, **Blacktown** at 9.52 am and **Penrith** at 10.06 am. The train arrives at **Emu Plains** at 10.09 am.

Members traveling from **Katoomba** can catch a train departing at 9.15 am and **Springwood** at 9.54 am. The train stops at all stations between Katoomba and Emu Plains. The train arrives at **Emu Plains** at 10.20 am.

Both trains services arrive at Emu Plains in sufficient time for the short walk to O'Donoghues Irish Pub for the meeting's 10.30 am start time.



PRESIDENT MESSAGE (CONT'D)

The federal government is somewhat in denial about the weak economy, they like to point us to the current low unemployment number. What is overlooked is that the *Australian Bureau Statistics' (ABS)* unemployment figure is a headline number, it merely indicates a trend. However, if you look further into the *ABS* under-employment rate (people looking for more work) is at eight per cent, and there is high youth unemployment.

As for infrastructure spending, the government announced an extensive infrastructure spend over the next ten years. **The problem is that only 20 per cent of the infrastructure spend will occur in the next three years, 60 per cent of the spend does not happen until after 2024.**

The government hopes the planned tax cuts will give people more money to spend. I am not so sure; people are worried about their individual financial position. The current economic situation has been coming for several years. The low wages growth and indeed, income reductions brought about by the penalty rate decision alongside high energy costs have placed pressure on the household budgets. Currently, household debt is running at 200% of income. Hardly, an environment where people will go out and spend more.

I would like to conclude on this subject, referring to figures I came across on the multiplier effects of various measures to stimulate the economy. Money spent on infrastructure, the multiplier effect is up to 2.2, on social programmes, it is 2.1. For tax cuts to high-income earners, it is between 0.05 and .0.5.

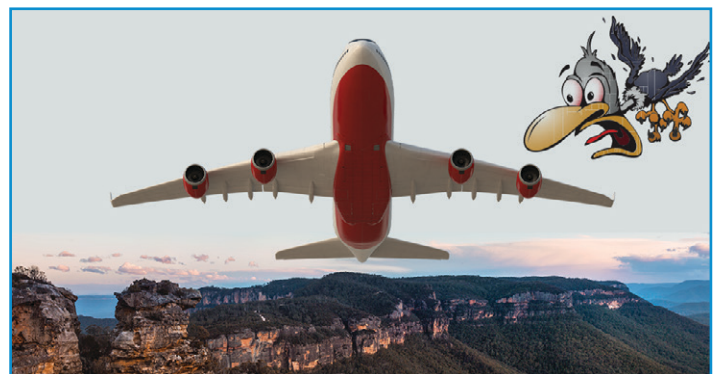
Most economists agree that tax reductions for low and middle-income earners will have more impact on the economy moving in the right direction is because these income earners spend their money to live, not save it,

When the global financial crisis hit in 2008 the *Rudd Government*, at Treasury's advice, went early and hard injected a considerable stimulus package into the economy aimed at stimulating household spending and as a result we escaped relatively unscathed. I am not so optimistic this time around.

It is estimated that the third tax cut instalment will cost the economy, and according to the *Grattan Institute*, the government will need to make around \$33 billion in savings to finance the third instalment. Not what the economy needs in the coming years.

EMU PLAINS GENERAL MEETING

Members would be aware we are now having the August General Meeting at Emu Plains on **Thursday, 22ND August (see the notice in this month's newsletter)**. We will be having guest speaker Trevor Neal from **RAWSA**, (*Residents Against Western Sydney Airport*). The **RAWSA** is a very active local group aiming to prevent the construction of the airport at Badgerys Creek or lessen its impact on the environment and surrounding suburbs. The second airport is planned to be a 24-hour operation. **RAWSA** has been seeking to find more information on the flight paths that will serve the airport. There has been little information forthcoming. I am aware this is becoming an increasing concern for people living in the Blue Mountains and Western Sydney.



Our next General Meeting will be at our regular venue in Sydney on Thursday, 25TH July (see a notice in this month's newsletter). At the meeting, there will be a motion for the *Retired Members Association* affiliate with the *Council for the Ageing (COTA)*. *COTA* was founded in 1965 and makes representations to all levels of government on all problems affecting the Ageing.

Bye for now,
Vince



IN JUNE, WE HAD OUR FIRST LUNCH AT THE MANLY WHARF HOTEL. THIS WAS BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE MANLY SKIFF CLUB POLICY CHANGE FOR GROUP BOOKINGS. THE MANLY WHARF HOTEL HAD BEEN RECENTLY RENOVATED. WE HAD A GOOD TURN-OUT OF MEMBERS. THE HOTEL IS VERY CLOSE TO THE MANLY FERRY TERMINAL, THIS MADE IT MUCH EASIER FOR SEVERAL MEMBERS. THE ONLY PROBLEM WAS THE COLD INSIDE THE HOTEL. PERHAPS NEXT YEAR WE SHOULD HAVE OUR LUNCH THERE IN A WARMER MONTH.

Lunch at the Mosman Rowers Club

Our next lunch will be at the Mosman Rowers Club on Thursday, 15th August 2015. The club has just been renovated and also survived a fire. Our lunch at the Mosman Rowers Club over past years has proved popular among members; the warmer August weather should make for a great day.

I look forward to seeing you there.

Snowy Mountains Trip-away

You will recall that I reported that the trip away to the Snowy Mountains was fully booked. I also mentioned I was maintaining a reserve list in the case of cancellations. I will place names on the reserve list in the strict order as they are received. Each year, we have members who have to cancel their bookings for genuine reasons because of ill health or medical appointments. Please contact me if you would like to come and prepared to place your name(s) on the reserve list.

I would ask those who have made a booking, to **please pay your \$50 per person deposit by the end of August**. The newsletter has details on how to pay, if you are paying the deposit by cheque, please make it payable to the *Retired Members Association*, this assists with banking.

Of course, if you have any questions, please contact me, my contact details are on page 2 of the newsletter.

Chicago - The Stage Musical

Further ahead, we have a matinee viewing of the stage production of the musical "Chicago". This is on Thursday, 3rd October 2019 at the Capitol Theatre. You will find a notice for the event in this month's newsletter.

Upcoming Social Events



John Lane

2019 Annual Trip Away - Payment Details

We are now taking bookings and payment for the annual trip way to Snowy Mountains. The Tour Operator requires a deposit of \$50 per person. You can pay the deposit at a general meeting, post a cheque to Bruce Muirhead, our Secretary (the address is on page 2). *Please make the cheque payable to the "Retired Members Association"*.

There is also the option of electronic payment. **Credit Union Australia (CUA) BSB 814-282, eSaver Account No: 10642769** - please include your surname and confirm with John Lane your payment. All payments made for *Life of Riley Tours* are fully refundable to the day of departure.



RETIRED MEMBERS ASSOCIATION

Mosman Rowers Club: Lunch

3 Centenary Drive, Mosman Bay

Thursday, 15TH August 2019

Lunch commences about 12 pm

The plan is to disembark from the ferry at the Cremorne Wharf and then take the leisurely and scenic walk to the club (about 10 minutes). Members and friends who do not feel up to the walk can stay on the ferry and disembark at Mosman Bay and take a much shorter walk to the club.

Ferry Departs
Circular Quay
(Wharf 4) at **11am.**
Later Ferries depart at
30 minute intervals



Goulburn District Reunion

"Reunion - PMG, Telecom, Telstra. All past and present employees are invited.

The reunion will be held at the Goulburn Soldiers Club,
15 Market Street, Goulburn.

RSVP by 1st October to allow for the preparation of name tags

Saturday
19th October 2019
From 10 am for a
11 am Start

Contacts are:

Bob Speer 0408 863 900,
Alan Barker 02 4871 1161,
Geoff Chadwick 0407 164 466



Mid North Coast Annual Get-together

Wednesday, 28th August 2019

We usually gather from 10 am onwards

All former or current PMG/Telecom/Telstra employees are welcomed at our annual get together at Port Macquarie.



West Port Macquarie Bowling Club in
Buller Street, Port Macquarie

The get-together is absolutely informal, there is no business agenda. Just come along and renew old friendships, everyone is very welcome. Please spread the word to those who may be interested.

For further information please contact Peter Lygoe.
Ph. (02)6551 0500.
Email: peter.kayl@bigpond.com

Can You Help Bob

Bob Speer is searching for copies of "Bulletin" issued by Technical Training Division of the PMG.

This bulletin was first issued in October 1947, with a subsequent edition in March 1949. If you have a copy of any issue please let me know.

Bob Speer 0408863900

Retired Members Association

SPECIAL EVENT

STAGE MUSICAL

CHICAGO



Capitol Theatre, Sydney on Thursday,
3rd October 2019 at 1pm.

TICKETS \$70 (Dress Circle)

If you would like to join us, please advise us at the General Meeting or contact **Bob Hamblion on 0419 268 618**. Payment can be made at a General Meeting or you can post a cheque to the Secretary (see page 2 for the address), and make the cheque payable to the *Retired Members Association*. You can also make an electronic payment:

Credit Union Australia (CUA)
BSB 814-282,
eSaver Account No: 10642769
Add your surname as the reference



Harold (Harry) Burke

The *Retired Members Association* is sad to report the recent passing of Harry Burke on Friday, 28th June 2019.

Harry first worked at the Dalley Trunk Exchange. In the 1960s, the trunk network underwent a significant expansion. There was the introduction of the first crossbar trunk exchange (ARM) that allowed subscribers to make trunk calls without the assistance of an operator.

Harry and many other technicians transferred to the Haymarket ARM Exchange. The introduction of this new exchange technology was not without its problems and challenges. Harry remained at Haymarket until his retirement in the early 1990s. Harry progressed to become a shift leader at the Haymarket Transmission Terminal.

Harry was very much a people person and very much respected by both management and staff. Many a trainee who rotated through Haymarket either in the trunk exchange or transmission terminal would be appreciative of his support and mentoring. As former Haymarket staff learn of Harry's passing; they will be deeply saddened. You will be missed "H".

Harry was instrumental in the restructuring of the Haymarket Trunk Exchange and Transmission staff organisation in 1981. The restructure gave many of the staff a much-needed career path that was sadly lacking in the old staff organisation.

Outside of work, Harry was a keen surfer, and from time to time did some sailing.

After his retirement, Harry moved from the Sutherland Shire to the Queensland Sunshine Coast.

The *Retired Members Association* extends its sincere sympathy and condolences to Harry's wife Helen, children and other family members.



Robert (Bob) Stewart

The *Retired Members Association* is sad to report that Robert (Bob) Stewart recently passed away on Saturday, 21st June 2019.

A funeral service was held for Bob on the 5th July 2019 at the Port Macquarie Uniting Church.

Bob was 77 years of age.

Bob was well known to our members on the North Coast. Bob Stewart was a 1959 Technician in Training and worked at Dalley Street Exchange until his appointment as a technician to Port Macquarie.



Lionel Cooper

The *Retired Members Association* is sad to report the recent passing of Lionel Cooper. At the time of newsletter's preparation, a funeral service for Lionel will take place on Thursday, the 11th July 2019 at Craig's Hill Catholic Cemetery, Middle Arm Road, Goulburn. The service commences at 11 am.

Lionel had been in Warrigal Care, Goulburn for several years.

Lionel had been a member of the *Retired Members Association* for over 22 years.

Lionel commenced with the PMG in 1946 as a Technician in Training at Alexandra. Following the completion of his training, he was appointed a Technician and later as a Senior Technician at Bowral.

He Transferred to Goulburn where he was appointed Supervising Technician on shifts. He was the Supervising Technician in charge of the installation of the underground repeaters on the Sydney to Melbourne Coaxial Cable as part of an upgrade from 6Mhz to 12Mhz.

The next appointment for Lionel was as the first Internal Plant Manager of Goulburn District Telecommunication Branch when Telecom introduced the Operations Department. Lionel was then appointed District Telecommunications Manager (DTM) at Goulburn, Gosford and finally Newcastle from where he retired.

Outside of work, Lionel was a keen hockey player in his younger years and later matured into golf which he enjoyed up until he entered care.

The *Retired Members Association* extends its sincere sympathy and condolences to Lionel's wife Elaine, daughters Tracy Lee, Victoria, and son Brett.



MANUAL TO AUTO EXCHANGE CONVERSIONS

Bob Hyde

BY THE MIDDLE OF THE 1970S, A LOT OF COUNTRY TOWNS HAD HAD THEIR MANUAL TELEPHONE EXCHANGES REPLACED BY AUTOMATIC EXCHANGES. HOWEVER, THERE WERE STILL PLENTY OF QUITE SUBSTANTIAL TOWNS WHICH WERE STILL MANUAL EXCHANGES. IN THE HUNTER VALLEY TOWNS LIKE ABERDEEN AND MURRURUNDI WERE STILL WAITING.

Much of the countryside was serviced by small manual telephone offices, run by *Telephone Office Keepers (TOK)*. The **TOK** was usually a local farmer, who provided service during restricted hours – often a couple of hours morning and evening, and even less on weekends. The telephones were magneto, (to call, wind the handle a few times, lift the receiver and hope that the TOK would answer) and some of the close-in lines were built and maintained by the PMG, and the more distant services were built and maintained by the subscribers. Often the subscribers shared party lines, which meant that anyone on the party line could, and did, listen in to their neighbour's conversations. The quality of the service in an area depended very much on the personality, reliability and sobriety of the Telephone Office Keeper.

Large properties were big businesses, and it was difficult to run such a business with the restricted hours offered by a small Telephone Office. On many occasions, discontented subscribers would call local meetings to demand an automatic exchange. The local Federal Member of Parliament would be summoned, and the PMG would be required to send along a senior representative to explain where the project may or not be on the *"Draft Capital Works Programme (DCWP)"*. I heard that at one such meeting (*I think it was in the Riverina in the early 1960s*) the PMG representative spent much time talking about the huge expense of the DCWP, and how the DCWP was dependent on the allocation of funding in the Federal Budget.

One property owner stood up and demanded: **"How much do one of these Automatic Exchanges cost?"** The PMG man said something like: **"Ten thousand pounds"** – an enormous sum in those days. The property owner whipped out his cheque book and wrote out a cheque for the full amount. **Game, set and match!**

There was no backing out – the District got its automatic exchange that year.

Preparing a town for its automatic exchange was a big project, and there were many side-benefits for the town. A site for the exchange was bought, and

usually, a substantial brick building was built.

A team from Country Installation moved into the town for some months to install the equipment. The *Country Installation* technicians were on a *Travelling Allowance*, and they contributed mightily to the social life and to the economy of the town. Lines staff moved in to test and upgrade the cable network of the town. All of the *magneto handsets* had to be replaced by dial handsets. (it is heartbreaking to think of all those magnificent *Swedish Ericsson* and *Australian Ericsson* handsets, which now sell for hundreds of dollars in antique shops, which were thrown in the river or burnt).

The cutover night was a big night for the town. The local newspaper would do an article with lots of photos, and a party was always planned for midnight, which was when cutover was scheduled to happen. In the hours leading up to midnight, the technicians carried out a battery of last-minute tests. The telephonists, many of whom had worked on the manual boards all of their adult lives, received hundreds of good-luck calls from subscribers. By this stage, the telephonists were sipping on champagne, and many tears were shed.

At midnight the automatic equipment was switched online. The manual boards fell silent, and the automatic equipment started chattering as it handled its first calls. The party started, and the dancing and singing and drinking continued on through most of the night.

Most towns were happy to go automatic. However, a few resisted right to the end and were very reluctant to lose their manual exchange. One such town was *Vacy*, north of Maitland, which had a wonderful *Telephone Office Keeper* who provided excellent 24-hour service. A caller asking to be put through to, say, John Smith, would be told: **"John's not home, he's down helping his brother-in-law fix his tractor. I will put you through to there"**.

However, in the end, even *Vacy* had to join the national automatic network.