



Retired Telecommunications Employees Association

NEWSLETTER

RTEA - Proud our Union Origin

NOVEMBER 2024

Welcome to your November 2024 Newsletter.

While putting together my final message for 2024, I like to look back to my last year's final message; it provides a snapshot or summary to compare with what I am about to write. In 2023, we were returning to normal after a long period of lockdowns and isolation following the COVID-19 pandemic. I am pleased to say that 2024 has been even more successful, judging by attendance at our general meetings and social functions.

As I mentioned at the Christmas Lunch, our age demographic does not seem to be on our side; I anticipated that members would increasingly be unable to attend our functions. However, I am pleased to say members have continued to support us with their attendance. In 2024, we had another successful ferry cruise, a historic tour of the Brisbane Waters and, more recently, our tour of exhibitions at the ANZAC Memorial and State Library. Three lunches stand out; we started the year at the Bundeena Social Club, then the Sydney Rowers Club and a new find: the Manly Club. I encourage you to attend our socials in 2025, I certainly enjoy them and the feedback tells me others as well. As we advance in years, shared experiences are invaluable and enhance your well-being.

Early in 2025, the committee will meet to develop a new range of social functions and guest speakers for the year ahead.

Still, on socials, we had a splendid Christmas Lunch at Petersham RSL. We had a close call with the proposed train strike, which was planned to start on Thursday. Fortunately, the industrial action did not go ahead. Everyone I spoke to told me that they enjoyed the day. Once again, the catering staff at Petersham did an outstanding job, and the food was superb.



Gwenda Chambers



Margaret Duric



Helen Wilson

Continued on Page 3



Last Newsletter
for 2024



**Back in
February
2025**



Retired Telecommunications Employees Association

NOVEMBER 2024 General Meeting

Thursday, 28TH November 2024

Meeting Commences at 11.05 am

The November 2024 General Meeting will be held at the **Petersham RSL Club (301 Trafalgar Street, Petersham, an easy 150m walk from Petersham Railway Station).**

While the General Meeting will have Zoom Video coverage, you are welcomed to join with us in person at the Petersham RSL. The Petersham RSL has an excellent bistro where you can get together with fellow members over lunch.



The Meeting will also be held via **ZOOM**
Access details will be emailed to members on Wednesday morning, **27TH NOVEMBER 2024**

Retired Telecommunications Employees Association

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Trevor Anderson, John Bryce, Allan Fairbairn,
Bob Hamblion, Vince Haywood,
Terry Livingstone, John McAuliffe,
Arthur McCarroll, Paul Rewhorn,
Barry Robinson, Garry Masman, Ron Milosh,
Warren Morley, Lee Walkington.



Welcome to your November 2024 Newsletter

Before the Christmas Lunch, many members had returned a week earlier, fully relaxed, from our annual trip away to Coffs Harbour and surrounding areas. We had a terrific week; like the previous year, our bus driver, Nigel, made the trip go like clockwork. He knows the area well and wherever we visit; he is only too happy to share his knowledge. Members also enjoyed the accommodation and food at the Zebra Motel.

OBE AND OBN AWARDS

We rounded the year with the presentation of two OBEs (“Over Bloody Eighty”) and an OBN (“Over Bloody Ninety”) awards. I had the honour of presenting awards to three lovely ladies. The OBE awards went to Margaret Duric and Gwenda Chambers, and the OBN to Helen Wilson.

Helen had a fall just outside of Petersham RSL when arriving at our Christmas lunch. I am pleased to inform members that later Helen had a full medical check and an overnight stay in the hospital, she is now at home on her way to recovery, nursing some bruises.

REMEMBERING MEMBERS PAST

Each year, a number of our members pass away. Sadly, this year was no exception. I know this will be a sad time for their families. I am sure members will join me in extending our condolences; we will think of you over Christmas and New Year.

Next year, the Retired Telecommunications Employees Association will celebrate its forty years. Many members who have passed made the Retired Telecommunications Employees Association the success it is today. We will be forever grateful to them for the good times we enjoy today.

THANK YOU

I would like to thank this year’s committee for their tireless efforts. I anticipate that some of the committee members may want to pass the baton. Therefore, more than ever, we will need fresh faces on our committee. New faces will invigorate our Association. I especially encourage country members to consider joining us on the committee. Do not worry about not being physically at our committee; we have Zoom video conferencing, which makes participation easy. Feel free to reach out for more information.

The committee meets once a month (second Thursday). I will be pleased to hear from you if you need more information about the committee.

I thank the Petersham RSL for their ongoing support, especially for making a conference room available for our monthly meetings and Christmas Party.

Petersham RSL has proved to be a great venue; I cannot express enough how friendly and helpful the staff are. Members always look forward to the club’s luncheon meals

I want to end by wishing everyone and your family a happy and safe Christmas and New Year. Please stay safe and well. I look forward to seeing you sometime in the new year.





Trunk Service Christmas Reunion Lunch

Greetings, former colleagues from Trunk Service!
We invite you to join us for a Christmas lunch at the
Combined Services Club
(7 Barrack Street, Sydney),
on **Thursday, 12th December, at 12 p.m.**

For further details contact:

Tod Mirgis 02 9939 1935
Warwick Brodsky 0412 729051

Country Installation Office Party

YO-HO-HO!!

Wishing everyone a
Merry Christmas and a
Joyous New Year

Crystal Palace Hotel

The Silly Season has rolled around again, and it is time to have a couple of drinks with some old workmates. This year the Country Installation Office Party will be conducted as follows:-

Peter Clarke 0419 394 349
Email:- hipshot@bigpond.com

Thursday
5TH December 2024
When:- 1200 for 1230 hrs



Why a Password Manager?

Safeguarding Your Digital Life

The Retired Telecommunications Employees Association newsletter has featured articles about securing our online information and avoiding scams (the June 2024 newsletter was the most recent).

The June 2024 newsletter discussed scams and online frauds, in which attackers deceive you into revealing personal information or taking over your computer for malicious purposes, like launching DDoS attacks.

The following article will explain the benefits of using a password manager to secure the many passwords you need in today's digital environment.

A password manager simplifies the process of managing numerous accounts. Today, we are required to enter a password to access various online platforms, including online purchases, banking, government agencies, television subscriptions, health funds, and services provided by Service NSW, to name but a few. These platforms hold our sensitive personal information, making them attractive targets for cybercriminals.

The experts advise us not to use the same or similar passwords to access our online services; the passwords must be long and complex to make them difficult for hackers to crack. However, we often find ourselves in overwhelming circumstances where it is impossible to remember dozens of complex passwords and feel we have no choice but to either jot down or use similar and simpler passwords to access our information, leaving us with an unsettling feeling that a hacker will one day gain access to our online information.

MANAGING MULTIPLE PASSWORDS

A password manager also simplifies the process of managing numerous accounts. It securely stores and automatically fills in your login credentials, saving you time and effort. You no longer need to remember or jot down dozens of passwords, reducing the risk of forgetting them.

Moreover, password managers often include features such as password generation that create complex passwords difficult for hackers to crack. They also offer encrypted storage for sensitive information like credit card details and personal identification numbers, adding an extra layer of protection.

Paul Rewhorn
Assistance with Research:
Chris Cartledge



A password manager will auto-fill in your login details, saving you time and effort. This convenience extends across multiple devices, as many password managers offer synchronisation, meaning you can access your passwords from any device, whether a smartphone, tablet, or computer, ensuring you always have your credentials at your fingertips, no matter where you are.

THE SOLUTION: A PASSWORD MANAGER

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Why a Password Manager Cont'd

CHOOSING THE RIGHT PASSWORD MANAGER

There are numerous password managers on the market. For this article, I have relied on a Choice magazine article that tested about a dozen password managers (the web address for the Choice article is listed elsewhere in this article).

I would suggest that as well as reading the Choice article, you further research the subject of password management online. As you narrow down your selection, read reviews of your password manager candidates. Password managers are marketed to you as a subscription service and will offer you a discount if you pay annually. Perhaps, at first, you take the monthly payment option before you make a longer-term commitment or take up a free trial period if offered.

PASSWORD	RESULTS
abcd	A hacker could crack instantly
1234	
starwars	
qwerty	
family	
coffee	
throw a mix of symbols and numbers in – things get difficult for a hacker	
+!password!+	about 18 years to crack
<+family?/{	about 29 years to crack
?+qw3r7y:{?	about 200 years to crack
start using randomly generated passwords, you'll get these results	
4dhrE_gaB9pj\$	about three million years to crack
sArRUZ88Yv\itN_jf9	approximately four quadrillion years to crack

Source: Choice Magazine

When selecting a password manager, Choice recommends that you consider the following factors:

- **Security Features:** Most password manager use strong encryption standards, such as AES-256. Look for additional security features like two-factor authentication (2FA) and biometric (fingerprint or facial recognition) login options. Password managers can automatically log out after inactivity to prevent unauthorised access.
- **Usability:** The password manager should be user-friendly and compatible with your devices and browsers. It should offer seamless synchronisation between your desktop PC and mobile devices and provide a straightforward interface for managing your passwords. Your data is encrypted end-to-end during transit, meaning only your devices can decrypt it, protecting your data from interception or eavesdropping.
- **Cross Platform Compatibility:** You must check that your preferred password manager will work on your computer's platform (Windows, Mac and Linux). The same applies to your mobile devices (Apple IOS or Android).
- **Price:** Most password managers are subscription services. Prices range from free (for the most basic password manager features) to just over \$70 annually.

CHOICE MAGAZINE TESTS

I would recommend that before you decide on a password manager, you read the Choice article at the following

URL: <https://www.choice.com.au/consumers-and-data/protecting-your-data/data-privacy-and-safety/review-and-compare/password-managers>

The article provides an their rating of the various password managers as well as:

- Price
- Test comments
- Ease of use score
- Family plan availability
- Password Management
- Cloud sync across devices
- Sync score

Also, it may be best to consider a family plan when taking out a subscription, as you will likely want to share your password manager with other family members, who would have separate access and passwords.

Continued on Page 7



Why a Password Manager Cont'd

USING YOUR NEW PASSWORD MANAGER

Installation and setup will differ depending on your password manager; therefore, they are impossible to explain in this article.

When you create a password manager account, you have to create a master password that will unlock your passwords stored in your vault. It is the only key to your vault. It is crucial to understand that the master password is the key to everything.

You will need to make it extremely strong and unique. Remember that most password managers will not allow you to recover it. There is a good reason for this: providing a recovery means would severely compromise your password management, and a hacker with your master password would have access to all your passwords.

Your password manager will most likely provide you with helpful information on keeping your master password secure; the following are some basic safeguard measures:

Do Not Store It Digitally: Avoid storing your master password in an unencrypted digital form, such as a plain text file or a note on your phone. If you must record it, consider writing it down on paper and storing it in a secure physical location, like a safe.

Use Two-Factor Authentication (2FA): Enable two-factor authentication for your password manager, adding an extra layer of protection by requiring another form of verification (e.g., a code sent to your phone or generated by an authenticator app) whenever you access your vault, making it significantly more difficult for someone to gain access even if they somehow discover your master password.

Avoid Sharing and Phishing Threats: Never share your master password with anyone, and be cautious about phishing attacks



Not Another COVID-19 Article

Our newsletter has featured several articles about COVID-19 during and after the pandemic. I trust this article is not the one too many on the subject. However, while mostly underreported, Australia has experienced COVID-19 outbreaks that sometimes put our hospitals under pressure to cope with additional patients. The outbreaks usually coincide as the virus strain changes. Fortunately, these days, most people's symptoms of COVID-19 infections are mild and non life-threatening. However, for some with preexisting health problems, COVID-19 still poses a significant threat. Today COVID-19 antiviral medicines play an important treating severe symptoms. This article has information about eligibility and how about obtaining antiviral medicines.

The SARS-CoV-2 virus was the source of the COVID-19 pandemic. It had been a century since the world had experienced a pandemic on the scale of COVID-19. Countries had to respond to the virus's rapid spread from its initial outbreak in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. Later in March 2020 the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a pandemic.

Europe became a major centre for COVID-19 in early 2020. In March 2020, Italy had over 100,000 cases and more than 10,000 deaths. Spain followed soon after with 200,000 cases and 20,000 deaths.

Worse was to follow in the United States and Brazil. By mid-2020, the U.S. had reported over a million cases, with significant outbreaks in New York, California, and Texas. The infection rates varied widely between states, influenced by population density, healthcare infrastructure, and public health policies. At the end of the pandemic, the United States, the world's leading economy with advanced healthcare, experienced over one million deaths.

INSIGHTS

The following patterns and insights emerged:

- Countries that implemented *early and stringent measures*, such as China and South Korea, saw quicker stabilisation of infection rates. Compared with the United States, which delayed its response.
- The *efficiency of healthcare systems* significantly reduced infection rates and managed lower mortality rates.
- *Socio-economic disparities* – countries with high inequality had more challenges in controlling outbreaks.
- The role of *community engagement and public compliance with health measures* – countries that fostered public cooperation maintained lower infection rates.

Country	Infections	Deaths
United States	102 Million	1 Million
India	44 Million	530 Thousand
France	40 Million	160 Thousand
Germany	39 Million	160 Thousand
Brazil	37 Million	700 Thousand
Japan	33 Million	50 Thousand
South Korea	32 Million	34 Thousand
Italy	25 Million	190 Thousand
United Kingdom	24 Million	200 Thousand
Russia	22 Million	400 Thousand
Turkey	17 Million	100 Thousand
Spain	14 Million	100 Thousand
Australia	14 Million	21 Thousand
Vietnam	12 Million	43 Thousand
Taiwan	11 Million	18 Thousand
Iran	7 Million	150 Thousand
Indonesia	6 Million	210 Thousand
Argentina	5 Million	130 Thousand
Netherlands	5 Million	24 Thousand
Poland	5 Million	100 Thousand



Not Another COVID-19 Article (Cont'd)

AUSTRALIA

Here in Australia, the country managed the pandemic relatively well compared to many other countries. Our response was swift, imposing travel bans on visitors from high-risk countries and requiring returning Australians to undergo mandatory quarantine. Then came testing and contact tracing and lockdowns and social distancing. All these measures slowed transmission rates and eased the pressure on our healthcare system.

Once vaccines became available in early 2021, Australia commenced the initial distribution to healthcare workers, aged care residents and vulnerable people. By the end of 2021, most of the population had received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. After vaccination, Australia began to ease restrictions.

Unfortunately, the pandemic's impact is not yet over in Australia and other parts of the world. Extended lockouts have had social and mental health impacts. The high youth crime rate has been attributed to the isolation caused by the lockdowns and school closures. On the economy, Australia is undergoing a period of high inflation as the economy returns to normal.

FURTHER READING

[NSW Health Website](#)

[Anti Viral Medications](#)

nsw.gov.au/health/covid-19/testing-managing/antiviral-medicines#toc-what-are-antiviral-medicines

[Rapid antigen tests for COVID-19](#)

nsw.gov.au/health/covid-19/testing-managing/rapid-antigen-tests-for-covid-19

Health Care Advice and Anti-viral Treatment

COVID-19 is now an endemic virus, regularly occurring within the community, such as the common cold or influenza. However, COVID-19 can still cause severe illness or worse, mainly when the virus strain changes or infects older people or those with a compromised immune system.

When you suspect a COVID-19 infection, you will be concerned about visiting your general practitioner and spreading the infection. You should have a rapid antigen test kit and face mask available first to help determine whether you have a COVID-19 infection and the face mask if your GP wants to see you in person.

First, you should call your regular GP. However, if you suspect you have a COVID-19 infection outside business hours, calling (1800 022 222) might be an option. You can also visit the Health Direct website (<https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/symptom-checker>) to type in your symptoms and receive recommendations.

The remainder of this article will take you through the steps when you call Health Direct with a suspected COVID-19 infection and obtain antiviral medicines if your GP deems it necessary.

1. You should first take a rapid antigen test (RAT) when you have typical COVID-19 symptoms. If you test positive, stay at home and manage symptoms.
2. If your symptoms are severe, like difficulty breathing, and your GP is unavailable, you can call Health Direct.
3. A nurse will initially take your call and will review your symptoms. If the nurse suspects you have COVID and is concerned that more than the normal treatment is necessary, the nurse will refer you to a doctor for a teleconference consultation.
4. A doctor calls you back and will determine whether you need antiviral or other treatment.

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Health Care Advice and Anti-viral Treatment (Cont'd)

You are ordinarily eligible to receive antiviral medicines and test positive for COVID-19 and are:

- 70 years of age or older
- 50 to 69 years of age with two additional risk factors for severe illness
- an Aboriginal person, 30 to 69 years of age, with one additional risk factor for severe illness
- Eighteen years of age or older and are moderately to severely immunocompromised or have previously been hospitalised from COVID-19.

The antiviral treatment is a five-day course. The aim of anti-virals is to:

- Reduce the risk of you going to hospital
- Prevent the development of breathing difficulties
- Reduce your need for oxygen assistance or intensive care.
- Prevent a COVID-19 virus infection becoming life-threatening.

NSW Health states that antiviral medicines are not a substitute for vaccination - vaccination is still the best protection against COVID-19.



Member Chris Cartledge has provided members with a calendar for many years. We thank Chris for making an effort to prepare the calendar. The calendar shows the dates for the Centrelink and ComSuper payments in 2025.

As well as the calendar below, you will find another copy on the next page in the entire landscape. Also, I have attached a PDF version of the newsletter for members who receive the newsletter via email



2025

NSW GOVERNMENT SCHOOL HOLIDAYS (Eastern Div.)
Summer 23 Dec 2024 (Mon) - 30 Jan 2025 (Thu)
Autumn 14 Apr 2025 (Mon) - 24 Apr 2025 (Thu)
Winter 07 Jul 2025 (Mon) - 18 Jul 2025 (Fri)
Spring 29 Sep 2025 (Mon) - 10 Oct 2025 (Fri)
Summer 22 Dec 2025 (Mon) - 26 Jan 2026 (Mon)

2 Centrelink Paydays

Year of the Snake

9 ComSuper Paydays

JANUARY						
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Chris. Cartledge cartledge@outlook.com

Calendar 2025.xlsx



2025

NSW GOVERNMENT SCHOOL HOLIDAYS (Eastern Div.)
Summer 23 Dec 2024 (Mon) - 30 Jan 2025 (Thu)
Autumn 14 Apr 2025 (Mon) - 24 Apr 2025 (Thu)
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Year of the Snake

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9 ComSuper Paydays

APRIL						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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AUGUST

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DECEMBER

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Retired Telecommunications Employees Association

NEW MEMBER APPLICATION FORM

Email Address: webadmin@rtea.net.au



Alan Bassman
46 Lyle Street, Girraween
NSW 2145

The Retired Telecommunications Employees Association welcomes new members who have worked in Telecommunications. The Association holds monthly meetings followed by lunch, an option to meet with former workmates. We hold several social functions throughout the year, and we email members a monthly newsletter.

- Complete the Form**
- Send the completed application to the RTEA via one of the following options:**
 - Click the Submit button at the bottom of the form, your application will be sent via your email client to us
 - If your email client doesn't support option {a}; save the completed form as a PDF file and email it to the Secretary at [email address].
 - Print the form, complete by hand if necessary, and post the completed form to the address shown on the top of the page. Please do not include a cheque or cash with your form, we can only accept payment by a bank transfer.
- Make your Payment via a Bank Transfer (The form shows the Bank Details)**
 - A one-time membership fee is \$20.
 - A purchase of a "Name Badge", at \$15 will (including delivery) makes the total payable amount - \$35.
- Additional Information:**
 - The membership fee is a one-time payment with no annual fees.
 - Your information will remain confidential and will not be provided to third parties.

Your Details

First Name Last Name Spouse/Partner Name

Address Line 1 Address Line 2

Retired Telecommunications Employees Association has regular social functions to which Spouses and Partners are welcomed.

Town/Suburb State Postcode

Email Address Phone/Mobile

The Retired Telecommunications Employees Association does not share members' email addresses with third parties and without their expressed consent.

Former Company/Workplace Worked Outside of Telecommunications?

Retired Telecommunications Employees Association accepts membership from persons outside of telecommunications and without a retiree association.

Wish to Purchase a Name Badge?

Our badge costs \$15 which includes delivery. Name on Badge

Tell us about your work history in Telecommunication. If you worked with the PMG/Telecom/Telstra and a Technician in Training let us know the year you commenced as a TIT. Our members hold regular reunions for the TIT entrance year.

Confirm your Application

I am applying for membership of the Retired Telecommunications Employees Association. I understand that by completing this application form and making payment, I agree to abide by the constitution of the Association.

Please tick if you agree and to confirm your membership application:

Payment amount and how to pay

Payment Amount: \$20

The Association can only accept payment by Bank Transfers (electronic payment)

Great Southern Bank BSB 814-282, eSaver Account No: 10642769.

Please include your surname in Details on your bank's transfer transaction form.