



# NEWSLETTER

Retired Telecommunications Employees Association

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

FEBRUARY 2025

## Welcome back to your February 2025 Newsletter.

I would like to welcome you back for 2025. We have made it to the quarter century mark. I trust you have an enjoyable Christmas and New Year and are looking forward to the year ahead.

John Lane

The committee has already had a planning meeting to map out our activities for the coming year. This month's newsletter includes details of our social events and guest speakers. Given it is still early in the year, you can expect updates and more information as they become available.

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM) ANNOUNCEMENT

**Remember that our AGM is on Thursday, 27th February 2025, at the Petersham RSL. Yes, there will be Zoom for members who cannot personally attend.**

The AGM will open at 11:05 am.

Our February 2025 General Meeting immediately follows the AGM.

The Annual General Meeting has two agenda items after I opened the meeting with an introductory message.

- ◀ Alan Bassman, the current Secretary/Treasurer, delivers our finance report for the year ending 31st December 2024. This month's newsletter has the financial statement.
- ◀ All current executive and committee positions are declared vacant. The meeting elects a returning officer, and elections follow to fill executive and committee positions. Nominations close just before the election of a new committee and the executive.

### VACANCIES ON COMMITTEE

If you are interested in any position on the executive or committee, I would like to invite you to do so. We have several vacant committee positions. Some of our current committee members are doubling up on their tasks, and we need your help to ensure the smooth running of our Association.

I am extending a special message to our country members; I would like some of you to participate on the committee. Remoteness from Sydney is not an obstacle; we meet once a month in person and via Zoom video conferencing.

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### Vale Guy Robins

Last month, the Retired Telecommunications Employees Association reported the sudden passing of Guy Robins following a heart attack on Sunday, 12th of January 2025. Guy had a funeral service at the Greenway Chapel on Friday, 24th January 2025. Many of Guy's workmates from NDC, the Union movement and our association came to pay their respects.

Guy was aged 77.



Guy was born on the far north coast of NSW, where his parents ran a farm at Rous. Many who knew Guy were surprised to learn he rode on horseback with his sister from the farm to primary school.

Guy joined the Postmaster General Department on January 6, 1964, as a junior postal officer (Telegram Boy). A year later, on January 18, 1965, he began as a Technician in Training. His career

appointments with NDC included City South Carrier in 1967, Bourke in 1969 and later to the Central Coast in 1972.

However, Guy's career aspirations lay elsewhere within the Union movement. He became a Branch Councillor with the NSW Technical Branch of the ATEA (Australian Telecommunications Employees Association) in 1974. Three years later, Guy secured a full-time position as an Industrial Officer. He remained in the position for over three decades. Guy was also a member of the ALP and came very close to pre-selection for a Labor seat on the Central Coast in the mid-1980s.

No one could doubt Guy's commitment to the labour movement. Processing a solid work ethic, he tackled challenging and demanding tasks, making determined representations on behalf of members. He was an adept and skilled negotiator. Guy finally completed his career in 1992.

Outside of work, union activities, and politics, Guy was an enthusiastic lawn bowler who achieved Life Membership at Gosford City Bowling Club, representing the club at all levels, including serving as Club President. He enjoyed his life with family, at many home social occasions, and trips away with them, including snow skiing.

The Retired Telecommunications Employees Association extends its condolences and sympathy to Guy's wife, Chris of 53 years, his children Chris, Renee, Tenille, Karla and son Wade, his extended family, and workmates in the NDC and Union.



**FEBRUARY 2025**

RTEA.NET AU



# Annual General Meeting 2025

Retired Telecommunications Employees Association

**Thursday, 27<sup>TH</sup> February 2025**

Starts at 11:05 am



### Location

**Petersham RSL Club (301 Trafalgar Street,  
Petersham,  
an easy 150m walk from  
Petersham Railway Station**

The Meeting will also be held via  
**ZOOM** Access details  
will be emailed to members  
on Tuesday morning,  
25<sup>TH</sup> February 2025



Retired Telecommunications Employees Association

## OFFICE BEARERS

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### Committee

*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 back to your February 2025 Newsletter (Cont'd).

You have a fantastic opportunity awaits you to get involved, make a difference, and bring fresh ideas to us. *If you want to join the committee, please fill out the nomination form in the newsletter and submit it to the Secretary/ Treasurer. Your participation is necessary, and we look forward to welcoming new members onto our committee.*

### VALE GUY ROBBINS

It must have come as a shock to everyone learning of Guy Robbins's passing. I last met Guy at Colin Cooper's memorial event in September 2024. We spoke for quite a long time as it had been several years since we had last seen each other. I recall him looking so well.

I first met Guy when he became a member of our Union. At about the same time, I became a branch councillor. We got to know each other very well as we were both there for the long haul. He was only a branch councillor officer for a couple of years, and shortly after, he became an industrial officer; a full-time union position. Guy also joined the ALP in the mid-seventies. I occasionally visited work centres with Guy and soon understood his dedication to his members and working-class values.

I was surprised at his funeral service when I discovered he was brought up on a farm between Lismore and Ballina and rode horseback with his sister to school.

There is a tribute to Guy within this publication. I just wanted to express the sadness of losing a good friend; I was fortunate to become reacquainted only recently.

Rest in Peace, Guy Robbins

### HOME CARE ASSISTANCE

*This month's newsletter covers home care assistance packages. After discussing the subject with Paul, we realised that some members may be in need of home care assistance now or in the future.*

Aside from a few conversations with members, I had not paid much attention to home care assistance before. However, my family and friends suggested that Joan and I needed help at home, and I agreed - we were struggling.

Knowing the federal government funds home care assistance, I visited the "My Aged Care" website, researched the process, and applied online. This newsletter article outlines the application process in more detail.

After undertaking an assessment in our home, we received approval for specific home care assistance. Using the "My Aged Care" website as a guide, I made contact with local service providers in my area.

*Here is where it got interesting; every provider I contacted said they were not accepting new applications due to a lack of current federal government funding.* They also indicated that new round of funding was unlikely for at least six months.

*By the time we receive home care assistance, it will be at least ten months, perhaps even longer, from the time of our application,* far longer than the supposed three-month timeframe mentioned on the "My Aged Care" website. The recent Royal Commission into Aged Care recommended a maximum wait time of one month.

I recently found a press release from the Council on the Ageing (COTA), of which the *Retired Telecommunications Employees Association* is a member. COTA cited an *Anglicare report revealing 'hidden' delays that were not included in government estimates. It found that only one in three home support providers are accepting new clients, and older Australians wait an average of fifteen months for home care.*

*Even worse, COTA estimates 10,000 people die each year while still on the waitlist - when they need care the most.* More details are in our article.

The Anglicare report advised that all the providers they spoke with indicated they would have the capacity to deliver more Home Care Packages if they had the funds to do so, with two out of every three Home Support providers citing a lack of funds from the government as the most significant barrier to delivering more services.

The central reason for giving you my experience and having an article on the subject in the newsletter is twofold.:

- Acquaint you with home care assistance and let you know where to find more information.
- Given the long approval times, offer advice not to delay your home care assistance application, especially as you struggle to remain home without support assistance.

**Continued on Page 4**



## Message from the Treasurer

Members,

The attached Finance Report shows the Income & Expenditure Statement for 2024 and the Balance Sheet at close of business on 31 December 2024.

The report also shows the financial details for the two previous years being 2023 & 2022 for comparison.

Overall 2024 was a very busy year with Income & Expenditure transactions exceeding \$100,000 dollars. The primary reason being the cost of the annual trip away. There was also an increased in costs for postage stamps, printer needs and domain hosting.

With a small increase in Investment income, the end result was a surplus of \$266.16 for the year.

As Total Assets equal Total Liabilities plus Equity, the books balance.

The book entries have been checked and found to be in order by BF Baker on 11/01/25

Report to be presented at the 2025 AGM

Alan Bassman  
Secretary / Treasurer RTEA 2024

**The Financial Report is  
on the next page**

## Welcome back to your February 2025 Newsletter (Cont'd).

### CELEBRATING OUR 40 YEARS

Paul Rewhorn alerted me that this year marks the 40th anniversary of our Association. Forty years for an organisation of older people is a noteworthy achievement; it is not as if we have ample time on our side. Forty years is a landmark, a time to reflect on our accomplishments.

I have written an article on our formation and early history in this month's newsletter. I invite you to read it.

### BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE OF US OUT THERE!

Still reflecting on our membership, whether they are from the technical ranks, linemen, engineers, telephonists or the clerical ranks, our overall majority of members come from the PMG/Telcom/Telstra, and there's something about that organisation that we were so proud to work for. Throughout the country, there are regular gatherings of ex-workmates who meet and yarn over a meal and a few drinks. We are drawn to each other to maintain the social side of our former careers together.

You will frequently see reunions and get-togethers notices in our newsletter. It is a service that we are pleased to extend to you. I encourage you to use the newsletter to advertise your events. It serves as well as a record of your social events.

Of course, other social organisations have emerged from our same workplace background. I congratulate Shaun Higgins for his dedication in regularly producing the "Technical Socialist". The publication has heaps of photos of local gatherings and evidence of former workmates coming together to renew their friendships. I have only known Shaun briefly, yet he seems like a friend I have known for years. Well done, mate!

Social media has passed me by, but I know of people who use Facebook and other media platforms that connect people with a background in telecommunications around the nation. The common thread is PMG/Telecom/Telstra. I believe no other organisation shares the same deep, long-lasting commitment that our workplace roots have given us. Let us take pride in this and continue to uphold it. After all, we all need that sense of belonging and connection with our past.

From the RTEA celebrating 40 years, I congratulate all the other small or big retired organisations or social gatherings.

**On this note, I hope to see as many of you as possible at our AGM on Thursday, 27TH February 2025 at Petersham RSL.**




FEBRUARY 2025

## RTEA - INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENT FOR THE EOY - 31ST DECEMBER 2024

| Retired Telecommunications Employees Association - RTEA            |                          |                    |                    |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Income & Expenditure Statement For Year Ending 31st. December 2024 |                          |                    |                    |
|  |                          | <u>31.12.2023</u>  | <u>31.12.2022</u>  |
| Opening balance (1 January 2024)                                   | \$24,162.68              | \$22,896.43        | \$30,529.99        |
| <b>Income</b>  |                          |                    |                    |
| Membership   | \$100.00                 | \$120.00           | \$80.00            |
| Name Badges  | \$225.00                 | \$120.00           | \$30.00            |
| Donations  | \$330.00                 | \$275.00           | \$195.00           |
| Christmas Lunch  | \$3,445.00               | \$3,420.00         | \$3,150.00         |
| Trips Away   | \$45,330.00              | \$22,100.00        | \$8,535.00         |
| Other Social Outings ANZAC Memorial                                | \$380.00                 | \$0.00             | \$0.00             |
| Newsletter mailout   | \$90.00                  | \$84.00            | \$465.00           |
| Investment Income  | \$1,222.36               | \$1,049.05         | \$215.15           |
| Other - Miscellaneous - Raffle money                               | \$157.00                 | \$165.00           | \$145.00           |
|  | <b>Total Income</b>      | <u>\$28,089.05</u> | <u>\$12,815.15</u> |
| <b>Expenditure</b>   |                          |                    |                    |
| Social Refunds   | \$195.00                 | \$3,680.00         | \$2,125.00         |
| Affiliation/Membership Fees/Dues                                   | \$50.00                  | \$0.00             | \$50.00            |
| Name Badges  | \$184.80                 | \$178.20           | \$0.00             |
| Donations -MSF, Dementia, Alzheimers etc.                          | \$550.00                 | \$100.00           | \$100.00           |
| Christmas Lunch  | \$3,234.00               | \$3,259.96         | \$3,108.00         |
| Annual Trips Away - Coffs Harbour                                  | \$45,089.50              | \$18,363.91        | \$14,297.00        |
| Other Social Outings ANZAC Memorial                                | \$380.00                 | \$0.00             | \$0.00             |
| Postage Stamps   | \$367.80                 | \$165.00           | \$118.80           |
| Printer Needs - Toner / Paper / ink etc.                           | \$146.17                 | \$66.45            | \$107.99           |
| Misc. Stationery inc. Packaging                                    | \$107.94                 | \$12.48            | \$0.00             |
| Misc. Postage - Awards   | \$11.00                  | \$94.32            | \$4.40             |
| www.Domain Hosting, Mailerlite. Cwuretired.org rtea.net            | \$420.70                 | \$291.59           | \$149.90           |
| ZOOM Meeting Subscriptions   | \$246.29                 | \$230.89           | \$229.40           |
| Meeting Costs - Speakers/Mic's/ Survey Monkey                      | \$0.00                   | \$0.00             | \$0.00             |
| Miscellaneous Expenses   | \$30.00                  | \$30.00            | \$158.22           |
| Welfare Expenses   | \$0.00                   | \$0.00             | \$0.00             |
| CPSA Membership Dues   | \$0.00                   | \$50.00            | \$0.00             |
| Dementia Australia Donation -Mary Kovacs Donations                 | \$0.00                   | \$300.00           | \$0.00             |
| Friends of the ABC Subscription                                    | \$0.00                   | \$0.00             | \$0.00             |
|  | <b>Total Expenditure</b> | <u>\$26,822.80</u> | <u>\$20,448.71</u> |
| <b>Surplus/ -Deficit</b>   | <b>\$266.16</b>          | <b>\$1,266.25</b>  | <b>-\$7,633.56</b> |
| <b>Closing balance (31 December 2024 )</b>                         | <b>\$24,428.84</b>       | <b>\$24,162.68</b> | <b>\$22,896.43</b> |
| <b>Balance Sheet As At COB 31.12.24</b>                            |                          |                    |                    |
| <b>Represented by. Current Assets</b>                              |                          |                    |                    |
| CUA T/A Prime Saver A/C  | \$100.00                 | \$182.71           | \$240.60           |
| GS Bank E Saver A/C  | \$3,137.80               | \$2,788.93         | \$1,155.83         |
| Cash at Call   | \$3,237.80               | \$2,971.64         | \$1,396.43         |
| CUA T/A Investment A/C 1   | \$11,191.04              | \$11,191.04        | \$11,500.00        |
| GS Bank Investment A/C 2   | \$10,000.00              | \$10,000.00        | \$10,000.00        |
| Term Deposits  | \$21,191.04              | \$21,191.04        | \$21,500.00        |
| <b>Total Current Assets</b>  | <u>\$24,428.84</u>       | <u>\$24,162.68</u> | <u>22,896.43</u>   |
| Less Liabilities -   | \$0.00                   |                    |                    |
| Add Equity   | \$24,428.84              |                    |                    |
| <b>Total Liability and Equity</b>                                  | <u>\$24,428.84</u>       | <u>\$24,162.68</u> | <u>22,896.43</u>   |

Compiled and prepared by Alan Bassman, Treasurer

This is to certify that I have checked the books of the RTEA and found them in order.

  
 11 January 2025  
 BF BAKER

JP 130012



**Vale John Donnellan**

The Retired Telecommunications Employees Association is sad to advise members that John Donnellan, a fellow member of our Association, passed away peacefully on Saturday, 17<sup>th</sup> November 2024. John had a funeral service at the Chapel Broulee on Friday, 29<sup>th</sup> November 2024.

John was a member of our Association for over twenty years.

John was born on the 8th May 1940. He grew up in the suburb of Haberfield. John joined the PMG at the age of fifteen. He married Helen in 1963. They had two children, Karen and Chris. John and Helen built their first home in Ingleburn.

In 1972, John joined Ericsson, installing Telex exchanges in England, Egypt, Thailand and Saudi Arabia. After seven years with Ericsson, John returned to Australia and rejoined Telecom in 1979. John retired early in 1989, moving to Yandina in Queensland, where he grew award-winning fruits and helped local charities.

John and Helen moved back to New South Wales, living at Bomaderry and later at Gerringong. From there, John and Helen toured Australia in their caravan, making many friends.

Helen passed away in 2009 after a short battle with cancer. John resumed his travels, catching up with old friends. He met Linda, whom he married in 2021. Early this year, John's health began to deteriorate, needing additional care; John moved into Maranath Lodge, where he passed away peacefully.

On a personal note, I knew John from our days at the Haymarket Telephone Exchange. I remember often speaking with John while we waited for an elevator that frequently seemed to take hours to arrive. John was a friendly and personal gentleman, always interested in what was happening with you.

Later, in our retirement, John would frequently attend our general meetings via Zoom. He would often email with words of encouragement after receiving our newsletter or following our general meeting. He once described our meetings as entertaining; I am unsure what to make of the comment.

Members will sadly miss John. I want to extend the Association's condolences and sympathy to Linda, Karen, Chris, John's extended family, and his many friends.

**Vale Paul Schneider**

The Retired Telecommunications Employees Association is sad to advise that member Paul Schneider passed away on Sunday, 19th January 2025.

Paul was 81 years old and had been a member of our Association for twenty-four years.

Paul grew up on a dairy farm in Firefly, south of Taree. Paul came to Sydney in 1959 as part of the 1959 Technician in Training intake. His initial appointment was on exchange maintenance at the Central Telephone Exchange under the Sydney GPO.

His initial appointment was followed by appointments on subscriber maintenance at Dalley Street Exchange, City North Area PABX, as a team leader at Northern PABX North Sydney. Paul finished his career at Concord Maintenance, which covered PABX for the Sydney area.

Paul was a passionate musician outside of work. He played the saxophone in two bands: "The Sundowners" and "The Renegades." He also played rugby league for the training school in the 1959 Western Suburbs competition.

Paul was the devoted husband of Joy (who passed away in July 2024), father of Fiona, and father-in-law of Glenn. He had two grandchildren, Sarah and Thomas.

The Retired Telecommunications Employees Association extends its condolences and sympathy to Paul's daughter, Fiona, his family, friends and former workmates.



**R**ecently, the federal government announced it was investing \$3bn to finish the NBN and deliver 622,000 new fibre access connections. The new funding will ensure that eleven million homes can access high-speed data. Here, we are the NBN remains a decade overdue.

I found an opinion piece by Barry Jones in the "Saturday Paper" on 1<sup>ST</sup> February 2025. Barry Jones argued that people enter politics because they are deeply and passionately involved in fundamental issues that produce an unambiguous "Yes" or "No" response. However, his article continued on to remind that there are everyday matters such as improvements to education, health, environment and other everyday nation building projects where everyone (whatever their side of politics) wants better outcomes and, therefore, should not attract deeply partisan or one-sided responses from political parties.

Political battles waged over broadband, electricity, and now continue over nuclear energy impact on the Australian community. Our monthly electricity and broadband bills are a reminder of how pointless partisan politics have let us down.

### NBN ANNOUNCEMENT

In 2009, as soon as the Rudd Labor Government announced plans for a National Broadband Network (NBN), it became a hot political battleground. NBN had the task of bypassing an ageing copper network with optical fibre to the majority of homes. The plan was to have optical fibre to the premises (FTTP) access to 93% of the Australian population and the remainder through fixed wireless and telecommunications satellites. The cost estimate was \$43bn and later revised to \$37.4bn

### MIXED TECHNOLOGY SOLUTION

Like most significant infrastructure projects, the NBN fibre rollout had initial teething issues while putting in place the foundation for a new fibre network. Other issues were logistical and regulatory, hiring and getting sub contractors up to speed and range of infrastructure problems such as disputes with Telstra over the use of existing copper ducts.

## National Broadband Network



A Sorry Saga of politics gone wrong that will cost us all for years to come. **Paul Rewhorn**

During the project's initial phases, the Coalition would seize on the early NBN expenditures together with the initial low number of home optical fibre connections. The Coalition would divide these figures to calculate the "cost per premise" and then generalise the this figure over eleven million homes. Based on this type of analysis, at one stage, the Coalition predicted it would cost up to \$92bn to complete the NBN fibre to the home rollout and make the claim that NBN was a non-viable project and ought to be scrapped.

Of course, as the rollout gathered pace, this figure was much over-blown.

In April 2013, shadow communications minister, Malcolm Turnbull unveiled a plan to abandon Labor's fibre-to-the-premise (FTTP). Instead, the Coalition would deliver high-speed broadband to homes using a "mixed-technology" solution. He promised to deliver his solution within three years with although it would have a slower broadband download speeds of 25Mbps, and come in \$60bn cheaper than FTTP. (a comparison he continued to make with his earlier mentioned \$92bn figure).

### COST BLOWOUTS

However, it was not long before problems surfaced with the mixed technology solution. Early during the rollout of the mixed technology solution, *Guardian Australia* obtained figures from a redacted document showing:

- ◀ The original estimate per premise using hybrid fibre-coaxial (HFC) pay-tv cable networks was between \$800 and \$850 per premises had risen more than threefold to \$2,752.
- ◀ Similar, the fibre to the node (FTTN) cost was out more than threefold over the original estimate of \$600 to \$650 per premises, it was coming in at \$2,330.

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## The Sorry Saga of NBN (cont'd)

Mr Turnbull had badly underestimated the complexity of his mixed-technology solution. The NBN had paid Optus \$800 billion for their hybrid fibre-coaxial (HFC) pay-TV cable network, only to find it in a state of disrepair. Additionally, it will cost \$641 million for the NBN to remediate Telstra's copper cable to make it suitable for "fibre to the node." The NBN also had to purchase 60,000 km of copper to replace existing end-of-life copper cables.

All these issues caused the Coalition's mixed-technology solution to blow out to \$58bn while delivering a low download speed of only 25 Mbps.

Well, we might shrug and say it is all in the past. At least today, we have high-speed data delivered to our homes via optical fibre; if we request it. Sadly, this is not entirely the case. We will continue paying more for broadband services for years to come.

You may have received an email or letter from your telecommunications provider offering to install fibre direct to your home for free. However, there is a catch—you must opt for a more expensive data plan (at least 100 Mbps). This artificial price increase for higher bandwidth is the NBN's way of raising more revenue over time. Ironically, even though optical fibre runs right past your home, you may still be using a copper cable connection due to cost.

In November 2022, the Productivity Commission released its report on the NBN. The report found that, as of the end of 2021, the NBN had accumulated losses of \$36bn, with projections indicating accumulated losses of \$25bn by 2040; assuming sufficient revenue offsets.

The report partially blamed the Coalition government's decision to steer away from fibre-optic cable for these financial losses. Given these figures, do not expect many future broadband discounts; though I hope I am proven wrong.

RETIRED TELECOMMUNICATIONS EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

### **BUNDEENA LUNCH THURSDAY, 20TH MARCH 2025**

Last year, the RTEA hosted a social day in the picturesque coastal town of Bundeena, with lunch at the *Bundeena Community & Social Club*. Many members came together to enjoy fine food and of course each others company.

Before or after lunch, you may like to wander through the charming village streets of the Bundeena Art Trail or soak in the beachfront views. The Bundeena Community & Social Club is just a short stroll up a scenic hill from the ferry wharf.

Travel to Bundeena is a train trip to Cronulla and then a 30-minute ferry ride to Bundeena. A Cronulla-bound train departs from **Central at 10:19 am** from Platform 25. The same train leaves **Sydenham at 10:26 am**, **Wolli Creek at 10:29 am**, **Hurstville at 10:40 am**, and **Sutherland at 10:53 am**. The train arrives at Cronulla at 11.08 am.

There is ample time to walk from Cronulla Station to the ferry wharf in Gunnamatta Bay. The Bundeena Ferry will leave at 11.30 am. Returning from Bundeena, the ferry runs on the hour.

Please note that the \$2.50 seniors concession (Yellow Opal Card) for transport in Sydney and its surrounds does not apply to the Bundeena ferry. Instead, there is a concession charge of \$4.40 per journey. Your concession card must be shown; otherwise a full fare of \$8.80 applies. The ferry operator accepts Eftpos and Credit Cards (fees apply).







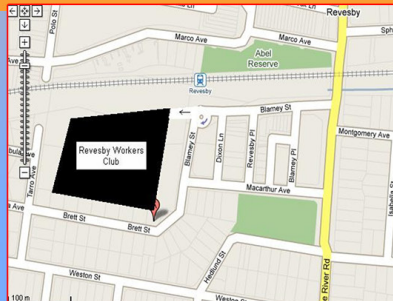
## 2025 - Reunion of 1957 Technicians in Training

Wednesday, 12TH March 2025

Revesby Workers Club

**Our reunion function will commence at 10am, with lunch 12 noon. Conversations and heartwarming recollections will continue until about 1600 Hrs.**

*The Revesby Workers Club is located just across the road from Revesby Railway Station. You will see the club on your left as you travel towards Campbelltown on the East Hills Line. You can enter the club via Coles, there is a lift in on the left, past the checkouts. For those travelling by road, the Revesby Workers Club has a very large car park (it is FREE, you can enter via Brett Street. Avoid the Coles Park as it is very expensive.*



**Please RSVP to Bob Speer  
Section 10  
by SMS/Text to 0408 863 900**





# RTEA: Celebrating 40 Years

John Lane

Paul Rewhorn alerted me that this year marks the 40th anniversary of our Association. Forty years for an organisation of older people is a noteworthy achievement; it is not as if we have ample time on our side. Forty years is a landmark, a time to reflect on our accomplishments.

Please indulge me as I go back to the start of the Retired Members Association (our earlier name).

## BERT HARRIS

Bert Harris conceived of having an organisation of retirees from our Union's ranks, the Australian Telecommunications Employees Association (ATEA). Bert did not believe lifelong workplace friendships should disperse on retirement. We had long lives ahead of us and plenty of opportunities to unite and keep our friendships going without the workplace hassles.

Bert was an industrial organiser and the office manager of our Union; Bert could undoubtedly organise. With his retirement looming, Bert worked towards creating a retired members association. First, he gathered a team of retirees with whom he set about writing a constitution. Next, he obtained endorsement from the NSW Branch Council of the ATEA. Union endorsement and support were necessary for the retired members in the early days. They helped advertise the RMA and would publish notices about the new retired member's organisation.

Bert and his team put together a committee.

*Alan Driver* was the first president, and Bert became secretary-treasurer. The RMA held its meetings in the Union conference room for many years. Do you see the importance of the Union to our formation and growth? Imagine the expense of hiring meeting accommodations and publishing and posting newsletters. Remember, emails were starting to emerge as a form of communication; printing and postage were expensive.

I was able to receive a redundancy package back in August 1995 at the tender age of 53. I recall at my retirement function when Bert approached me to say goodbye because he had to leave early for his trip home to the Central Coast.

He shook my hand and then handed me an RMA application form. There was no way I could refuse Bert, and so I joined close on thirty years ago. It did take several years before I began to appreciate the significance of being an RMA member. Perhaps it has something to do with the ageing process.

## YEARS LATER

All these years later, I appreciate what our founders created. On a personal note, I find the friendship and support I get from my fellow members as personal challenges come along overwhelming. I still have friends who were once workmates, and I made many new friends who I can now say are old friends, made after our general meetings, at social events and the annual trip away. Many of whom I never knew while working. I realise this experience is not unique to me; I know so many of you feel the same.

I am surprised we have lasted this long. Many other retiree organisations fold as their numbers dwindle as the years advance. Allow us to keep the *Retired Telecommunications Employees Association* rolling along for as long as possible. Thank you for your continued support, reading and contributing to our newsletter, attending our meetings, and joining us at our monthly social events. I encourage you to keep doing so. Please encourage others from the telecommunications industries who are not members to join us.

Sadly, we have lost many fellow members over the years; they have given us lasting memories for which I am grateful. After our February 2025 General Meeting, we should raise a glass to Bert and his early support team to thank them for what we have today, forty years later.



# 2025 Social Calendar

## Lunch at the Bundeena

Last year, the RTEA hosted a social day at the picturesque coastal town of Bundeena—so why not join again for a relaxing day? This year's outing promises a perfect blend of relaxation, exploration, and good company.



We gather for a delicious lunch at the welcoming Bundeena Community & Social Club, just a short stroll up a scenic hill. Before we eat, you can wander through the charming village streets the Bundeena Art Trail or soak in the beachfront views.

After a train ride to Cronulla, we have a tranquil ferry trip across the water to Bundeena, where our day begins.

For all the details, check out this February 2025 newsletter—don't miss out on a day filled with discovery and connection!

## Lunch at the Anglers Rest Hotel, Hawkesbury River

After our ferry cruise on the Hawkesbury River in 2023, we stumbled upon the Anglers Rest Hotel's restaurant, a delightful find! The delicious food and efficient service left a lasting impression. It's the perfect way to spend a day enjoying great food, relaxation, and the natural beauty of the Hawkesbury.



Before lunch, you can explore the pleasing foreshores of the Hawkesbury River or take a trip to Dangar Island. On the island, with no cars to disrupt the tranquillity, wander around. You can treat yourself to morning tea at the charming Dangar Island Depot Cafe before hopping back on the ferry to join other members for a leisurely lunch.

## Autumn Leaves Lunch at the Springwood Sports Club

As the hues of autumn surround us, it is the perfect time to come together for our much-loved traditional Autumn Leaves Lunch. Join us for a warm and welcoming gathering at the Springwood Sports Club, where you can enjoy delicious food and conversation with fellow members.



This event is an excellent opportunity for our members from the Blue Mountains and western Sydney to connect without the hassle of long-distance travel. For those closer to Sydney, getting there is relatively easy, as you can board a fast inter-urban train from Central and stations in between to Springwood Station.

The Springwood Sports Club is just a ten-minute stroll from the Springwood Station.

## Garvan Institute of Medical Research

After a five-year break, the RTEA is excited to announce a special tour of the Garvan Institute of Medical Research!

The Garvan Institute is at the forefront of groundbreaking medical research, dedicated to transforming healthcare. Their teams are tackling the full spectrum of diseases to uncover ways for everyone to live longer, healthier lives.

This visit offers a unique opportunity to gain insight into their innovative work and the future of medicine.

We are currently finalising the maximum number requirement for the tour of the centre. This is placing the tour in some doubt. We will share the outcome in an upcoming newsletter. Stay tuned for this interesting experience!



## 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 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 Sydney Opera House

We are in the early stage of planning a tour of the Sydney Opera House. We will keep you informed of developments.



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

Watch this space for exciting news coming soon.

## 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!





# RTEA: General Meeting Calendar for 2025

General Meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of each month, from February through to November. Meeting starting time is 11am.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Annual General Meeting (AGM) &amp; February 2025 General Meeting</b><br/> <b>27<sup>TH</sup> February 2025</b><br/> <b>Petersham RSL</b></p>                            | <p><b>July 2025 General Meeting</b><br/> <b>24<sup>TH</sup> July 2025</b><br/> <b>Petersham RSL</b></p>                               |
| <p><b>March 2025 General Meeting</b><br/> <b>27<sup>TH</sup> March 2025</b><br/> <i>Guest Speaker: Roger Bambar - Managing major disasters.</i><br/> <b>Petersham RSL</b></p> | <p><b>August 2025 General Meeting</b><br/> <b>28<sup>TH</sup> August 2025</b><br/> <b>O'Donohues Hotel</b><br/> <b>Emu Plains</b></p> |
| <p><b>April 2025 General Meeting</b><br/> <b>24<sup>TH</sup> April 2025</b><br/> <i>Guest Speaker: Prof Ed Davies - Australian Media</i><br/> <b>Petersham RSL</b></p>        | <p><b>September 2025 General Meeting</b><br/> <b>25<sup>TH</sup> September 2025</b><br/> <b>Petersham RSL</b></p>                     |
| <p><b>May 2025 General Meeting</b><br/> <b>22<sup>ND</sup> May 2025</b><br/> <b>Woy Woy Hotel, Woy Woy</b></p>  | <p><b>October 2025 General Meeting</b><br/> <b>23<sup>RD</sup> October 2025</b><br/> <b>Petersham RSL</b></p>                         |
| <p><b>June 2025 General Meeting</b><br/> <b>26<sup>TH</sup> June 2025</b><br/> <b>Petersham RSL</b></p>   | <p><b>November 2025 General Meeting</b><br/> <b>27<sup>TH</sup> November 2025</b><br/> <b>Petersham RSL</b></p>                       |



# Guide to Home Care Assistance

Paul Rewhorn

The article aims to provide a guide to help members better understand the federal government’s home care assistance programmes. The article might be helpful if you are new to the subject or beginning to consider home care assistance.

The following article can only serve as a guide or an overview; an attempt to provide a detailed explanation would span several pages. I have also provided links within the email that contained this newsletter that will provide further in-depth information.

The federal government’s “My Aged Care” website ([myagedcare.gov.au](http://myagedcare.gov.au)) does have a comprehensive explanation of Home Care Assistance programmes.

Hopefully, the following article will serve as a jump-off point before you look at the “My Aged Care” website, as the website’s home page layout is somewhat tricky, lacking a good introduction or pathway to understanding the available home care assistance programmes.

The article will explain:

- ◀ The key differences between the *Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP)* and *Home Care Packages (HCP)*.
- ◀ Eligibility criteria for each program.
- ◀ Applying for an assessment.
- ◀ The assessment
- ◀ How to select a service provider to deliver your approved service plan.
- ◀ Expected delays during the application process.

## OVERVIEW

If you want to follow along with the “myagedcare.gov.au” website, I suggest the following steps:

1. Go to the “myagedcare.gov.au” website.
2. At the top menu, select “*Help at Home.*”
3. The website will open a new page. Scroll down near the end of the page. There you will find descriptions of the *Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP)* and *Home Care Packages (HCP)*.
4. From there, you should find it easier to access information on eligibility, assessments, and other relevant details.

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# Delays in Home Care Assistance

**Older people are experiencing increasing delays obtaining home care assistance.**

You will find applying for either the *Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP)* or *Home Care Package (HCP)* is not straightforward. There are inherent delays throughout the application process. Worse, final funding approval is likely to come many months after you have been deemed eligible for home care assistance support.

- ☆ 270,000 older Australians received home care packages in year to December 2023, up 14% from the previous year.
- ☆ Waiting lists for home care packages grew from 30,000 to 51,000. A 70% increase.
- ☆ Long waits for home care assistance can will lead to worsening health outcomes – About 8,000 people died while waiting for a package in 2020-21 and 11,000 older Australians entered residential care instead of remaining in their home.
- ☆ People over 65 years has grown from 8% of the population in the 1970s and will grow to 22% by 2026.
- ☆ Australia spends less on aged care than most similar nations. Australia has the second-lowest age pension in the OECD.

The current federal government has made improvements in aged care. Their key achievements have been the improvement in nursing home standards, a registered nurse in each aged care nursing home and increasing the staff salaries for those working in aged care via direct subsidy, ensuring aged care sector can attract and retain staff.

Now you have a better understanding of what is happening with home care assistance. You should not delay a home care application if you are, or beginning to struggle with your effort to stay within your home.



# Guide to Home Care Assistance (cont'd)

The federal government has two home assistance programmes with the aim of assisting older people in remaining in their homes longer.

The programmes are:

- ◀ **Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP)** and
- ◀ **Home Care Packages (HCP).**

The **Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP)** offers entry-level support with basic and practical assistance. The **Home Care Packages (HCP)** provides more comprehensive care for those with more significant needs, that may extend further into delivering health care. Later, the article will give more details on both programmes.

## ELIGIBILITY

Before you can have an assessment of your home care assistance, you must meet the basic eligibility needs. You must be 65 or older (50 or older for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people).

## THE ASSESSMENT

### Assessment Application

Before accessing a subsidised aged care service for the first time, you must apply to have an assessment. You can complete your application for an assessment online.

“My Aged Care” estimates it will take up to 20 minutes to complete the online application. You can complete the application yourself or have the assistance of a family member or friend. You can have a support person available to help by visiting the “My Aged Care” website or call **1800 200 422**.

The assessment has three parts:

**Your situation – confirming your eligibility:** Answering questions about your current situation and the help you need for some everyday tasks.

**Your details – you will be asked for information about yourself:** Have your Medicare card ready to help complete this part.

**Arranging the assessment:** you will be asked who the assessment organisation should contact to confirm your needs and arrange your assessment.

### Undertaking the Assessment

Typically, it will take an assessment organisation about two to six weeks to contact you. When they contact you, the assessor will confirm your needs and arrange a time to have your assessment generally held in your home.

**For your assessment, you must have your Medicare card, proof of identity,** and a copy of any doctor referrals and contact details for your GP and other health professionals.

**You should consider whether you need a support person** present and consider the aged care information you may require.

**During the assessment, the assessor will discuss your needs and work with you to develop a personal support plan.** At the end of the assessment, the assessor will give you a copy of your support plan.

**You should ask the assessor about available services for your plan,** whether a service provider is available locally, and the wait time.

## FINDING A SERVICE PROVIDER

I will tell you that finding and engaging a service provider is not as straightforward as the “My Aged Care” website explains.

Their website indicates that once you are assessed as eligible for home care assistance, your assessor can assist you in locating services in your area, linking you with service providers.

Reading the above paragraph would make you believe finding and engaging a service provider is an “all-in-one” step.

However, there is a second part to their explanation or, in my opinion, “a catch”. The second part states, “seeking home care services, you will be placed on the National Priority System (NPS) to wait for your Home Care Package to be assigned”. The explanation continues, advising that you will receive a referral code when your package is assigned.

**Waiting for a Home Care Package assignment requires the federal government to approve and assign more funding to the home care assistance programmes, leading to wait times going past twelve months.**

All aged care service providers deliver their services differently and charge different amounts. You need to have a conversation with a prospective service provider; choose carefully and compare service providers.

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# Guide to Home Care Assistance (cont'd)

## SERVICE DELIVERY

There are three main things to consider:

**Confirming the service provider** who will meet your needs in your assessment plan.

**Quality of care.** The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission regulates every provider. The service provider must meet strict quality standards. Look for a service provider who carefully explains how they will deliver their services.

**Understand the costs for the different care items in the approved care plan.** The federal government will pay part or all your costs. The service provider must show their fees which can vary between providers and the government subsidy.

Even after you have a service provider delivering your care plan, you can change the service provider. However, you should discuss first with a “My Aged Care” representative.

Once you have approval and engaged a service provider, you will receive a service agreement document. The service agreement will cover:

**Provided services to meet your care needs**, when they will be delivered and the frequency.

**The fees that you have agreed to pay** for services you will receive.

## EXPECTED DELAYS

As mentioned earlier, after the assessment there is lengthy delay until you can engage a service provider. When you read the home care assistance information on the “My Aged Care” website, there is no clear mention of this delay.

In this month’s newsletter, you will find an article about the lengthy delays that are occurring with home care assistance programmes.

- ◀ Home assistance needs two separate approvals.
- ◀ Funding approval for a service provider to commence their services.

The second approval is where you will likely experience a long delay extending to many months.

At the commencement of the article, you will read in the sidebar about the increasing demand for home care assistance that is stretching government finances.

*Understandable is the increased demand confronting the federal government; not comprehensible is the lack of transparency about the lengthy delays in-home care assistance. You will only hear about the large volume of approvals for home care packages but hardly any mention of the prolonged funding delays.*

**The following table shows the likely time between each stage of the application process for home care assistance.**

| Process   | Time Taken  |
|---|---|
| Wait for an assessor once you have submitted your online application                | 2 to 6 weeks.   |
| Wait for your assessment result   | 2 to 6 weeks.   |
| Selection of a service provider and funding approval for the provision of services: | one to ten months (can depend on the type of services). |

**Given the long approval times, the recommendation throughout the article is not to delay starting your home care assistance application, especially as you begin to struggle remaining in your home without assistance care.**

**Continued on next page**



# Guide to Home Care Assistance (cont'd)

## COMMONWEALTH HOME SUPPORT PROGRAMME

The following are examples of CHSP services; others may be available. The assessment process will determine the services within your care plan you should receive.

- ◀ **Personal Care: Assistance:** Daily activities such as bathing, dressing, and grooming.
- ◀ **Domestic Assistance: Help** with household tasks like cleaning, laundry, and meal preparation.
- ◀ **Social Support:** Opportunities to stay connected through activities and companionship.
- ◀ **Transport: Support** Going to appointments, running errands, or attending social events.
- ◀ **Home Maintenance:** Carrying out minor repairs, gardening, and other tasks to keep the home safe and comfortable.

### Example 1

*Frank lives alone at Home. Some years ago, he had to surrender his driver's licence. He used public transport to get to shops to purchase groceries. Recently, his mobility has started to decline. He finds it difficult to reach public transport, and carrying his groceries is now demanding.*

**CSPH: Under an approved CSPH plan, Frank receives help transporting, collecting, and carrying his groceries twice weekly.**

### Example 2

*Staying with Frank, he is now beginning to have difficulty mowing and maintaining his garden. Also, he is not comfortable standing on a ladder changing light bulbs.*

**CSPH: With an approved and updated CSPH plan, Frank has someone mowing his lawn and basic gardening once a fortnight. At the same time, his service provider checks and changes light bulbs.**

### Example 3

*Peter lost his wife three months ago. His wife did all the food preparation, and Peter had taken little interest in the kitchen in the past. As a result, Peter struggles to prepare his food and has no understanding of his dietary needs.*

**CSPH: Under an approved CSPH plan, Peter has someone helping him in the kitchen, showing him food preparation and discussing dietary needs. The help continues for six weeks when Peter is capable of preparing his food.**

## HOME CARE PACKAGE

Home Care Package (HCP) is a government-subsidised program to provide affordable care services to older Australians who need assistance with daily living activities. Home Care packages go beyond services under the Commonwealth Home Support Programme.

The Home Care Package aims to help older individuals remain in their homes for as long as possible, maintaining their independence and well-being.

There are four levels of Home Care Packages, each catering to different levels of care needs:

- ◀ **Level 1: Basic care needs**
- ◀ **Level 2: Low-level care needs**
- ◀ **Level 3: Intermediate care needs**
- ◀ **Level 4: High-level care needs**

Each package level receives a different federal government subsidy rate, which helps cover the cost of the services provided. Refer to the "My Aged Care" website for government subsidy amounts for each plan level.

### Services Provided

Depending on the level of Home Care Package, recipients can access a variety of services, including:

**Personal care:** Assistance with bathing, hygiene, and grooming

**Nursing care:** Help with treating and monitoring medical conditions at home

**Therapies:** Podiatry, physiotherapy, and other therapies to maintain movement and mobility

**Meals and food preparation:** Ensuring recipients continue to eat well

**Household chores:** Cleaning, laundry, and home or garden maintenance

**Home modifications:** Changes to increase safety and independence at home

**Aids and equipment:** Mobility aids, communication devices, and other tools to support independence

**Transport:** Assistance with getting to appointments and community activities

**Social support:** Social outings, group activities, and visitors to help maintain social connections.