

JUNE 2018

Retired Members Association

www.cwuretiredmembers.org

NEWSLETTER



Vale Kevin Connell

Paul Rewhorn

THE RETIRED MEMBERS ASSOCIATION IS SAD TO INFORM MEMBERS THAT KEVIN CONNELL PASSED AWAY ON TUESDAY, 29TH MAY 2018. A FUNERAL SERVICE FOR KEVIN WAS HELD ON THURSDAY, 7TH JUNE 2018 IN THE SOUTH CHAPEL AT ROOKWOOD CEMETERY. THE FUNERAL SERVICE WAS ATTENDED BY A LARGE CONTINGENT OF MEMBERS FROM THE RETIRED MEMBERS ASSOCIATION.

Back in March of this year, Kevin had a fall with an injury to his head that required stitches, he also had some fluid on his lungs. Kevin went onto make a recovery and return home. Later in April, Kevin was again admitted to hospital for a melanoma operation on his leg. These consecutive health problems seem to have taken their toll on Kevin. Kevin was admitted to hospital again in late May. Kevin's son informs us that he passed away there peacefully.

Kevin had been a member of the *Retired Members Association* since June 1994 (membership number: 283). Kevin regularly attended our general meetings and social events.

Kevin was born on the 1st October 1927. He was brought up in the family home in Hurlstone Park. Kevin joined the PMG back in 1944. He was in the same class as fellow retired member and friend, John Hickey. Not long after he completed his technical training, Kevin was stationed at Bathurst. It was at Bathurst that Kevin met his future wife and started a family, two sons and a daughter. Back in 2013, Kevin had his last trip-away to Bathurst with the Retired Members.

In 1962, Kevin transferred back to Sydney where he was stationed at City South. Here he met and became a life-long friend of Col Wilson, a fellow member of the *Retired Members Association*. Kevin retired from City South in 1987 at the age of 60.

President, Vince Haywood presented OBN (Over Bloody Ninety) Awards to Kevin Connell and John Hickey at the October 2017 General Meeting. Kevin and John between them had accumulated about 45 years of membership with the *Retired Members Association*.

It is always a challenge to attempt to describe a person who has lived a long life in just a few words, Kevin was kind and a gentle person who enjoyed the company of his many friends in the *Retired Members Association*, he will be sadly missed.

The Association extends its deep sympathy and condolences to Kevin's children Paul, John and Joanne, other family members, his many workmates and friends.



Kevin Connell with John Hickey receiving an OBN Award at the October 2017 General Meeting



Kevin Connell with Tod Mirgis at the RMA Christmas Lunch





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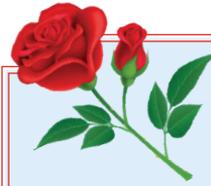
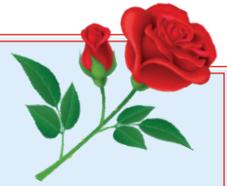
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**Ivan Lipovac**

The *Retired Members Association* extends its deep sympathy and condolences to Ivka Antoni, her mother Helena Lipovac and other family members on the passing of Ivan Lipovac at the age of 90 on the 18th May 2018.

Ivan was the husband of Helena of 54 years and father of Ivka. For members who may be unaware, Ivka is the Union's Office Manager. Ivka has been with the Union since the mid-1980s. Ivka provides great support to the Retired Members. She is essential to the distribution (printing and mailing) of our newsletter each month.

We know that Ivka is very close to her parents and this must be a very sad time for her, mother and all the family.

Our thoughts are with Ivka in this very sad time. May her father rest in peace.

Retired Members Association

June General Meeting

The March General Meeting will be held on **Thursday, 28th June 2018 at 10.15 am.**

The venue for the annual meeting is the Financial Sector Union (FSU), Level 2, 321 Pitt Street, Sydney.

Members are most welcomed to attend, especially members who may not have attended a general meeting.

It is great opportunity to catch-up with former workmates.



THIS MONTH'S SOCIAL FUNCTION

Retired Members Association

Lunch: Manly 16Ft Sailing Skiff Club

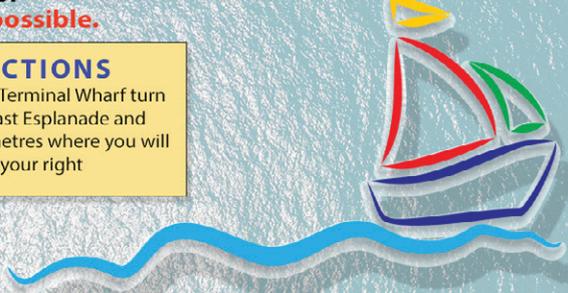
The Retired Members Association will be having a lunch for members and their friends at the **Manly 16Ft Skiff Sailing Club** on **Thursday, 21st June commencing around 12 noon.** The club is located on the corner of **East Esplanade & Stuart Street, Manly** (see accompanying map).

The club is a short walk from the Manly Ferry wharf. The ferry for Manly leaves Circular Quay at **11.30 am** and arrives at **12 pm**. There is a later ferry at **12.15pm**.

If you would like to attend please contact John Lane either via email (a-lane@bigpond.com) or on 0417 238 687 as soon as possible.

DIRECTIONS

From the Manly Terminal Wharf turn right onto the East Esplanade and then walk 700 metres where you will find the club on your right



Mid North Coast Annual Get-together

Wednesday, 22nd August 2018

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

We usually gather from 10 am onwards. For any further information please contact Peter Lygoe : Phone: (02) 6551 0500 email : petekayl@bigpond.com

West Port Macquarie Bowling Club in Buller Street.

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.

**July General Meeting
Thursday, 26th July at 10.30 am**

O'Donoghues Irish Pub, Emu Plains

The Retired Members Association will have the July General Meeting at O'Donoghues Irish Pub at Emu Plains. The Emu Plains location gives our members from Blue Mountains and outer west Sydney the opportunity to attend a general meeting.

O'Donoghues is located at 99 Great Western Highway, Emu Plains, only 350 metres from Emu Plains Railway Station (see map and train timetable information in the July 2018 newsletter)

To match the train timetable, the meeting will commence at the special time of 10.30 am.

We hope to see as many as possible and a warm invitation is extended to our regulars at Sydney CBD General Meetings to attend.



WOULD LIKE TO START THIS MONTH'S MESSAGE WITH A BIG THANK YOU TO JOHN LANE FOR CHAIRING THE MAY GENERAL MEETING AT WOY WOY IN MY ABSENCE. I HAVE HAD BUILDERS AT MY HOME TO DO SOME ESSENTIAL REPAIRS, THERE IS STILL MORE WORK TO BE DONE. I WILL BE PLEASED WHEN IT IS OVER. THE MAY GENERAL MEETING HELD ON THE CENTRAL COAST HAS BEEN A TRADITION SINCE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE RETIRED MEMBERS ASSOCIATION BACK IN 1980.

General Meetings outside of the Sydney CBD allows our non-metropolitan members the opportunity to come along to our meetings and catch-up with workmates and friends. About three years ago, we added a general meeting at Emu Plains to our calendar to make it easier for members in the Penrith and Blue Mountains regions to have the same access. The Emu Plains meeting will be on **Thursday, 29th July at O'Donoghue's Irish Pub, Emu Plains.** The hotel is kind to allow us a meeting room. The hotel has a fine and I may add a warm dining area for lunch afterwards. I would urge members in the area and those in Sydney to attend, it is always a great day.

Going back to the Woy Woy General Meeting, John Lane had the privilege of presenting **Ted Leeson** with "**Over Bloody Eighty**" (OBE) award. I would like to add my congratulations to Ted Leeson. Ted has been a member of the *Retired Members Association* for 24 years.

Drivers Licence and a Medicare Check-up

I have just experienced my 75th birthday and this important milestone opened up my eyes to several factors. First, under NSW law, I needed to have a medical check-up for my driver's licence. My GP recommended that I undertake a full "**Over 75 Medical Check-up**". This check-up is funded by Medicare. The check-up undertaken by a practice nurse and the GP takes over an hour. It is well worthwhile as the check-up can identify health risks before they become significant and difficult to treat the problem. I will be doing the same check-up each year. I would advise members to discuss this medical service with their general practitioner.

During the check-up, I was given a New South Wales Health Department publication called "**Staying active and on your feet**". This is a 20-page booklet with useful information on how to remain active using gentle exercise at home and dietary hints. The publication is available online at www.activeandhealthy.nsw.gov.au or by **phoning 1300 655 957.**



Staying on Your Feet

Still, on the subject of health, I notice in **Peter Hack's Welfare Report**, there have been several recent incidents where Members have had injuries caused by slips, trips or falls. This type of injury can be devastating at our time of life, you need to be aware of the risks and the preventative action you need to take. Our newsletter in the past has had articles on this subject and perhaps it will be worth publishing these articles again.

I have done some research on what action can be taken to help prevent the occurrence of slips, trips and falls. Before I go into more detail, I notice too many fall or trip injuries occur at night, please when you have to get-up or move around during the night; first turn a light on, keep a torch near your bedside to find the light switch before you do anything else. Don't worry about others in the house, this is a circumstance where you need to come first.

The Australian Government Health Department has figures that show one in three people aged 65 and over living in the community have had a fall each year. Falls are the leading cause of deaths from injury for people aged 65 and over.

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A Message from the President *(cont'd)*

Falls can happen to anyone, but, unfortunately, as you grow older, a fall can become more common and you are more likely to cause a serious injury.

The good news is that there are a number of things you can do to help prevent falls and minimise your injuries if you do have a fall. Knowing your risk factors and taking a few precautions is a good start and again I recommend a Health Department publication called **"Preventing Falls in the Elderly"**. The publication sets out in easy to read fashion the main causes of falls and how to reduce the risk of falling plus who can assist you if you are unfortunate enough to have a fall. The publication is available on the web at:

<https://www.myagedcare.gov.au/getting-started/healthy-and-active-ageing/preventing-falls-in-elderly> or by phoning 1800 200 422.

Vale Kevin Connell

I was saddened to hear of the passing of Kevin Connell. Kevin was a fine and gentle person and a good Member with many close friends in our Association. Kevin participated in many of the Association's meetings and social functions. Our thoughts are with his family and his many friends at this sad time.

Encounter with Wally Daniels

As I left the "Service New South Wales" office after submitting in my medical check-up report and claiming my CTP rebate, I had the good fortune of running into **Wally Daniels** (on the footpath not on the road). Wally Daniels, a former Exchange Officer-in-Charge and workmate from Burwood. It was good to say hello again.

Later, I visited Wally and he gave me a copy of a CD that has photos and the history of the Ashfield Exchange. There are many photos of staff of Ashfield.

I will organise to send a copy to the Museum and Bruce Muirhead our secretary for our own archives. I have also discussed with Paul Rewhorn, our editor the possibility of a future article.

Reuniting with Former Workmates

I have had a few calls recently from members seeking friends and workmates contact details. If you have lost contact with a friend or fellow workmate, the *Retired Members Association* may be able to assist.

Just contact me and I will contact the missing friend if the person is a member. First, I will need to personally contact the member and seek their permission to provide their details or give them your details for them to get in touch.

Changing the Rules

This May Day, I joined with a few fellow members to attend the May Day March. My expectation that the May Day March would be attended by people let me say well into their mid-years or over. First, my surprise at the large number in attendance and the very large proportion being young people.

The editor and I have mentioned in several newsletter articles that low wages are a major cause of the growing inequality in this country and this will have an eventual impact on the general economy. Mr Morrison, Federal Treasurer took much credit on behalf of the federal government for the March 2018 GDP figures. However, if he had cared to look deeper into the figures, he would have understood, that halve the growth came from the mining sector, wage growth has continued to increase at just on or below CPI movements while company profits continue to grow five times faster than wages.

Mr Morrison needs to pay attention to rising energy costs, does he notice today's increasing price of petrol? Does he realise home interest rates may soon rise, irrespective of the official Reserve Bank Rate, this is because interest rates have increased in overseas countries as their economies continue to improve faster than the Australian economy?

The Reserve Bank and leading economists are alarmed at the increasing indebtedness of household budgets as wage earners struggle to meet everyday expenses. They are drawing down on their savings or turning to credit. This points to the fragility of household budgets to any future shocks to the economy.

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A Message from the President *(cont'd)*

I would say Retired Members were fortunate to have been in the workforce at a time when Unions were strong enough to secure decent wages and conditions for their memberships and able to prevent the exploitation of working people, we witness today. Perhaps, with the growing involvement of younger people in the Union movement, the current rampant exploitation of workers can be reversed.

Of course, some people will point to the number of industrial actions that took place in the latter part of the last century.

The Australia Institute has produced a report that links current wage stagnation to the drop in industrial actions in Australia. The report revealed that since the 1970s, the frequency of workplace stoppages has decreased by 97% and the decline in strike activity has been caused by current Australian industrial laws, which are some of the most restrictive in the developed world.

A clear example of the strict industrial laws is when the Fair Work Commission ordered NSW rail workers to abandon their planned work stoppage back in January of this year. The rail unions had planned a 24-hour strike and an indefinite ban on overtime.

The NSW Government and Sydney Trains came before the Fair Work Commission (FWC) to seek suspension orders for the industrial action. After hearing the suspension application, the Fair Work Commission placed a block on any industrial action on the part of Union for a period of six weeks, citing that Union's protected industrial action would damage the economy. This is despite the refusal of both the NSW Transport Minister and Sydney Trains to enter into meaningful negotiations with the Rail Union in the prior twelve months.

The FWU rulling based on damage to the national economy is rather generic reason that could apply to any Industrial action by any Union.

While Unions are constrained under the current Fair Work Act, the same does not apply to employers. Today, many companies will cancel an enterprise agreement once it has expired. Unions then have to reach an agreement on a new enterprise agreement while its members are placed on reduced wages during negotiation period. There is no incentative for employers to bargain in good faith, after all they are saving money with their employees are on a lower wage. Hardly, what I would call negotiating in good faith.

Adelaide University professor Andrew Stewart told the ABC in March last year that Australian industrial action laws are some of the most restrictive in the developed world. And many of these laws are also in breach of international labour standards.

I could also talk about wage theft, this is a subject or another time.

Coinciding with May Day, this year, the ACTU is launching a campaign to change the rules. Let us hope our politicians begin to listen before conditions become much worse for employees particularly those on lower incomes. If this has no interest for them, the future and long term damage to the economy caused by low incomes may move them.

Bye for now,
Vince



HAVE A BRIEF SOCIAL REPORT FOR THIS MONTH. THIS IS NOT TO MEAN THAT THERE IS NOT A LOT HAPPENING.

We have a great response to this year's annual trip-away in October. This year, our trip away is a bus coach tour of Moree and surrounding districts from Sunday, 14th October through to following Saturday. You will find all the details in the past three issues of our newsletter. **There are still vacancies for this trip, but I will need to hear from you soon.**

Upcoming Social Events

John Lane



Our next social function is lunch at the Manly 16ft Sailing Skiff Club on Thursday, 21st June, commencing around noon. You find all the details including ferry times from Circular Quay in this month's newsletter. This lunch proved very popular last year, we had to arrange additional tables at the last moment. **I would like to confirm numbers with the club in the next few days, just a quick text message, email or phone call would be appreciated.** My contact details are on page 2 of the newsletter.

Moving onto July, we are having another lunch near the water (yes, we do like to dine beside the water) at **Davistown RSL Club on Thursday, 19th**. This a social function that should appeal the budget conscious, the day includes a 90-minute ferry cruise and then a two-course lunch at the Davistown RSL Club for just \$30 per person. Also, this lunch is designed to make it easier for our members on the Central Coast to attend one of our social functions. Of course, our Sydney members are most welcome to come along. Details are in this month's newsletter.

It is not just the Retired Members head office that organises social functions. Peter Lygoe is organising an annual reunion for PMG/Telecom/Telstra retirees and their friends on the mid-North Coast at the West Port Macquarie Bowling Club on **Wednesday, 22nd August** starting at 10 am. Peter has been organising this function for a number of years. Support Peter by coming along. Full details are in the newsletter.

There will be other social functions later in the year. If any member has an idea for a social function, please get in contact with me.

Retired Members Association Ferry Tour and Luncheon at the Davistown RSL Club

Thursday, 19th July 2018



The day will include a 90 minute Ferry Tour with commentary followed by a two course meal at the Davistown RSL Club (two choices available for each course)

The cost is \$30.00 per person.

Names of those attending must be advised to social secretary (John Lane 0417 238 687 or email a-lane@bigpond.com) as we need a minimum of 25 persons to attend.



For Members travelling by train, a train leaves Central Station (country platforms) at 8.45 am, then Eastwood at 9.07 am, Hornsby at 9.22 am and arrives at Woy Woy at 10 am. For our Central Coast Members, a train leaves Gosford at 9.36 am and arrives at Woy Woy at 9.44 am. The same train service leaves Hamilton at 8.25 am. The train services arrive at Woy Woy in sufficient time for a 3 min walk to the wharf for the Ferry Tour leaving at 10.15am.



We Tried to Warn You, Mr Penn

Paul Rewhorn

TELSTRA HAS BEEN IN THE NEWS IN THE PAST FEW MONTHS FOR ALL THE WRONG REASONS. THERE HAVE BEEN TWO MAJOR NETWORK OUTAGES, ONE OUTAGE DISRUPTED CALLS TO EMERGENCY SERVICE (TRIPLE ZERO) IN THREE STATES FOR A NUMBER OF HOURS. THEN TELSRA HAD TO ISSUE A PROFIT WARNING TO THE STOCK EXCHANGE. THE COMPANY'S SHARE PRICE FELL BELOW \$2.80 PER SHARE AND THEIR DIVIDEND HAS COME DOWN FROM 31 CENTS TO 22 CENTS A SHARE.

The reason for profit warning and waning share price and dividend is because Telstra is struggling to keep its market share for broadband and mobile services.

All the above news takes us back to late 2016, when the *Retired Members Association* wrote to Mr Penn, Telstra CEO. RMA suggested that Telstra needed to differentiate its customer services from those of its competitors.

The subject of Telstra's poor customer service had been frequent topic among members at our monthly general meetings. Members related not just not their own but those of their friends and neighbours experience of appalling service when they made contact with Telstra customer service representatives.

They talk of the long wait times, then being transferred from one section to another and repeatedly being asked to restate the problem, their phone number and date of birth as they are shuffled from customer representative to another.

Our correspondence started by reminding Mr Penn that Telstra had traditionally positioned itself as a premium and quality provider of telecommunications services. As a result, Telstra could sell their various services at higher price margin than its competitors. However, customers in return expect Telstra to deliver a superior service and respond professionally when a problem occurs or when they make an enquiry. We told Mr Penn that our members' individual experiences of Telstra suggested that his customers were not experiencing a professional and quality service when they needed to contact a Telstra Customer representative either at a Telstra shop or by phone.

Our correspondence went onto explain our concern with poor skills and communications problems of staff located in overseas call centres. ***When the Association wrote that letter back in August 2016, the Telstra share price was \$5.48 per share and at the start of same year, the share price was a high as \$6.29.*** The fall in the share price around that time alone should have informed Mr Penn he had a problem on his hands.

Mr Penn replied to us a month later, while he agreed here still much that Telstra needed to do to improve their customer service (including their call centres), he indicated the location of Telstra's call centres overseas was not under review. Mr Penn ended his correspondence stating Telstra's commitment to become a truly customer-focused organisation.

Two years later, it would be safe to say that Mr Penn has made no inroads into Telstra being a truly customer-focused organisation.

The company claims it will spend \$3 billion dollars (\$1.5 billion would go into networks, \$1 billion on digitising the business, and up to \$500 million on other customer experience) over the next five years to improve the performance of its network. Staff numbers do not seem to enter the equation because in the same year (2016), ***Telstra reduced its staff numbers by 1400 positions. Perhaps the skills loss in Telstra is why the company still has not explained the loss of emergencies services in May.***

Telstra can no longer expect to be regarded as a premium provider of mobile and data services. Their past reputation for such has slipped away. Current and potential customers will view Telstra as little different to the competition when it comes to customer service. Now, they will simply go after the cheapest price and take their chance on service. Speaking to members and friends, this is what many have already decided.

It must soon be crunch time for Mr Penn. Will Mr Penn be given one more opportunity to turn Telstra's prospects around? What is his new plan for this year? Further reduce staff numbers? It is certainly now the time for Mr Penn to begin to question some of his long held assumptions and strategy particularly in regard to customer service.

I only hope for the sake of superannuant investors, Telstra's share price and dividend do not continue on their current downward trajectory.



Welfare News

Peter Hack

This month I would like to pass on my condolences and sympathy to the family and the many workmate friends of **Kevin Connell**. I include myself as a workmate and friend of Kevin. Kevin was a real gentleman, Kevin will be sadly missed.

I received the news that **Roger Bamber** while hiking had a fall and severely damaged the tendon to the back of his knee. The injury is serious and will require months of rehabilitation. I am sure all members will join me in wishing Roger a full recovery.

John Hickey tripped at home. Fortunately, he was able to grab a handrail and took a bit of fur off his side. President Haywood is on the war-path over the number of falls being reported in the newsletter. Please read his comments in this month's newsletter. I would to also echo Vince by saying turn those lights on when moving around the house at night. You have been warned!

Joyce Overton gave me a phone call, she is well and hopes to make it to our Christmas Party at the end of the year.

Ian Cutting hopes to get his hearing aid installed soon, so he will be back on the air again.

Finally, I would like to pass on my sympathy to **Ivka Antoni**, her mother and other family members. Ivka is the Union's Office Manager. Her father, **Ivan Lipovac** passed away on Friday, 18th May 2018.

Slips, Trips and Falls

Paul Rewhorn

BACK IN MAY 2012, THE NEWSLETTER PUBLISHED AN ARTICLE ON SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS. THE ARTICLE WAS BASED ON A PUBLICATION PRODUCED BY THE MACULAR DEGENERATION FOUNDATION. THE PUBLICATION TITLE IS "SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS".

WE ARE PUBLISHING AGAIN EXCERPTS FROM THE ARTICLE AS A SERVICE MEMBERS IN THE HOPE THAT MEMBERS WILL UNDERSTAND RISKS AND THE ACTION THEY CAN TAKE TO PREVENT A FALL.

Lifestyle

The following are some of the key lifestyle recommendations mentioned in the publication to minimise personal and environmental risk factors.

- ◆ Exercise regularly (daily if possible). Remember to focus on the balance and strength components.
- ◆ Engage in leisure activities to keep active.
- ◆ Maintain a healthy diet. Perhaps consult with a Dietician
- ◆ Be sensible, use common sense and recognise your limitations.
- ◆ Do things safely and don't be afraid to ask for help.

Medicines

Some types of medications can risk increase your risk of a falling because of possible side effects such as drowsiness, confusion, unsteadiness and dizziness.

Therefore you should:

- ◆ Speak to your doctor and pharmacist about side effects; remind them of all your current medications (best keep a list of all your current medications).
- ◆ Speak to you doctor if you detect any unusual side effect when you start a new medication.

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Slips, Trips and Falls (cont'd)

Feet and Footwear

As we age, our feet can change shape and lose some feeling. This change may impact on the way we walk and our balance. Painful or swollen feet can make it difficult to walk. Some shoes and slippers can make you more likely to slip, trip or stumble.

Remember:

- ◆ Purchase comfortable, firm fitting, flat shoes and slipper with rounded, low, broad heels and slip resistant soles that grip.
- ◆ See a doctor or podiatrist if you have painful or swollen feet, tingling or pins and needles.
- ◆ Talk to a podiatrist if you have trouble finding suitable shoes because of foot problems.