

WELCOME TO YOUR MAY 2019 NEWSLETTER. I HOPE EVERYBODY ENJOYED THE EASTER BREAK AND SCHOOL HOLIDAY PERIOD. I KNOW THAT THIS IS A PARTICULAR TIME WHEN MANY GRANDPARENTS HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEND QUALITY TIME WITH THEIR GRANDCHILDREN. I HAD A PRIOR COMMITMENT, AND THEREFORE I WAS UNABLE TO ATTEND THE APRIL GENERAL MEETING. ONCE AGAIN, JOHN LANE STOOD-IN FOR ME, IN HIS CAPABLE MANNER, AS HE ALWAYS DOES.

Vince Haywood

Donation to Alzheimer Australia

The April General Meeting approved the donation of \$250 to Alzheimer Australia. Our Committee supported the donation.

We have in the past made donations to Alzheimer Australia and other organisations such as cancer research. In making such recommendations, the Committee is mindful that our capital provides the money to support our day to day expenses. We are in a low-interest environment these days; a factor we need to consider when making charitable donations.

Alzheimer's Australia is the peak body providing support and advocacy for the 500,000 Australians living with dementia. It is committed to the prevention of dementia while valuing and supporting the people living with the disease

Federal Election and the Electric Car

As I write this article, the political parties are now in full campaign mode in the federal election. Many people these days have decided to switch-off when it comes to politics. The reason, election campaigns should be a contest of Ideas and vision for the nation's future; instead, we have negativism and pervasive argument.

Take the current federal government's opening salvo when the Labor opposition announced their 50 per cent target for electric cars on our roads by 2030. Many other developed nations have a similar objective and are far more advanced towards their goals today than Australia. If you follow reports from overseas, you would know all the major car manufacturers in the US, China and Europe are gearing up to manufacture electric cars.

Australia lost its car manufacture industry under this federal government's watch. Perhaps, it will be the case, this country will have to accept what the rest of the world is going to sell us.

The government seized an opportunity to make Labor's target about the target heavily taxing your petrol driven car to meet this target. This was despite media analysis showing there was little difference between the government and opposition when it comes to electric vehicles. In fact, the government was already on record themselves predicting electric cars would take an increasing proportion of the nation's vehicle fleet within a relatively short time. So instead of a discussion on future transport and the infrastructure to support electric cars such as charging stations and electrical power supply, we instead got negativism; it was all a plot by the federal opposition to take away the tradies' utes, claimed the Prime Minister and Senator Michaelia Cash.

Water Buy-Backs and Federal ICAC

I wrote back in the March 2019 newsletter of the need for a Federal ICAC. I specifically mentioned the flow of monetary donations and gift and how this largesse plays out in the formulation of government policy decisions.

Now, we have starting to learn of an \$80m water *Buy-Back* deal that occurred in 2017. Then Water Minister, Barnaby Joyce approved a deal where *Eastern Australia Agriculture (EAA)* received an \$80m payment for water on two of their properties. **EAA** reported a \$52m profit on the sale, much of this money appears to have been transferred to its parent company in the Cayman Islands.

Here we come to a lack of transparency; Angus Taylor, the federal energy minister, co-founded **EAA**. He claims no current involvement in the company. Concerns about this particular water *Buy-Back* were investigated by the Australia Institute and published in the Guardian over twelve months ago.



Retired Members Association

The May General Meeting will be held on the Central Coast at Woy Woy

Thursday, 21st May 2019 at 10.30 am.

A warm invitation is extended to our Central Coast and Newcastle members to attend a Retired Members' General Meeting. Our Sydney members are most welcomed to attend. This is a great opportunity for former workmates to catch-up after the meeting over lunch.

See Train Timetable and Map Directions on Page 4

Woy Woy Leagues Club,
82 Blackwall Rd,
Woy Woy

WANTED

DO YOU HAVE A PAPER COPY OF THE RETIRED MEMBERS ASSOCIATION'S NEWSLETTERS PRIOR TO 2000?

IF YOU DO, WE WOULD LIKE A COPY.

BRUCE MUIRHEAD NEEDS THEM FOR THE ASSOCIATION'S ARCHIVES.

Please contact Bruce. Contact details at the bottom of this page.

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PRESIDENT MESSAGE (CONT'D)

Just to remind you, the purpose of purchasing water (*Buy-Backs*) is to restore much-needed water to the *Murray-Darling Basin*. Members who were on our trip away to Moree last year, may remember seeing large amounts of green algae in the river when we stopped at *Collarenebri* for morning tea then later that day seen the warning signs not to swim in the water at *Goondiwindi*.

The Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (**DAWR**) was responsible for purchasing the water. **DAWR** bought the 29 gigalitres of water for nearly \$80m.

The *Australia Institute* noted that **EAA's** original asking price was \$2.200 per megalitre. The **Department of Agriculture and Water Resources paid them \$2.745 per megalitre; 25 per cent more than asked;** a fantastic bit of negotiation on behalf of the Water Resources Department!

The *Australia Institute's* report reveals more bad news for the taxpayer. **EAA's** entire properties were valued at \$107m in total, just \$27m more than the amount paid for the water, the two properties have a river flowing through them, and the properties still get to retain 31.6 gigabytes of water under this water *Buy-Back* agreement. Just on this basis alone, it is apparent that the department paid tens of millions of dollars too much.

What do we get precisely for \$80m? The purchased flood plain water, as the name implies only becomes available when the properties flood. Further, there is no legal status or any recognition once the water leaves the **EAA** properties, the federal government cannot ensure the water will get to the places it is intended to be used. The *Buy-Back* water could well flood onto an adjacent properties. I might add the dams and levees are still in place on the two **EAA** properties, so how the water leaves the property is a mystery.

The *Australia Institute* and *The Guardian* did a splendid job exposing this particular water *Buy-Back* agreement. To discover this information, the *Australia Institute* had to work with heavily redacted documents supplied by the government. The government still refuses to provide unredacted documents.

Agriculture minister, *Senator David Littleproud*, has asked the auditor-general to investigate these purchases and all other purchases dating back to 2008. The Australian National Audit Office had already added this to their list of prospective enquiries after the Centre Alliance, the Greens and the ALP had submitted a joint request last year. I would suggest the government is attempting to bury this matter until well past the election, hoping in time, the issue will receive less scrutiny.

Barnaby Joyce maintains it was the Queensland Government that had recommended the purchase, but what the Queensland Government supported was the purchase of the two properties, including all their water licences at the cost of \$123m.

Further, he tells us that it was his department that approved the water *Buy-Back*, not himself. Clearly, Mr Joyce does not understand ministerial accountability. Does he seriously suggest that \$78m is purely discretionary spending over which he has no oversight interest? If he had exercised his ministerial responsibility, he might have asked his department why it paid 139% higher than a previous purchase for the same type of licence and 85% higher than the average price for a more reliable kind of water licence or why this water *Buy-Back* did not go to open tender.

This sorry episode calls for a body like a *Federal ICAC* to investigate. A *Federal ICAC* would tell us if corruption was at the bottom of this water *Buy-Back* agreement or we simply have an incompetent minister and government department who have wasted \$80m on the water that may never exist or ever reach the *Murray-Darling Basin*.

Woy Woy General Meeting

Our next general meeting in May will take place on the Central Coast. Over the years, we have held the May General Meeting on the Central Coast to give our members who live there the chance to attend our general meeting. Many members come from Sydney travel to Woy Woy for this meeting, I welcome them again this year to travel to Woy Woy. The meeting offers friends and former workmates the opportunity to meet up. I would urge members from Newcastle and the Central Coast to avail themselves of this opportunity.

The meeting is to be held on the 23rd May 2019 at the Woy Woy Leagues Club and commences at 10.30 am. More details including train timetables are in this newsletter.

Bye for now,
Vince



Anthony (Tony) Woodfield



The Association is sad to report the passing of Tony Woodfield who passed away suddenly in his home on Sunday morning on the 31st March 2019. Tony's funeral service was on Friday, 5th April 2019.

Tony Woodfield was a member of the *Retired Members Association* for over five years. Tony is the husband of Mary Kovacs also a member of our Association.

Tony over recent years suffered health problems. He was seriously ill back in 2016 when he spent time in intensive care. Tony gradually recovered with Mary's help and support. Mary was a strong advocate for Tony when she considered he was not receiving the appropriate care.

Tony and Mary regularly attended the Association's General Meetings. He and Mary had attended the March General Meeting only a week before.

Tony was working for Cooks Transport, however, he did not like the job. At Mary's suggestion he began work with Telecom as a mechanic in the Automotive Plant at Villawood where he remained until offered redundancy.

Tony decided that he wanted to stay with Telecom and moved to a position in the Sales Office for about five years, working on computers. Tony was not keen on the work as he was an outdoors person.

When the Sydney Olympics came along; he studied with Mary's help to qualify as a linesman. After the Olympics, he moved to look after the Waterboard lines until his retirement.

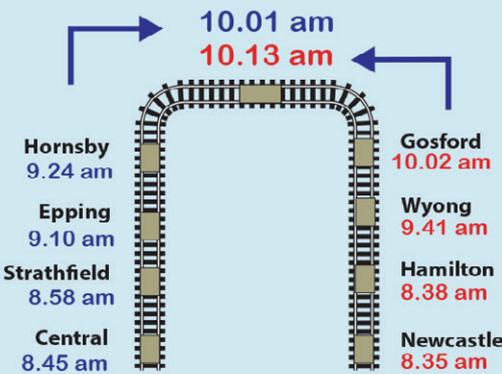
Outside of work, Tony also served 43 years in the Army Reserves, his other great love.

Mary thanked the Association for the support she has received, especially from John Lane and Bob Hamblion.

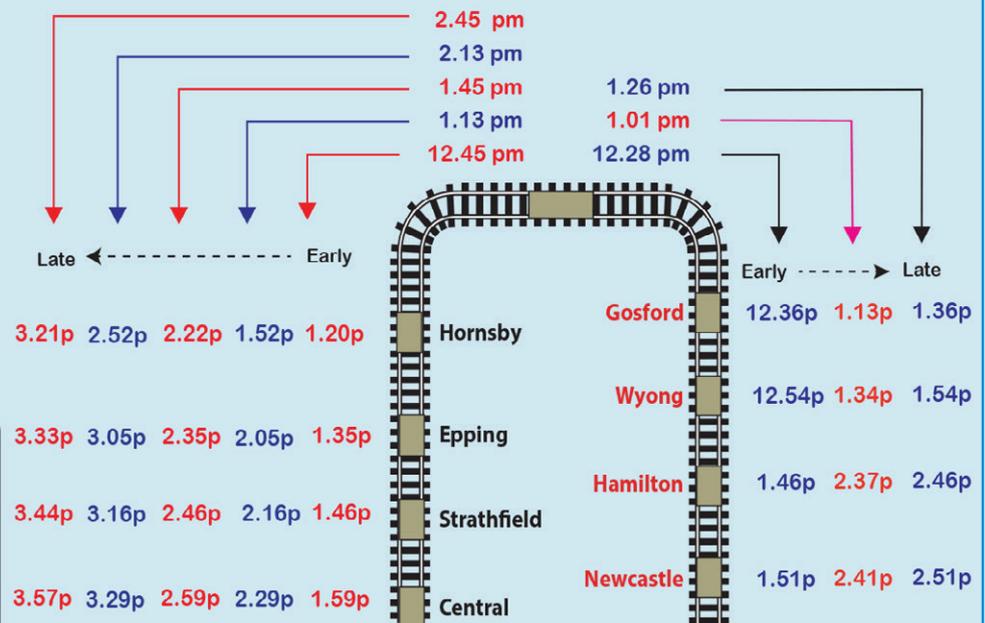
Retired Members Association extends its condolences and deepest sympathies to Mary, family and friends.



To Woy Woy



Return Woy Woy



Directions to Woy Woy Leagues Club

From Woy Woy Station, use the station's overhead walkway and walk towards Blackwall Road - 70m

Walk along Blackwall Road - for 700m

Woy Woy Leagues Club will be on your left

Thursday, 23rd May 2019 at 10.30 am.
Woy Woy Leagues Club
82 Blackhall Road,
Woy Woy



Thursday, 16th May 2019

**Springwood Bowling Club
81 Macquarie Road,
Springwood**

Meet between 12 and 12.30pm

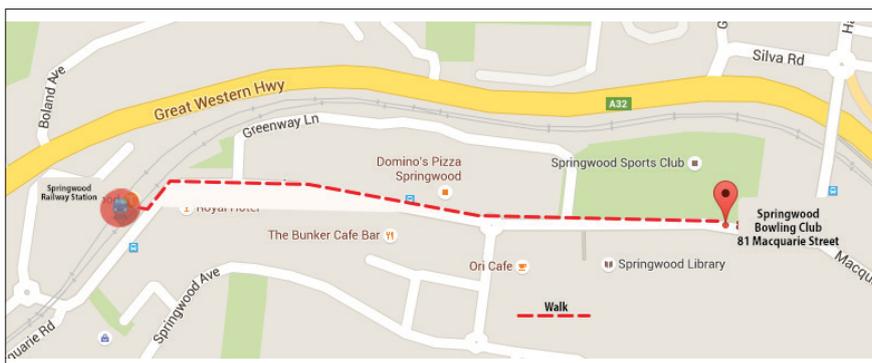
May Newsletter will have train timetables & map

Autumn Leaves Lunch - Train Timetables and Map Directions

Central to Springwood		Lithgow - Katoomba - Springwood		
Central (Country Terminal)	10.18 am	Lithgow	9.25 am	
Strathfield	10.31 am	Katoomba	10.14 am	11.14 am
Parramatta	10.43 am	Springwood	10.54 am	11.54 am
Blacktown	10.52 am	Autumn Leaves Lunch Thursday, 16th May 2019		
Penrith	11.07 am			
Springwood	11.37 am			

Going home from Springwood towards Central, the first practical departure from **Springwood to Central leaves at 1.54 pm**, stopping at these main stations; **Penrith 2.24 pm, Blacktown 2.40 pm, Parramatta 2.50 pm, Strathfield 3.02 pm**, then **Central 3.15 pm**. **Later departures** are at **2.36 pm, 3.00 pm, 3.30 pm and 4.00 pm**.

Going home to the west of Springwood a train departs Springwood at 1.47 pm, then arrives **Katoomba at 2.27 pm and arrives Lithgow at 3.16 pm**. Other trains departures from **Springwood to Katoomba** are at **2.46 pm and 3.37 pm**. Finally a train leaves **Springwood at 3.37 pm for Katoomba at 4.17 pm** and arrives at **Lithgow at 5.05 pm**





Technicians in Training

Class of 1953

66th Year Reunion

RSVP: Tuesday, 28th May 2019

Our reunion lunch is to be held on Friday, 31st May 2019. We meet at 11.45 am for lunch commencing at noon.

Venue:

Petersham RSL Club
7 Regent Street
Petersham
A 200m walk from Petersham Station

Please confirm your attendance with Allan Fairbairn by:
E-mail: abfairbairn@bigpond.com
Phone: 02 9484 6146

Retired Members Association

The Life Of Riley Tour of the Snowy Mountains

**FULLY BOOKED
TAKING RESERVATIONS**

2019 Annual Trip Away
10th to 15th November 2019

We have had a terrific response to this year's trip away. The trip is now fully booked, if you still wish to join the trip, you are welcomed to place your name on our reservation list. Reservations will be taken in order received. Contact John Lane to place your reservation (contact details on page 2).

Important Notice

**JULY GENERAL MEETING AT EMU PLAINS
NOW TO BE HELD IN AUGUST**

The July General Meeting previously scheduled for the fourth Thursday, in July at O'Donohues Hotel, Emu Plains is postponed to the **Thursday, 22nd August commencing 10.30am**. This is because O'Donohues Hotel has a prior booking for our original July date. The July General Meeting will now be held at the FSU Meeting Room, 2nd Floor, 321 Pitt Street, Sydney



OUR NEXT SOCIAL FUNCTION IS THE AUTUMN LEAVES LUNCH AT THE SPRINGWOOD BOWLING CLUB ON THURSDAY, 16TH MAY 2019. THE BOWLING CLUB OVER THE YEARS HAS PROVED TO BE AN EXCELLENT VENUE, IT HAS A WARM AND COSY ENVIRONMENT, ESSENTIAL AS THE TEMPERATURE OUTSIDE BEGINS TO COOL. THIS LUNCH HAS BEEN A REGULAR FEATURE FOR THE RETIRED MEMBERS ASSOCIATION AND OFFERS AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY TO ATTEND FOR MEMBERS IN SYDNEY'S WEST AND BLUE MOUNTAINS AREAS. YOU WILL FIND IN THIS MONTH'S NEWSLETTER TRAIN TIMETABLES AND MAP DIRECTIONS.

I look forward to seeing many of you there.

Manly Skiff - Lunch Cancellation

I have to report a problem for our planned June lunch at the Manly Skiff Club. The club has changed its policy for group bookings. The club now requires people who are part of a group booking to select their food from a set menu. The club has two set menus, one at \$35 and the other costs \$45.

I consider our members should be able to order their own meals like the other patrons attending the club. I know this will come as a disappointment to many of you, the club is in a great location.

I am now looking to have lunch at the Manly Wharf Hotel. The hotel has a wide range of food choices, for example on a Thursday (the day we would be there), the club has a special menu item comprising *steak, chips and salad for \$10*. Significant savings compared to the fixed menu prices. The hotel is very close to the Manly Ferry Terminal. I have not been able to finalise a booking in time for this month's newsletter. Therefore, please look in our next newsletter for booking confirmation.

Tour of the Garvan Institute

Further, in July, we will be doing a tour of the Garvan Institute. The Garvan is a state-of-the-art scientific facility. We will learn how medical research is progressing at an increasingly rapid rate.

I personally will be looking forward to seeing the institute's progress in reversing the ageing process in the knee joint. Next month's newsletter will have information on this tour.

Upcoming Social Events



John Lane

Snowy Mountain Trip-away

You will recall that I reported that we were having a great response to this year's trip away to the Snowy Mountains. I now have to inform you that the trip is fully booked. Perhaps you may still want to join us on the trip away, if this is the case, I suggest you place your name on a reserve list. I will put names in the strict order as they are received.

Each year, we have members who have to cancel their bookings for genuine reasons because of ill health or medical appointments. Please contact me if you would like to come and prepared to place your name(s) on the reserve list.

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

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

2019 Annual Trip Away - Payment Details

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

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



MEMBERS ON QUEEN ELIZABETH CRUISE

Four members of the Retired Members Association enjoyed a cruise on the Queen Elizabeth in March 2019.

The photo was taken on board in the Grand Lobby while the Queen Elizabeth was cruising from Wellington to Auckland.

The members in the photograph from left to right are: Alan Fairbairn, Rick Hinde, John Bryce and Rodger Folkes.



Reminder!

Now is the time for your Flu Injection



For seniors who are in their sixties or older having the flu can be a lot more serious than just a runny nose, a cough and aches in the joints.

Unfortunately for older people aged 65 years, the flu can have serious complications, particularly if they have existing health problems such as:

- Heart disease
- Lung conditions
- Kidney problems
- Undergoing cancer treatment
- Diabetes
- Blood disorders
- and various other conditions.

Flu complications can result in hospitalisation and on a more serious note, there were 3334 deaths attributed to influenza and pneumonia in 2016. The average age of a victim was 88.

The Flu Vaccine is Free

Free flu vaccines under the National Immunisation Program have been available from a vaccination provider since April 2018. **Getting vaccinated early (now) gives you the best protection ahead of the peak flu period, from around June to September.**

The vaccine is free under the National Immunisation Program for people who are more likely to be affected by complications from the flu. This includes seniors 65 years and over.

More Ways to Prevent the Spread of the Flu

Given there will be still risks associated with the flu, you should:

- **Avoid close contact with people who are sick.** When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect others from getting sick too.
- **Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.** Promptly dispose of the tissue and wash your hands after using a tissue.
- **Clean your hands regularly,** use a hand sanitiser where possible.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.**
- **Practice other good health habits.** Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at home.

Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.



FIRST FIELD APPOINTMENT

Barry Robinson

This month, the newsletter returns to Barry Robinson's book, telling of his work experiences. This month, we join Barry on his first field assignment in 1958. Barry is off to York Street; you may recall last year we featured Ralph Britten's stories about his time also at York Street. Let's hope that Ralph was not at the end of Barry and other trainees' pranks.

Then we jump to Barry's work experience outside of Telstra. One of Barry's workplace initiatives don't go quite to plan.

AT THE END OF 1958, WE WERE ALLOCATED TO VARIOUS TELEPHONE EXCHANGES THROUGHOUT NSW. LEN LAMONT AND I WENT TO YORK TELEPHONE EXCHANGE LOCATED IN THE GRACE BUILDING ON THE CORNER OF YORK, CLARENCE AND MARKET STREETS, SYDNEY ALONG WITH ANOTHER SIX OTHER TECHNICIANS. WE WERE ALL SIXTEEN AT THE TIME AND WERE FOREVER IN TROUBLE. THERE WAS NOT MUCH WE WERE ABLE TO DO SO WE WOULD PLAY TRICKS ON THE OLDER STAFF.

One of the tricks we played was to connect a spare telephone line to the morning tea hooter button, which was in the supervisor's office. I can still see John Manson's face looking at the button after the hooter went off half a minute before nine o'clock which was the morning tea time. All we had to do was to dial the spare's line number and off went the hooter.

We used the same circuit to connect into the exchange's public address system. It had two microphones, one inside the exchange and the other in the boss's office. We would use this when we were out late at night and ring the number when we knew only one staff member was on duty. The lone staff member would hear our voice saying get back to work. He would think someone was in the office, we would wait a moment until we thought he would get to the office, then say "stop mucking around in the office and get back to work". We drove the night shift guy's nuts for several weeks using this circuit. Later we found many other uses for the circuit including connecting it up to various alarms.

In 1960, my third year at work as a Technician in Training, I was sent into the field to repair telephones, intercom systems and telephone switchboards inside subscribers' premises. Later the term subscriber was changed to customer. My area extended from Wynyard and Town Hall Stations to Darling Harbour. Below the city is a network of telephone cable tunnels interconnecting all the telephone exchanges. They are large enough to walk through. We spent some time chasing each other from one end of the city to the other and scaring people standing next to vent in the footpaths above us.

On top of the Grace Building is a tower in one corner, this part of the building was used as the PMG radio terminal, as it was the highest point in Sydney. Later as the city grew, the radio terminal moved to Redfern Telephone Exchange. Of course, as the city continued to grow, the final destination for the radio terminal was at Waverley. Today, long-distance radio links are almost obsolete as the Optical Fibre Cable Technology has taken over the Broadband Radio and the Coaxial Cable networks.

Bankstown Employment Services

I found an advertisement in the local Bankstown paper for a position of Trainer to teach PowerPoint on computers at the Bankstown Employment Services Training (BEST) which provided computer skills training for unemployed people. I applied for and got a position which was for four days per week. I was also asked to teach Word Perfect, a primitive version of Microsoft Word that I had never used before; I taught it anyway.

The computers were a mess, and only half of them had a mouse, and the majority had viruses that needed to be cleaned out. The majority of staff were women, a new experience for me; they were always stressed. The boss was always asking me if I required a hand, I said: "no I am fine". I guess I was the only staff member not stressed out. I had one guy on the first course who was an artist and had never used a computer before. He drew a Spanish Galleon in incredible detail using PowerPoint.

Continued on Page 10



FIRST FIELD APPOINTMENT (CONT'D)

Western Sydney Itech

Next, I was contacted by Michael Burke from the old North Sydney School. Michael wanted someone to run some electronic courses at Western Sydney Itech at Parramatta. Michael had been working at Western Sydney Itech for some time. Once again it involved teaching the unemployed, this time involving wiring, soldering, circuit reading and electrical theory and also writing résumés and organising work experience.

The courses lasted for eight weeks and some of the advanced courses sixteen weeks. I spent about one and a half years there, Michael and I were the only guys, the majority were women who taught office skills. Once again, they were very stressed and in a perpetual panic. The boss was always asking us if we required help; we declined.

One morning there was a copy of a fax on the notice board from the Blood Bank. The fax was asking businesses if they could release staff to make blood donations. The Blood Bank offered their bus to pick up donators take them to the Parramatta Blood Bank. I spoke to the boss about taking the class there, he asked *if I could arrange it?* I replied *"of course"*.

I went back to the class and asked *if they would like a bus tour of Parramatta and a free lunch?*

They said: *"if I could arrange that for free?"*

I said, *"of course"*.

I arranged for the bus to pick us up at 11 am. I took the class over to the **Red Cross bus** when it pulled up. However, once the bus was spotted with the **Red Cross** on its side, two Vietnamese guys shot threw thinking they were to be deported. When we arrived at the blood bank about another three would not go inside.

The remainder of us went in and filled out the paperwork. As a result, only one from the group was eligible to give blood.

We were thanked for coming and were given a hot meal. I could not donate because of my cancer back in 1988. We waited a long time for our one and only donor to reappear. When he did appear after giving the blood, he was a little dizzy, the nurse told him to lay there and relax, and of course, he went to sleep. When we got back to work, I told the boss what had happened; he just laughed.

Eventually, the company had to stop operations as the then Prime Minister John Howard cut the funding to the Skill Share Program which ITEC relied upon to fund their operations. On the last day, because the majority of permanent staff had left days before, I was left to run a computer typing class, a class finishing their résumés and my own class who were completing their final exam. This was followed by a party for my class then followed by the wake held by the Boss of Itech.