

DUE TO A LAST-MINUTE OTHER COMMITMENT, I WAS UNABLE TO ATTEND THE AUGUST GENERAL MEETING AT EMU PLAINS. ONCE AGAIN, I HAVE TO THANK JOHN LANE FOR STANDING IN SO CAPABLY, AS HE ALWAYS DOES. OUR GRATITUDE MUST ALSO GO TO O'DONOHUES IRISH HOTEL FOR ONCE AGAIN PROVIDING OUR ASSOCIATION WITH A MEETING ROOM AT NO COST.

Unfortunately, my absence prevented me from listening to a very informative guest speaker, Trevor Neal from the Residents Against the Western Sydney Airport Action Group. Trevor, along with Denise and Roger Hennessey, has been campaigning against this development since the beginning. They were pleased with the reception they received at the meeting. As well, they signed up new newsletter members.

Second Airport - Western Sydney

The Western Sydney Airport Action Group is warning the residents of Western Sydney that the proposed airport at Badgerys Creek threatens their quality of life. Their aim at this stage is to inform residents of the air, water and noise pollution that will result from a new airport's 24 hours a day, seven days a week operation. Trevor told the meeting there is still time to prevent the construction of the new airport that has commenced and ceased of six prior occasions. Instead of a new airport, the Action Group is proposing the building of Fast Rail infrastructure between the east coast's capital cities (Melbourne, Canberra, Sydney

Retired Members Association
SPECIAL EVENT
STAGE MUSICAL
CHICAGO
Capitol Theatre, Sydney on Thursday,
3rd October 2019 at 1pm.
More Details inside this month's newsletter

and Brisbane).

You will find more information on this issue in this month's newsletter.

OPAL and Your Credit Card

Warren Morley gave a very informative report on his difficulties with his OPAL card being billed twice for the same trip. Warren has the automatic top-up facility on his OPAL card that has a direct debit to his credit card. When Warren checked his OPAL monthly statement, he found that he had been charged twice for the same journey. What had happened? When Warren tapped on at the commencement of his trip, the OPAL reader read both his OPAL card and his credit card, which was near OPAL card.

At his destination, he tapped off; this time, the reader only recorded the OPAL card. He OPAL card registered the correct fare for the journey. While his credit card charged the maximum adult fare for the same trip. Fortunately, an enquiry to the OPAL Customer Care sorted out the problem. He learned this was a common occurrence.

I have noticed some commuters who hold their wallet against the OPAL reader. They may receive a nasty surprise when and if they read their OPAL and credit card statements. The lesson for us? Keep your credit card separate from your OPAL card and check your bank statements.

Retired Members Association

October 2019 General Meeting

Thursday, 24th October 2019
Meeting Commences at 10.15 am.

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



Retired Members Association

September 2019 General Meeting

Thursday, 26th September 2019
Meeting Commences at 10.15 am.

Venue

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

Ed Davis, President -ABC Friends NSW & ACT will be Guest Speaker.

Ed will speak to meeting on industrial relations in Australia. Of course, he will answer questions members may have concerning the ABC Broadcaster.

Retired Members Association

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PRESIDENT MESSAGE (CONT'D)

Warren's experience also warns about credit card skimming that is becoming more common today with "Tap To Pay". Professional thieves use card skimmers to capture your credit card information. You can purchase a special credit card sleeve that can prevent this and maybe a solution to the OPAL problem as mentioned above.

Western Sydney Hub

While we are on the subject of Western Sydney, Penrith Council have been working with COTA NSW (the Council of the Aging) to establish an aged care **Information Hub** in Penrith. It will be open in Penrith Library on the last Thursday of each month.

The **Information Hub** is part of a trial assisting older people in accessing aged care services through the government's "myagedcare.gov.au" website, called the *Aged Care Navigators Trial*. The main objective of the website to assist people in finding more about the services there to help around the house or look into aged care homes

The Hub is a place to come and learn about aged care services. It is there to support people who have difficulty getting the assistance they need to live at home, or to find a place in an aged care home. The Hub is useful to people who may not have access to the Internet or lack confidence in finding information this way. Also, some may have concerns about the cost of aged care or feel that your circumstances will not be understood.

The Hub has trained volunteers who can talk about what an individual is looking for and explain how the myagedcare.gov.au website works. They can help you use "myagedcare.gov.au" website to find out about costs, local services and eligibility. It will even help you to complete forms.

The Hub will open on the 26th of September and will operate between 9.30 am and 1 pm. You can drop into Penrith Library during that time, or call 8268 9601 or 0438 431 817 for a booking. Family and friends of people who need aged care are also welcome.

Vale Bill Edwards

Those of us who came through the Training School will appreciate the bonds of camaraderie that developed between members and lasted over the years. Sadly, I lost a good friend of almost 60 years last month.

Bill Edwards and I met up in 1960 at the Strathfield training school on the daily walk to and from Homebush railway station. We soon became friends.

I remember the instructors arranged a weekend at the Broken Bay Fitness Camp. On Friday afternoon, Bill and I were busy in the locker room loading bottles of "supplies" into our bags when Jack Krieger walked through. Without missing a beat, he said: "*make sure they don't rattle*" and continued walking — what a lovely bloke, Jack.

On the Sunday afternoon and we were down to our last bottle. We took a walk along the shores of the Hawkesbury. We found a beautiful cold, deep rock pool and deposited a bottle there for consumption on our way back.

Coming back, we found the rockpool to be beerless. Later that evening, Jack asked, with a smile on his face if we were thirsty.

Bill and I kept in touch over the years and at the five-year reunions, often staying at each other's place. Last February, Bill rang to say he had diagnosed with a particularly virulent form of leukaemia and there was no cure.

Before I could offer my sympathies, Bill said: "*I know it's nothing I've done to cause it and I know there's nothing I can do to cure it, so I'm going to live what's left to the best of my abilities*".

And he did, even though spending almost half his remaining time in hospital he sent emails and texts describing how he was looking forward to a "Scottie" and a glass of red when he arrived back home.

We conversed often, and he was always his usual cheerful self. My last conversation with Bill was a week before he died, and he said: "*I didn't think anyone as crook as I could feel so good*".

I consider myself inordinately blessed to have had Bill as a close friend for almost sixty years, and I'll miss him but not forget him.

Continued on Page 5



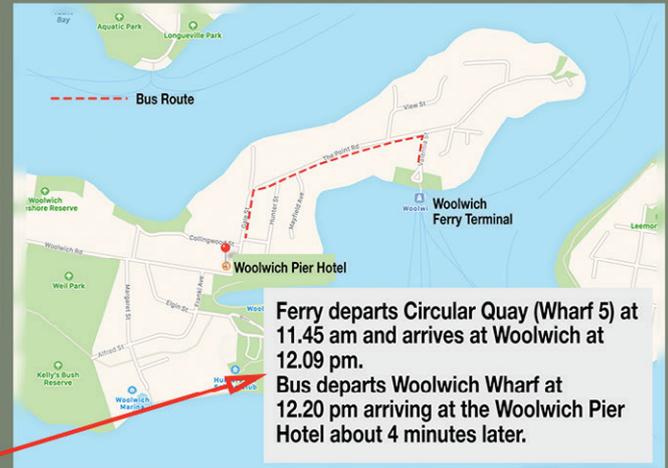
Retired Members Association

Woolwich Pier Hotel: Lunch

2 GALE STREET, WOOLWICH

Thursday, 19TH September 2019

Lunch commences about 12.30 pm



Ferry departs Circular Quay (Wharf 5) at 11.45 am and arrives at Woolwich at 12.09 pm.
Bus departs Woolwich Wharf at 12.20 pm arriving at the Woolwich Pier Hotel about 4 minutes later.

Map Insert has Ferry and Bus Times

Retired Members Association

SPECIAL EVENT

STAGE MUSICAL **CHICAGO**

**Capitol Theatre, Sydney on Thursday,
3rd October 2019 at 1pm.
TICKETS \$70 (Dress Circle)**

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

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



PRESIDENT MESSAGE (CONT'D)

Newstart

You will have no doubt have read or listened to media the increasing discussion on the increasing the Newstart allowance for the unemployed.

Both the major political parties avoided this issue leading up to the May Federal Election. It is an issue seemingly that will not go away. You have the Unions, businesses and the Phillip Lowe, Governor of the Reserve Bank, all calling for an increase in the Newstart Allowance.

Single Newstart recipients are currently expected to survive on \$40 a day. Phillip Lowe suggested an increase to the current \$277.85-a-week payment would help stimulate the economy.

You may have assumed the *Newstart Allowance* amount is an issue that affects mainly the young and middle-age demographic. **The age group 55 to 64 is the seconded highest age group on Newstart. Worse, Newstart for this age group has increased by more than 55,000 in less than five years and impacts more on females. People in this age group are on Newstart for three and a half years on average.** The Rudd's Labor Government decision to increase the retirement age to 66 has not helped this age group.

I came across an article in "*The Guardian*" on the 20th of August 2019. The article was about Marie, who at 62, had quit her job of 27 years to care for her husband. Her husband had cancer and could not walk or look after himself. Marie received a carer's payment while she looked after her husband at home. After a year, her husband moved into palliative care.

Now at 64, Marie's carer's payment was cancelled, and she was placed on the lower Newstart allowance.

Worse was to come for Marie, twelve months ago, the Coalition government's welfare reforms extended "*mutual obligations*" for Newstart recipients to include those over 60.

Marie had to do volunteer work. Not sure when she would lose her husband of 42 years, she did her volunteer work at the nursing home where her husband was dying. The nursing home made it clear to Marie that she needed to assist the other patients and not just sit with her husband all day.

During the day, she would spend 45 minutes of her lunchtime sitting with her husband. After her husband died, no one at Centrelink told Marie she was eligible for a widow allowance without the need for mutual obligations.

When the Guardian's enquired of *Centrelink* as whether they had handled Marie's case correctly, *Centrelink's* spokesman refused to comment conveniently citing privacy.

We have a federal government facing a looming recession yet seem to believe their harsh policies on welfare is winning public support. It is a distraction from the greater economic problems looming. The country already has a retail recession and the latest GDP growth figures show the coalition tax cuts are not working. With the nation's high household debt, people are choosing to save their tax rebates rather than spend.

September General Meeting

Our next general meeting is on Thursday, 26th September 2019 commencing at 10.15 am. The venue is our usual location at the **FSU Meeting Room, 2nd Floor, 321 Castlereagh Street**. We have a special guest speaker, Ed Davis who will talk on current industrial relations in Australia. I look forward to see you there.

Bye for now, Vince



Retired Members Association

12 pm, Thursday, 21st November 2018

Petersham RSL, 7 Regent Street, Petersham
(Just a 200m walk from Petersham Station)

The cost is \$50 per person.
Includes a three-course meal and
lucky door prizes.

Payment can be made at a General Meeting or you
can post a cheque to the Secretary,
(address shown on page 2 of the newsletter)
or via electronic payment.

Credit Union Australia (CUA) BSB 814-282,
eSaver Account No: 10642769



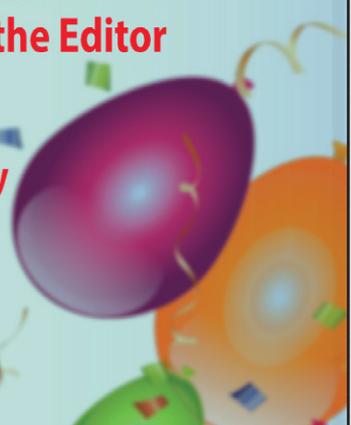
*Organising a Former Workplace
Reunion or Christmas Party
for the end Year or New Year?*

There are only two issues of
newsletter remaining for 2019.

**Please send your Christmas or
Reunion Details to the Editor**

(pdrewhorn@me.com)

**by the first Wednesday
of either October or
November**



Goulburn District Reunion



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

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

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

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

Contacts are:

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



Bill Edwards



The *Retired Members Association* with sadness reports the passing of member Bill Edwards. Bill passed away in the early hours of Wednesday, 7th August 2019. There was a funeral service for Bill at the James Murray Funeral Chapel, Broadmeadow on Wednesday, 14th August 2019.

Bill received a diagnosis of Acute Myeloid Leukemia in early February. Following his diagnosis, Bill underwent several chemo treatments. Bill remained resilient and optimistic throughout his treatment. However, in the past month, he suffered several infections. It two weeks ago; he said he felt so well it was hard for him to accept that he had such a serious illness.

Bill had been a member of the *Retired Members Association* for just under twenty years.

Bill grew up on a Dairy Farm at Bowraville, where his first contact with the PMG was his meeting with the Technician at Macksville Post Office; the one Arthur Collinson in 1959. Bill commenced as a 1960 Technician in Training at the Strathfield Training School. Following the completion of his training, Bill he was appointed to the Kempsey Telephone Exchange. It was there that he passed the Senior Technician's Examination. His next move came as a promotion to the Moree Telephone Exchange, then a section of the Armidale Division of the PMG Department.

After some time in Moree, Bill's next move was to the Newcastle area. His appointments were Officer in Charge and Management positions that included



Telegraph and Data, Hamilton Exchange, Field Engineering Section Office, Internal Plant Manager Operations. Later, in his career, Bill held the position of Executive Manager, Network Operations NSW. Bill and Liz spent nearly three years on secondment in Indonesia before his retirement.

Bill also had a career as a member of the Citizens Military Force where he attained the rank of Captain. After his retirement, he volunteered at the Singleton Army Camp Museum researching army ordinances and restoring Flags. His social life included dancing with Liz as his partner and entertaining on the piano.

Our sympathy and condolences go out to Bill's wife Liz, sons Mick and Dave and his many friends at this sad time.



Hugh Edward Burkett



The *Retired Members Association* is sad to report the passing of Hugh Burkett on Saturday, 24th August 2019. The funeral service for Hugh was on Monday, 2nd September 2019 at the Tweed Valley Lawn Cemetery Chapel.

Hugh was aged 93 years. A member of the *Retired Members Association* for sixteen years.

Hugh was a well-known identity to members on the far north coast of New South Wales. Hugh last worked at Murwillumbah Exchange before retirement.

Hugh was the loved husband of Pam (dec) and Betty (dec). The beloved father and father-in-law of Margaret, Hugh and Rebecca, Jim and Julie and Kate and Graeme. Nineteen grandchildren and seventeen grandchildren; all cherished Hugh.



The *Retired Members Association* extends its sincere sympathy and condolences to Hugh's family and his many friends.



Western Sydney Airport Action Group

Vince mentioned that Trevor Neal from the Residents Against the Western Sydney Airport Action Group addressed our August General Meeting. Trevor spoke about the Action group's opposition to the construction of the Western Sydney Airport (WSA) at Badgerys Creek.

The Action Group is engaged in a David and Goliath fight against powerful supporters of WSA including the Murdoch Press, foreign airlines, big business interests and a range of influential politicians (from both major parties). These politicians perceive the construction of 24/7 airport in Western Sydney as a countermeasure against increasing pressure to lift the curfew at Kingsford Smith Airport.

Trevor Neal told the general meeting that people in Western Sydney are starting to realise that the Western Sydney Airport is a conn. Back in 2014, the Abbott Government declared that the WSA must proceed and everything since then points to that objective. A draft Environmental Impact Study (EIS) was released in October 2015.

Public submissions in response to the EIS closed before Christmas 2015. Except for two minor concessions, the 4500 public objections were ignored.

The WSA project failed in the 1980s and 1990s because of adverse health, noise and environmental impacts. The latest EIS notes these impacts but claims they are within acceptable limits. Since the 1980s an extra 1.5 million people have moved into the affected area. Worse still, the preparation of EIS assessment was without knowing the flight paths. The government is not prepared to release the flight paths until the project is near completion. The Greater Blue Mountains is a World Heritage area that could well see planes flying as low as 5,000 feet overhead.

The government claims the second airport will create 8,700 jobs by 2031. An independent report (Watson Report) is sceptical about this claim. ***The Watson Report found that only 120 construction jobs and 800 airport jobs would be targeted to Western Sydney workers in the first stages (to 2050) of the project. Comparable airports, such as Adelaide, support only 1,600 aviation jobs.***

Instead of the second airport in Sydney, the Western Sydney Airport Action Group has proposed an integrated High-Speed Rail Network linking the east coast, constructed over 25 years. The group argues that while HSR a more expensive alternative, HSR addresses transportation, employment, housing, environmental and economic sustainability. Not just in Sydney, but in regional areas across Victoria, ACT, NSW and Queensland.

Finally, Trevor told the meeting that Kingsford Smith Airport would not reach full capacity until 2045; enough time to construct to a High-Speed Rail.