

JULY 2018

Senator Doug Cameron to speak at our July General Meeting

SENATOR DOUG CAMERON WILL BE SPEAKING AT OUR JULY GENERAL MEETING AT EMU PLAINS ON THURSDAY, 26TH JULY 2018.

Senator Cameron is the current shadow minister for two portfolios Skills, TAFE and Apprenticeships and Housing and Homelessness. Prior to his election to the Senate, Senator Cameron served as the National Secretary of the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union (AMWU) from 1996 to 2008 and played a key role in developing industrial and political strategies designed to improve employment security, wages, and skill and industry development in the manufacturing industry. The Senator was also the centre of ACTU and campaigns on workers entitlements, health and safety, work and family balance and the right to collectively bargain.

Prior to his involvement with the Union movement, Doug completed a fitter apprenticeship in Scotland and shortly after emigrated to Australia in 1973, at the age of 22. He has worked at the Garden Island Dockyard and moved in 1975 to the Muswellbrook to work at the Liddell Power Station for seven years as a maintenance fitter before elected as a regional organiser for the Amalgamated Metal Workers and Shipwrights Union.

Doug was elected to the Senate at the 2007 federal election and took his seat on 1 July 2008. He lives in the Blue Mountains, west of Sydney and his electorate office is in Springwood.

Within the ALP, he has argued and fought for compassionate treatment of refugees, social justice for welfare recipients, equality for the LGBTI community, stronger protection for the environment, and been outspoken against the expansion of Australian uranium mining.

Senator Cameron has announced that he will retire from the Senate at the next election. The July General Meeting will give members a unique opportunity to hear what the Senator has to say on the future direction of the Trade Union and the Labor Party's direction on a number of issues.

The July General Meeting will be on Thursday, 26th July 2018 starting at 10.30 am at O'Donoghues Irish Pub (a short walk from the Emu Plains railway station), Emu Plains.



July General Meeting
Thursday, 26th July at 10.30 am
O'Donoghues Irish Pub, Emu Plains

O'Donoghues is located at 99 Great Western Highway, Emu Plains, only 350 metres from Emu Plains Railway Station (map and train timetable information are inside this newsletter)



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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.



**Vice President, John Lane presents Ted Leeson with
an "Over Bloody Eighty" OBE Award**

Ted Leeson Receives "Over Bloody Eighty" Award

At the Association's May General Meeting held at Woy Woy, Vice President John Lane presented Ted Leeson with the Association's Over Bloody Eighty Award (OBE).

Ted has been a member of the *Retired Members Association* for just over twenty-four years.

A very healthy-looking Ted Leeson accepted his OBE.

Ted thanked the meeting for his award. Ted mentioned he had over forty years in the job, most of the time with the Construction Branch. He told the meeting that worked in the job perhaps at the most interesting time in communications history, a time of rapid technology change. We wish Ted continued good health.



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

O'Donoghues Irish Pub

99 Great Western Highway, Emu Plains
only 350 metres from Emu Plains Railway Station
(see map below)



Senator Doug Cameron
Guest Speaker

Train Timetables

Members travelling from Sydney can catch a train from **Central Station** departing at 9.18am, **Strathfield** at 9.31 am, **Parramatta** at 9.43 am, **Blacktown** at 9.52 am and **Penrith** at 10.06 am. The train arrives at **Emu Plains** at 10.09 am.

Members traveling from **Katoomba** can catch a train departing at 9.15 am and **Springwood** at 9.54 am. The train stops at all stations between Katoomba and Emu Plains. The train arrives at **Emu Plains** at 10.20 am.

Both trains services arrive at Emu Plains in sufficient time for the short walk to O'Donoghues Irish Pub for the meeting's 10.30 am start time.

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Social Functions for July and August 2018.

Retired Members Association Ferry Tour and Luncheon at the Davistown RSL Club Thursday, 19th July 2018

Prior bookings for this social function is essential. Please reply to John Lane on 0417 238 687, you can leave a text message or email a-lane@bigpond.com. Please include your name and number attending.

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.

Retired Members Association Sydney Rowers Club Lunch

Thursday, 16th August 2018
Meet between 12 pm and 12.30 pm

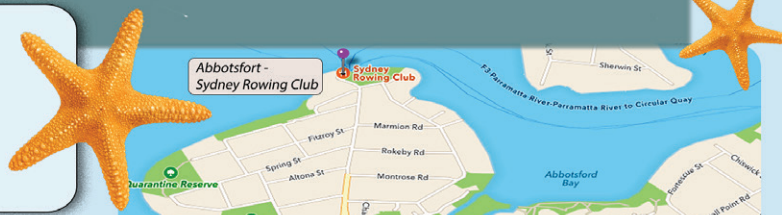
Our most popular
Harbourside
Lunch Event
returns for
2018

The Sydney Rowers Club is 150 metres from the Abbotsford Wharf (613 Great North Road), Abbotsford Point.

The Sydney Rowers Club is on the Parramatta River. Sydney Ferries service the wharf from Circular Quay. The \$2.50 concession fare for seniors and pensioners applies. The club is a very popular lunch venue for weekday lunches. We have reserved a table, therefore please e-mail or phone John Lane (0417 238 687) if you like to join us for lunch.

Ferries from Circular Quay
Dep 11.07 am Arr 11.44 am
11.37 am 12.14 pm

Return from Abbotsfort
1.57 pm, 2.27 pm 2.57 pm
(37 min trip)





WELCOME TO YOUR JULY 2018 NEWSLETTER. I TRUST THIS NEWSLETTER FINDS YOU WARM AND COMFORTABLE IN THE MIDST OF WINTER. THE JUNE GENERAL MEETING HAD A REASONABLE ATTENDANCE AND IT WAS GOOD TO SEE TWO MEMBERS, PAUL BROWN AND MAX HACKETT ATTEND THEIR FIRST GENERAL MEETING.

We commenced the general meeting with a minute silence to remember and acknowledge the passing of **Kevin Connell**. Kevin was a much-respected member who was in regular attendance at our general meetings along with many of the social events. Our thoughts and good wishes go to his family at this difficult time.

John Lane updated the meeting on upcoming social activities, you will find details within in this month's newsletter. **John also had a major announcement that Senator Doug Campbell would be a guest speaker at the July General Meeting at Emu Plains on Thursday, 26th July 2018.** Senator Cameron is a strong advocate for the Union movement, first as a Union Official and then continued his advocacy as a Senator. I would urge members to attend our July General Meeting. The newsletter has all the details for this meeting, I look forward to seeing you there.

ABC Under Renewed Threat

Members would have noticed that the ABC is more in the news these days. The May 2018 Federal Budget would have made us think that the country is awash with money with tax cuts for individuals and companies, yet **the federal budget reduced funding for the ABC by a further \$50 million dollars over the next three years. This cut is in addition to previous reduction of \$250 million dollars back in 2014.**

This funding reduction comes most likely as a result of government deals with the crossbench in the Senate, pressure from certain members within the Coalition and the commercial media. There are also reports in the media that State Councils of the Liberal Party have passed motions calling for the privatisation of the ABC. The federal government has denied it has any such plan.

The **"Friends of the ABC"** has vowed to take this fight up to the government this election, with renewed vigour and with a swelling support base. Member, Warren Morely is endeavouring to have the **"Friends of the ABC"**, New South Wales President,

Professor Ed Davis, attend a meeting to outline the threats to this esteemed independent media source and how we can respond to these threats from both the Federal Government and commercial media

Welcome to your July 2018 Newsletter

Vince Haywood

Keep our Personal Affairs in Order

Alan Stevens raised an important issue during general business; the need for members and their loved ones to have their personal affairs in order. Alan gave examples where relative had been unable to access a home computer, another where it was not known what funeral arrangements were wanted, relatives not knowing bank account and superannuation details or access a deceased mobile phone. Alan reminder is timely, given we store much of our data these days in the "cloud" these days and walk around with passwords inside our heads.

To help you sort out your personal records for close one has been published by our affiliate, the Superannuated Commonwealth Officers Association (SCOA).

This is a 60-page document and can be obtained for \$15 from fedsec@scoa.asn.au or SCOA, Post Office Box 107, Mawson. ACT 2607

this is a comprehensive guide to this subject and is well worth the money.

Finally, Paul Brown also spoke on the subject of dividend imputations.

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A Message from the President (cont'd)

Penalty Rates

I cannot let the start of July pass without a mention of penalty rates. Last year, the *Fair Work Commission* made the decision to cut penalty rates over a four-year period for workers in industries such as hospitality and retail. On Sunday, 1 July, the second round of these cuts came into effect with full-time and *part-time workers in the hospitality industry having their Sunday penalty rates cut by 10 per cent. While in retail, full-time and part-time workers will see their Sunday penalty rates cut by 15 per cent, while casuals will lose 10 per cent.*

While many of the above workers live on wage little above the minimum wage level, many are casual and part-time workers. They need to carefully manage their household budget and forego some life's small luxuries.

Our politicians were more fortunate on 1 July. The *Independent Remuneration Tribunal* that determines salaries increases for senior public servants, judiciary and federal politicians, approved a 2 per cent pay rise for members of federal parliament. It is more than ironic that politicians on salaries of over \$200,000 a year need a pay rise to maintain their living standard while another tribunal (*The Fair Work Commission*) expects workers on baseline wages to get-by, the same people who give up their weekends, public holidays and evenings to make ends meet.

Oh, remember the claims made by employer advocates for the penalty rate reductions, they said, "it was never about the money, they simply wanted the penalty rate reductions to allow them to employ more staff on weekend", anyone noticed more people serving, where you have a cup of coffee on a weekend?

Hospital Concession Parking

There is perhaps little need to remind members of the many out of pocket expenses that can come with hospitalisation, particularly if there is a need to make frequent visits or for an extended stay.

One of those expenses can be for parking at certain public hospitals. People eligible for concessional car parking include:

- Holders of an RMS issued Mobility Parking Scheme permit
- Holders of a Pensioner Concession Card
- Holders of a Gold Veterans Affairs Card
- Holders of a Health Care Card
- Ongoing cancer treatment patients
- Patients and their carers who are required to attend the hospital/facility for a course of treatment over a period of time greater than one week
- Patients and their carers attending more frequently than twice weekly, including carers of long-term patients who visit frequently
- Cardiac rehabilitation education and exercise class attendees; Daily dressing outpatients
- Health promotion education class attendees.

To claim your eligibility for a concession parking rate you will need to present your parking ticket, photo identification and concession card at a NSW public hospital administrative points prior to exiting the car park. You can claim the parking concession as either a patient or as a carer for a patient.

Concession Rates as of the 1st July 2018

- **0 – 3 hours; Free**
- **3 plus hours: \$5.50** one exit only per 24 hours
- **Three-day ticket: \$11.10** frequent use allowing multiple entries and exits in a 3 day period
- **Seven-day ticket: \$22.20** frequent use allowing multiple entries and exits in a 7 day period

Much of the above information comes from the Combined Pensioners and Supernatants Association (CPSA) who had campaigned for years to reduce hospital parking fees. You can find more information on the NSW Health website: (www.parking.health.nsw.gov.au).

On this website, you will also find details on downloading an app to assist you to claim this concession. The app shows the location of enquiry points within a hospital.

Once again, I hope to see many of you at the July General Meeting at Emu Plains on Thursday, 26th July 2018 commencing at 10.30 am.

Bye for now, Vince



Telstra Slashes Staff Numbers

Paul Rewhorn

LAST MONTH, I WROTE AN ARTICLE FOR OUR NEWSLETTER ON THE TOPIC OF TELSTRA AND ITS PROFIT WARNING FOR 2018-19. THE ARTICLE ATTRIBUTED SOME OF TELSTRA'S DIFFICULTIES TO THEIR POOR CUSTOMER SERVICE. A POINT THE RETIRED MEMBERS ASSOCIATION HAD TRIED TO PERSONALLY MAKE TO TELSTRA CEO, MR PENN, A FEW MONTHS EARLIER.

At the end of the article, I speculated what Mr Penn might do next. Would he further reduce staff numbers to make the company's bottom line seem better? Within days of the article, **Mr Penn announced plans to slash staff numbers by 8000 (one in four people) over the next four years. This comes on top of a 1600 staff reduction, a year earlier.**

Mr Penn also announcements on future investments (includes 5G mobile network) and company restructure of its networks division. The share market remained unimpressed. Telstra's share price fell a further and continues to languish.

About now, Telstra, employees undertake their annual performance reviews. They have to show whether they have achieved their performance goals. It would be interesting to be a *"fly on the wall"* at Mr Penn's performance review. **On Mr Penn's appointment as the CEO in February 2015, Telstra's share price was \$6.74 now the shares are sold as low of \$2.68. The share dividend has fallen by close to 33 per cent.**

Sure, the introduction of NBN onto the scene has had a major impact on Telstra profitability. Still, Telstra had large customer base. Customer loyalty that they needed to safeguard. A focus on quality customer service would have gone a long way.

I know how low Telstra's customer service can go. When I moved back to Sydney from Melbourne nine years ago. I notified Telstra of my move six weeks prior, yet it took Telstra a month after the move to have all my services working once again. Then billing issues took a further month to resolve. I asked myself at the time, how could a customer without inside knowledge of Telstra, cope with their constant errors and misinformation? Again, last November, I transferred over to NBN broadband with Telstra. Nothing had changed, another mess for me to sort through.

So instead of safeguarding its existing customer base and building its business in Australia, what has Telstra done in the past three years? There have been the unimpressive forays into Asia. such as an investment in a Chinese car sale website, failed efforts to break into Vietnam and the Philippines markets and a partnership with PT Telkom. **One investment alone into a video streaming business caused Telstra to write down \$500 million in the past two years.**

These overseas investments were to be growth opportunities. At the same time, Telstra was failing to shore up its core business at home. Now 8000 employees will pay the price of these misguided investment strategies and lost opportunities at home. Put aside the devastating impact the job losses will have on the employees and their families, there must be the doubt that Telstra senior management can deliver the staff reductions without further alienating their customers. It is a big claim to say you can reduce staff by 25 per cent, does Telstra suggest many of their people have been doing little that was worthwhile over the years?

The time has come for Telstra shareholders to ask if Mr Penn along with some board members and senior managers have the capability to take the company into the future.