



NEWSLETTER

Retired Telecommunications Employees Association

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

MARCH 2025

Welcome to your March 2025 Newsletter.

John Lane

Welcome to your March 2025 newsletter. I will begin by telling you we had a successful Annual General Meeting. Seeing so many members in attendance at the Petersham RSL and via Zoom video conference was gratifying. I thank members for their interest.

FINANCIAL REPORT

The first order of business was the Financial Report for 2024. The report indicated that our finances remain in a strong position, and I thank our treasurer, Alan Bassman, who now also serves as our secretary. I appreciate Alan for all his hard work; it is truly valued. You will find a copy of last year's financial report in the February 2025 newsletter.

CHANGES ON COMMITTEE

The other significant item on the AGM agenda is our election for executive and committee positions for 2025. This year, there are a few changes. First, Bruce Noake has stepped down as our assistant secretary. Bruce has been our assistant secretary for several years but has agreed to remain on the committee. He is also in charge of printing and posting our newsletter. Bruce will keep doing the newsletter postage in the coming year. Yes, we still have a few members who receive their newsletter by mail.

Bruce is now doing all the work that used to take the entire committee a couple of hours, folding and pasting address labels on all those newsletters. The Union would help with printing and postage. But Bruce does all this on his own. I appreciate the time and effort Bruce puts into our Association. Bruce plays a vital role at our Christmas Party, but I cannot tell you anymore as Bruce does his Christmas work undercover.

Yes, I am grateful we now have email, but the one drawback is that while preparing the newsletter for postage, the committee would come up with the solutions for most of the world's problems; you only need to view today's news to understand how much the world misses our input.

THANK YOU ALAN FAIRBAIRN

We also had Alan Fairbairn retire from the committee. Alan has worked on the Association's executive and later committee almost from the Association's foundation. *Alan has seen successive generations on executive and committee, serving thirty-one years on committee.*

Alan was once our treasurer and helped implement our current financial arrangements with the credit union. Over the years, credit union dividends have given us a healthy return covering our operational costs and, at times, allowed us to make several charitable donations. We are certainly going to miss Alan's advice. Thank you, Alan, for your years of work on behalf of the Association. I am sure you will continue to attend our general meetings.

OTHER COMMITTEE CHANGES

I have spoken about the outgoings, and now I will mention the new arrivals and changes on the committee. We have a new committee member, Terry Robinson. Terry is the brother of Barry Robinson. Barry has organised historic tours of the Hawkesbury via ferry over the past couple of years and has put together our lunch at the Anglers Rest Hotel in April.

Over the years, we have guarded against factions forming on the committee. If you find us going on ferry cruises each month, you will realise that the Robinson faction is in firm control.

We still had one committee vacancy following the AGM. I invited Peggy Trompf to join our committee. She kindly accepted and the March 2025 committee meeting unanimously endorsed. We are excited to have the first woman serve on our committee. Peggy is the wife of the late Colin Cooper. She has expressed to me that Colin would be proud of her and I could not agree more.

A warm welcome to Peg.

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MARCH 2025



Retired Telecommunications Employees Association

Thursday, 27TH March 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,
25TH March 2025

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Committee	
<p><i>Trevor Anderson, John Bryce, Bob Hamblion, Vince Haywood, Terry Livingstone, John McAuliffe, Arthur McCarroll, Barry Robinson, Terry Robonson, Garry Masman, Ron Milosh, Bruce Noake Warren Morley, Lee Walkington.</i></p>	



Welcome to your March 2025 Newsletter (Cont'd).

Finally, Paul Rewhorn has become our new assistant secretary and will continue as newsletter editor. The additional workload for Paul gives me concern that more typos will find their way into the newsletter. Paul has agreed to undertake monthly performance reviews with me over a few beers after the committee meeting. Hopefully, he will remember my helpful feedback.

THANK YOU PETER CLARK

My thanks go to Peter Clarke, who was our Returning Officer. I belatedly asked Peter because our regular returning officer, Alan Stevens, has not been well lately.

We recently had our first social function for 2025 at Bundeena Beach, where we experienced beautiful weather. **Our next social function is lunch at the Anglers Rest Hotel restaurant on the Hawkesbury River on Thursday, 17TH April 2025.** We had planned to have lunch on Dangar Island; however, no restaurant on the island is open on weekdays. However, if you would like to arrive a little earlier, there is a ferry service to the island, or I suggest an alternative is for you to take a walk around Brooklyn foreshores, close to where we will have lunch.

ANGLERS REST HOTEL

We have booked the Anglers Rest Hotel restaurant from 11.30 am and plan to commence lunch around midday. *You will find plenty of information inside the newsletter, including the Hawkesbury River Station train timetable and the Dangar Island ferry timetable. I need to advise you that the Dangar Island ferry is a small vessel and not part of the Opal fare network and the return fare is about \$11.*

In May, we will have our traditional Autumn Leaves lunch at Springwood. I will tell you more about that in the April 2025 newsletter.

ROGER BAMBER - MARCH GENERAL MEETING GUEST SPEAKER

Roger Bamber is our guest speaker at our March General Meeting this Thursday, 27th March 2025. During his time with the PMG/Telecom/Telstra, Roger was called upon to coordinate the response to major disasters impacting telecommunications. There was the Granville train disaster in January 1977 and major vandalism attacks on the network. I believe members will find Roger's presentation interesting.

I look forward to seeing you at our meeting at Petersham RSL and on Zoom video on Thursday, 27th March 2025. The meeting starts at 11.05 am.



MARCH 2025 GENERAL MEETING

Guest Speaker - Roger Bamber

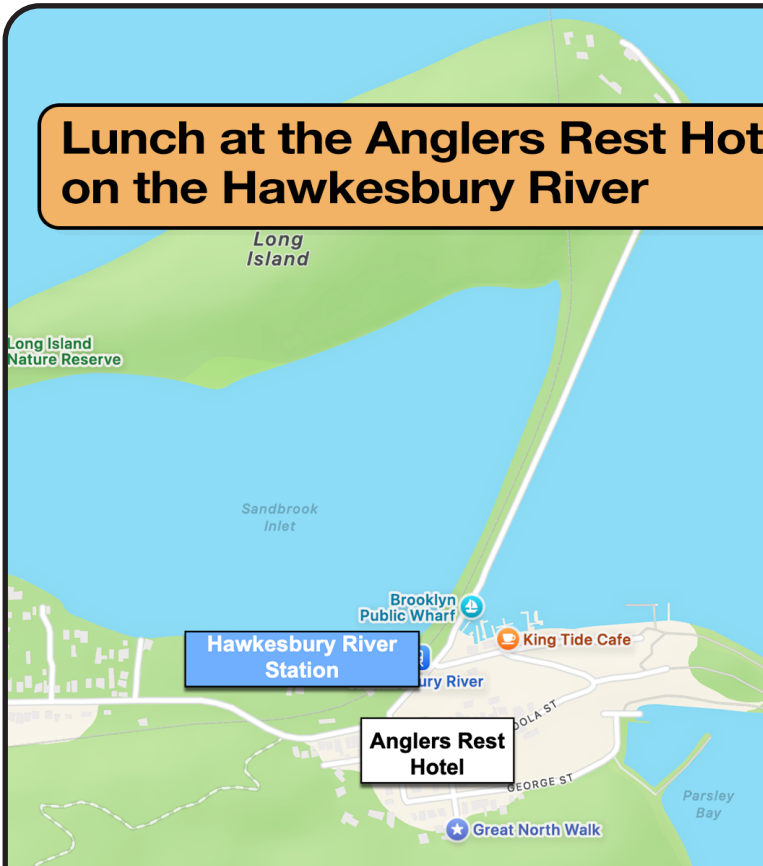
Topic: Personal Experience - Managing Major Incidents while with PMG/Telecom/Telstra.

Roger will speak of his personal experiences coordinating a response to major disasters that impacted on telecommunications services, incident management and services recovery

27th March 2025



Lunch at the Anglers Rest Hotel on the Hawkesbury River



Date: 17TH April 2025
From 11.30 am
 Lunch at the Anglers Rest Hotel outdoor restaurant is the perfect way to relax and enjoy lunch on the beautiful Hawkesbury River.
 Before lunch, you can explore the foreshores of the Hawkesbury River or take a trip to Dangar Island, where you can treat yourself to morning tea at the Dangar Island Depot Cafe before hopping back on the ferry to join other members for lunch.
 Or wander around on the foreshores close to the Anglers Rest Hotel with plenty of interest to observe.

Trains - Central to Hawkesbury River				
Central	Strathfield	Epping	Hornsby	Hawkesbury River
8.50 am	9.03 am	9.15 am	9.26 am	9.50 am
9.50 am	10.03 am	10.15 am	10.26 am	10.50 am
10.50 am	11.03 am	11.15 am	11.26 am	11.50 am

Trains - Newcastle InterChange to Hawkesbury River			
Newcastle Inter-Change	Gosford	Woy Woy	Hawkesbury River
7.31am	8.59 am	9.10 am	9.23 am
8.31am	9.59 am	10.10 am	10.23 am
9.31am	10.59 am	11.10 am	11.23 am

The Central to Hawkesbury River Station 8.50 am and 9.50 am trains leave from Platform 8 and the 10.50 am train leaves from Platform 9. The departure platform is subject to change. You should arrive a little early and check the inter-urban indicator boards for the latest platform departure information.

Dangar Island Ferry Timetable					
Brooklyn	Dangar Is	Brooklyn	Brooklyn	Dangar Is	Brooklyn
9.25 am	9.55 am	10.10 am	10.15 am	10.55 am	11.10 am
11.40 am	11.55 am	12.10 pm			



Lithium-ion Battery Safety

You may have read and seen more news lately about fires caused by rechargeable batteries. In 2024 alone, 63 fires linked to lithium-ion batteries have occurred in NSW, averaging almost six per week, resulting in seven injuries and two deaths. I read of a damaged lithium-ion battery in February 2024 taken from a car left out in the weather at a car rental near Sydney Airport. It exploded and destroyed five nearby parked vehicles. I also notice the manufacturer LG, is frequently running advertisements on commercial television advising of the urgent recall of some of its batteries.

Lithium-ion batteries are found in many everyday items like phones, tablets, hearing aids, electric bikes, vaccum cleaners, scooters, and garden tools. I own an electric mower that has a large battery. I like it because I do not have to store petrol and oils, and then there is the push-button start.

Lithium-ion batteries, while small, are powerful able hold large amounts of energy. You can compare the need to carefully handle batteries to the storage of petrol around your home.



WHY ARE LITHIUM-ION BATTERIES RISKY?

- ◀ **Their risks can come from being poorly made**, overcharged, becoming damaged (dropped including with a tool or device) and unsafe DIY modifications to either the battery or its charger.
- ◀ **Other serious incidents occur at their disposal**. They have ignited fires in garbage trucks.

- ◀ **There is little regulation** where there are inspections; authorities frequently find non-compliant chargers are being sold. Fortunately, this is about to change in New South Wales.

THE SAFETY TIPS

Charge safely - Always use the charger that came with your device - not a cheap replacement. Do not charge overnight or when you are away from home. Unplug the battery and its charger once fully charged. You are likely prone to forget; therefore use a timer that will disconnect 240v from the charger.

Be careful where you charge - Keep batteries away from beds, couches, or anything flammable while charging. Never charge batteries on soft surfaces or under pillows.

Never drop or puncture batteries - Check the battery if you have drop the battery itself or while it was connected to a tool or other device. Take damaged batteries to a recycling centre; never throw them in with the household rubbish.

Avoid DIY fixes - Do not modify or tinker with batteries or a charger to make devices go “faster” or “longer.” It is dangerous.

Be alert to the warning signs - If a battery feels hot, swollen, smells odd, or starts to make noise—stop using it immediately.

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Vale Charles Thomas Hoyer



The Retired Telecommunications Employees Association is saddened to inform members of the passing of our esteemed member, Charles Thomas Hoyer, who passed away peacefully on Sunday, 9th March 2025. His funeral service was held on Thursday, 20th March 2025.



Charles was 75 years old and resided in Woonona. He had been a valued member of our Association for nearly 12 years and occasionally joined our general meetings via Zoom.

Charles began his career in telecommunications as a Technician in Training in 1965. After completing his first year of training at Strathfield, he was posted to the Wollongong Telephone Exchange, later transferring to the newly opened Unanderra Telephone Exchange. In addition to his service with the then PMG, Charles also served briefly in the armed services. He continued working in the Wollongong area until his retirement in 1988.

A lifelong resident of the Unanderra area, Charles grew up near the local railway lines, which sparked his enduring passion for railways. He was a dedicated model railway enthusiast, often planning family holidays around visits to railway museums and collections of memorabilia. Charles also had a keen interest in technology.

Deeply connected to his community, Charles actively supported his local school, RSL, and lodge.

Charles is survived by his beloved wife Helen, and was a devoted father and father-in-law to Karena, April, Jasmin, and Chris. He was a proud grandfather to Morgan, James, Megan, Grace, Lucy, and Lawson, and great-grandfather to Ivy and Cody.

Charles will be sadly missed by all who knew him. The Association extends its heartfelt condolences and sympathy to Helen, his family, and his many friends.

Lithium-ion Battery Safety (cont'd)

NEW LEGISLATION ON THE WAY

Last week, the NSW government announced it is taking significant steps to address the growing dangers of lithium-ion battery fires by introducing new legislation—the Product Lifecycle Responsibility Act

The Act includes

Mandatory Stewardship Schemes: Manufacturers and suppliers must ensure safe design, manufacturing, reuse, recycling, and disposal of batteries.

Safe Disposal and Recycling: Suppliers will be responsible for registering battery products and providing dedicated collection points for disposal.

Public Awareness Campaigns: Battery suppliers must run education campaigns to help consumers understand battery risks and how to dispose of them safely.

Safety and Design Standards: Companies must improve battery packaging, storage, and importation practices to reduce fire hazards and improve recyclability.

Broad Scope of Coverage: The law will not just apply to large batteries but also to smaller embedded batteries in devices like cordless vacuums, electric toothbrushes, children’s toys, e-bikes, and e-scooters.



Nuclear Energy - Please No More Costly Mistakes

Paul Rewhorn

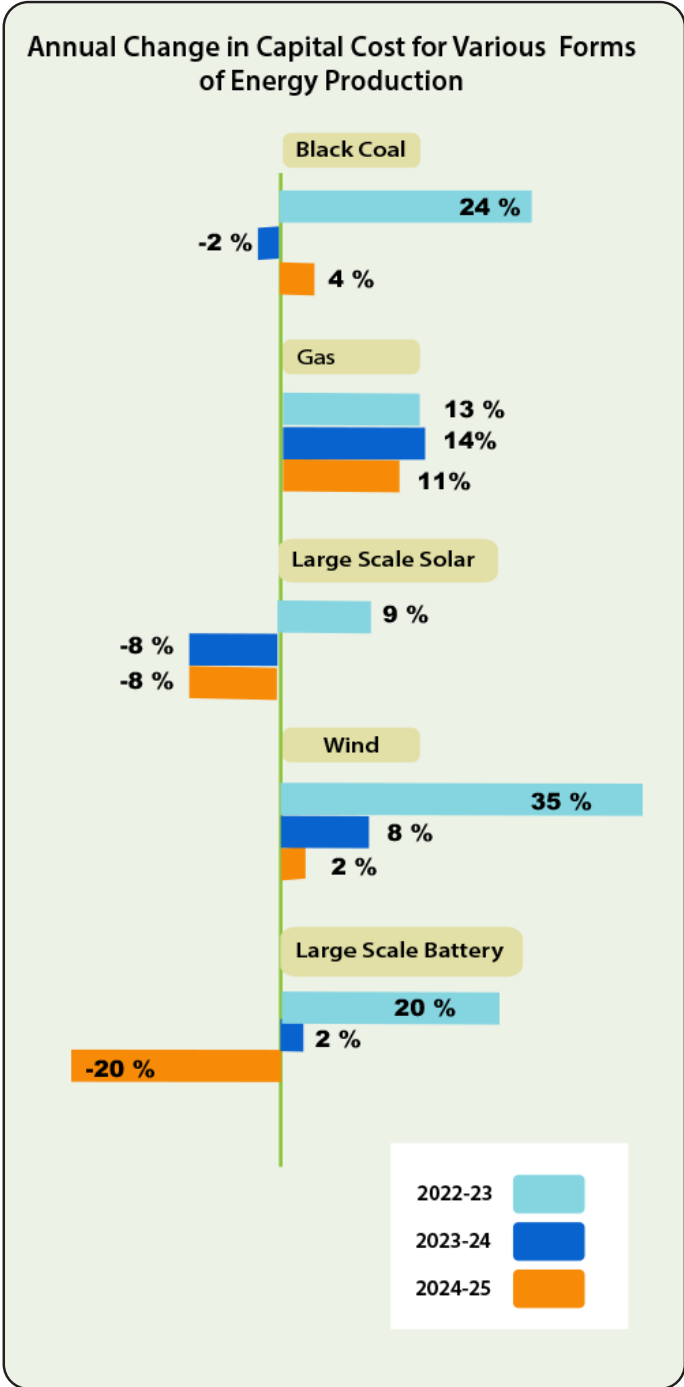
I am not writing the following article about the federal coalition’s plans to build seven small modular (SMR) nuclear reactors across Australia by 2035 from the perspective that nuclear reactors are unsafe. Instead, I suggest that the plan to construct nuclear reactors in this country is not the solution to our future energy needs and makes no economic sense. Australia cannot continue to make mistakes when it comes to energy policy.

Our politicians have squabbled over energy policy for more than two decades. Where has this left us? We have high electricity prices that are certain to continue to go even higher, and there is continued uncertainty as to whether we will have the necessary future generation capacity to meet our needs. I find it astonishing that the federal government needs to subsidise every Australian household \$300 per annum to help them with their electricity bill. I am sure most welcome the \$300; however, it tells you something is seriously wrong.

There was a time long ago when the electricity bill was not a standout expense item compared with other everyday expenses. All that started to change and gather pace in the late 1980s when lobbying for privatising government assets seemed a good idea, the answer to everything. We were told the private sector offered greater efficiencies and would provide the State governments with the funds to get on with other more important matters. Despite public scepticism about privatising electricity, State governments were determined to push ahead with privatising energy production and retail.

We will have a federal election in the next three months, and electricity prices and securing our future electricity needs will feature prominently. The federal opposition believes it has an opportunity to sway the electorate with a proposal to build seven nuclear power stations across the country.

Their argument claims is that with 90 per cent of our baseload electricity comes from coal-fired power stations, which will end their lifecycle in the next decade and nuclear energy is essential to replace these coal-fired power stations.



However, If 90 per cent of coal-fired capacity is to retire, the proposed seven small modular reactors will replace only 30 per cent of the retired coal-fired generation.

The federal opposition remains unclear as to whether it will immediately proceed the construction of nuclear reactors.

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Nuclear Energy - Please No More Costly Mistakes (Cont'd)

There are reports, it would first have a two-year study and then perhaps start the construction of two nuclear power stations as part of the trial before the construction of the remainder.

Also, they will need overcome existing legislation. The Howard government prohibited nuclear power 25 years ago. New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland have laws that prevent the construction of nuclear power stations. Just changing federal legislation will need to get past the control of the Senate, where federal governments rarely have a clear majority. Three of the fifteen power stations are due to close by 2034. Delays finishing the nuclear power stations instead of other alternatives will cause a gap in electricity supply.

The federal opposition maintains that the seven planned small modular reactors (SMRs) can be quickly built. However, ***SMRs are still mainly in the development stage. Their supporters say they can be factory-built, mass-produced and easily transported to onsite, but no country has yet achieved full-scale, commercial SMR manufacturing. SMRs are not yet cost-competitive compared with larger nuclear reactors or renewable energy, and the regulatory framework for SMRs is still evolving. It is unlikely that there will be an answer as to whether there is a future for SMRs until the 2030s.***

The modern nuclear plants under construction in Western Europe are years behind schedule. Here, we are talking about countries with an established nuclear power industries. ***A case in point is the Hinkley Point C nuclear power plant in the United Kingdom. Hinkley Point C was to cost \$20 billion initially but is now likely to exceed \$100 billion and will come into operation years overdue.***

An important point to consider is that the United Kingdom was the first nation to construct nuclear reactors; therefore, it has a pool of people with the skills to eventually overcome problems at Hinkley, albeit at a cost and with a delay. Compare this to Australia, which has little or no experience in nuclear energy production.

When the opposition was last in government, it failed to achieve consensus even among its ranks on the make-up of future power generation. They did decide on a pumped-hydro project in 2017. The estimated cost was \$2 billion and was due for completion in 2021.

The price has blown out to \$12 billion and is not expected to generate power until late 2027. I mention "Snowy 2,0" to show the unexpected does occur. The opposition's nuclear project is estimated to cost around \$400 billion, and Australia can ill-afford a cost blow-out of the magnitude of "Snowy 2,0".

Despite the setbacks, *pumped hydro storage* (PHS) is the world's most significant and widely used form of grid-scale energy storage and could be a solution to achieve a reliable base power. Pumped hydro storage uses electricity (solar or wind generation) to pump water uphill while energy demand is low and then release it downhill to generate electricity when demand is high.

For the coalition, the warning signs are already out there in full view. A Howard government commissioned *Switkowski Report* that estimated it would take at least ten and possibly fifteen years to construct just a single nuclear power station. The CSIRO, in their recent report into nuclear energy, concluded:

- ~ ***Nuclear power does not currently provide Australia's most cost-competitive solution for low-emission electricity.***
- ~ ***Long development lead times mean nuclear will not be able to significantly contribute to achieving net zero emissions by 2050.***
- ~ ***While nuclear technologies have a long operational life, this factor provides no unique cost advantage over shorter-lived technologies.***

In this article, I have included a chart showing the changes in capital costs to produce various forms of energy over the past three years. The chart shows that wind, solar, and battery productions are the cheapest and are getting more affordable.

During the upcoming election, we must listen to who or what is responsible for high electricity prices, followed by claims and counterclaims as to the best solution. Private lobbyists and self-interest groups will be there, stoking the debate funds siding with the politics that matches their aims. Let us hope that voters will make the right decisions as the consequence of poor choices will be more dire than their NBN fiasco.



2025 Social Calendar

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,
Meeting starting time is 11 am.

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