Retired Telecommunications Employees Association
NEWSLETTER
September 2026
RTEA - Proud of its Union Heritage

Retired Telecommunications Employees Association Remembers Jim Spencer

Paul Rewhorn

Soon after Alan Stevens's passing, the Retired Telecommunications Employees Association has lost Jim Spencer, another long-standing member.

Jim Spencer passed away peacefully in the early morning of 26th August 2026. Jim had turned 97 just two days earlier. Jim's daughter Emma expressed gratitude for the peaceful passing, explaining that Jim had become frustrated by his failing body and increasing dependence. She thanked RTEA members for the care and friendship they had shown him over many years.

Jim joined our Association in its formative years and maintained his membership for over 35 years. Together with founding members like Bert Harris, Harry Collins, Alan Fairbairn, and Ralph Britten, he helped guide the Association into the supportive network it is today for former Telecommunications retirees.

At our August General Meeting in Emu Plains, members shared memories of Jim. The general view was simple: *he was a "great bloke," always ready to have a yarn.*

Being a true gentleman he would have stood aside and let Dolly pass through the Pearly Gate first.

Bob Hamblion

Jim had a distinguished career in Network Design and Construction (NDC - Country Installation) and outside Telecommunications. Jim and fellow member Tod Mirgis were at Woomera during the period when rocket research was taking place soon after the Second World War.

During his career, Jim had widespread respect as manager of Country Installation at the PMG. Throughout the 1960s, he led teams that delivered major network modernisation projects, that introduced automatic switching, and transmission quality improvements across New South Wales.

Peter Clarke and Jim both who both worked in NDC in conversation - 2016 Christmas Party

Returning to our Association, Jim became well known for delivering his regular ***"Spencer Report"*** at each monthly General Meeting. He offered thoughtful and often insightful commentary on the state of politics at the time, particularly on issues affecting retirees. While he sometimes expressed frustration with the political landscape, his reports were always informative, engaging, and keenly anticipated by members.*Daughter Emma recalls there was a family version of the Spencer report at the dinner table when young.*

Jim's commitment, however, extended well beyond his commentary at our general meetings. In the early years of our Association, he joined other members, travelling to Canberra to meet representatives from both major political parties and advocating strongly for retirees' interests. He also represented our Association on bodies that promoted the interests of senior retirees. Jim helped secure a transport seniors card, allowing seniors to travel throughout the metropolitan area for just $2.50.

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Jim and Ann Spencer - 2016 Christmas Party

Apart from his activism, Jim and his late wife Ann were regulars at our social events and our annual trips away; they were always enjoyable company and made many friends. Sadly, Jim's health declined in his later years, though he always tried to stay independent. Peter Hack and other members kept in constant touch with Jim, and despite his declining physical health, he remained alert and still took an interest in current affairs.

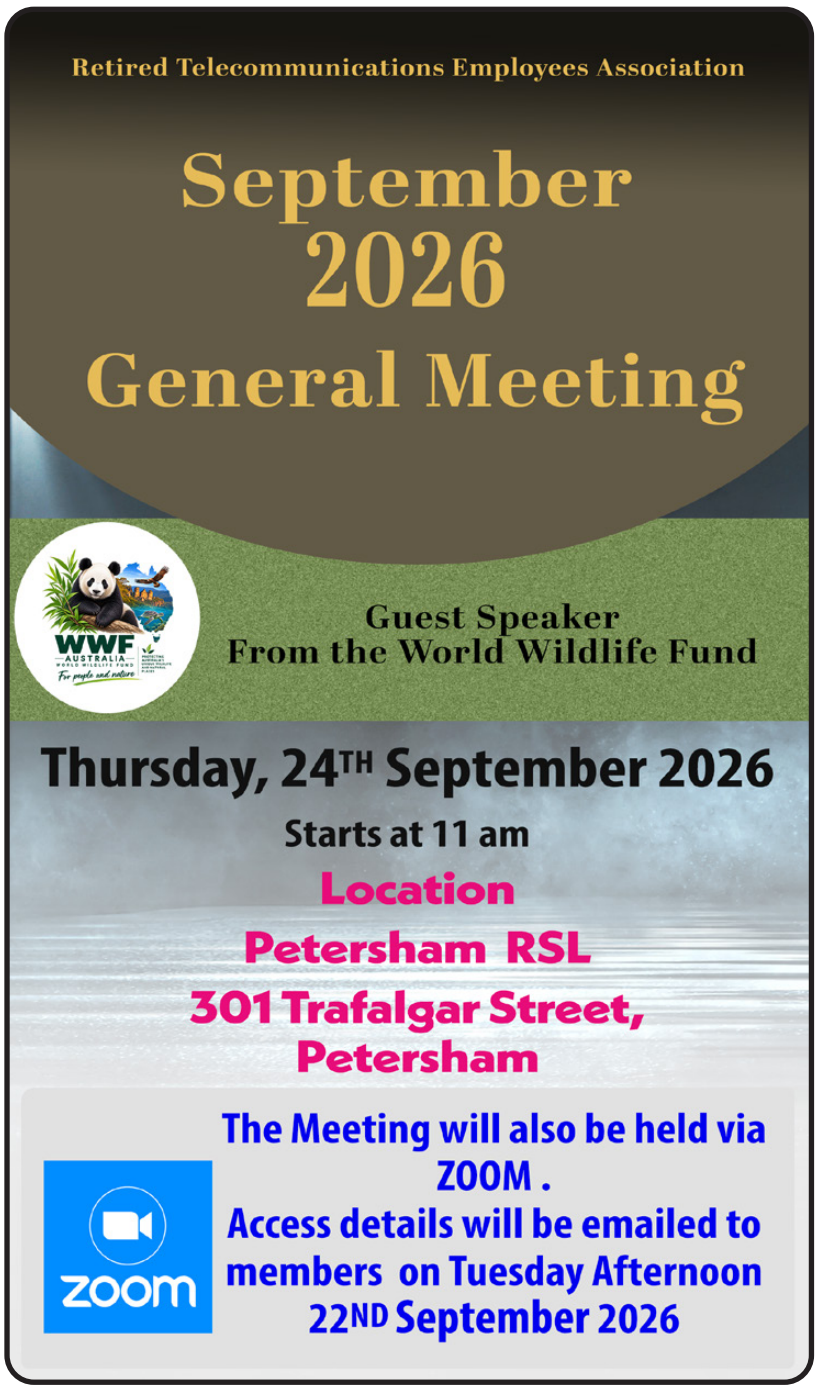
A private funeral service has been held for Jim. The family have advised the RTEA that there will be a public memorial service for Jim in January of next year. Once the Association has the details, we will forward them to members.

We cannot complete this tribute without mention of Peter Hack. Peter, our welfare officer, remained in constant contact with Jim by either phone or personalhome visits as his health went into decline. Jim's family have expressed their gratitude to the Association, and Peter in particular, for the support offered to Jim.

We should be grateful to have known Jim, and to have appreciated the wisdom and friendship he shared with all of us.

Our condolences and sympathy go out to daughter Emma and son Evan, and other family members during this difficult and sad time.

Rest in peace, Jim Spencer.



Retired Telecommunications Employees Association

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Welcome to your September 2026 newsletter.

John Lane

Welcome to your September 2026 newsletter. Once again, I have to start with sad news: Jim Spencer's passing, so soon after Alan Stevens's passing. This month's newsletter has an article dedicated to Jim. At our August General Meeting, just a few days after Jim's passing, members spoke warmly of him, after we held a minute's silence in honour of Jim and Alby Hinchcliff.

I visited Jim just a couple of weeks before his passing. He looked frail but alert, as always, and we enjoyed a good conversation that afternoon. When an Association like ours forms, no one is sure whether it will succeed. Fortunately, we had a group of members that included Jim, who gave the right leadership to ensure success. More than forty years later, we are still together, owing much to the dedication that Jim and others gave to our Association in those early days. Our presence today underscores their vision and commitment. Thank you, Jim Spencer.

Earlier, I mentioned Alby Hinchcliff, a member of our Association since 1992. A tribute to Alby is being written and will be featured in our October 2026 newsletter.

FUTURE EVENTS

The year is coming to a close, but we still have plenty on our calendar for the rest of the year. I will briefly describe each item here, and I invite you to learn more in the newsletter.

We have a tour of the Conservatory of Music this coming Thursday, 17th September 2026. We thank Peggy Trompf for arranging the tour, which is not generally offered to the public. We will receive a guided tour of this historic colonial building, ending with a special one-hour concert. **Afterwards, we will have lunch at the City Club at 565 George Street, Sydney.** No booking is required; please take advantage of this unique day out.

I am looking forward to the day.

Next, I will mention our Christmas lunch at the Petersham RSL before turning to guest speakers. You will find all the details in the newsletter, and you can book now. The biggest challenge today is keeping lunches affordable in these inflationary times. I am pleased to tell you we have kept the price the same as last year, thanks to a wonderful, friendly group of caterers at the Petersham RSL.

Last year, many members told me how good the food was. We will still have lucky door prizes. While there will be future reminders, please put Thursday, 19th November 2026 in your calendar for our final end-of-year function. For details, see inside the newsletter.

GUEST SPEAKERS

All our upcoming General Meetings for the remainder of the year will have a guest speakers. Starting at the **September General Meeting on Thursday, 24th September 2026, we will have a speaker from the World Wildlife Fund** to discuss their work protecting the planet's animal species and climate. Then, at the **October General Meeting on Thursday, 22nd October 2026, a representative from the "Save the Children" organisation will speak.**

Finally, we have former senator John Faulkner at our November General Meeting. John will speak about his newly released book "Fishy Business". It is about the Sydney Fish Market, its history and its people. Something I didn't know until recently: the Sydney Fish Market is the third biggest in the world. I am planning our visit to the Fish Market next year so that we will have some valuable background information.

Well, I am about to find some clean socks to pack for our annual trip away to Gilgandra in October. We have already booked all the rooms at the motel in Gilgandra where we will stay. We have six interesting days ahead to explore places around Gilgandra. We have had great support from members for this trip - thank you.

One last thing: please do not forget our September General Meeting on Thursday, 24th September 2026. I look forward to seeing you there.

Retired Telecommunications Employees Association members have a unique opportunity for a guided tour of the **Sydney Conservatorium of Music (SCM) on Thursday, 17TH September 2026, starting at 10.30 am. Members should assemble in the Conservatorium's foyer at 10.15 am to ensure our tour starts on time.**

Following our tour, the conservatorium has invited us to attend a concert at midday. Shortly before the concert, we can have refreshments from 11.30 am.

The Conservatorium's main building is a heritage-listed Greenway Building located within the Royal Botanic Gardens off Macquarie Street.

The building was originally designed as a stable for Governor Macquarie to hold 30 horses and servants. Construction dates back to 1817. Today, the building is part of the NSW Conservatorium of Music, one of Australia's oldest and most prestigious music schools, founded in 1915 by Belgian conductor and violinist Henri Verbrugghen.

Following our visit, we plan to have lunch at the City Club, at 565 George Street.

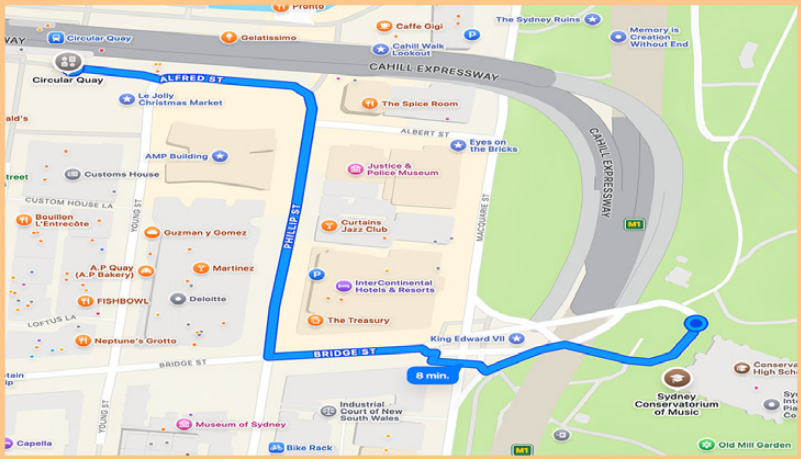
Directions from St James Station

The walk from St James Station is 0.9 Km. From St James Station, take the exit to Macquarie Street. Continue on Macquarie Street, pass the NSW Parliament Building, and you can join a pathway in the Botanic Gardens until you arrive at the conservatorium, which you will see on your right.

Sydney Conservatorium
1 Conservatorium Road, Sydney

Directions from Circular Quay Station

The walk from Circular Quay Station is 0.5 Km with some steep inclines. Exit Circular Quay Station and head to Phillip Street (135m). Then take a left onto Bridge Street. Continue for 120 m, then bear right after 35m,; after 80 metres, the conservatorium is on your right.



Retired Telecommunications Employees Association

CHRISTMAS LUNCH

12 PM - Thursday - 19TH November 2026

PETERSHAM RSL

Our Christmas lunch at the Petersham RSL offers an excellent opportunity to catch up with fellow members while enjoying a delicious three-course lunch. There will also be lucky door prizes (bottle of wine)

$65 per person

Same price as the past two years

MENU

ENTRÉE	Tomato bruschetta, garlic prawns and an arancini ball
MAIN	Choice of roast pork or barramundi (every second placement)
DESSERT	Christmas pudding and custard

PAYMENT

You can pay via Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). When using EFT, please type your surname in the details. If EFT is unavailable to you, please pay at our next General Meeting to Alan Bassman.

Great Southern Bank
BSB 814-282 **eSaver Account No: 10642769**

John Faulkner
Special Guest Speaker

November 2026 General Meeting
Thursday, 26th November 2026

Former Senator John Faulkner has released "Fishy Business", a book exploring the Sydney Fish Market, the world's third-largest fish market.

For coastal Aboriginal people, fishing and shellfishing were not only a way of life but also formed the foundation of the region's culture. This influence was to continue after the arrival of early European colonists.

John Faulkner brings to life the history of the Sydney Fish Market: its colourful personalities, intrigue, and the remarkable journeys of hardworking families from Europe, Asia, and beyond.

Drawing on his deep personal connections, John Faulkner offers a personal perspective on the vibrant history and community of the Fish Market in "Fishy Business".

INTRODUCE A NEW MEMBER

We are making it easier for you introduce a former workmate as a new member of our Association.

Simply email the newsletter to them, direct them to this page of the newsletter and to click on the link below. The link will open a PDF file that has membership application. They can type their application and form is easy to complete.

There is a SUBMIT APPLICATION button on the bottom left of the application form that will email their application to the Association.

Alternatively, print them the application inside that is inside of this newsletter for them to complete by hand.

Future Guest Speakers

September General Meeting
Thursday 24TH September 2026

The Retired Telecommunications Employees Association is pleased to welcome a representative from World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Australia as a guest speaker at our September 2026 General Meeting.

For over 40 years, WWF-Australia has worked to protect Australia's remarkable wildlife and natural environment. It works with governments, Its work includes protecting threatened species and restoring their habitats, conserving forests and oceans, responding to the effects of climate change, and supporting communities to care for the natural environment. Australian species include koalas, platypuses, greater gliders, bilbies, whales, marine turtles and many other threatened animals. More than 570 native Australian animal species are presently at risk of being lost.

A major focus of the organisation is its Regenerate Nature by 2030 strategy. The aim is not simply to protect what remains, but to restore damaged landscapes, wildlife habitats and marine

Save the Children

October General Meeting
Thursday 22ND October 2026

Save the Children Australia will have a guest speaker address us at our October 2026 General Meeting.

Save the Children works in Australia and around the world to help ensure every child has the opportunity for a healthy, safe and educated future. Its work ranges from improving children's health and access to education to protecting vulnerable children from abuse, neglect and exploitation.

The organisation also provides vital assistance during wars, natural disasters and other emergencies, supplying children and families with essentials such as food, clean water, shelter and emotional support. Save the Children helps to establish temporary learning facilities to give children the opportunity to continue their education during periods of disruption.

The guest speaker will inform members about Save the Children's important work and the challenges facing children in Australia and overseas.

Alan Bassman
46 Lyle Street,
Girraween NSW
2145

Retired Telecommunications Employees Association

NEW MEMBER APPLICATION FORM

Email Address: alanbassman53@gmail.com

1 Your Details

First name | **Last name** | **Spouse/partner name (optional)**

Street address

Suburb/town | **State** | **Postcode**

Email address | **Phone/mobile**

Privacy: RTEA keeps members' information confidential and does not share it with third parties without consent.

2 Work History

Former company or workplace | **Worked in telecommunications?** ☐ Yes ☐ No | **TIT year (if applicable)**

Employment history, roles and relevant information

3 Membership Options

One-time membership fee (no annual fee)	$20
Optional name badge, including delivery	$15
Total payable	**$20 or $35**

Optional name badge ☐ Yes ☐ No | **Name on badge** | **Amount payable:** $20

4 Payment And Submission

Bank transfer details

Great Southern Bank **BSB: 814-282** **Account number: 10642769**

Payment reference: include your surname in the transaction description.

By email: Save the completed PDF and attach it to an email addressed to alanbassman53@gmail.com.

By post: Print and send the completed form to Alan Bassman, 46 Lyle Street, Girraween NSW 2145.

Please do not send cash or cheques. Payment can only be accepted by bank transfer.

Select Submit Application, review the prepared email, then select Send.