

Vol 13 No: 4, April 2019

President's message



It's hard for us as individuals to keep up with the pace of technological change, and as a Club we also need to keep changing.

We've noticed, for example, that there is less demand for basic courses and more interest in short courses on specific topics and in getting one to one help with problems. The Committee is looking at rationalising the different services we offer, and the prices we charge for them. We will have more details for you at the April member meeting and value your feedback.

One new offering is the Help Desk service, which will be operating on Monday afternoons in Term 2 with different trainers on different days. We have two bookings so far (how to install Linux on a notebook; how to synchronise contacts and calendar between phone and laptop). If you need help with a problem, consider booking in for one of these sessions – we'll do our best to assist.

Another exciting alternative to classroom learning is the self-paced learning package that Deb Neyle has developed for watching YouTube. It's currently being user-tested, and if all goes well will be available in Term 2.

We surveyed members at the March member meeting to find out which agenda items you thought were most important. We're making some changes as a result, including singing Happy Birthday at morning tea; skipping the stretch break; expanding 'What's New'; and changing the entertainment segment. You'll see these changes at the April meeting.

We're now having two weeks' well-deserved break and the Office will be closed. If you need to book and pay for Term 2 courses, come to our member meeting next Thursday.

Best wishes for the Easter break, drive safely, and Keep learning!

Deborah

dmmartin@bigpond.net.au

Home Energy Action Plan – Appliance Replacement Offer

The speaker for our March members meeting was Eve Ivy from the Sustainability section of the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH). She introduced three current programs being run by the OEH aimed at reducing energy usage in the community. Collectively these are named the High Energy Action Program.

The three elements of this Action Program are;

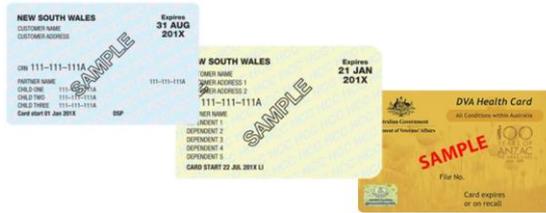
1. The Appliance Replacement Program
2. The Energy Hardship Assistance plan
3. A Social Housing Upgrade.

Most of the talk was devoted to the **Appliance Replacement program (ARP)**. At the moment this program covers TVs and 'fridges only. TVs with a cathode ray tube are especially energy hungry. 'Fridges must be more than 6 years old.

In collaboration with "The Good Guys" stores across the state, the ARP offers a variety of TVs (3) and 'fridges (15) with high energy efficiency ratings (3.5 stars or better out of 5) to replace older equipment that is more wasteful of energy.

The objective of this scheme is to reduce the number of older machines in the community so an old 'fridge or TV must be surrendered for a new one to be subsidized.

The scheme is open to people with a pension concession card, a DVA gold card or a Commonwealth Health Care card.



*Please note: A Commonwealth Seniors Health Card is not sufficient eligibility for this offer. You will need to hold one of the above cards.

Our speaker did, however, suggest that individuals who do not meet the criteria may still be allowed to use the scheme at the discretion of the government. For example, a person fleeing a violent relationship with children, who needs to set up a new household could use the scheme under a discretionary ruling. These applications are handled by community organisations such as Anglicare, Baptist Care, Vinnies, Sydney West Multicultural Centre and Bingaree Indigenous Centre.



The Good Guys offer a discount of about 10% which is then boosted by a government contribution so that the price of the appliance is 40-50% cheaper than the original price. No interest payment plans can be arranged.

In Parramatta, it is expected that nearly 33,000 households will meet the criteria. Currently, only 1147 applications have been made and 902 appliances delivered. However, the uptake for February had grown 5% over previous months so the program seems to be having some impact. The people covered in Parramatta included Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, culturally and linguistically diverse households and disability pensioners as well as older members of the community. In NSW, 33,500 households have been approved for new appliances.

Margaret Tucker Moxon commented that she had used the scheme to purchase a refrigerator, and that there was a good selection of brands and sizes. Her old fridge was taken away.

Access to the ARP is via the website <https://energysaver.nsw.gov.au>. On this site there is more information, an energy usage calculator (for working out the impact of an appliance on your energy bills and a Free Lightbulb Saver Application. The Free Lightbulb Scheme replaces existing lights with LEDs reducing the 10% of an average electricity bill which is due to lighting.

The **Energy Hardship Assistance (EHAS) scheme** aims to produce energy bill reductions of up to 50% by providing solar panel systems and other energy saving equipment to qualifying households. This is particularly aimed at people in rental accommodation who wouldn't normally spend money of such upgrades as they may not remain in the house long enough to have a financial benefit.

The **Social Housing Upgrade** is very similar to the EHAS but concentrates on social housing. This upgrade includes rooftop solar panels, ceiling insulation, draught-proofing and lighting updates to make the social housing much more energy efficient.

To close, the speaker ran through some other energy tips including;

- Closing windows and doors to reduce draughts.
- Setting air conditioning at 23-26 degrees C in summer and 18-21 in winter. Each extra degree of heating or cooling increases energy use by 10%.
- Set the 'fridge temperature at 3-1 degrees C and the freezer at -15 to -18 degrees C.

- Switch appliances off at the wall. Stand-by lights can take up 5% of the energy used by the appliance.
- Wash with cold water, hang clothes out on a clothesline.
- Check the star ratings when buying a new appliance.
- Use fans first in both summer and winter to distribute cool/warm air better.
- Watch water usage – fix drips, take shorter showers, only use dishwashers when full.

Eve left pamphlets for members to take and she was able to join us for morning tea where she answered some questions for individual members.

Contributed by Deb Neyle

Members' Meeting speaker

The presentation at the April meeting will be on the theme **Healthy Brain Ageing**.

The meeting will be held as usual at the UNE premises on Level 1, 232 Church Street, Parramatta on Thursday 18th April between 9:30-11:30 am.

New Members in March

Please welcome the following new members:

- Chris Fraser (Ms)
- George Karas
- Steve Mather
- Pravin Nadkarni (Mr)
- Trish Rushton (left off Feb list)

George, Steve and Pravin have joined our training team.

At the end of March the club had 213 members for the 18-19 financial year.

Suggestion box



There were a number of suggestions from members this month. All were considered by the Committee.

Suggestion 1: Can we have a course on FitBit?

Committee response: No, we think there is not enough to need a 2 hour course; start with the manual and make a Help Desk appointment if necessary.

Suggestion 2: Can we have a public expo of what all the Special Interest Groups (SIGs) do?

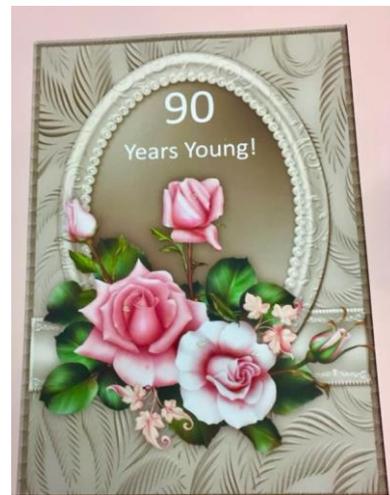
Committee: We will have a monthly meeting where SIGs can show off what they do, instead of a guest speaker

Suggestion 3: Can we display members' photos at the Christmas party?

Committee: No, we don't think that's the best venue; but the newsletter is a good avenue for this.

Suggestion 3: Do the Craft ladies want to sell their cards to members?

Committee: We will ask the Craft SIG.



Suggestion 4: Can we have an Apple Mac course?

Committee: Put your name on the Register of Interest. (Mac courses are planned on a regular basis).

Suggestion 5: I want to learn Word, Excel, Internet and Email for a TAFE course.

Committee: Put name on Club's Register of Interest, and/or look for WEA courses.

Thursday Weekly Updates

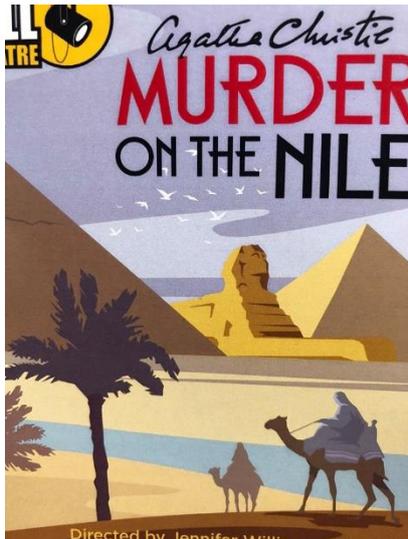
Committee member George Simpson continues to email members each week with his weekly update. Expect it each Thursday. Look in your Promotions folder (if a Gmail user) or Spam /Junk folder in any email type you use if you can't see it. To avoid this, record Parramattacps@gmail.com in your Contacts list.

George always highlights upcoming courses which have vacancies.

Term 2 courses may be viewed as a pdf document on the website at:

<https://parramattacps.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Term-2-2019-Timetable-090419.pdf>

Lovely day out at Hunters Hill



Nearly 20 members booked to see member Darrell Hoffman performing in a show at Hunters Hill Town Hall last month. It was a play based on one of Agatha Christie's murder mysteries Death on the Nile and was a lot of fun. Many of us gathered for lunch beforehand at the Hunters Hill Bowling Club. It was a very pleasant afternoon indeed.

The club organises regular outings, sometimes at weekends but mostly during the week. Do you have a suggestion? Put it in the box.

Sad news from Laurieton



Former member John Wilkinson who celebrated his 90th birthday with us last year and was given a fond farewell when he recently moved to the mid-north coast sent some sad news last week. His wife of over 60 years, Grace had passed away.

Many of us sent condolences, as did ParraPals. Fortunately, John has family nearby.

We miss his quiet presence at meetings, and at earlier courses.

Now don't take us seriously ...



ParraPals Committee

President: Deborah Martin
dmmartin@bigpond.net.au

Vice president: Deb Neyle

Secretary: Silvia Vega
parramattacps@gmail.com

Treasurer: Colleen Burns
treasurercps@gmail.com

Training Co-ordinator: Jon Bayley
jobayley@bigpond.com

Newsletter editor: Margaret Tucker
Moxon

Photographers: Dawne Zotz, John
Lee, Judy Joyce.