

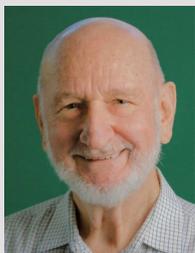


SWITCHED - ON SENIORS

Email : contact@computerpals.org.au

President

Barry Keen



Dates to Remember

Term 1 starts
Monday Feb 2nd 10am
Club Lambton

Enrolment Day
Monday February 2nd

Seniors Festival
Morning Tea
Monday March 2nd

Social Outing—NSW
Seniors Festival Expo
International
Convention Centre,
Sydney. Thurs. March
12

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PRESIDENT’S REPORT – January 2026

2026 is here!!!



Greetings all, and welcome to the start of 2026.

Over the holidays, several of the teams have gotten together to discuss the Term 1 class schedule and the Club’s 2026 Calendar.

Wendy Smith, Margie Olsen and I have been to two PrezXprez meetings representing Newcastle in the collaboration between NSW clubs.

We have secured assistance from Northern Beaches Compals with the sharing of their experiences with AI. Two speakers will come and visit us for our NSW Seniors Festival event on Monday, 2/3/26 (Ian White and Judy Elias). I will host them with overnight accommodation on Sunday, 1/3/26, and I’ll give them one of our \$50 gift cards to cover their petrol.

Monday 2/3/2026 will be a free Morning Tea from 10:00 am to 11:30 am, followed by an Assistance Session at 12:30 pm - 2:00 pm.

Cheers
Barry Keen
President

Contact Us



To contact
the Roster
Team or
the
Treasurer

regarding
class rosters or
payments use:

islingtonpals@gmail.com

Committee

Carolyn
Keane



Wendy
Smith
Secretary

Mervyn
Pope



Brenton
Eley
Social

Margie
Olsen



Member Information

Payment Details:

Our bank account details are
Account Name **Computerpals**
BSB **650 000** (Newcastle Permanent Building Society)
Account **962205402**

in the reference section put your SURNAME and INITIAL, plus M
(for membership payment), #... (for Assistance class)

Remember: *please book in for the classes you want to attend..*

Note: BeConnected classes are free, but afternoon Assistance classes on Mondays are not (cost \$5 per 1½ hours) and are available only to ComputerPals financial members. Don't just drop in—we are restricted to the booked in numbers we can help.

How do I book in: **Phone: 0478 219 220** leave your name & phone number and the reason for your call— someone will get back to you.
See [club website](#) for more information

Writerpals

This is a reminder notice about our next Writerpals get-together which will be happening as soon as we get all our “big doings” out of the road and are back to regular operating, so it might not be until the start of the New Year 2026. Other suggestions from other people would be welcome as this is not just my group – we all have memories, let's bring them out of the shadows and give them light and life. Everybody deserves to be remembered, so let's give our grandkids something to remember us by.

We talked last year about epitaphs and obituaries, but with the big ASCCA competitions at the same time we did not progress very far, so let's give it another go! This time it is a little more structured with a few guidelines.

These suggestions do not have to be epitaphs, obituaries or eulogies, just stories about you. Tell them how you remember them, don't downplay them as unimportant because each incident has helped make you the incredible person you are today – a person I treasure in my life as each of you has added a gem to my treasure-chest. [See Page 7 for examples.](#)

Just a thought or two about what you would like to be remembered for – and/or what you would prefer was not remembered.....

You don't need to tell everybody, but make the stories interesting and enjoyable and when you're gone, the memories will linger on and the content accepted as “things my grannie or grandpa got up to.

This is just a starter to get the thought processes working.

If you've not joined us before, please drop in. You might just want to stay and chat with us.

Cheers and blessings

Carmel

Social News

2025 Christmas Party

Our member's Christmas lunch was held on Wednesday 10th December at Club Lambton with a roll-up of 52 participants.

A fine day beckoned as members rolled in for the last social event for 2025. With our (now) usual section of the Club secured for the occasion and tables beautifully decorated, the scene was set for those attending to catch up with Christmas conversations and enjoy the lunch provided by the Club. President Barry Keen began proceedings by welcoming those attending, giving a brief outline for the start of the new year and thanking those involved in preparing this special function. Formalities over, it was then time to enjoy a lovely main course and sweets that from all reports received 'a tick of approval', and I'm sure no one would have left this function hungry.

A special mention must again be made to our Secretary, Wendy Smith, who was a tremendous help in liaising with and helping Club staff with the room set-up. She also produced and arranged those awesome table decorations, so thanks heaps Wendy. Also assisting with collating the lolly bags and table settings were Judy Wallace, Caroline Keane and Marj Stanton.

From the 'Social Department', both Beryl and I would like to especially thank those members who supported our various activities throughout the year and wish all members a Safe and Merry Christmas/New Year period and look forward to catching up in 2026.

Our first social 'outing' will be a trip to Sydney by train to the NSW Seniors Festival expo at the International Convention Centre on Thursday 12/3/26. More details will be emailed to you. Come along and join us.

Brenton Elsey, Social Secretary



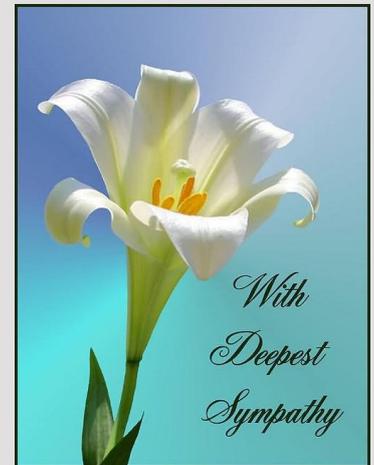
Best Wishes

For all our members who are celebrating birthdays and anniversaries - hearty congratulations !



To those who are ill we send our best wishes for a speedy recovery.

Condolences



To those of our members who have lost loved ones recently, please accept our sincere condolences. You are in our thoughts.

Contact Us

To contact the Roster Team or the Treasurer regarding class rosters or payments use:

islingtonpals@gmail.com

Committee

Graham King

Treasurer



Denise Hayes

Mitzi Gordon



Carmel Smith

These people are all volunteers and most also teach classes at Computerpals. We ask that you take this into consideration when your phone call is not answered immediately.

Scam Watch



Current scams in Australia, heavily driven by AI, include sophisticated phishing (SMS/email) impersonating banks (CommBank, NAB, Westpac), government agencies (myGov, ATO), and service providers (Linkt, Telstra). Key threats involve fake investment opportunities, recruitment scams, and fraudulent Facebook Marketplace payments.

Top Current Scams in Australia (2025-2026):

· **AI-Driven Phishing & Voice Scams:** Scammers are using AI to mimic voices of acquaintances and create highly convincing phishing emails and texts to steal personal information.

· **Bank Impersonation (Phishing):** Fraudulent SMS messages claiming account locks or compromised cards, particularly targeting CommBank and NAB, leading to fake login pages or remote access software downloads

· **Government & Services Impersonation:** Fake emails and texts pretending to be from Services Australia/Centrelink, the ATO (regarding tax refunds/myGovID), or toll road operators (Linkt/Toll).

· **Investment & Crypto Scams:** Scammers impersonate brokers (e.g., CommSec) on social media, using fake websites and ads to lure victims into fraudulent, high-yield investment opportunities.

· **Recruitment & Job Scams:** False job advertisements asking for upfront payments or personal details in exchange for a "guaranteed income".

· **Fake Online Retail & Classifieds:** Scammers on platforms like Facebook Marketplace use fake payment portals to steal funds.

Key Advice to Stay Safe:

· **Never click links:** Do not click links in unsolicited SMS or emails.

· **Verify independently:** If a caller claims to be from a bank or government, hang up and call back using a number found on their official website.

· **Never give remote access:** Never install software or allow remote access to your device if requested, even if they claim to be from a bank's fraud team.

· **Report scams:** Report all scams to [Link: Scamwatch <https://www.scamwatch.gov.au/report-a-scam>].

PRIVACY STATEMENT: Information contained in this Newsletter is only for the members of the ComputerPals Newcastle Inc. The Editor accepts no responsibility for any errors, omissions, libels, inaccuracy or other shortcomings of this newsletter.

Contact Us



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regarding class rosters or payments use:

islingtonpals@gmail.com

Committee



Judy Wallace



Jackie Lampe
Vice President



Lindsay Hreadgate



Ray Hinton

Technology

I received an email from OpenAI. Even though it was unsolicited, I found it useful to pass on to our CPal members. It lists some harmless, easy to follow ideas on using AI to help in the little things in your life.

I spent a couple of days with a girlfriend who has ADHD and she is using AI to help her manage this. She could tell ChatGPT how she is feeling and get a sympathetic response, a bit like a therapist. She didn't get any coping strategies until she asked for them. You can see the possibilities here for immediate help with emotional issues without having to wait to see a therapist. However, it is important to know that any overwhelming problems must be addressed by a professional or by calling a help line.

My friend also created an itinerary for our 3 nights away with a request to go a little slower to accommodate a person with an injury limiting walking. She added in all the places we wanted to go to, including meals and rest time. It was actually quite good. You can tweak the result by adding extra information/requests.

Here is the email transcript I received, you might want to give it a go:

Just tap a chat to start

Try these ideas for fitting in more wellness.



I don't belong to a gym. Make a no-equipment, 20-minute home workout



I want to eat more protein. Plan 5 protein-rich, balanced dinners



I've had a stressful day. Talk me through a 5-min breathing exercise



I don't know what to cook. Look at my fridge to recommend a recipe

Ask ChatGPT for more wellness tips

ComputerPals Mission

Our mission is to educate seniors in the use of computers as a way of enriching their lives and making them more self-reliant. We bridge the generation gap and assist seniors to find ways to benefit the community through their collective experience and knowledge.



2026 Term 1 - 2nd Feb to 2nd April.

Ph: 0478 219 220 (updated 9/01/26)

BeConnected classes are free. #35 Zoom Classes - register \$10 (covers all ZOOM Term sessions on Thur).

Computerpals Club Assistance classes are cost at \$5 per 1½ hours

Wk	Monday Morning Club Lambton	Monday Afternoon for ComputerPals Members Club Lambton	Tuesday Wallsend Library	Wednesday Afternoon Adamstown Library	Thursday Zoom session (see your email for the link)
1	2/2 10:00 to 11:30 am Enrolment Day BeConnected Introduction to BeConnected & ComputerPals Web site	2/2 12:30 to 2:00 pm #39 Assistance class	3/2 10:00 to 11:30 am BeConnected Introduction to BeConnected & ComputerPals Web site	4/2 1:00 to 2:30 pm BeConnected Introduction to BeConnected & ComputerPals Web site	5/2 10:00 to 11:30 am Online ZOOM class #35 Zoom fee \$10 is now due (covers all sessions for Term 1)
2	9/2 10:00 to 11:30 am BeConnected Device Storage	9/2 12:30 to 2:00 pm #40 Assistance class	10/2 10:00 to 11:30 am BeConnected Device Storage	11/2 1:00 to 2:30 pm BeConnected Device Storage	12/2 10:00 to 11:30 am Online ZOOM class
3	16/2 10:00 to 11:30 am BeConnected Cloud Storage	16/2 12:30 to 2:00 pm #41 Assistance class	17/2 10:00 to 11:30 am BeConnected Cloud Storage	18/2 1:00 to 2:30 pm BeConnected Cloud Storage	19/2 10:00 to 11:30 am Online ZOOM class
4	23/2 10:00 to 11:30 am BeConnected Password Management	23/2 12:30 to 2:00 pm Committee Meeting	24/2 10:00 to 11:30 am BeConnected Password Management	25/2 1:00 to 2:30 pm BeConnected Password Management	26/2 10:00 to 11:30 am Online ZOOM class
5	2/3 10:00 to 11:30 am SENIORS FESTIVAL MORNING TEA BeConnected	2/3 12:30 to 2:00 pm #42 Assistance class	3/3 10:00 to 11:30 am BeConnected Q & A	4/3 1:00 to 2:30 pm BeConnected Q & A	5/3 10:00 to 11:30 am Online ZOOM class

Wk	Monday Morning Club Lambton	Monday Afternoon for ComputerPals Members Club Lambton	Tuesday Wallsend Library	Wednesday Afternoon Adamstown Library	Thursday Zoom session (see your email for the link)
6	9/3 10:00 to 11:30 am BeConnected Scams	9/3 12:30 to 2:00 pm #43 Assistance class	10/3 10:00 to 11:30 am BeConnected Scams	11/3 1:00 to 2:30 pm BeConnected Scams	12/3 10:00 to 11:30 am Online ZOOM class
7	16/3 10:00 to 11:30 am BeConnected Voice to Text	16/3 12:30 to 2:00 pm #44 Assistance class	17/3 10:00 to 11:30 am BeConnected Voice to Text	18/3 1:00 to 2:30 pm BeConnected Voice to Text	19/3 10:00 to 11:30 am Online ZOOM class
8	23/3 10:00 to 11:30 am BeConnected Video Calling	23/3 12:30 to 2:00 pm Committee Meeting	24/3 10:00 to 11:30 am BeConnected Video Calling	25/3 1:00 to 2:30 pm BeConnected Video Calling	26/3 10:00 to 11:30 am Online ZOOM class
9	30/3 10:00 to 11:30 am BeConnected Google Lens / QR codes	30/3 12:30 to 2:00 pm #45 Assistance class	31/3 10:00 to 11:30 am BeConnected Google Lens / QR codes	1/4 1:00 to 2:30 pm BeConnected Google Lens / QR codes	2/4 10:00 to 11:30 am Online ZOOM class

Bring that gem out and let it shine.

Things that are special about your life and times – they did, after all, lead to the person you are today – *I really don't think there is anything special about my life and times apart from producing two beautiful sons who have grown into incredible men (a totally unbiased viewpoint). I was born, I grew up, and now I'm on my way out having had a lot of fun in the latter part of my life – said fun being greatly enriched by the people who entered my life when I found Computerpals*

Things I've done and their causes and consequences – *School holidays were my time to enjoy life as a child and I certainly did that with my small blue-roan accomplice, my brumby pony who gave his whole heart every time we went on one of our adventures*

Things I wish I'd done – and why – *I'd like to have learned to swim but my introduction at about 5 or 6 was way too scary to contemplate immersing my whole self in water. I was chucked in the local waterhole by my father at that age and went straight to the bottom and stayed there. Fortunately a nearby farmer had brought his horses to drink and saw what happened. He dragged my bedraggled and terrified self out then the commotion was on. My father was yelled at by the farmer, screamed at by my mother, cried at by me and never did such a stupid thing again. Now 80, I still haven't learned to swim.*

Places I've been (short anecdotes could be included if you wish), - *1986 trip to Korea to collect my adopted daughter. Some hilarious experiences with language and sayings that Australians take for granted but the Korean people took literally eg a cleaning lady requested to clean the room, I replied with "go for your life". She did – full speed into the service elevator down to the lobby where we found her held firmly by the manager who wanted to know our reason for desiring to kill her. Hilarious reactions all around when I explained and every time we left the hotel after that we got a thumbs up from the staff on duty and "Go for your life Australia" Nearly 40 years later the memory still brings a smile to my face.*

People I've known (again short anecdotes could be included) My older brother is about the only familial survivor of my generation that I choose to remember and was my partner-in-crime-and-mischief and my co-conspirator in most adventures until he left home at about 19 to go cane cutting and fruit picking. He does not like to be reminded of some of the adventures we had and when I mention them I get told "You're dreaming. Never happened"