



Newsletter

August 2005

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Tin Cans to Hi-tech

Roger Bamber, the man responsible for Telstra's service levels and business performance in outer metropolitan, rural and remote New South Wales, is our guest speaker for August.

Given recent developments in the on-going saga that is the privatisation of Telstra, this promises to be a topical presentation. With the Queensland Nationals yet to fully commit to the sale, debate still rages – are the promised sweeteners and safeguards adequate?

Roger has spent nearly forty years working in telecommunications. Now, as the Government slowly brings its plans for full privatisation to fruition, Roger will be responsible for rolling out the infrastructure necessary to improve service levels in rural NSW. Who better to tell us what's needed and how this state's share of the \$1.1 billion should be spent?

Roger has worked his way up through the ranks in Telstra and its various earlier incarnations. In the journey from Cadet Engineer with the PMG's Department in 1966 to his current role as Managing Director of Telstra Country Wide NSW, he has provided operational and high level technical services, headed several business units and supervised large technical and field workforces. In his current role for the past five years, Roger has travelled regional Australia listening to customers and working out how ISDN, DCMA, ADSL, GSM and a host of other acronyms could be put to work for rural areas.

Working for Australia's largest company, Roger has ridden the roller coasters of deregulation and the technology boom. He will, no doubt, draw on his



Roger Bamber, Managing Director of Telstra Country Wide, NSW who will speak about the planned roll out of hi-tech telecommunications to rural New South Wales.

knowledge of the industry and his understanding of his customers for his talk at the Farm Writers' event next Friday - August 26th.

With the full sale of Testra looming, and adequate services to the bush in question, don't miss this opportunity to hear how Telstra plans to bring the bush into the 21'st century?–

To book go to the website:
www.nswfarmwriters.org/BOOKINGS.htm.

Register on-line for the seminar on Friday 26th August with Roger Bamber and please note the change of venue.

Corporate Members of the Month: NSW Farmers' Association and Integrated Marketing Communications

Venue: The University & Schools Club, 60 Phillip Street, Sydney.

When: Friday 26th August 2005 at 12pm for 12:30pm

Cost: \$55 per head, or voucher, for members. **\$65 per head for all non-members.**

Register: BEFORE 5:00pm on Wednesday 24th July, on-line at <http://www.nswfarmwriters.org> or by emailing bookings@nswfarmwriters.org, or by phone to Fiona Dewar, (02) 8203 3856.

Late cancellations: Phone Fiona Dewar (02 8203 3856) or Jamie Graham (0418 479 434)

Website sponsored by Telstra Country Wide NSW

Reminiscences, recital & challenge

Members and guests at the July function were entertained by recently retired ABC radio personality, Colin Munro.

Colin reminisced on 40 plus years of ABC Radio. His many stories were punctuated by numerous quotations - ranging from nuggets of wisdom imparted by renowned rural personalities to entire bush ballads, stirringly delivered.

As Colin recounted a few of the highlights of his career it became clear that he reported on many of the events that have become, with hindsight, defining moments in the development of rural Australia.

As a raw recruit, Colin won the trust of the shearers gathered at the Railway Hotel in Bourke during the Shearers' Strike and scored the only interview. Similarly he was on hand in May 1985 to cover the Mudginberri Abattoir Dispute, which sparked the founding of the Australian Farmers' Fighting Fund.

Colin commiserated with those starting out as journalists at the ABC. In his view, they are not given as many chances and experiences as recruits in his day. Colin's early experiences ranged across radio and TV from presenting the weather and reporting on commodity markets to "What's This Country Music" when Johnny Cash was starting out. This sparked a life-long interest in country music now expressed in Colin's continuing commitment to the Star Maker Country Music Festival.

Other things he holds dear, like the Stockman's Hall of Fame and the Year of the Outback, will benefit from his continuing involvement.

Colin paid tribute to many people who influenced him during his long career - in particular, two

recently departed personalities, Slim Dusty and R M Williams. He recounted how Ken Cowley called him on behalf of the Williams Family asking him to be Master of Ceremonies at RM's funeral. Colin responded "You don't have MC's at a funeral". Ken Cowley retorted "You do now" and Colin performed the role for the five hundred mourners who attended RM's funeral in Toowoomba.

Colin recounted his involvement in the establishment of the Isolated Children's Parents Association ("ICPA") - the precursor of modern distance education. It was evident that through that Association he made many life long friends, including Wally Mitchell and Bunny Powne.

What was evident throughout the presentation was Colin's enduring passion for all things rural and his respect for the humour and candour he finds in rural Australians.

He illustrated his early education at their hands at his first public speaking engagement in the Bega Valley. Colin extolled the virtues of Australia's top dairy farmers calling them "the cream of the crop". One of the farmers in the audience responded "You're way off, youngster. Cream is rich and thick and we're neither."

Before ending with a recitation of the Irish Blessing and his trade mark "go kindly", Colin issued a challenge to those who continue in the communication business. He called on us to "maintain the faith for agribusiness and the farmers. They need a voice in the city - a ferocious voice" he said.

In moving the formal vote of thanks David Boyd, Chairman of Clyde Agriculture, recounted shared experiences from their days at the same school. He noted



Colin Munro.

Colin's ability to create atmosphere and express his zest for life in his story-telling and paid tribute to his enormous importance in addressing the country-city divide. "Colin expresses rural values in terms that city people understand".-

Thank you to our corporate members of the month, Clyde Agriculture and Renard Marketing.

Upcoming Events

September 30th: Mark your diaries now for **12pm on Friday 30th September** when **Dr Jennifer Marohasy**, Director of the Environment Unit with the Institute of Public Affairs and columnist in The Land newspaper, talks about the need for a new approach to public policy decision-making in natural resource management.

☞ Know a speaker you'd like to hear at a Farm Writers' event? Email us: suggestions@nswfarmwriters.org

REMINDER: REMINDER

Subscriptions now due
Membership subscriptions for the new financial year are due. Thank you to those who have already renewed.

If you haven't already done so, please send your forms and payment to GPO Box 1108, Sydney, 2001.