

API Leisure & Lifestyle

OUR HISTORY

The Australian Post-Tel Institute (API) 1918 - Today

THE AUSTRALIAN POST-TEL INSTITUTE (API)

1918 - 2011

The API has faced and overcome many trials in the last 90 years—the early days when administrators acquired the skills needed to guide the fledgling organisation, the Depression, World War II, the impact of television, changing technologies in the computer and digital age, the introduction of the World Wide Web, as well as the dramatic changes that followed the introduction of Australia Post and Telstra (then Telecom Australia) to their subsequent incorporation. Some of our greatest traditions

blossomed by the foresight of a single individual, while others evolved when administrators and Branches responded to the changes in the world around them.

The Institute has come along way from its humble beginnings in a single room, (6x12m), with a billiard table, chairs for members wishing to play cards, bookshelves, and a reading area.

THE FOUNDATION

1918 - 1921



The Honourable William Webster, MP.

The Honourable William Webster's prophetic words - "Today is a day in the history of the Postal Department that I trust will be remembered by all those who are to benefit by the Institute which is being opened for the advancement, education and recreation of the staff of this great service." - were spoken on the foundation of the first Postal Institute in Victoria on October 15, 1918. The establishment envisaged by Mr Webster culminated many years of contemplation and discussion.

William Webster first realised the need for such an organisation while preparing reports for Parliament calling on a Royal Commission into the Postal Service. The then Chief Electrical Engineer, Mr John Hesketh, submitted Mr Webster's

recommendation for adoption by the department.

The Intervention of World War I caused the proposal to be deferred, but members of the Postal Electricians, Telegraph, Sorters, and Maintenance Unions decided to make a commencement.

This was called the Victorian Postal Institute. Three times mayor of Chelsea, Mr Meier, and twice Mayor of Sandringham, Mr Brown were the first secretaries of the scheme. The single room (6x12m) premises of the Institute played host to union meetings, lectures, and classes pertaining to the Postal Service.

Applications were called to establish the Institute in each State. Plans were approved by the Minister and a provincial

committee was formed under the Chairmanship of Mr C. E. Bright. On a delightful October morning the Honourable William Webster, preformed the opening ceremony within the Spencer Street General Post Office Building. The occasion was marked by the attendance of many important and notable guests. Two poetic lines included in the opening speech have since achieved recognition as the official motto for the Institute - "Strive to improve the body and the mind and thus assist to elevate mankind to higher things." - Mr Webster.

In 1918 the membership in Victoria was 1,200 persons, and by 1921 had increased to 1,614 persons - a very pleasing figure after only three years of operation.

EXPANSION

1921 - Present



Plaque Ceremony, 1975.



First API Holiday Home,
1953. Volunteers involved.

The first expansion of the Institute took place in 1921, when Mr J. W. Kitto was elected as the first President of the Postal Institute in New South Wales.

In 1923 the Queensland Postal Institute was formed in the old Police Building in Brisbane. Mr S. McFarlane was elected the foundation President.

The Western Australia Postal Institute was established in Perth 1924, with Mr. W. F. Ferguson the foundation President.

The Tasmanian Institute was formed in Hobart in 1924, with Mr. J. Clinch the inaugural President.

In 1925, the South Australian Institute was formed with Mr. J. W. Kitto, the then Deputy Postmaster General, appointed Chairman - Mr Kitto's experience in NSW was called upon to ensure a successful launch in South Australia.

From these humble beginnings a proud and magnificent organisation grew.