



TelSoc

Telecommunications & the Digital Economy

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Submitted by Administrator on Tue, 25/06/2013 - 23:29

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Dear TSA member,

We are writing to advise you that we, the outgoing Board members of the Telecommunications Society of Australia, are in the process of setting up a new not-for-profit society, to be provisionally called the Telecommunications Association (TA), in order to carry on the traditional activities of the TSA: popular industry events, lunchtime lectures and the publication of TJA (which we regret will also need to be renamed), in order to keep us all informed on new telecommunications developments.

Your Board has taken this decision because it believes that the survival of the Society is at stake and all other avenues for working within the ACS have been exhausted.

We ask you to support the new society so that we can continue to effectively support telecommunications professionals across all disciplines within the industry, as we and our predecessors have been doing since 1874 under several changes of names for the Society, but in particular as the Telecommunications Society of Australia since 1959^[3].

Background to this decision

In 2007 the outgoing Board of the TSA Ltd (incorporated in 1991) transferred the assets, both cash and intellectual property (IP), of TSA Ltd to the Australian Computer Society (ACS), in the hope that the TSA would flourish as part of the ACS. The relationship between the ongoing TSA and ACS HQ was often difficult but was manageable until mid-2012. In particular the TSA received excellent support from the ACS's State Branches and from its senior officers when approached to solve system problems.

But in mid-2012 the introduction of a 'single brand' policy by the ACS Management Committee made the TSA almost invisible, and the ACS's new website launched in June 2012 provided less functionality than the previous website to assist us in keeping in communication with our members and allowing them to easily renew their membership online. The TSA Board became convinced that unless something was rapidly done to retain the visibility of the TSA and to make it easier to communicate with our members, the TSA would die a slow and painful death. To that end, we created the TSA.org.au website. We were immediately asked to take this website down by the ACS CEO, but this execution was stayed by the ACS President to allow negotiations to continue on the future structure of the ACS.

We as the outgoing Board of the TSA have spent 12 frustrating months in negotiations with the Australian Computer Society's representatives, attempting to first solve the problems with getting better visibility and functionality in the ACS website, and when that got nowhere, to get their agreement to an amicable de-merger. We sought the return of the TSA's IP to a re-incorporated TSA Ltd, in return for our commitment to ongoing collaboration with the ACS on the planning of industry events of mutual interest and for us to provide ACS members with discounted access to TJA articles. However on Friday 21 June we received an emailed letter from the ACS President, Dr Nick Tate, refusing our request and declaring that the ACS would take direct control over the IP of the TSA and would run the TSA itself in future within the ACS. They have forbidden us from using the names TSA and TJA for our new society and our new journal.

On checking ASIC's business name search facility^[4] we have found that ACS registered both 'Telecommunications Society of Australia' and 'Telecommunications Journal of Australia' in Sydney on Friday 14 June 2013.

Our response

As the TSA has been now given no direct voice at the higher decision-making levels of the ACS, and we no longer have confidence that the ACS Management Committee understands how to retain the motivation of a group of volunteers (the current TSA Board and Branch Committee members) in supporting the multi-disciplinary telecommunications industry, we see no future for the TSA within the ACS. We are now creating an autonomous not-for-profit society, provisionally called the Telecommunications Association (TA), in order to continue the great traditions of the former TSA.

Once we have registered the new society we will ask for your support in joining it as a Foundation Member. We are committed to building a lean, re-energised, enthusiastic organization that will grow fast and carry out its members' wishes via a consultative governance structure. Our key objectives remain to keep our members abreast of the latest knowledge of the most important new developments in the converged telecommunications industry and digital economy, to celebrate the history and new achievements of our industry, and to provide excellent networking opportunities for our members. We will re-create our authoritative journal TJA under a new title, with free access for our members.

With best wishes from the outgoing Board of the TSA:

Reg Coutts
John del Papa
Peter Gerrand
Tim Herring
Peter Hormann
Jim Holmes
Graham Shepherd

Your comments are invited below.

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John Rimmer (not verified)
- 27/08/2013 at 09:03

I'll join - where and how? Congratulations on the move. JR

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