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## **100 years old and still surfing - BigPond's oldest customer celebrated**

When Lismore's Alf Webb OAM was born, Australia still had only its second Prime Minister, the first Model T Ford had yet to roll off the production line and Alexander Graham Bell's first telephone was barely 30 years old.

Today Mr Webb, who turned 100 years old at the weekend, has been celebrated as BigPond's oldest broadband customer.

In an email message of congratulations to Mr Webb, BigPond's Managing Director, Mr Justin Milne, said today:

"Your achievement of 100 years of age is remarkable and to be celebrated. The fact that you are not only an active member of your community, but the world wide online community through your emailing and web surfing, makes us very proud to be your Internet Service Provider.

"For someone who will have seen so many things in their lifetime, from the dawn of aviation, two World Wars, space flight, and the tremendous developments in telecommunications, I hope the online world brings you new discoveries and interests.

"May you continue to be online and active for a long time to come. Yours is a remarkable achievement," Mr Milne said.

To further mark today's special occasion, Mr Webb was presented with a certificate to mark his new status as BigPond's Oldest Broadband customer, and a year's free BigPond ADSL broadband connection, by Telstra Countrywide's Lismore Area General Manager, Ms Sue Passmore.

Mr Webb, who served with Telstra's predecessor, the P.M.G., from 1947 until his retirement in 1969, said he became interested in the Internet after purchasing his first computer last year to for his 99<sup>th</sup> birthday.

"When I was a young lad, home telephones were few and far between. Many people shared party lines and letters in the mail could take many days, or even weeks if you were writing overseas," he said.

"Now with my computer and my BigPond connection I've really enjoyed the ability to instantly email my friends and family. Now I am looking forward to experiencing broadband.

"I am a keen amateur radio enthusiast, and my club's newsletter contains many interesting internet links which I now am enjoying exploring," Mr Webb said.

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“My children, my 13 grandchildren and my 24 great-grandchildren enjoy being able to email me and I look forward to many hours of ‘surfing the net’ and enjoying its many interesting places,” Mr Webb said.

## **Further information on Mr. Webb**

Alf Webb was born on 10<sup>th</sup> September 1905 in the London suburb of Islington. He migrated to Australia in May 1911. He married Muriel Rudd in 1928 and they had a son Ron 1929. Muriel died soon after the birth.

In 1932 Alf married Mary (Meg) O’Brien who passed away in 1998. They had four children Lenore, Margaret, Faye and Warren, who all followed their father into service with the P.M.G./Telecom/Telstra. His children have provided Alf with 14 grandchildren and 24 great grandchildren.

He served in the 15<sup>th</sup> Light-horse Regiment from 1924 to 1931. In 1940 he joined the Volunteer Army Defence Force until entering Army Signals in 1943 where he served until his discharge in June 1946.

Having been introduced into amateur radio by a cousin in 1922, Alf obtained his Amateur Radio Operators License in 1947 and today remains an active operator. During the 1954 Lismore flood he provided the only communication to the outside for telegraphs, police and councils. (Alf was a Morse code operator and still is!)

He joined the P.M.G. in Lismore in 1947 as an Exempt Technicians Assistant, working in the Casino and Kyogle areas as well before being appointed to Lismore in 1948 when he qualified as a technician.

The “Webb” family has contributed 15 members to the ranks of the PMG, Telecom and Telstra, providing a total of 319 years, which continues with four grandsons still with Telstra.

In 1987 Alf was awarded the “Meritorious Medal” by the R.S.L., followed in 1990 by an Order of Australia Medal for service to the RSL and community. He is a Life Member of the Lismore RSL; the NSW Branch of the RSL; the RSS&AL of Australia and the Old Timers Radio Club. He is a life member of the Ballina Ex-services Homes, a member of the Ballina RSL Club and a member of the Ballina Sub-branch RSL. **(Supplied by the Webb family)**

## **Telstra Media Contacts:**

Craig Middleton  
BigPond Corporate Relations  
0400 931 772  
02 8236 4372

Sue Passmore  
Telstra CountryWide, Lismore  
(02) 6626 5222

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