

RINGWOOD TELEPHONE EXCHANGE: A BRIEF HISTORY.

The first mention of Ringwood Exchange is in the official list of exchanges and subscribers of 31 December 1912, when, included under country exchanges, it had 19 lines.

Ringwood was then a magneto manual exchange, connected with the operation of the Post and Telegraph Office in Whitehorse Road.

It is of interest to note that in that year, 1912, the annual rental for an exclusive service was £3, and £2 10s to each subscriber for a two party service.

Local calls then cost $\frac{1}{2}$ d, and trunk calls were also possible interstate, Melbourne having been linked to Sydney by aerial telephone wire in 1907. The cost of ringing Sydney---4s 4d for the first three minutes.

In 1914 Melbourne and Adelaide were connected, and, in 1930, Melbourne and Perth. However, it wasn't until 1935 that Tasmania was first linked to the mainland by telephone, with the opening of a submarine cable.

An indication of both the growth of Melbourne, and Ringwood, was that, in 1929, Ringwood Exchange was for the first time included amongst the list of metropolitan, and not country, exchanges.

In 1930 international operator connected overseas calls were made possible by the opening, in that year, of a radio telephone link between Australia and England. The cost then---a minimum of £6 a call.

Further development came to Ringwood with its cutover to automatic working in March 1948. The new exchange was then sited in two buildings at the rear of the Post Office at the corner of Whitehorse Road and Ringwood Street.

On 21 August 1954 a new exchange was provided further down Ringwood Street, adjacent to the present Post Office. It is at this site, to the rear of the present exchange that a new building was officially opened on 30 July 1981, a building which not only provides space to augment present facilities, but will also replace the present exchange by the end of 1985, when cutover to AXE is completed.

In 1948 the exchange consisted of step by step equipment, and was a satellite off the Mitcham Exchange, with the prefix WU6. In April 1966 modern crossbar equipment was provided, with the new prefix of 870, and in 1970 the 879 level was installed.

STD came to Ringwood in December 1968, and, in 1976, ISD, enabling the present 3000 odd Ringwood subscribers connected to this facility to dial over 80 countries directly.