

NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF ABC FRIENDS
Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday & Wednesday, 23-24 June, 2015
at CWA, Kent Town, Adelaide, South Australia

Present:

NSW: Mal Hewitt (Pres), Chris Cartledge (Web), Catherine Henderson (ACT) *visitor*

VIC: Graeme Connelly (Pres), Peter Monie (Trs)

QLD: Ross McDowell (Pres), Dr Mark Hayes (C'tee mbr/media)

S.A.: Jessica Knight (Pres), Aussie Kanck (Trs), Andrew Johnston (C'tee mbr/IT) *visitor*, Sandra Kanck *visitor*

TAS: Margaret Reynolds (Pres), Belinda Wright (Sec)

W.A.: Bobbie Mackley (Pres/Trs), Terri Brown (Sec)

Day One

Quentin Dempster and Ranald MacDonald attended the first day of the conference as presenters.

Sandra Kanck chaired the conference sessions at the unanimous request of delegates.

Bobbie Mackley & Belinda Wright agreed to record the Minutes.

At the beginning of the session the Chair invited each of the attendees to introduce themselves.

Briefing by Quentin Dempster concerning what has been happening within the ABC including the effects of cuts, the Lewis Efficiency Review, the loss of the Australia Network. He also mentioned the game-changing nature of streaming by companies such as Netflix, also governance and management issues within the ABC. He said: "There are forces at work in this country out to destroy our unique national broadcaster". He also touched on the campaign that he and Margaret Pomeranz have been coordinating to prevent increased advertising in prime time and further commercialisation of SBS.

Presentation by Ranald Macdonald regarding the need for a national campaign which would aim to protect the ABC in its role of providing an authentic Australian voice within the national media rhetoric and in providing quality programming.

Following this presentation the following motion was discussed:

Motion #1: *That this National Conference of ABC Friends agrees to the need for an urgent National Campaign to defend the ABC and restore its funding.*

Moved: Bobbie Mackley

Seconded: Graeme Connelly

The motion was carried with one abstention (Qld).

During the afternoon there was a brainstorming session regarding ideas for the National Campaign and there was further discussion with the two presenters. The following ideas were considered:

- Debates/discussions with champions of the ABC, for example, Tamie Fraser, Barry Jones, sportsmen and women, state-based supporters.
- Need for an online coordinator for social media for a fixed period.
- Structure of the campaign coordination, eg, a joint committee with media releases sent out by each State President
- Need for a National Spokesperson
- Having a detailed plan in place well before the next election which could come early.
- Questions of politicians at public events to get them on record

It was also agreed to issue a press release calling a press conference at the CWA for midday tomorrow. The press release was sent to local media later in the afternoon.

The meeting closed for the day at 4:45pm.

Day Two

Each state ABC Friends group provided a report on their activities over previous months. There was some discussion about the events of recent weeks and how they have affected the various State organisations. As a result the following motion was proposed and discussed:

NSW advised that it had contributed \$10,000 towards the running of ABCF National following the 2014 national conference and also made a regular monthly payment of \$1,000. WA advised that ABCF-WA had contributed \$5,000 following last year's conference and had not been asked for more.

It was agreed that all states should contribute to the running cost of ABCF National; the meeting asked ABCF-Vic to provide a dollar figure so that an agreement on this could be reached.

ABCF-Vic then raised the issue of the passwords to the national Facebook and Twitter accounts currently held by an FABC-Qld committee member. It was agreed that it was necessary for these to be held by staff of ABCF National. It was also agreed that a watch should be kept on the Facebook page by one of the state Friends office-holders due to the inexperience of new staff.

Motion #2: *That passwords to the ABC Friends National Facebook and Twitter accounts be provided to ABC Friends Victoria; and that Bobbie Mackley (President ABC Friends WA) will moderate the national Facebook page.*

Moved: Ross McDowell

Seconded: Margaret Reynolds

The motion was carried unanimously

The meeting then moved on to discuss a proposed National Fighting Fund (NFF) and to consider some ideas around the workings of a National Federation. During this session the following motions were considered and voted upon:

Proposed National Fighting Fund

Motion #3: *That this meeting of ABC Friends National agrees that a National Fighting Fund should be established.*

Moved: Mal Hewitt

Seconded: Graeme Connelly

The motion was carried unanimously

Motion #4: *That approval be given to ABC Friends Victoria to open a National Fighting Fund account with Westpac Bank requiring four authorised signatories, with any two to sign for each transaction.*

Moved: Bobbie Mackley

Seconded: Graeme Connelly

The motion was carried unanimously

Motion #5: *That the four signatories eligible to sign should be from four different States.*

Moved: Aussie Kanck

Seconded: Peter Monie

It was then moved by Margaret Reynolds that this motion should lay on the table and this was agreed.

Motion #6: *That an ABC Friends National Campaign Committee (NCC) be established made up of a designated office holder from each State.*

Moved: Margaret Reynolds

Seconded: Chris Cartledge

The motion was carried unanimously

Margaret Reynolds then moved that the earlier motion be restored to the table and this was agreed. Then following discussion a motion was put that we should move into Committee mode – agreed. Following further discussion it was moved and agreed that the meeting move back out of committee mode.

The following motion was returned to the table and put to the vote:

Motion #5: *That the four signatories eligible to sign should be from four different States and would be Christaan Cartledge (NSW), Peter Monie (Vic), Asbjorn Kanck (SA) & Marie-Therese Eva Irene Brown (WA).*

Moved: Aussie Kanck

Seconded: Peter Monie

The motion was carried unanimously

Motion #7: *That a budget be approved and administered by the National Campaign Committee.*

An amendment to the above motion was moved by Peter Monie and the amended motion was put to the meeting as follows:

Motion #7: *That a budget be approved and administered by the National Campaign Committee and that small items of expenditure up to \$1000 may be authorised by the Victorian Treasurer for later endorsement by the National Campaign Committee.*

Moved: Peter Monie

Seconded: Andrew Johnston

The amended motion was carried unanimously

Motion #8: *The Presidents of the Friends of the ABC and ABC Friends organisations meeting nationally in Adelaide commend former ABC Friends National Campaign Manager and acting National Spokesperson Glenys Stradijot for her tireless work over many years in support of the national broadcaster and Friends around the country. Her energy, commitment and dedication are very much appreciated and we regret that she has felt the need to resign. We wish her all the very best for the future.*

We would also like to acknowledge the commitment over many years of ABCF–Victoria and National administrative staff Elizabeth Paull and Fabia Paull and wish them both well for the future.

Moved: Bobbie Mackley

Seconded: Margaret Reynolds

The motion was carried unanimously

Andrew Johnston (SA committee member) was nominated by Jessica Knight (Pres SA) to be the SA representative on the National Campaign Committee.

Motion #9: *That members of the National Campaign Committee should be: Bobbie Mackley (WA), Margaret Reynolds (Tas), Graeme Connelly (Vic), Andrew Johnston (SA), Ross McDowell (Qld) & Mal Hewitt (NSW).*

Moved: Peter Monie

Seconded: Jessica Knight

The motion was carried unanimously

It was agreed that Graeme Connelly would organise the first meeting of the National Campaign Committee as soon as possible. Bobbie Mackley suggested meetings by Skype as required, but at least monthly.

National Campaign Coordinator

It was considered necessary to appoint someone to act in this role. There was discussion of the difference between a campaign co-ordinator and a national spokesperson.

It was also felt that it would be a great benefit to have an ABC Friends spokesperson, someone instantly recognisable as an ABC protector and supporter as well as someone of high national profile, trusted and seen as non-aligned. The position would be honorary with re-imbusement of reasonable expenses. The following motion was then put to the meeting:

Motion #10: *That Quentin Dempster be invited to be the National Spokesperson for the ABC Friends in an honorary capacity with reasonable expenses paid; and that, should he decline, he be asked if he can recommend an alternative person.*

Moved: Jessica Knight

Seconded: Aussie Kanck

The motion was carried unanimously

It was also agreed that, with her agreement, Margaret Reynolds, President ABC Friends Tasmania, would act as our National Spokesperson until someone else was found. Margaret Reynolds agreed to this request.

At midday prior to lunch, a reporter and camera operator from ABC Adelaide arrived in response to our press release. Footage was taken of the committee 'at work' in the meeting room; the group of state presidents were then present at an interview in the corridor where Margaret Reynolds spoke on their behalf. At a request from the reporter for another interviewee, Bobbie Mackley also spoke about the situation of the ABC in Western Australia and the other smaller states.

The Tasmanian representatives departed at 2pm and formal proceedings closed.

END