

NSW FABC AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN BROADCASTING FOR 2007 GOES TO ROBYN WILLIAMS AND THE RADIO NATIONAL SCIENCE SHOW

TheScienceShow | ABC Radio National



Producer and presenter of *The Science Show* since its launch in August 1975, Robyn has given 32

years of outstanding and distinguished service to both the ABC and the listening public of Australia. Working within very limited financial resources, Robyn has, over those 32 years, provided us with a program of a consistently high standard, often controversial, always entertaining, and of interest to both the scientist and layperson.

Robyn was born in the UK in 1944 (during an air raid), received his education in London and Vienna, attending the University of London, where he obtained a BSc(Hons) in biology, and gained two fellowships at Oxford. He is currently a visiting professor at University of NSW.

His career with the ABC began in 1972, when he covered the last two Apollo Missions. His first radio series was *Innovations*

(1972), and included *Investigations*, *Ockham's Razor* and *In Conversation* which features leading science writer and broadcaster Robyn Williams talking one-on-one with science professionals and other leading figures.

Robyn describes *The Science Show* as follows:

"The program is essentially unpredictable. This is to allow maximum flexibility to accommodate new material and talent. It can range from the regular magazine program to lectures, scripted series, of which several by the late Professor Peter Mason were legendary, to hoaxes and satire.

John Clarke began his Australian career on *The Science Show*, with reports on the connection between scoffing red foods and communism, and the deep conundrum of whether sheep have ethics (not in New Zealand, apparently). *The Science Show* has featured Paul Hogan, Sting, Bill Gates, Shere Hite, Douglas Adams, John Cleese, Graham Chapman, Margaret Thatcher, Jane Goodall, but not Madonna, Delta Goodrem or Doris Postlethwaite."

Enemies of the ABC

Darce Cassidy

While there is little to distinguish between various parties on the issues of ABC funding, and advertising on the ABC, there are significant differences with regard to the appointment of the ABC Board.

All governments have tended to appoint their own sympathisers to the ABC's governing body, but the Howard government has taken board stacking to new heights. The Fraser government made generally conservative appointments, but playwright David Williamson was a notable exception. The Hawke/Keating government appointed mostly Labor sympathisers, but an exception was the former Liberal minister Ian McPhee.

But for the Howard government selecting a predominately conservative board was not enough. In choosing Ron Brunton, Keith Windshuttle and Janet Albrechtsen they have chosen three strident public critics of the ABC. It would not be too unfair to describe the trio as enemies of the ABC, and enemies of public broadcasting generally.

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The Future of the ABC is Under Threat
Vote for your ABC in the Senate

We need

- » Adequate and recurrent funding for the ABC to produce a diverse range of Australian programs in current affairs, drama and culture
- » A new way of making the ABC Board independent of the Government (the current government refuses to change the way it appoints the ABC Board)
- » To keep the ABC commercial free – NO advertisements



The Senate will decide the fate of your ABC

Your Senate vote will make a difference

Remember some politicians want to control your ABC

The ABC belongs to everyone not just the politicians

Use your vote to ensure an ABC that is fearless innovative and comprehensive

Join the Friends of the ABC
www.friendsoftheabc.org.au

Do you know?

- ❖ It costs less to run all of your ABC 's services (2 TV networks, 5 radio networks, ABC online, ABC shops) than it does to run the Channel 9 network?
- ❖ Each year your ABC costs a taxpayer about the cost of one hardcover book
- ❖ Your ABC provides a lifeline to regional Australia
- ❖ Public funding allows your ABC to maintain independence and journalistic integrity
- ❖ Nearly all Australians tune in each week to one or more of the many services provided by the ABC

Authorised by Jan Kent, Secretary, Illawarra Friends of the ABC

Dear Friend,

It is my pleasure to extend to you an invitation to join us at our annual Christmas Party at the Dot Strong Terrace, ABC Centre, 700 Harris Street, Ultimo on Friday 7th December at 6 PM.

Each year we present our Excellence in Broadcasting award. This year it will go to the Science Show, and presenter Robyn Williams has graciously agreed to attend in person to receive it.

We have maintained the all-inclusive cost per person at \$20.

Non-members are welcome to attend, and we will also be joined by ABC staff and presenters.

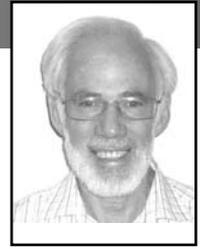
Best wishes

Mal Hewitt

President

FABC NSW

THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT



In this special Election Issue of *Update* we have provided you with information to enable you to assess the policies of each of the parties relating to the ABC. Friends of the ABC has never been a supporter of one or other of the mainstream parties (both Labor and Liberal governments have been responsible for the steady erosion of funding for the ABC since 1986), after 11 years of the Howard government, their attitude on key issues is fairly clear.

They have abolished the position of staff-elected director, they have blatantly stacked the board with very vocal opponents of the ABC and of publicly-funded broadcasting, they have denied the ABC the necessary funding to convert to digital broadcasting, they have failed to provide guarantees that they would not allow commercials on the ABC, and through such vocal critics as Senators Alston, Santoro and Fierravanti-Wells, have constantly attacked the ABC with allegations of bias. This Update sets out the policies of each of the major parties on these issues, but also provides a strong reminder of the importance of your Senate vote in the forthcoming election. Legislation favourable to the ABC which is passed in the Lower House may still be blocked in a hostile Senate.

Reports on the work of our branches features prominently again in this *Update*. Many of our Branches hold "Meet the Candidate" public meetings, where there is opportunity for each candidate to present their party's policies on the ABC – I recently attended an excellent forum held by Eastern Suburbs Branch in the seat of Wentworth. Sadly, the sitting member and Minister for the Environment, Malcolm Turnbull, was conspicuous by

his absence! I am grateful to Jill Greenwell, President of ACT Branch, and the very active membership for the great work they have been doing in the marginal NSW seat of Eden-Monaro. Jill reports on their campaign in this issue.

I am particularly pleased to announce that the recipient of the Annual Friends of the ABC Award for Excellence in Broadcasting will be Robyn Williams, producer and presenter of Radio National's *Science Show* since its launch in 1975. I am no scientist, but have been a regular listener to the *Science Show* over the years, and have found it a constant source of fascinating information and delightful entertainment. Robyn has de-mystified science for many of us through his often irreverent, tongue-in-cheek approach to science, but Robyn also exemplifies the integrity, professionalism and resourcefulness that we have come to expect from ABC staff.

His capacity to maintain outstanding quality on a risible budget is legendary. Robyn will be joining us at the Christmas party on 7th December to receive his award.



Distinguished journalist John Highfield was our guest speaker at the NSW Friends of the ABC Annual General

Meeting on 6th October. Recently retired, John spoke with passion of his long career in radio and television journalism, mainly with the ABC, and of the changes to presenting and reporting over 40 years. He expressed great concerns regarding the capacity of journalists to bring us the truth in the current political climate, including a chilling anecdote of the recent treatment of a jour-

nalist by the Australian Federal Police under our extraordinary anti-terror legislation, more redolent of Soviet Russia or present-day China. The AGM also elected a new committee to steer NSW FABC into 2008. I wish to record my appreciation of those who have agreed to serve on the committee for the next twelve months, but particularly James Buchanan (Secretary /Treasurer) and Chris Cartledge (Membership Secretary), both of whom provide a great service to the membership and tremendous support to me as president.

Finally, it is with great sadness that we have just heard of the death of Peter Andren, independent member for the seat of Calare in the Federal Parliament and a passionate supporter of the ABC, particularly in its services to rural and regional Australia. Kevin Rudd expressed it perfectly: 'He brought a rare dignity, honesty and integrity to Australian politics. In the nation's parliament he made a principled and thoughtful contribution to debates, speaking on subjects as diverse as refugees, Iraq, renewable energy and telecommunications.' He will be sorely missed.

Mal Hewitt President
FABC (NSW)



No ads on our ABC - what the parties say:

Australian Democrats

Oppose the introduction of any commercial advertising on ABC radio, television or websites. They fear that creeping commercialism, of which the threat of advertising is only a part, is corrupting the ABC as an independent public broadcaster.

(Senator Lyn Allison, Sept 2007)

Australian Labor Party

“will ensure that the ban on advertising remains in place. Labor will also ensure that advertising is not permitted on ABC branded websites”. (ALP

Platform, paragraph 59)

Greens

Oppose commercial activities which risk the ABC's editorial independence and therefore do not support commercial advertising on ABC radio, television or websites. “I would support legislation before the Senate banning advertising on ABC branded websites as well as on ABC radio and television” (Kerry Nettle NSW Greens Senate candidate Sept 2007).

Liberal Party

Minister for Communications, Helen Coonan, thinks that advertising on ABC TV and radio is “something that we can look at down the future” (The Bulletin, 21 Mar. 2006) “Discreet and regulated advertising” on ABC radio and television could fund more local drama. (Senator Gary Humphries, October 2005)

ABC Funding - what the parties say:

Australian Democrats

“The ABC should be in a position to produce high quality local material. It should be funded at the base level of funding before the Howard Government cut 12% from the ABC's budget in 1996. Funding should be on a recurrent basis, not 'one-off’”. (Senator Lyn Allison Sept 2007).

Australian Labor Party

“Over time I envisage a major investment in the ABC. The only way to get Australian voices and stories in the new world of converging media is from the ABC”. (ALP Shadow Communications Minister, Stephen Conroy Sept 2007).

Greens

The Greens support a funding increase to restore cuts made since 1996. (Kerry Nettle NSW Greens Senate candidate Sept 2007).

The Greens call for the release of the recommenda-

tions of the review of ABC funding by KPMG.

Increased funds for the ABC should not be one-off, for a limited period. They should be rolled into the ABC's base funding.

Liberal Party

- promised before the last election that, if re-elected, it would inquire into the adequacy and efficiency of ABC funding. What happened? The Government has never released the recommendations of that review. It took place. It apparently recommended increased ABC funds. However the voting public have never been told what the recommendations were. In 2006, the Coalition Government gave the ABC an increase of \$88.2m dollars for the next three years. The increase was very welcome, but why restrict it to 3 years?

An independent ABC board - what the parties say:

Australian Democrats

“No-one in Parliament has been as vigilant as the Democrats in urging a transparent and merit-based appointments procedure”. (Senator Lyn Allison Sept 2007).

Staff elected Director: We support the restoration of the position.

Australian Labor Party

The ALP Platform (2007), paragraph 58, sets out: “a new ABC Board appointment process in which board members are appointed on the basis of merit. Candidates will be considered by a panel established at arm's length from the minister who will appoint Board members from a shortlist prepared by the panel..... the staff elected commissioner position on the ABC board which was abolished by the Howard Government will be reinstated.”

Greens

- support an independent ABC Board at arms length from the government, along the lines of the British “Nolan Rules” model.

“I would support legislation before the Senate reinstating the staff-appointed position on the ABC Board.” (Kerry Nettle NSW Greens Senate candidate Sept 2007).

Liberal Party

Retain the present system of ABC Board appointments. Legislation to abolish the position staff elected Director passed both Houses in 2006, after the Coalition gained control of the Senate. Quentin Dempster is now “staff elected director in exile”.

Over 37 000 pamphlets with the above information have been distributed in the Eden-Monaro area.

EDEN-MONARO UPDATE

'Ads on our ABC?' is the question we're putting to voters in Eden-Monaro.

That marginal electorate is on the ACT's doorstep so we've been putting a lot of effort into raising the profile of the ABC as an election issue

Since August we've held 13 stalls, in Queanbeyan, Cooma, Braidwood and Bungendore. We've been selling merchandise, handing out balloons and distributing material about an independent Board and about adequate ABC funding, but nothing attracted as much interest as our information about the threats of advertising on the ABC. Everywhere we got a very strong reaction against any possibility of advertising on the ABC. People queued up to sign our petition to all Eden-Monaro can-

didates, urging whoever is elected to stand up for an ad-free ABC.

So with that clear and strong reaction, we designed our pre-election pamphlet with the bold question "Ads on our ABC?" We've produced 37,500 pamphlets, outlining what the parties say - about advertising, but also about ABC funding and ABC Board appointment procedure - which will be distributed to Queanbeyan, Cooma, Bega, Bungendore, Braidwood, Narooma, Moruya, Merimbula and Tumut.

This effort of ours has been helped in a number of practical ways by NSW FABC.

The considerable contribution to our campaign funds is what has made possible the extensive reach of our letter-box distribution. Thanks NSW FABC for all your support and encouragement. Together we can keep ads off our ABC!



Jill Greenwell

President,
Friends of the ABC
(ACT & Region) Nov. 2007



GARY COOK RECEIVES LIFE MEMBERSHIP

At the recent AGM of NSW FABC, past president Gary Cook was, by unanimous vote of the meeting, awarded Life Membership of Friends of the ABC, in recognition of

his very significant contribution to the Friends as Vice-President and leader of the Events and Recruitment Committee (1999 to 2001) and as President (2002 to 2006).

Congratulations, Gary!



IN THIS ELECTION

RING YOUR LOCAL CANDIDATES AND ASK THEM

- will you call for restoration of untied core funding to the ABC?
- will you call for an independent ABC Board?
- will you call for an end to government and editorial interference in our ABC?



Mid-North Coast Branch Friends of the ABC

ALL WELCOME!

FABC FEDERAL ELECTION CANDIDATES FORUM



SEA ACRES

IN THEATRETTE DOWNSTAIRS

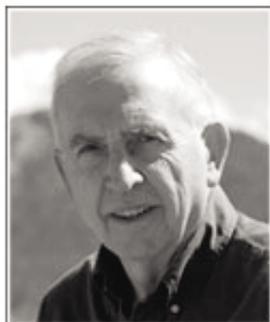
MONDAY 12 NOVEMBER 5PM

The critical issues remain - declining real levels of funding; independent selection of the board; the threat of advertising which would compromise editorial independence; the need to defend independent public broadcasting from creeping surveillance and censorship.

The FABC Candidate Forum is one of only a few candidate forums being held in the Hastings area to give voters the chance to meet candidates and ask questions.

Enquiries – 6583 8798 President FABC Mid North Coast

Blue Mountains Branch Friends of the ABC



Hugh Mackay coming to speak at our AGM on November 17 caps off an excellent year for FABC in the Blue Mountains.

The highlights!

Peter Manning's presentation to a 60 strong audience at our November 2006 AGM

Setting up our stalls, writing and public forums working groups at a planning workshop in February

"Say NO to advertising on the ABC" as the focus of our lobbying effort during 2007 320 letters to Senator Coonan signed and sent by the public at the Springwood Foundation day, another 370 at Katoomba's Winter Magic Festival, and more to come from the Glenbrook Fair on November 10

An overflow audience at the Carrington for our *'Media, Democracy and the Role of the ABC'* forum in July

Positive feedback on the forum from our panel of stars – John Highfield, Peter Manning, Richard Bawden and Neil Inall

The quality of interaction at our 'Meet the Candidates' forum in September – Kerry Bartlett (Liberal), Bob Debus (Labor), Carmel MacCallum (Greens), David King (Democrats), Tim Williams (Independent) and 60 FABC members

The camaraderie among members at our monthly meetings, in our working groups and at our events, and during social functions like the "ABC Ultimo Tour" on November 5

Plans for 2008 include lobbying via a writing campaign and FABC stalls at local festivals, and public forums with invited speakers. In principle commitments from Geraldine Doogue, Fran Kelly, Monica Attard and Chris Masters augur well.

Hugh Mackay is arguably Australia's foremost social commentator and his topic 'Advance Australia (and the ABC) ... Where?' gives him plenty of scope to relate insights from his just-published book to his lifelong study of the media and its influence on our lives. Bring your friends along with you – there is no charge. The Grandview bistro is a fine venue for a post-meeting lunch and a good way to close a vintage FABC year. Join the candidates and members of the Friends for lunch at the Grand View afterwards.

Bob Macadam

Eastern Suburbs - Friends of the ABC

CANDIDATES FORUM

No Show by Local member

More than 60 people attended the Eastern Suburbs Friends of the ABC Candidates' Forum held on Sunday afternoon 14 October 2007 at the Bondi Junction Waverley RSL Club.

Candidates of the major parties in Wentworth were invited to present their policies on the ABC.

Well known Australian actor Rhys Muldoon moderated the afternoon's event which included questions from the audience. He kept the audience entertained with his humour and gave everyone present an opportunity to have their say including two Independent candidates who were present.

President NSW FABC Mal Hewitt was the first speaker and outlined the priorities of the FABC. Mal's knowledge of the issues and his grasp of the facts and figures assisted the debate greatly.

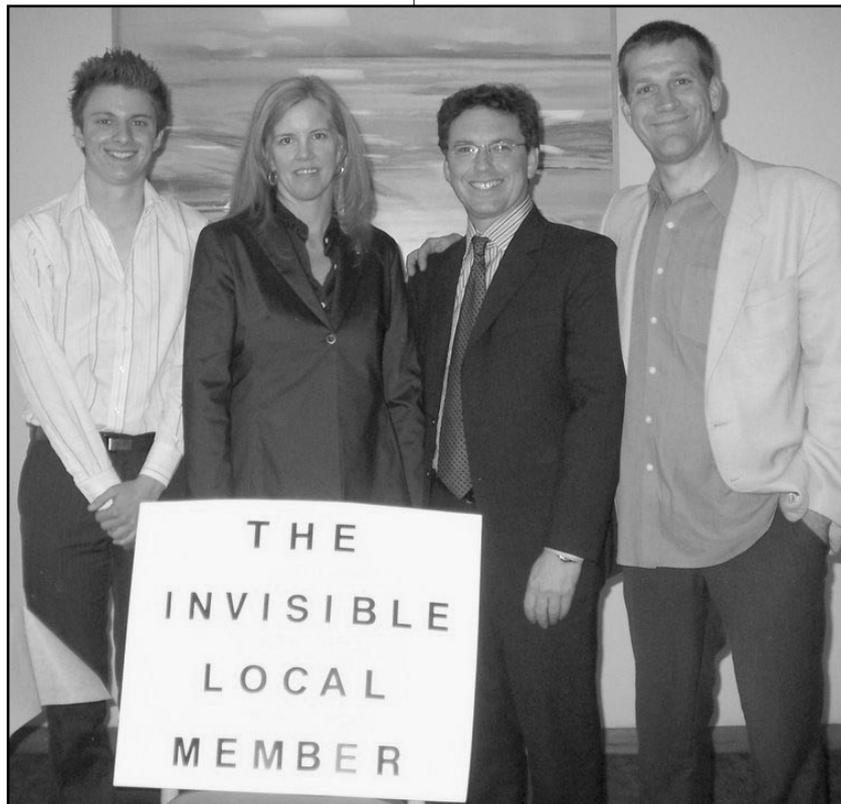
The executive of the ESFABC expressed disappointment that in spite of strenuous efforts to accommodate the local Member for Wentworth, Malcolm Turnbull, he declined exactly as he did three years ago, when the Friends held a similar Candidates' Forum for the 2004 election. The

Secretary, Nizza Siano stated that the Executive of the ESFABC found it disappointing that the Local Member could not fit into his campaign schedule the opportunity to explain his party's policies on the ABC to members and supporters of the FABC in his own Electorate,. She said that all her attempts, starting in early July,

and ALP George Newhouse. They all expressed unequivocal support for our Public Broadcaster to be independent and free of political interference by introducing a new ABC Board appointment process. They also supported the reinstatement of a staff elected Representative on the Board - a position which was abolished

by the Howard Government, a ban on advertising, including on ABC branded websites, plus adequate funding for all ABC services.

Following the Forum, the Executive of the ESFABC, with the financial assistance of the NSW FABC, placed a half page ad in the Wentworth Courier. The photo that appeared in the article is reproduced here.



Democrat Pierce Field, Greens Susan Jarnason, ALP George Newhouse. and Australian actor and Moderator Rhys Muldoon

with the Member for Wentworth, as well as with the Liberal Party at both the Federal and State levels, had failed to produce a representative from the Liberal Party prepared to attend the Forum.

Even an invitation to the Minister for Communications, Senator Helen Coonan, remained unanswered.

The three Candidates who did attend were Democrat Pierce Field, Greens Susan Jarnason

Friends of the ABC has NEVER been a party political organisation. It is a lobby group and as such, must maintain a civil relationship with all parties. This does not mean the Friends cannot rate the way that various parties have treated the ABC. However, Friends of the ABC does NOT tell citizens of Australia HOW TO VOTE.

HUNTER BRANCH SPECIAL ELECTION REPORT

The Hunter Branch will be distributing the Senate cards in addition to circulating the flyers produced by the A.C.T. branch.

In addition we are manning an FABC voting information booth in the key electorate of Paterson, currently held by a Liberal MP.

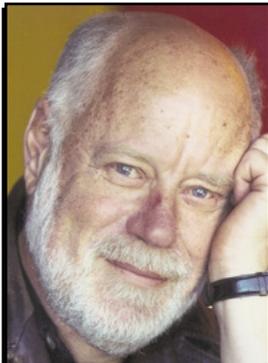
All local federal politicians and candidates from the various known political parties have been forwarded a questionnaire

requesting their views on ABC funding and Board appointments. Disappointingly there has been a poor response with only Jill Hall from Shortland Electorate and Joel Fitzgibbon of Hunter Electorate responding up to 30 October.

Every other democratic means to ensure a more ABC friendly government is returned will also be taken.

The Hunter Committee applauds the NSW and other Branch's election initiatives and is keen to offer every assistance.

Peter Brandscheid
President, Hunter FABC Branch.



AN EVENING WITH PHILLIP ADAMS IN THE HUNTER

On 16 August the Hunter Friends, in conjunction with Politics in the Pub, hosted a successful evening with Phillip Adams at Newcastle Panthers (the old Workers' Club of earthquake fame).

Over 300 people were treated to Phillip's witty insights on the Australian and American political scene. We wonder what Phillip has made from the CWA cookbook he was given as a thank you.

Lisa Thomas

SAVE OUR ABC BY SAVING THE SENATE

Consider these scenarios....

If elected, Labor would legislate for a ban on all ABC advertising - on ABC websites as well as on ABC radio and ABC TV. It is supported in this by the Democrats and the Greens.

That legislation to ban ads would not be sure to pass in the Senate unless there is a change in the Senate balance of power.

.....or this one:

If, on the other hand, the Coalition is returned and did look at advertising on ABC TV and radio, the ABC Act would have to be amended.

That legislation to allow ads would pass the Senate unless there is a change in the Senate balance of power.

It is vitally important for keeping the ABC

ad-free, (as well as for restoration of the Staff Elected Director on the ABC Board), that parties committed to banning ads on the ABC have a majority of seats in both the House and the Senate (see Darce's article "Enemies of the ABC"). The ALP will legislate to ban all advertising on the ABC, and is supported by the Democrats and the Greens. ACT Liberal Senator Gary Humphries has specifically and publicly stated that he would not support legislation banning advertising.

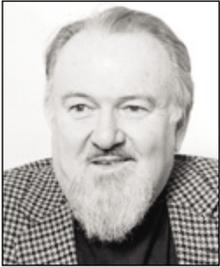
Coalition Minister Coonan says advertising - on ABC TV and radio - is "something we can look at down the future". At present, the Coalition has 39 Senate seats. Opposition parties have a total of 37 - the ALP have 28, Greens 4, Family First 1, and Democrats 4.

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Enemies of the ABC

(Continued from Page 1)

It is a remarkable fact that in the 75 year history of the ABC the government has only appointed one broadcaster to the ABC Board. Robert Raymond, a distinguished



TV producer who had worked for both the ABC and Channel 9, was appointed by the Hawke government but only served one term.

To some extent this deficiency in the makeup of the Board was rectified by the ABC staff. The Whitlam government introduced the ability of ABC staff to elect one member of the board. While they could have elected an administrator or a technician, ABC staff have consistently elected broadcasters to this position. However this position was abolished by the

Howard government last year, further damaging the diversity and range of skills and experience available to the board.

Labor has promised to restore the position of staff elected director, along with the introduction of a new and transparent process for appointing all board members.

While Labor clearly has a good chance of forming government, it will have an uphill battle in the Senate. Only half the Senate retire at each election. Given the strong vote for the Coalition at the last election Labor would have to win significantly more than 50% to control the Senate. The Greens have promised to restore the Staff Elected Director of the ABC and the Democrats have also supported this position. But could the position be restored without the support of majority of Senators?

The short answer is yes, but it probably wouldn't last. When Whitlam first introduced the position he did not have a Senate majority. He did not change the Act. The Minister of the day simply used his power to make appointments to appoint the person who had received the most votes in an election by the staff. The downside of this technique was because it never became part of the Act the Fraser government was not obliged to follow the practice.

It is therefore vitally important that parties committed to the resoration of the Staff Elected Director, and an end to the stacking of the ABC board hold a majority of seats in both the House and the Senate.

Darce Cassidy

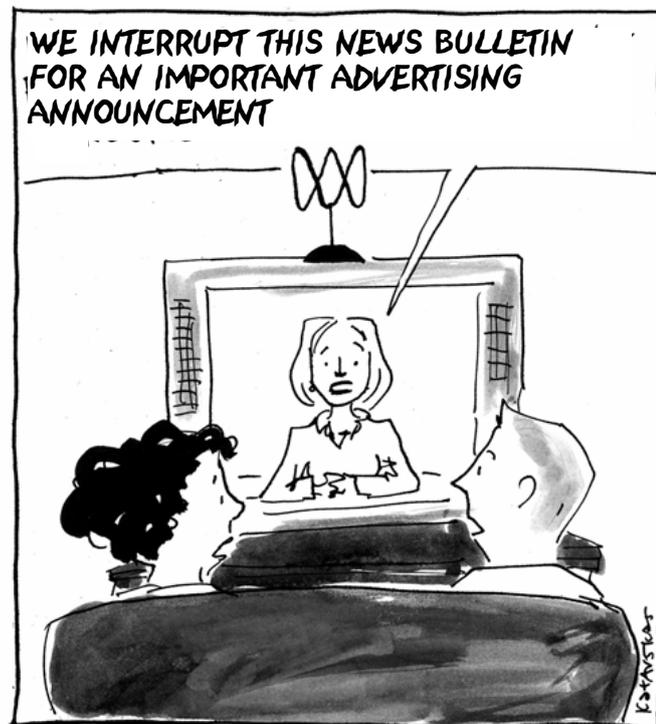
SAVE OUR ABC BY SAVING THE SENATE

Continued from Page 8

In NSW, Greens Senator, Kerry Nettle, rates her chances of re-election as 50/50. If she loses, probably to Liberal Senator Marise Payne, the Coalition's dominance of the Senate would strengthen.

In the ACT a second non-Coalition Senator could take control out of the hands of the Coalition. We have produced a pamphlet to be distributed in selected areas of the ACT, urging "Vote NO to ads on our ABC" by returning a second non-Coalition Senator - and saving the Senate as a House of Review.

*Jill Greenwell President
Friends of the ABC
(ACT & Region)*



Remember, when casting your vote, support the candidate who genuinely supports the ABC.

ALAN BURKE Remembered

We are indebted to Tom Jeffrey for the following excerpts from tributes to Alan Burke, pioneering ABC television producer and director, who died on 27th August. His career extended from the beginnings of television in Australia through to the 1980s.

Alan had just started producing at the ABC in 1958 and I was a lowly floor manager just promoted from studio hand. He took me under his wing and, as he did with others, became a mentor to me – not in an obvious way saying: do this or do that, but just allowing me to see into the creative process of his work, sharing with me his wealth of knowledge about theatre, film, music and opera. I observed the respect and love he had for the people he was working with, particularly actors. It was learning by osmosis, and I valued the experience highly.

From David Salter:

Whenever we met the same question always cropped up in my mind: where would Australian television drama be without Alan's great teaching?

And the depth of his experience and knowledge flowed into other areas - even to we cheeky bastards in current affairs who were greedy to learn all we could about the medium. He was ever generous and understanding - and had a wicked sense of humour. Alan was a key member of that select group who helped shape quality television in Australia. We are all in his debt.

From Marius Webb:

He was in charge of our group of grumpy, badly dressed trainees when we did the Specialist Trainee course up at Kellett St in the early seventies.

Apart from Alan Ashbolt I can think of no one who had a deeper impact on me in my first few years

in the ABC. We were extraordinarily fortunate to have been vouchsafed such a creative and free-wheeling talent, although I doubt that it was done on purpose.

What I mean is that he wasn't sent to training because someone higher up thought he was necessarily the right person for the job. They probably wanted to sideline him! But as it turned out he was the best person for the job as he really understood the creative process and imbued in us all a desire to get the most out the potentially creative situations we would be in.

He was also a very gentle and courteous man who saw the best in everyone and whose contribution to the ABC should be well remembered.

And from the ABC's current Director of Television, Kim Dalton:

Just twenty-one when he was trained in television at the BBC, Alan Burke then went on to almost thirty brilliant years at the ABC.

He was among those bright idealists and pioneers who went looking for adventure and found it in television. Young when television was young, they were rhapsodic about TV's great promise and hope. They saw ahead to the time when it would assume its place at the heart of Australian culture.

And they knew that once they'd learned how to write for it how powerful it could be. Who were intent on creating television that lived up to all its potential, rather than down to its limitations.

Alan was also wanted to see drama - which he loved - reach its widest possible audience and make its greatest impact. And like others – particularly those in the ABC – saw TV as the means by which that would be achieved. Keep in mind the odds that were against them at the time. TV pioneers like Alan came up hard against the fact

that when they strode into TV, there was no feature film industry, no strongly established theatre in Australia.

His was an age when writing and directing for the small screen was in its infancy – and whatever the precedents in theatre or film, they didn't entirely apply. They made it up as they went, and made history along the way.

Keep in mind also that after two years of TV in Australia, when Alan came to the ABC in 1958, more than 40 plays had been screened on ABC TV. Not one had been shown on commercial television.

Rattle off a few of the list of works Alan produced or directed and you get some sense of the simultaneous coming of age of Australian culture and Australian television - their ascendancies went hand in hand. Sure, he started – as ABC TV did - with Pinter, Shakespeare and there was plenty of Puccini too, but later he went on to produce and direct works like Kylie Tennant's *Ride on Stranger*, Alex Buzo's *Coralie Lansdowne Says No*, plays and stories by Ruth Park, Patrick White, David Williamson. With the power of Alan's TV experience behind them, these works helped change forever how we felt about our own writers, and what we knew about ourselves.

And pioneers like Alan lay the foundations for the huge affection that exists for today's ABC, after fifty years of television, and seventy-five of radio. People whose talents were so large and whose enthusiasms so great that they could have worked anywhere, but who chose instead to dedicate their lives to the ABC.

His legacy endures, and all of us at today's ABC are in his debt.

Kim Dalton, Director of Television, ABC.

Radio Australia represents ABC at London Media Awards

Radio Australia programs have been shortlisted in 3 categories for this year's Association for International Broadcasting Media Excellence Awards.

The Breakfast Club has been nominated in two categories - "the most innovative partnership", following a live to air road trip taking in China, Singapore and Malaysia with host Phil Kafcaloudes also scoring a nomination as "International Radio Personality of the Year".

And Radio Australia's Pacific current affairs program, "Pacific Beat" has been nominated for "Best Program dealing with a topical issue".

In April this year, Breakfast Club presenter, Phil Kafcaloudes set out on an ambitious journey to conduct live broadcasts from Guangzhou in China, Singapore and Malaysia. In China, the Breakfast Club conducted the first-ever ABC broadcast from Guangzhou, a few days later Phil participated in a live simulcast with NewsCorp's

major news radio channel, '938Live' in Singapore and wrapped up the trip with another live simulcast with Traxx FM in Malaysia.

As well, Phil has also been shortlisted for the international radio personality of the year. Phil and co-host Adelaine Ng, provide an amusing and informative start to the day across Radio Australia's expanding Asian and Pacific FM network, on line and shortwave. The Breakfast Club is fast becoming a regional benchmark in interacting with wide audiences ranging across physical borders and cultural boundaries.

Radio Australia's respected Pacific Beat program has also been shortlisted in the category of "best programme dealing with a topical issue, radio" for its segment titled, 'Blogs Challenge', where Radio Australia's journalist Bruce Hill explores who bloggers are in the Pacific.

The awards will be presented in London on November 20th

PASS ME ON

When you have finished with this *UPDATE* Newsletter please pass it on to another family member, friend, neighbour etc.
The ABC needs all the Friends it can muster!



Who to Write...

Anyone seeking basic information about writing to persons of influence might find it helpful to go to the FABC NSW website <www.fabcnsw.org.au> where there are some menu items leading to pages of information:

Who can I write to? What can I say?

UPDATE

Print post approved PP 245059/00002

Update is published four times a year by Friends of the ABC NSW (FABC) – PO Box 1391 NORTH SYDNEY 2059. To become a member phone (02) 9990 0600 or email to: <fabcmem@fabcnsw.org.au>.

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Greetings from the other side of 1980!

In the lead up the 2007 Federal Election, my heart goes out to nematodes. Such is the bias shown by our government that they openly discriminated against these poor unsegmented creatures which don't even have a circulatory or respiratory system to call their own (roundworms only). From their bilateral symmetry to their apparent sensitivity to public opinion, they're a traditional component of televised Leaders debates. Not anymore.



Jessica Harwood

Regardless of the merits of nematodal adjudication (which may be few and far between), the issue of the worm ended up being a bit of a fiasco, clearly demonstrating the pressure put on our public broadcaster by the Coalition.

In this election year however, there's a chance to let the government know what we make of their approach to our Aunty. I definitely won't be tolerating any Aunty-bashing, especially not now I can vote! But does the opposition give us a better option, are they more Aunty-friendly, and will the ABC's situation improve with new leadership? We can't be sure what a Rudd government holds in store for the ABC. Remember, politicians will always react to scrupulous media analysis of their actions (which the skilful ABC provides) with allegations of bias, attack being the most convenient form of defence. And didn't the tradition of squealing ABC bias begin with Neville Wran, the then Labor Premier of NSW,

who declined to answer questions from an ABC reporter in 1983? We can only conclude that the ABC has done its job admirably- it's to the ABC's credit that their coverage is so highly disliked by the pollies. And dislike they do- The Liberal charge against the ABC has taken allegations of bias to a new level in the past eleven years, culminating with slashed funding and a clear preference for the commercial media. Is it time for retributions?

The Coalition has done much damage to our public broadcaster and the Australian media landscape, but their goals have just been made easier to achieve in the last two while it has held the balance of power in the Senate. Last year the Minister for Communications Helen Coonan put forward changes to Australia's media ownership laws which were passed by the Senate, therefore removing restrictions which limit the ownership of more than one newspaper, television or radio station in the same city. These changes were building since Howard was elected in 96, manifesting themselves in several policy announcements notably by Richard Alston in 2001 and meetings with Fairfax and the Packers. All it took was a Senate majority to fully relax our media ownership laws. Now we may truly be Out-Foxed with the reality of loosing media diversity.

Let's hope that this election year sees the Coalition loosing their two-and-a-half-year control over the Senate, the lack of contrasting opinions and balanced debate is getting a bit stifling in there!

This election we have a chance to vote with the ABC in mind. This election will be the first one I and many of my friends will be voting in. Some of us were wish-

ing we could vote years ago and are shamelessly excited, some are gearing up for a wild election party and are vaguely interested, and others haven't even enrolled yet, calling themselves politically apathetic which has sadly become somewhat trendy. No matter where young people are located on the spectrum of political botheration (from politically nerdy to couldn't-care-less) and how much they know about the workings of their democratic system, this is an important election for the ABC.

And this brings me back to the subject of nematodes. No matter who is elected, we must be vigilant to ensure that opposed pollies don't succeed in reducing the ABC's public persona to worm-food!

Jessica Harwood

Government-controlled ABC Ahead

"A Government-controlled national broadcaster looks to be the Coalition's promise if it is re-elected," said Friends of the ABC National Spokesperson, Professor Alan Knight.

The Government announced on 10 November a new vote-buyer: a dedicated ABC children's TV channel. This comes on top of Senator Coonan's announcement just over a week ago of a new ABC studio for Hervey Bay if the Coalition is re-elected, and Friday's announcement of a new ABC Local Radio morning program for Warrnambool.

"At face value this sounds positive. But it's not," said Friends of the ABC National Spokesperson, Professor Alan Knight.

"It's a misuse of the ABC for pork-barrelling in an election. Worse, it's a further attack on the national broadcaster's independence."

"Australia's national broadcaster is meant to be independent from government. It is for the ABC to decide how it best meets its Charter responsibilities specified in the ABC Act.

"This Government has undermined the public broadcaster's independence by stacking the ABC Board with its political mates. Now it is controlling what the ABC does by choosing what it will and will not fund.

"It is not difficult to guess the sort of things the public will no longer hear and see if the government is allowed to determine ABC services and programming.

"Australians value their independent national broadcaster. They don't want it to become a tool of any government.

"Friends of the ABC would welcome the ABC being provided sufficient funds so that it is able to re-establish a children's TV channel and to rebuild other parts of the ABC. But without adequate ongoing funding for the ABC, there is a serious risk that money will ultimately be drawn from other resource-starved ABC services to fund the Government's political promises," said Professor Knight.

Both electorates in which the Government is promising local services are Coalition-held elec-

torates - Hervey Bay is in southern Queensland, in the electorate of senior National Party Minister, Warren Truss; Warrnambool is in the Victorian electorate of Wannon that is held by the Liberal Speaker of the House, David Hawker MP.

The ABC's last effort to establish a digital children's channel, ABCkids in 2001, was short-lived. The ABC did not receive sufficient funds to keep it open.

The Government commissioned, and still refuses to release, the KPMG report into the adequacy and efficiency of ABC funding. Leaks from the KPMG report indicated the ABC needed \$37.6 million over the next three years just to maintain its present level of operation.

**WHEN YOU VOTE
REMEMBER THE ABC**



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My details will be passed on to my local FABC branch. (Strike out if you disagree) I/We apply for membership of FABC (NSW) Inc. and accept its objectives and rules.		
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