

UPDATE

Friends of the ABC (NSW) Inc.
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incorporating **Background Briefing** friends of the abc

EVELYN MASTERMAN'S SECRET – EXERCISE, FRESH AIR and the ABC



FABC Centenarian Evelyn Masterman, resident of Berriedale, up the Derwent Valley from Hobart, but a member of NSW Friends of the ABC, has been discovered by our resourceful and vigilant Membership Secretary, Angela Williamson. Evelyn will turn 104 on 31st May, and I am certain that she is our most senior “active” member.

A former competition skier who represented Tasmania, and a lover of bushwalking (although not active any more), Evelyn still walks a mile every day, and is an enthusiastic gardener. She is currently growing lupins, irises, penstamon and catmint, and when Angela phoned her, had spent the morning pulling off the tree all the Golden Delicious apples which had

been attacked by the codlin moth. She stews and bottles her own apples and apricots. Her companion is a cat called Star. When a kitten, it had a white star on its chest, but the star has now become an apron, but, as Evelyn sensibly points out, “I can’t call a cat Apron, can I?”

Evelyn was featured in the Hobart Mercury along with Jessie Luckman (100) and Nancy Weaver (100), all of whom graduated from the University of Tasmania in the 1930s. Friends of the ABC is fortunate to count passionate supporters such as Evelyn amongst its number. ☺

left to right - Jessie Luckman (100), Evelyn Masterman (103), Nancy Weaver (100). With thanks to the Hobart Mercury.

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Update is distributed to all members of FABC, as part of the membership fee. Update is also supplied to journalists, politicians and libraries across Australia. It is edited and produced in Sydney but contributions are welcome from NSW country and interstate branches.

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If you prefer this delivery option for future Updates please send an email to the Membership Secretary.

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.fabc.org.au where there are some menu items under "Be Active" leading to pages of information: *Who can I write to? What can I say?*

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From The President



A Hard Season

We have been through a summer of unprecedented natural disasters across Australia – devastating floods in four states, bushfires and cyclones. We must never take for granted the vital role played by ABC staff, sometimes working in extreme conditions, in providing up-to-date information to the community. I have reproduced in Update an email from Managing Director Mark Scott, paying tribute to the work of staff in providing this essential service at both a local and a national level, with outstanding dedication and professionalism.

Welcome to ACT Friends of the ABC

Over many years, Canberra has been well served by a strong and effective branch of Friends of The ABC. Sadly, an ageing membership has forced the closure of the ACT Branch, but we welcome most warmly all ACT members who have transferred their membership to NSW, and thank Chris Cartledge and Angela Williamson for facilitating that transfer of members.

Friends of the ABC is as powerful as its local branches. Mid-North Coast Branch reports in this issue of its recent meeting with independent Federal Member Rob Oakeshott on a range of ABC issues – local voices really do count! Central Coast Branch reports on a forum with Jonathan Holmes, presenter of MediaWatch, but it is also the final report from John Hale, who is stepping down after 10 years as Branch President. John and Margaret Hale have led one of our most dynamic branches – their public meetings frequently attract several hundred to hear a very wide range of ABC presenters and personalities. We wish John and Margaret a well-earned rest!

The Australian Network

Much concern has been expressed by FABC members over the future of The Australia Network, funded by Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, whereby The ABC broadcasts television programs into Asia and The Pacific. Minister Rudd announced last year that the contract would be put out to tender. The ABC will compete with commercial media for that tender, which closes on 25th March. An announcement will be made on 2nd May, and the new contract will commence on 8th August. Friends of The ABC has made a strong case to DFAT that the ABC should be retained as the broadcaster.

In an ominous move in the UK Rupert Murdoch has just acquired almost 50% of the British media. Murdoch's power is his ability to divide – his networks use fear and misinformation to divide communities, as we have seen in the US and increasingly in Australia. He will undoubtedly be tendering for The Australia Network.

Hope in a Slingshot

Regular readers of Update will have followed the saga relating to this outstanding documentary over the past 12 months. The ABC has given its final refusal to screen it, but should you wish to see it for yourself or organize a local screening, copies may be obtained from Ronin Films, PO Box 680, Mitchell, ACT. 2911, Phone 02 6248 0851, or email orders@roninfilms.com.au at a special rate of \$25 per DVD (inc. GST & postage) for members of Friends of the ABC.

Mal Hewitt

FABC NSW President 

Recognition for Illawarra FABC Stalwart Chris Cartledge.



Friends of the ABC NSW's Committee member and Webmaster Chris. Cartledge, was recently awarded the '2010 Illawarra Senior Volunteer of the Year Award' by The Centre for Volunteering. Chris also received a '2010 NSW Senior Volunteer of the Year Award - Highly Commended' award for his volunteer work.

Now days Chris' volunteer work mainly focuses on the refugee community in the Illawarra. However he was previously the FABC NSW Membership Secretary and of course remains our Webmaster. He is also a member of the Illawarra Bird Observers Club and is also their Webmaster.

Strategic Community Assistance to Refugee Families (SCARF) is an independent, not-for-profit, community based organisation established to enhance

the resettlement process of permanent resident status refugee entrants in the Illawarra Region of NSW.

For many refugees, email and other online social networking tools are the most efficient way of communication with family and friends 'back home', those still waiting in overseas refugee camps and their new communities in the Illawarra. Phone call costs are prohibitive and in many cases impossible (not connected).

One of SCARF's most popular and most valued services is the Computers for the Community Program. Community members who are registered with SCARF can apply for a computer, which is provided virtually free (\$20). Chris manages this program and has provided over 120 refugee families in the Illawarra with a computer and helped connect the vast majority to the internet.

Chris is a wonderful example of making great use of retirement to offer his skills and talents in the service of others. He has been an indispensable part of the NSW FABC team for some years, but the contribution he makes in his local community through SCARF is quite extraordinary. We are delighted to see Chris's service to the community recognized in this way.

ABC again provides a vital service throughout our summer of natural disasters

The following message was sent to all ABC staff on January 11 by MD Mark Scott

I just want to take a moment to convey thanks to ABC staff who have been working around the clock to provide continuous coverage of the devastating floods in Queensland.

In recent weeks, many returned early from holidays to ensure the ABC delivered vital news and information across radio, television and online. Some have flown in from around the country to support local teams on the ground. Extensive work has been done to keep services on air whilst making every effort to keep our properties dry and our facilities operational.

We have journalists and broadcasters with strong local

knowledge and broad experience reporting on the story. We are using social media to tap into audience experiences and insights. And we are delivering this through a range of new online sites. This morning we launched a new digital radio station so that people across the country who can receive the service will be able to listen to the outstanding coverage being provided by local radio in SE Queensland.

So many people are working so hard to give local communities the information they need and to report this story to the nation and to the world. Our ability to deliver as an emergency broadcaster comes as a result of detailed planning and preparation and the willingness of so many to give tirelessly at the time of

greatest need. We need to respond to these emergencies wherever they occur: last week it was flooding in Western Australia, where a bushfire rages today. When the stories have strong national focus or intense local impact, our people respond in a wonderful way.

The work in Queensland and northern NSW will continue in coming days and weeks as this story and its aftermath becomes clear.

My thanks to all who have been involved in this coverage and those who have provided support in different ways – and for the continuing commitment shown across the ABC to emergency broadcasting wherever and whenever it is needed.

Mark

The year that was



Managing Director, Mark Scott looks back on 2010, and pays tribute to ABC staff.

There is no doubt that from our audiences' perspective, this has been a big year at the ABC

Over the past twelve months we have started two new television networks – ABC3 and ABC News 24 – and both have already made a very strong impact with their target audiences. iView has established itself as the pre-eminent catch-up service within Australian television. We have expanded our capacity as a forum for diverse commentary, analysis and debate through The Drum. We are hosting a great range of interesting new content from our audiences in regional and rural Australia at ABC Open and making innovative use of opportunities in digital radio.

More than a million iPhone apps that enable Australians to watch the news and listen to radio through their phones have been downloaded. The ABC iPad app is the clear leader in iPad apps for Australian media organisations.

We have also led the Australian media in the use of social networks to connect with and grow audiences. As a result ABC content is being increasingly shared within these networks. The terrific makeover of our retail stores is helping to lift ABC product sales. The first of our new drama programs – Rake and Sisters of War – have been greeted with both critical acclaim and really positive responses from viewers.

Quite a year – and that is just focusing on new audience experiences. We continued to do exceptional work in our broadcasting and online services, both through regular programming and special coverage of big events. The ABC has never attempted a more ambitious or comprehensive election campaign coverage than the one we did this year. While this achievement was enough in itself, we also learned from the experience, and now know how our standards and performance might be even better next time.

There were also moments when our audience dramatically responded to ABC content, such as the more than \$6 million raised through the ABC's Pakistan Flood appeal, triggered by truly remarkable reporting from the scene by Sally Sara and Wayne McAllister.

None of this would have been possible without the tireless contribution of those behind the scenes - creating programming, delivering services, working cooperatively so that the work was done as effectively as possible.

“

I hope to spend several months next year talking with staff around the country, as we think through the decade ahead for the ABC and continue to move into a world transformed by broadband and unlimited audience choice.

”

To create the digital television services, for example, we needed to establish new working methods and introduce complex new technology at both the ABC and in our partnerships such as Media Hub. This was both difficult and challenging, and I want to thank everyone involved – your professionalism and determination have paid off and the new on-air services continue to improve.

We are indebted, as is every Australian who is enjoying the ABC's new services, to those in our production teams and support

divisions who have dedicated themselves to developing them - it could not have come together or been so successful without you.

We work in the most dynamic sector imaginable. Hardly a week goes by without some new innovation or development that potentially changes the way audiences consume and relate to media and the way organisations like ours deliver it.

I am pleased that our audiences regard the ABC as such an innovative institution, but I know we must continue to provide broadcasting and services that are distinctive and of high quality, of wide appeal and specialist interest.

We must continue to manage the tension between investing in the new and ensuring the highest standards in existing services are maintained. Our audiences, after all, want us to do both – so this will remain a key focus for me.

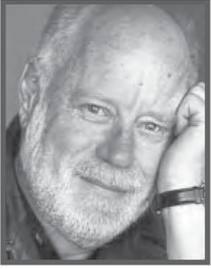
I can promise another action-packed year in 2011. We hope the new Brisbane headquarters will, if the rain stops, be completed in 12 months time. Preliminary work is underway for new premises in Melbourne.

Believe it or not - (I can't) - by this time next year we will have presented our new triennial funding submission and worked hard to secure a ten year extension of the Australia Network contract.

I hope to spend several months next year talking with staff around the country, as we think through the decade ahead for the ABC and continue to move into a world transformed by broadband and unlimited audience choice.

What will the media world be like in 2021? What will the ABC's place in it be? These are important questions I want us to consider as we make decisions necessary to our future.

Kind regards
Mark Scott



Dear Phillip, it's happy anniversary after two decades

Errol Simper, writing in *The Australian* on 21st February, celebrates 20 years of Phillip Adams and his Radio National program, *Late Night Live*.

Phillip Adams told Media's Sally Jackson the other day he was astonished at having chalked up two decades of hosting Radio National's *Late Night Live*, and well he might be.

Adams is an unspeakable man and *LNL* the epitome of the kind of blatant leftist bias which has for so long earned the ABC a thoroughly bad name.

Adams shouldn't be astonished. He should be ashamed. Night after night, afternoon after afternoon, on *LNL* (10.05pm, Monday to Thursday, repeated the following afternoon at 4pm) he goes to Berlin and points to where the Wall used to be. Doing his best Ronald Reagan impersonation he, effectively, says: "Build up this wall, Mr Gorbachev."

Fortunately, his sole listener is usually the wretchedly lonely Gladys, though how Adams has got away with this for so long is one of broadcasting's most abiding mysteries. For *RN* to pay Adams to do the airwaves such irreparable violence for 20 years is a disgrace.

Oh, all right. We don't mean a word of all that. The truth is we love and revere Adams and freely concede the longevity of a certain column by a certain person may owe something to Phillip Andrew Adams (as well as to some kindly and tolerant editors). As a partner for many years on the same Saturday page as Adams in *The Weekend Australian*, it was difficult not to take inspiration from that wise-looking visage at the top of the page. More or less new to writing national media columns 20-plus years ago, the scribe would labour pathetically to express distaste for ruthless television advertising aimed at the very young. Adams, once in the advertising business himself, dismissed it in Shakespearian terms as "corporate pedophilia". The scribe tried, pitifully, to find the appropriate words with which to admonish commercial television for some of the rubbish and nonsense it was championing and purveying as "the best

television in the world". Adams imperiously wrote it off as viscous material squeezed on to the screen through "the sphincter".

There was always something gloriously and enviably unfettered about his writing. Back in the days when *SBS* had a considerably more serious demeanour than it does now but was struggling to justify its existence in the face of tiny audiences, Adams rapidly identified the problem. The problem, he wrote, wasn't *SBS*. The problem was the audience. How could you not take inspiration?

His deft satire frequently resulted in the near-perfect newspaper column. And it still does, usually on page three of *The Weekend Australian Magazine*, with internal research suggesting him as the most widely read of the magazine's columnists.

If you had to peel off an instant description of *LNL* it might be "intelligent, tempered with iconoclasm". Adams admirably understates it as "a little wireless program", but it's probably quite influential. John Howard's famous plea for the ABC to unearth "a right-wing Phillip Adams" was a considerable, if unintended, compliment to Adams. *LNL*'s 10.05pm slot is a contemplative part of the day. For many, it's the last thing they hear as they prepare for bed. The day's catastrophes have been breathlessly relayed all day long. *LNL* frequently puts the daily calamities into a sensible context because, essentially, it's a big-picture program.

Adams, 71, talks with those who've spent years researching books on specific topics. And the longer-term thinking, which has led to particular opinions, comes percolating through the ether. Adams isn't interested in a knee-jerk, rolling-news bandwagon. *LNL* ensures you're not going to have to relive the suburban pettiness that's probably dogged your day. It eschews the banal, the mundane, the hideously obvious. Many Adams guests are not Australian, thus they pierce that claustrophobic parochialism that sometimes threatens to drive you into exile.

It's difficult to fault Adams as a columnist. Some say this isn't wholly true of his broadcasting. But then, if Adams didn't have faults and flaws, he'd be a global curiosity.

People would come from all corners of the earth to view this unique monument to human perfection. He has, arguably, a propensity to interrupt interesting *LNL* guests while they're in full flow, with occasionally irrelevant reminiscences of his own. It's sometimes said he can engage in a too-fierce agreement with guests whose opinions he happens to share. Some believe he occasionally veers to the Left simply because he feels it's somehow expected of him. He holds polarising opinions and some dismiss him as a selfish, rich, professional leftie. Yet he can also berate and harangue the Left.

The best thing Adams does for the Left, both with *RN* and *The Weekend Australian*, is to haul it into mainstream conversation. The Left is a fragmented thing. It's variously loopy, sane, prescient, dumb, infuriating, reassuring, honest, hypocritical, lovable, ghastly, self-indulgent, well-meaning, destructive, engaging, thin-skinned and many other things besides. A teenage communist, Adams can make sense of the Left and render it coherent as few others can. He does it so well that he can feed the best of the Left's ideas into mainstream radio and newspaper discussion.

Adams has achieved a great deal, whether as a government adviser, a prime mover in the domestic film industry, as a writer, intellectual and broadcaster.

An additional virtue is that Adams is a talent-spotter. He picked out Kevin Rudd as the man to topple John Howard long before Rudd was a serious twinkle in Labor's leadership eye. His choice of regular *LNL* commentators - David Brooks (now a *New York Times* columnist), Bruce Shapiro (a Columbia University journalist and media academic), Christian Kerr (*The Australian*), Laura Tingle (*The Australian Financial Review*) et al - has been shrewd.

Read him or hear him, Adams is the scabrous armature of controversy. So should you believe this is a passable column, you probably lean faintly to the Left. If you think it's appalling, you may sway in another direction. That's the unavoidable corollary to wishing Adams a happy 20th anniversary.

Branch News

Northern Rivers

On Saturday 5 February 2011, members of the Northern Rivers branch of the Friends of the ABC attended a hands-on workshop that showed participants how to access new technologies used by the ABC to make content more accessible to the general public.



Richard Johnson (ABC Online Editor for NSW and the ACT) outlined the nature of iView and ways of maximizing its use to enjoy previously-screened TV programs.



He also gave participants experience in accessing Radio National podcasts and material provided by the ABC App for Mobile phone users. Richard also showed participants how to participate in programs like Q and A and ABC Breakfast by "tweeting".



Catherine Marciniak (Manager of ABC Open at ABC North Coast) provided an informative insight into the potential of ABC Open – a new feature that encourages members of the public to take part in local and national projects by providing their own content to the national broadcaster.

Catherine showed how branch members had already contributed to the "Now and Then" project that had a focus on local history.

Attending the workshop were the Principal and a number of teachers from Bexhill Public School where the workshop was conducted. The Northern Rivers branch is very grateful for the support provided by the school in its well-equipped library.

In all, 18 people took part in this valuable learning exercise.

The next branch activity will be held on Saturday 9 April at the Bangalow Bowling and Sports Club. The session will start at 2 pm and will take the form of a panel session discussing the role of the ABC in periods of natural disaster. A number of ABC identities involved in recent emergencies have been invited to attend.

Vice President Doug Myler has indicated that he no longer wishes to continue in that role. Doug has been a stalwart of the branch over the past decade. We look forward to his continued involvement as a branch member. Any branch members willing to take on the Vice Presidential role should contact Neville Jennings.

The branch has a new website located at <http://www.friendsabcnr.net>. Branch members are encouraged to provide contributions to the Letters Page.

Neville Jennings

Hunter

On the evening of 15th February, members of Hunter Friends of the ABC gathered at the Sydney Junction Hotel in Hamilton. The event was one of a series sponsored by Politics in the Pub, and the Politics people gave FABC many plugs from the



Jonathan Holmes with Hunter FABC President Allan Thomas.

dais, pointing out the table with FABC information and membership forms. The main speaker was Jonathan Holmes of "Media Watch", who talked about time and money constraints on reporters, and why reporters often get their stories so wrong. The photo is of Jonathan Holmes with Hunter FABC President Allan Thomas.

Lisa Thomas
Hunter FABC Secretary

Mid North Coast

Friends lobby MP on ABC

Members of the Mid North Coast branch of Friends of the ABC (FABC) recently met with federal member for Lyne Rob Oakeshott, to enlist his support for the ABC.

Led by branch president, Drusi Meggett, several issues were covered:

- The National Broadcasting Legislation Bill currently before parliament.
- ABC Board appointments to be based on merit.
- Reinstating the Staff-elected board member.
- The Australia Network.

Friends know the ABC gives great value for money for the \$2 per week on average, per person, from the federal government. For this we get four national TV channels, five national radio networks, 60 local radio stations and several lively and informative sites on the internet. During disasters such as the Queensland and Victorian floods and cyclone Yasi, the ABC provides outstanding national TV coverage, as well as 24 hour local radio services to keep people informed. Total ABC funding for all services across the nation is less than the advertising revenue of a single commercial TV network.

Another issue concerning FABC is the future of Australia Network. Funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the ABC has successfully broadcast TV to Asia and the Pacific. However this service is now up for tender. Do we want the international voice of Australia to be from our own ABC, or from a commercial, and possibly foreign-owned company, promoting their agenda?

Mr Oakeshott showed a wide knowledge and understanding of the issues raised and committed to supporting a strong ABC.

Drusi Meggett

Central Coast

About 90 members and friends of the Central Coast Branch attended the "Lunch with Jonathan Holmes" at the Central Coast Leagues Club. Also in attendance were some senior students and staff from the Central Coast Grammar School.



Above: Jonathan Holmes with Central Coast Grammar School representatives Erin Pegus, John Gunderson, Bryce Mills, Ella Bickley, Matt Phillips. Below: Members John Hale, Angie Peachey, John Lund. These photos are by courtesy of Mark Childe, Chain Valley Bay.



Jonathan related his progress from student newspaper contributor at university to a rejection by the Manchester Guardian, but an acceptance by the BBC followed where he then worked as a journalist with the Current Affairs Department. He stressed the importance of accuracy in reporting on technical issues although being on the spot is a commanding issue when covering a story. "You don't have to know anything if you are there." It's the immediacy of the information and the pictures that are of importance to editors.

Jonathan expressed concern at accusations of bias against the ABC, the bitterness created by the Tampa affair and continuing divisions in Australia over the refugee situation.

He also touched on differences of opinion and judgements that a reporter might make when balanced against those of an editor.

We can all be reporters for Media Watch and he welcomes contributions from viewers who may recognise an inconsistency, an hypocrisy or ethical value judgement that might be aired to improve the level of journalism in Australia.

The Central Coast Branch has experienced a change of committee for 2011. Involvement in the FABC organisation creates the opportunity to meet and work with many folk including some who have retired from a life-time of outstanding service to the Australian community and who

are still prepared to take an active part in supporting and protecting the ABC. Many are members of other organisations and on various committees and it is reassuring to know that their knowledge and experience is not lost to such worth-while causes.

John Hale 

The ABC's dilemma



Darce Cassidy

The ABC's Charter expects the ABC to provide something for everyone, but the breadth of the Charter requirement is constrained by the

size of the ABC budget.

As a raft of new communications technologies become available, but the budget stands still, the national broadcaster has to make difficult choices.

The government has provided extra funds for the ABC children's channel, but no more money for content for the new 24 hour TV news channel.

Given that there is a spare television channel available the ABC has decided to take the plunge. It will need to pay for the content out of its existing budget.

This is not the first time ABC has chosen to go it alone. When the ABC established its much admired and very comprehensive web site, it did so without government support and by making economies elsewhere. The ABC website has been an outstanding success.

The same thing happened when the ABC introduced News Radio. This 24-hour service runs when parliament is not sitting, but the ABC has not received extra funds for content for it. News Radio runs on the smell of an oily rag and sometimes it sounds like it. None the less it has been a useful addition to the ABC's overall output.

Just as when the ABC expanded its web presence, and started News Radio, the ABC will need to fund the continuous TV news channel from its existing resources. Something will have to give – if not in the News division then somewhere else in the ABC.

As the breadth of ABC output grows, is there a danger that the depth on ABC content will be compromised? Is there a trade-off between quality and quantity? Will the ABC be infected by churnalism?

Wikipedia says that BBC journalist Waseem Zaikr coined this word and that it refers to where journalists, either lazy or overworked, become reactive rather than proactive. In extreme cases it can descend to simply re-writing media releases with no real investigation of the issue or the facts.

With much of the commercial media affected by the growth of churnalism it is important that the ABC both maintains high standards while at the same time providing a realistic alternative to the commercial media.

After a few teething problems the new channel seems to be finding its feet, and an audience. During the Queensland floods ABC News24 reached 3 million viewers.

According to OZTAM figures News24 has approximately double the audience of its commercial rival Sky News, but these figures no doubt reflect the fact that Sky News is only available on Pay TV.

However the questions remain. What is the proper balance between breadth and depth? How much effort should be spent in rehashing and repurposing, and how much should be spent on the core journalistic function of finding things out?

Will programs like Four Corners and Australian Story, Background Briefing and other specialist programs on Radio National, be adequately funded to shine a light in dark places?

When ABC program come under attack, will the ABC Legal Department have the funds, the expertise and the backing from senior management and the Board to defend legitimate journalism? 

It's been a big first six months FOR THE TEAM AT ABC OPEN

By ABC Open Project Directors, Ann Chesterman and Cath Dwyer

We've grown from a great idea into a great team of people working in communities around Australia, helping regional Australians contribute their stories to the ABC.

ABC Open was born from the understanding that more and more, people all over the world have access to the means to record and publish their stories online.

ABC Open is about bridging the divide between city and country audiences, equipping people with the skills to tell their own stories and opening a whole new conversation with our audience.

In five years time, we want to be able to look back and see changes in the way the ABC audience engages with the ABC.

ABC Open's first two national projects were a great success both in terms of community participation as well as interest and distribution across the ABC. From the thousands of contributions we received, a number have already been featured on ABC News 24, Art Nation on ABC 1 and on Local radio and Local online, as well as the ABC's Arts, Environment, Religion, Indigenous and Rural gateways.

While most of the content generated through ABC Open is available online, we are also developing a range of ways to share the stories in community spaces and places offline. From workshops, to film screenings, exhibitions and other community events, we'll be rolling out a range of exciting ABC Open activities around the country this year and into the future.

New media jobs in regional Australia

A cornerstone of ABC Open is creating new media careers in regional Australia. In the past six months, we've employed 29 producers and five state editors, based in regional ABC radio stations around the country. By the middle of this year, all 45 ABC Open producers will have been appointed to their regional posts.

Since January, we've filled ABC Open positions in Townsville, Port Augusta, Albany, Bendigo, Broken Hill, Bundaberg, Mount Gambier, Port Pirie and Alice Springs.

Sonya Gee, ABC Open Producer, Riverina, NSW - started December 2010



Sonya is a multimedia journalist and artist who is relatively new to Wagga Wagga and keen to get to know her new surroundings. Sonya contributed to Dazed and Confused AUS/NZ magazine and completed a newspaper internship in Seoul, South Korea before making the switch to multimedia journalism. She has been an online producer for SBS, working on 'Insight' and 'Living Black' and has contributed to a number of online arts magazines.

Jenia Ratcliffe, ABC Open producer, Broken Hill, NSW - started Feb 2011



Jenia's award winning film, "The Stone Thrower", won international acclaim in 16 festivals, including the Dendy Awards, Flickerfest, and the Commonwealth Film Festival. She's worked in Eastern Nepal as a Media Producer and as a Field Director for a series of 'behind the scenes' documentaries for Channel Nine's "Rock Eisteddfod TV Special". Recently she directed and edited multimedia content for Sydney University's online eLearning portal. She's thrilled to be the ABC Open producer for Broken Hill and surrounding regions.

News from the latest ABC Open projects

ABC Open currently has two national projects open for contribution.

Portrait of a Stranger invites people to capture someone you don't know in a portrait and short written story. <http://open.abc.net.au/projects/portrait-of-a-stranger/series-1/contributions>

Dawn, by ABC Open Camera Club member from Western Australia, 20tens.



Dawn was born in Warrnambool in the Western District of Victoria, she has lived in nearby Garvoc for 71 years. Four years ago she got a letter from the Water Board saying that the water in Garvoc was not fit for human consumption. She went into the office at Warrnambool to ask what

this letter was all about. They told her that this has always been the case with the water in Garvoc – but along with other residents, she’s been drinking the Garvoc water... and is still here to tell her story.

Due to popular demand, Portrait of a Stranger has been extended until 31 April, 2011, so grab your digital camera and submit your portrait of a stranger to the ABC Open Camera Club today!

One Small Window invites regional Australians to make a short 30 to 60 second video that captures a moment in life. Submissions for One Small Window are open until May 29, 2011. <http://open.abc.net.au/projects/one-small-window/series-1/contributions>

Dancing for a lifetime is 39 seconds of captivating film from the dance floor, by ABC Open community contributor, Lucile Brace. It demonstrates just how powerful thirty seconds of video can be. Here is the story behind Lucile’s One Small Window contribution:

When you see the legs of these dancers, it is hard to believe that the couple are in their 80’s. Yes they are still dancing together every week.

I wonder if it is what has kept their marriage strong over the last 55 years. Dancing most certainly has kept them fit and lively. Week after week I enjoy watching the array of couples who have come to dance.

Dancers of all ages arrive with a special bag, opening them reveals lovely dancing shoes, too precious to wear off the dance floor. The ladies shoes are decorative and usually matched to their outfits. The gentlemen have shoes that are smart and polished.

It reminds me of life in times gone by, where gentlemen respectfully took the hand of a lady and elegantly led her around the dance floor. I hope that this never dies out, but I guess my fear is it probably will... you can view this and other contributions here: <http://vimeo.com/groups/onesmallwindow/videos/20281942>

ABC Open invites regional communities to tell their stories through photos, sound, words and video. There’ll be a range of new projects to get involved in online and some exciting opportunities for regional communities to tell their stories.

Write it, film it, photograph it, share it abc.net.au/open



What’s Your Story?

Since this project opened for contribution in January 2011, we’ve received 127 amazing portraits. We featured this photo of Dawn as an example of the quality of contributions at the Australian International Documentary Conference in Adelaide this month. 



ABC back to the drawing board on foreign bureaux

APTN deal off the table



Jason Whittaker writes in Crikey:

The ABC will go back to the drawing board on its controversial changes to foreign reporting postings, with a deal to share facilities with the TV arm of Associated Press falling over.

ABC News manager Alan Sunderland has confirmed to Crikey the broadcaster's cost-saving drive to merge facilities and reassign reporters and support staff will now be redrafted. But he insists staff complaints about the changes didn't impact the decision to abandon the relationship with APTN.

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Sunderland, the head of national programs, says APTN decided it could no longer accommodate the ABC News London bureau at its New Zealand House headquarters in Haymarket. With that arrangement central to the APTN deal, the ABC will walk away from plans to merge bureaux in Jerusalem, Moscow and Bangkok.

“There is also lingering resentment from some ABC journalists over the establishment of ABC News 24.”

As Crikey reported last month, staff had expressed grave concerns about “jumping into bed” with APTN. One senior reporter said it was “effectively outsourcing” ABC News functions, questioning whether the organisation could properly support ABC journalists when major stories break given how many other clients they serve.

Consultations with staff are ongoing, Sunderland says, with reporters informed of the APTN situation in the last couple of days. London bureau staff had welcomed the move to better facilities, he says, insisting the decision is not a knee-jerk reaction to a staff revolt.

“Clearly we’re disappointed ... the APTN deal was fantastic,” he said.

“The central London accommodation deal did not fall over or get cancelled or get withdrawn because of the views of staff.”

The lease on the ABC’s current West End digs expires in the second half of next year, forcing management to look for new facilities over the next few months.

New plans also have to be drawn up for other bureaux. APTN “might come back to us with something”, Sunderland says.

ABC News boss Kate Torney announced in November that bureaux in Jerusalem, London and Moscow would close and self-contained office space rented from APTN. The office in Bangkok was to be remodeled and shared with APTN, which was also to provide “some technical, infrastructure and administrative support” to ABC bureaux. Camera operators in Jerusalem and London were to be employed by APTN, meaning a “potential reduction in the number of support staff employed locally”.

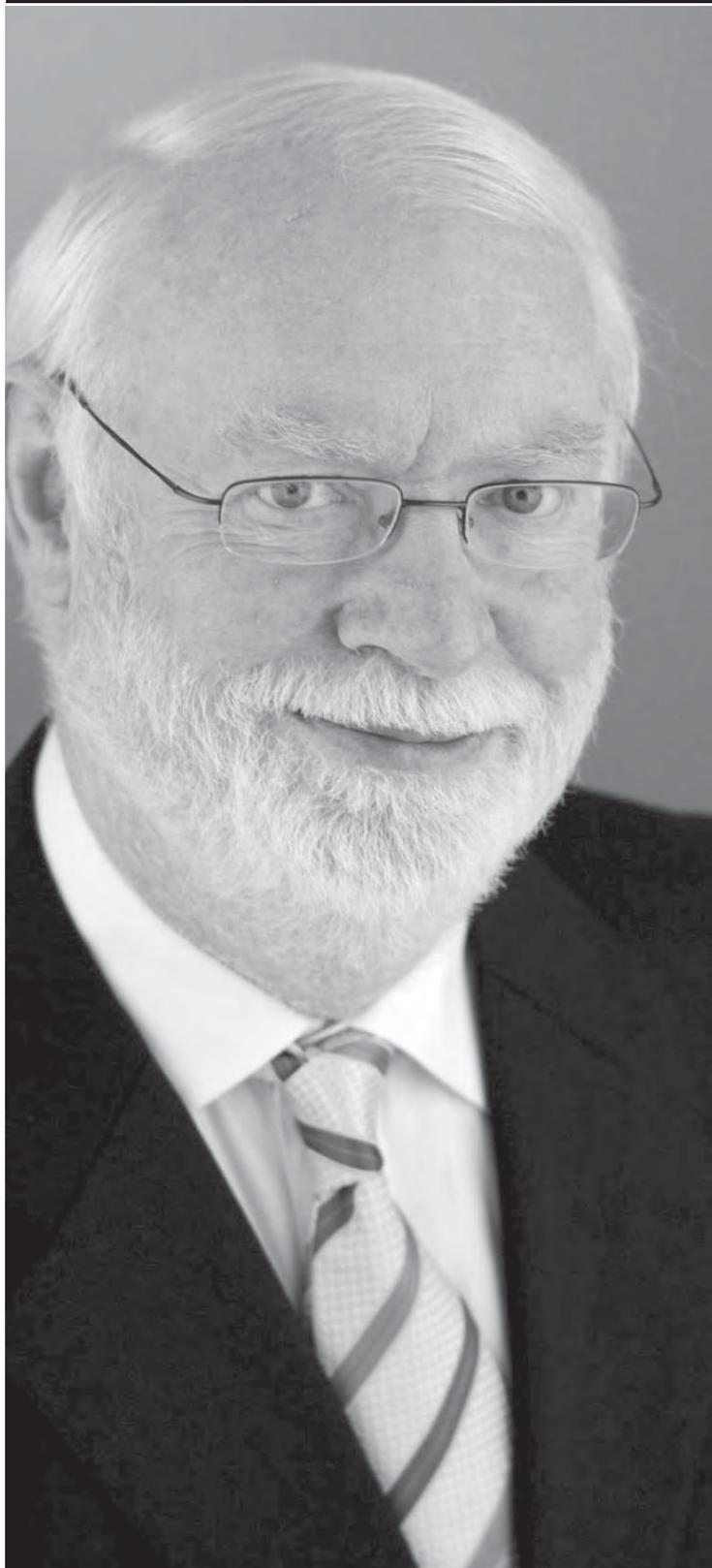
The changes were largely built around opening a new bureau in Afghanistan, headed by Sally Sara in Kabul, from next year. The savings were also supposed to free up budget for travel, allowing correspondents to do more field reporting.

The Kabul post will go ahead, Sunderland said: “Nothing is endangering the Afghanistan bureau.” And savings will still be made through realigning reporters and support staff and moving the London office.

Middle East correspondent Anne Barker has been recalled from Jerusalem, with that post to be staffed by a single reporter (Ben Knight) and producer. Barker will eventually take up residence in New Delhi, replacing Sara once she moves to Kabul. The ABC has maintained there will be no net loss in correspondent positions, however producer positions or hours will still be cut.

One foreign correspondent told Crikey today staff were privately told the same reasons behind the APTN decision. While they welcomed the chance to rethink international reporting structures, the cuts remain a concern: “They’ve got to find the money somewhere.”

There is also lingering resentment from some ABC journalists over the establishment of ABC News 24. Staff complained to Crikey that broadcasting into the 24-hour news network left little time to leave the office and prepare original packages. 



David Stratton Presenter At the Movies

Friends of the ABC, Blue Mountains, are delighted to invite you to hear David Stratton talk about his life, and especially his passionate interest in “all things cinema”. The event will also provide you an opportunity to ask David questions of relevance.

Admission to the talk and refreshments is \$5.00 for non-members and a gold coin donation for members. We look forward to welcoming you there.

NEXT MEETING:

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WHEN: Saturday 19 March

TIME: 10.00 am Meeting
11.00 am Guest Speaker

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