

# UPDATE

incorporating **Background Briefing** friends of the abc

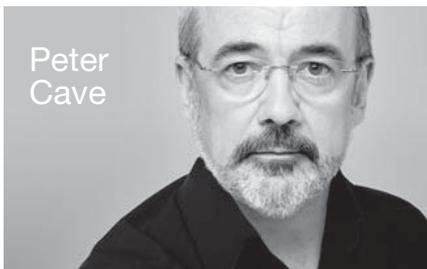
Friends of the ABC (NSW) Inc.  
quarterly newsletter

December 2012  
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## ABC wins eight Walkley Awards

ABC journalists and crew collected eight Walkley Awards for Excellence in Journalism at last night's 57th Walkley ceremony in Canberra.

Awards included Most Outstanding Contribution to Journalism, won by Peter Cave, who retired from the ABC this year after a long and distinguished career as one of Australia's most recognised and respected foreign correspondents.



Peter Cave

ABC flagship current affairs programs, Four Corners and 7.30 took home two Walkleys each.

Mary Ann Jolly, Geoff Thompson and Mary Fallon won for their Four Corners investigation into child sex abuse in the Catholic Church, "Unholy silence", while Matthew Carney and Thom Cookes won the International Journalism award for their Four Corners exclusive "In their sights", which revealed Australia's kill-capture strategy in Afghanistan.

7.30 host Leigh Sales won the Broadcast and Online Interviewing category for her interviews with Tony Abbott, Scott Morrison and Christine Milne. Reporter Nick McKenzie took out the Business Journalism award for his work with The Age's Richard Baker, "RBA faces questions over bribery connections".

ABC Radio's Nance Haxton won the Radio News and Current Affairs Reporting award for "Justice system fails disabled victims of sexual abuse".

Claudia Taranto, Amanda Gearing and Louis Mitchell won in the Radio Feature, Documentary or Broadcast Special category for their 360documentaries piece, "The day that changed Grantham".

ABC TV's "Then the Wind Changed", by Strathewen resident and director Celeste Geer about the devastating 2009 fires, won the Documentary Award.

ABC Managing Director Mark Scott, said "the depth and quality of ABC journalism was on show across all categories with the winners reporting on issues from international to political, business to social justice as well as in-depth analysis from floods to fires.

All our nominees and winners demonstrate why more than ever Australians are turning to the ABC for News and Current Affairs".

### ABC Walkley Winners

#### RADIO NEWS & CURRENT AFFAIRS REPORTING

Nance Haxton, ABC Radio, "Justice system fails disabled victims of sexual abuse"

#### RADIO FEATURE, DOCUMENTARY OR BROADCAST SPECIAL

Claudia Taranto, Amanda Gearing and Louis Mitchell 360documentaries, ABC Radio National, "The day that changed Grantham"

#### BUSINESS JOURNALISM

Nick McKenzie and Richard Baker, 7.30, ABC TV and The Age, Fairfax, "RBA faces questions over bribery connections"

#### INTERNATIONAL JOURNALISM

Matthew Carney and Thom Cookes, Four Corners, ABC TV, "In their sights"

#### BROADCAST AND ONLINE

#### INTERVIEWING

Leigh Sales, 7.30, ABC TV, "Interviews with Tony Abbott, Scott Morrison and Christine Milne".

#### WALKLEY DOCUMENTARY AWARD

Celeste Geer, Rebel Films/ABC TV, "Then the Wind Changed"

#### TELEVISION CURRENT AFFAIRS, FEATURE OR SPECIAL (MORE THAN 20 MINUTES)

Mary Ann Jolley, Geoff Thompson and Mary Fallon, Four Corners, ABC TV, "Unholy silence"

#### MOST OUTSTANDING

#### CONTRIBUTION TO JOURNALISM

Peter Cave 

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## Update Publication Information

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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](http://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?*

### FABC (NSW) Executive Committee Office Bearers

**President - Mal Hewitt**  
Phone: 02 9637 2900  
Email: [malandal@optusnet.com.au](mailto:malandal@optusnet.com.au)

**Secretary & Treasurer - James Buchanan**  
Phone: 02 9371 5621  
Email: [jamesbuc@bigpond.net.au](mailto:jamesbuc@bigpond.net.au)

**Membership Secretary - Angela Williamson**  
Phone: 02 4883 4048  
Email: [fabcmem@fabcnsw.org.au](mailto:fabcmem@fabcnsw.org.au)

**Update Editor - Mal Hewitt**  
PO Box 1391 N. Sydney NSW 2059  
Email: [malandal@optusnet.com.au](mailto:malandal@optusnet.com.au)

**Cartoonist - Phil Somerville**  
Editorial Cartoonist for The Sun Herald (Sydney)  
[phil.somerville@somervillecartoons.com](mailto:phil.somerville@somervillecartoons.com)

**Layout Artist - Paul Martens**  
[paul@martens.name](mailto:paul@martens.name)

**Membership Line: 02 9990 0600**



## From the President

### Walkley Awards

As this edition of Update goes to print, the 2012 Walkley Award winners have been announced. Once again ABC staff have featured prominently in all categories across radio and television, and we are reminded of the great depth of talent on which the ABC draws to bring us news and information of depth and quality. We should recognise especially the award of Most Outstanding Contribution to Journalism to Peter Cave, who retired this year after a long and distinguished career as a foreign correspondent, bringing us news and analysis from many of the world's most difficult and dangerous trouble spots. We record that the outstanding record of ABC foreign correspondents in bringing us the news often comes at great personal cost. Mark Colvin, who has just completed his fifteenth year as presenter of PM, almost lost his life and is permanently disabled as a result of a virus contracted whilst covering the massacres in Rwanda. On November 2nd, Mark delivered the Andrew Olle Media Lecture for 2012, entitled "How the Media can survive at the moment of extreme crisis."

### Hobart Television Production Axed

That moment of extreme crisis came to the sixteen ABC staff in Hobart recently when Mark Scott flew in to announce the closure of television production facilities in Hobart. This follows the cessation of television production in Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide. However, the announcement was quickly followed by the establishment of a Senate Committee to inquire into the disappearance of television production in all capital cities but Sydney and Melbourne, and whether the ABC can be seen to be meeting its Charter obligations to represent "all Australians."

### Hard to Fathom

Also difficult to justify is the axing of the Marngrook Football Show on ABC 2, a program where indigenous presenters and panellists discussed the issues of Australian Football,

with a particular focus on Aboriginal footballers and the communities from which they come. This unique opportunity to celebrate the outstanding achievements of Aboriginal sportspeople and to present a host of positive role models has been sacrificed, apparently for budgetary reasons. It stating the obvious that commercial television would never run such a show – how much more important it is that the ABC be seen to be providing a platform for indigenous people to express pride in achievement, "contribute to national identity, and reflect cultural diversity." (The Charter)

### The Shrinking Radio National

12 months ago, major changes were announced to the Radio National schedule for 2012, with a definite move away from the specialised programs for which Radio National was so renowned. Further changes have been signalled for 2013, including the total disappearance of radio drama, and further reduction in credible Arts coverage, along with a cut of \$1m to the RN budget. Friends understands that a person called the ABC Controller, Brendan Dahill, has been given five years to change the RN demographic from over 65 to 18 – 40. We hope that Mr. Dahill realises that even the 18 – 40 age group will expect both depth and quality from Radio National programs.

Any thoughts of Radio National in 2012 must bring to mind the tragic loss of Alan Saunders, a superb broadcaster, an incisive mind and a wonderful radio presence. He is sorely missed by his ABC colleagues and his appreciative audience.

### The Staff-Elected Director

Friends were delighted at the passage of the long-awaited legislation in Federal Parliament to restore the position of Staff-elected Director to the ABC Board, and supported strongly the candidacy of Quentin Dempster for that position. Quentin has recently advised ABC staff that the legislation restricts an appointee to two terms (of 5 years each). Quentin has already served two terms (but of 2 years each), but the

bill does not allow for the difference in length of terms, rendering him ineligible to stand for the new position. This is a most disappointing outcome of a sloppy piece of legislation, but Quentin's statement to staff is printed in this Update, along with information supporting Matt Peacock's candidacy for the position.

## 2013 an ABC Budget Year

Next year will be vital for the ABC as it goes to Canberra with its Budget requests for the next three years. It is in this area that Friends of the ABC can be very effective, simply by making contact with your local Federal Member (especially if he/she is Labor) and reminding them of the importance to the national wellbeing of a strong and independent ABC. We do know that the ABC did well in the last triennium because of the strong messages coming to the Treasurer and Finance Minister from local members as a result of pressure from constituents. Over the past 25 years ABC funding has not been indexed to the inflation rate, and has at times been cut by both major parties. A case should be made that ABC capital funding should increase each year, at least at the inflation rate. Another strong argument to advance is the importance of the ABC to communication in local communities at times of natural disasters. A paper produced by the Friends of the ABC State Conference in August with a detailed justification for increasing the ABC budget is reproduced in this Update.

## The Chairman Speaks on the ABC

Recently appointed Chairman of the Board, The Hon James Spigelman AC QC, in a wide-ranging address on "The ABC and Australia's New Media Landscape," proved to be an outstanding advocate for the ABC. Some excerpts:

- A commercial monoculture in the media will either not deliver the broad range of content that the public broadcasters have traditionally delivered, or will not deliver such content to the whole community.
- In the current environment, the challenge is for the ABC to ensure that it stays in the forefront of innovation in delivery to online and mobile

platforms. As with all other media organizations, we are creating, out of necessity, new forms of engagement with newly empowered audiences for whom content creation has become a two-way flow.

- Our entire 80 year history has been based on ensuring that the ABC cannot be subject to pressure, whether direct or indirect and whether express or implied, from its sole shareholder. In large measure this is a recognition of the fundamental importance of independence in news and current affairs reporting. Insulation from inappropriate pressure is also, to a significant degree, the basis for the statutory prohibition on advertising.

The entire, very revealing discourse can be found on the website at [www.fabcnsw.org.au](http://www.fabcnsw.org.au) We look forward to the Chairman's next foray into the public arena.

## Another Year of Support and Advocacy for the ABC

I wrote earlier this year "Friends of the ABC Branches scattered throughout the state are our real strength, with their local advocacy, support, publicity and lobbying for the ABC, and their unique value as a voice to local political representatives." Thank you to the leaders of local branches and their committees who work so hard for "our" ABC. The future possibility of a less sympathetic government in Canberra, and the growing stridency of attacks on the ABC's very right to exist from the Murdoch press mean that the ABC will always need strong defenders across the Australian community. I also pay tribute to the members of the NSW Committee, without whose commitment there would be no Friends, especially Secretary/Treasurer James Buchanan, Webmaster Chris Cartledge (and for his technical support in the production of Update), Jason Lowe and his hardworking Events Committee, Membership Secretary Angela Williamson, Minutes Secretary Geoff Brann, Update proofreader Susan Buchanan, Vice President Nance Loney, and Margaret O'Connor, who maintains our Facebook page.

Mal Hewitt  
President, NSW FABC 

## GERALDINE DOOGUE, recipient of the NSW Friends of the ABC Broadcasting Excellence Award for 2012.

Geraldine was presented with her Award at the Friends end of year function at the ABC Ultimo headquarters on Friday 30th November.



Geraldine's long and distinguished career in journalism began in 1972 with a cadetship with The West Australian. In her first ten years Geraldine worked in print, television and radio, including two years in London working for the Murdoch group's Australian papers.

Geraldine's talent for television was identified by the ABC while she was still working for Murdoch, and she was offered the Perth compere's position for ABC TV's new Nationwide program. She moved to Sydney to host the NSW edition of the program, but again left the ABC to work for 2UE, then to Channel 10 to present the nightly news, returning to the ABC in 1990.

Her role in ABC TV's coverage of the Gulf War earned her two Penguin Awards and a United Nations Media Peace Prize. In 1992, Geraldine began presenting Life Matters, a new program on Radio National which covered all the social issues of everyday life. In 1998, she became host of ABC TV's Compass program, which examined issues of spirituality, philosophy and belief.

After 11 years presenting Life Matters, Geraldine moved to Saturday mornings to host Saturday Extra, a program focussing on international politics, Australia's role on the world stage, and business.

In 2000, Geraldine was awarded a Churchill Fellowship for social and cultural reporting, and in 2003 was recognised with an Officer in the Order of Australia. Her citation stated: For service to the community, particularly as a commentator for social change, and to the media through raising public awareness of issues involving ethics, values, religion and spirituality.

We acknowledge Geraldine's outstanding career in journalism, and her passion for honesty, integrity and the search for the truth. 

# Statement from Quentin Dempster on ABC Staff-Elected Director Ballot



I have been rendered ineligible to nominate for the position of staff-elected director of the ABC in the impending Australian Electoral Commission ballot.

My legal advice is that the recently passed National Broadcasting Legislation Amendment Bill and associated regulations about to be proclaimed will retrospectively and unfairly discriminate against ABC employees who served two successive terms as director before the abolition of the position by the Howard government in 2006. Myself and only one other still serving employee, John Cleary, are affected.

I had been eligible to nominate (and in fact won the position) in 2006 even though I had served two terms as SED from 1992 to 1996.

But the new legislation in establishing five year terms for staff elected directors in future applies a retrospective prohibition to former office holders in spite of the fact that the ABC Act's former provisions set SED terms at just two years. The Minister's office has indicated my ineligibility is an inadvertent and

unintended consequence of legislative drafting.

I am distressed by this turn of events but have no choice now but to withdraw.

I thank the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, Senator the Hon Stephen Conroy, members and senators of the Australian Labor Party, supportive independent MHRs and the Greens for the governance reforms which establish an arms-length merit selection process for the appointment of all ABC directors and the reinstatement of the SED position. This is a significant legacy after 80 years of politicisation, influence peddling and the regular practice of stacking the board with partisans and ideologues by both the Labor and Liberal parties to the detriment of the ABC and this institution's trusted role in our national life.

I respectfully ask the Liberal and National parties to now review their policy and support these more enlightened governance arrangements.

I apologise to staff and ABC supporters who have been encouraging me to

'hang in there' in the six years since the SED position was abolished. I have kept faith with staff and the ABC over those six years, making submissions to parliamentary inquiries on ABC issues, supporting staff, engaging with Friends of the ABC and audiences, advising management on editorial policies and contributing to the debate about public broadcasting and the ABC's future.

I will remain an advocate for non-commercial mainstream public broadcasting in Australia and will be supporting Matt Peacock, an experienced, courageous and committed public broadcaster for the staff-elected director position. Matt is planning to visit Brisbane, Melbourne, Hobart, Adelaide, Perth and Darwin and as many regional centres as possible to engage with all staff on current issues in coming weeks and months.

I am asking all ABC colleagues to give Matt your full support in the difficult and uncertain period ahead to help secure the ABC's future.

**Quentin Dempster**

[dempster.quentin@abc.net.au](mailto:dempster.quentin@abc.net.au) 

## Matt Peacock – Candidate for Staff-Elected Director

The ABC staff-elected director position, along with merit selection of all board appointments for the ABC and SBS, has been achieved because of the campaigning of many committed people over the last six years.

I hope in the campaign to galvanise a discussion about what a public broadcasting system can cost-effectively deliver in the rapidly developing digital environment.

The ABC faces uncertainty until we see the result of the triennial funding negotiations, soon to be underway as

the ABC makes its formal submission.

At a time when other mainstream media organisations are shedding staff, it is more important than ever to secure the ABC's role as an independent, creative and stabilising institution.

The staff-elected director will provide an important conduit to the ABC board on our strategic direction.

My primary concern at a time when resources are limited and stretched across multi-channel platforms and digital devices is the quality and distinctiveness of all our programs.

Regional audiences are crucial to our

identity as a comprehensive national broadcaster. There needs to be a thorough audit of the continuing policy to outsource programs to external production, which is eroding crucial local skills and reducing diversity in ABC coverage

The ABC's role as an innovator and creative training ground is also critical.

None of these can be taken for granted. They must be fought for at board level.

If the ABC is to be downsized in the next triennium the board must protect our Charter obligations and not compromise our efforts by commerciality.

# Senate to closely examine ABC TV

NICK LEYS  
The Australian

28 November,  
2012

Claims of creeping centralisation towards Sydney by the ABC will be the subject of a Senate committee inquiry following the decision to axe television production in Tasmania.

The Senate yesterday voted to refer to the environment and communications references committee, chaired by South Australian Liberal senator Simon Birmingham, matters relating to the ABC's production model and its charter requirement to reflect regional diversity.

The impact of centralised production in Sydney and Melbourne on regional diversity will be central to that inquiry.

Accusations the ABC is ignoring its regional responsibilities follow the announcement last week by managing director Mark Scott and head of television Kim Dalton of the closure of production facilities in Hobart, making 16 staff members redundant.

The closure follows similar moves recently in Perth and Brisbane and staff cuts in Adelaide that effectively mean the end of television production outside Sydney and Melbourne.

The Community and Public Sector Union has lodged a claim against the ABC with Fair Work Australia on behalf of its 16 Tasmanian members, arguing that the national broadcaster has breached its enterprise agreement with staff.

Senator Birmingham said he welcomed the inquiry "into the ABC's capacity to meet its obligations to reflect regional diversity across Australia".

CPSU officer Sinddy Ealy said the inquiry would hopefully bring acknowledgment by the ABC that its mixed-model approach

was not in regional Australia's favour.

"The ABC continues to tell us that it is committed to regional TV production, but the facts tell a different story," she said.

"The ABC has taken an ideological stand against internal production in favour of outsourcing programs to the private sector. "It has been death by a thousand cuts and I think the public as well as our members have a right to know where it is all going to end." 



Matt Peacock has worked for the ABC for more than thirty years across a wide range of ABC TV and radio programs.

He has been chief political correspondent and bureau chief for current affairs radio in Canberra, foreign correspondent in London (2001-2003), Washington (1990-1992) and New York (1993).

Matt began his career in 1973 as a trainee with Australia's first TV current affairs program, *This Day Tonight*, before joining the ABC Radio National's Science Unit, presenting his own radio program, then producing a pioneering radio series on the asbestos industry for the multi-department radio program *Broadband*.

During the 1980s he was senior program officer in Darwin, reporting on rural and remote issues, producing and presenting programs such as *After Eight* and *Territory Tracks*.

For many years Matt worked for the

radio current affairs programs *AM*, *TWT* and *PM*, specialising in politics, environment and science. He also worked for RN's *Background Briefing* as compere and reporter.

More recently he has worked in TV as a senior current affairs reporter at 7.30 and *Foreign Correspondent*.

He is author of several books, including *Asbestos: Work as a Health Hazard* (ABC Books, 1978), *The Forgotten People - a History of Australia's South Sea Islanders* (ABC Books, 1978), and more recently a history of the former Australian asbestos manufacturer James Hardie, *Killer Company* (ABC Books, 2009), which inspired the ABC TV dramatic mini-series *Devil's Dust*.

Matt is also an Adjunct Professor of Journalism with Sydney's University of Technology (UTS). 

# Backlash for ABC on state closure

Matthew Denholm  
Tasmanian correspondent  
for The Australian

21 November 2012

The ABC is under growing pressure to reverse its creeping centralisation of television production in Sydney, with the Gillard government demanding it “immediately reconsider” plans to axe production in Tasmania.

The Hobart closure, costing 17 skilled jobs, continues a trend towards ending all in-house TV production outside Sydney and Melbourne, following the axing of local production in Perth and Brisbane and cuts in Adelaide. Staff yesterday referred to their employer as the “Sydney Broadcasting Corporation”, claiming it was in breach

of its charter commitments to produce regional programs.

The claim, denied by the ABC, was seemingly endorsed by Communications Minister Stephen Conroy, who refused to rule out government intervention if the ABC board ignored his plea for a reversal of the decision.

“I call on the ABC board to ensure that the broadcaster upholds its clear obligations in relation to cultural diversity and local programming,” he said. “Cutting production facilities in Tasmania could result in a dramatic reduction in the telling of Tasmanian stories, something that diminishes the ABC and short-changes the people of Tasmania.

“As the national broadcaster, it is concerning that the ABC continues to centralise its production processes in

Sydney and Melbourne. The ABC should immediately reconsider its decision.”

Closure of the Hobart TV production unit will mean the axing of Auction Room and end hopes of a resurrection of the once popular Collectors.

More broadly, it threatens to become a lightning rod for internal, community and political discontent at the “Sydneyfication” of the ABC.

Internally, there is a belief that ABC management set up the Hobart production unit to fail. While Collectors had been prime time, 8pm Friday, even after the loss of presenter Andy Muirhead on child pornography charges, Auction Room was allocated a “graveyard slot” of 6pm on Sunday and insufficiently promoted. Management then pegged the future of the Hobart production team on the ratings for the show.

The Community and Public Sector Union told The Australian it was taking legal advice to find whether management had breached the ABC Charter and accused it of flouting an industrial agreement by failing to consult ahead of the redundancies.

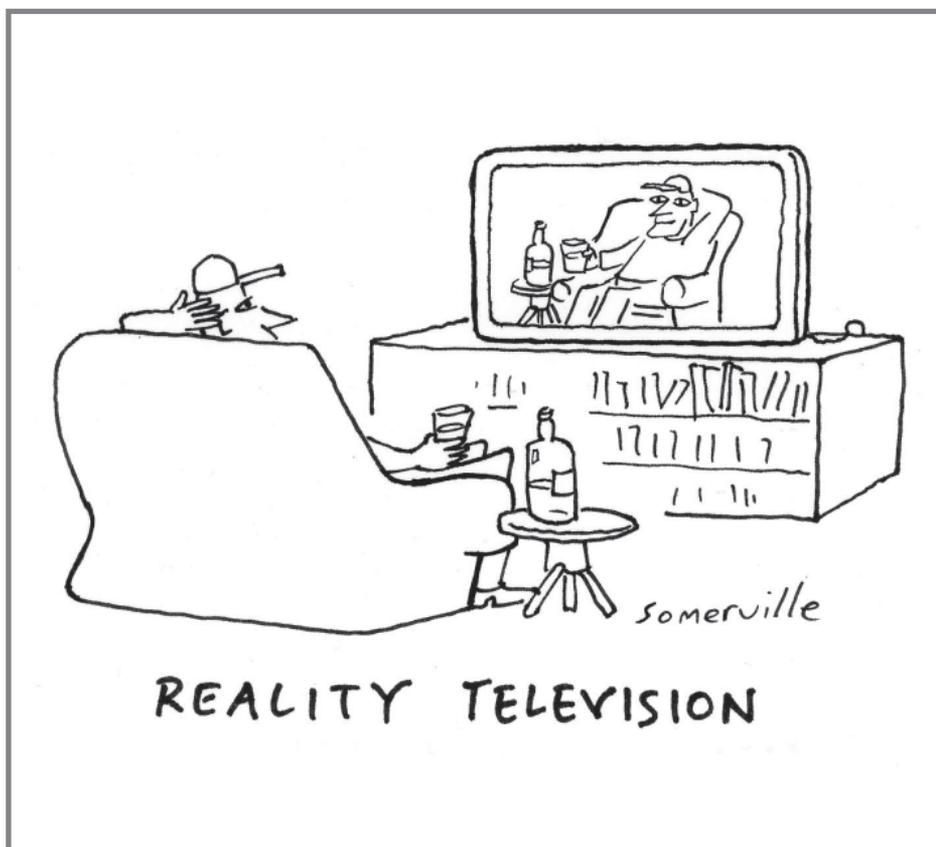
The CPSU said managing director Mark Scott flew into Hobart unexpectedly and gave an hour’s notice of a meeting at which he announced the decision.

The cuts will mean the loss of at least 17 camera operators, editors, directors, producers and researchers.

The ABC Charter commits to programs that ‘contribute to a sense of national identity and inform and entertain, and reflect the cultural diversity of the Australian community’.

Premier Lara Giddings said the ABC was in danger of forfeiting its claim to be a national broadcaster. “The ABC must not lose sight of the fact that it is a national broadcaster; it must commit as much to the regions as it does to Sydney and Melbourne.”

Several federal Labor MPs and senators, and independent Andrew Wilkie, reacted with anger. ‘Mark Scott seems hell bent on centralising production . . . despite the ABC TV production strategy for 2011 to 2013 committing to a regional presence,’ said Labor senator Lisa Singh. Greens leader and Tasmanian senator Christine Milne said the decision was further evidence of a centralisation of TV production and said the move ‘will deny rural and regional Australia its stories’. 



# ABC ERODED: Moving to Radio National Lite



Glenys Stradijot  
Campaign Manager  
Friends of the ABC (Vic)

**The erosion of Radio National – renowned for its breadth of programs of intellectual and cultural integrity – continues.**

While RN still retains some outstanding programs, recent years have seen RN shifting its direction. Programming that offers food for the imagination and programs of depth made by people with expertise and experience are disappearing.

For RN's 2012 schedule, *The National Interest*, which dealt with significant policy issues, was dropped. *Artworks* was axed and the arts merged into RN's dedicated book program.

Generalist talk programs, traditionally a feature of local radio, took the place of specialist programming in some time slots. The length and consistent depth of RN's current affairs documentary program Background Briefing declined.

'Flow programming', an anathema to RN's style of distinct programs, was introduced to some time blocks, resulting in audience confusion about the time they needed to tune-in to the programs of their choice. "Light weight" are words commonly used by RN listeners to describe several of the programs new to RN in 2012.

Now, some of RN's distinguished program-makers will be forced to leave. Included in the 11 staff who are expected to be made redundant are winners of prestigious radio awards and highly experienced program-makers held in esteem locally and abroad.

Next year, ABC management will axe *Airplay*. From Dickens to science fiction and political satire, plays have been performed on ABC radio since the 1930s. Gone will be the only outlet for Australian radio drama and a tradition which is as old as Aunty herself.

*The Book Reading* will be dropped. No longer will radio audiences experience

the delight of book reading, another important art form.

*Creative Instinct*, the experimental arts program *The Night Air*, and *Lingua Franca* will be cut too. *Movie Time* will finish. RN's book program whose mandate was broadened this year to become Arts and Books will be further diluted to incorporate film.

Other programs will have shortened preparation times. *Hindsight*, *360 Documentaries* and *Into the Music*, feature programs which tell mostly non-fiction stories, will be among programs to have their staff cut.

FABC is concerned that new arts programs for RN's 2013 schedule may include a large number of international, mostly American buy-ins. If true, the impact on the many and varied Australian artists and writers whose work presently features on RN programs will be significant.

Some of the money RN saves from its cuts will be used to establish a Creative Audio Unit which will develop and draw from outside the ABC material for RN, and also Online. The amount and balance of resources which remains available for radio content will be critical, as will be the maintenance of RN's high standards. Increased opportunities the unit is intended to provide for public input may result in wonderful, innovative contributions. They might also result in uninspiring content from aspiring contributors being accepted by the ABC as a cheap way to fill airtime and webspace.

## What the ABC says

Despite the quality of programming depending heavily on the number and experience of staff and the time to make programs, ABC management expects ABC audiences to believe that cutting the essential ingredients will have no impact at all.

As was ever thus, management seeks to present the cuts to Radio National as not cuts at all. Rather, they are wonderful new, fresh changes, in which nothing will be lost, but instead, reflected somewhere else or in a different way.



## What others say

Dr Siobhán McHugh, an award-winning oral historian, writer and documentary-maker, says "Underfunded as it is, RN is precious, as are its best producers". McHugh fears the result of RN changes may be a more superficial treatment of ideas, and that "highly textured, well researched programs which are produced with insight, authenticity, inventive sound design and general élan" will be lost.

Tom Morton, a former RN journalist and presenter, said the features unit will be "losing people who represent a very large part of the intellectual capital and experience at Radio National . . . potentially ripping the guts out of the whole culture of features, documentary making and drama".

## What FABC says

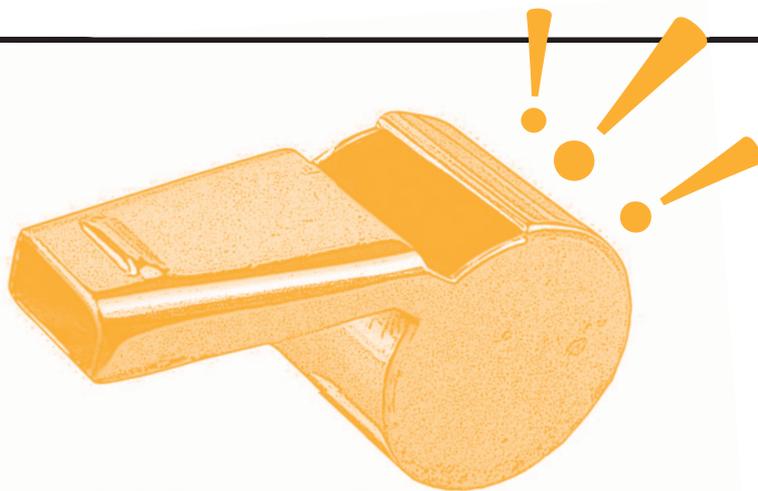
Radio National, the heart of the ABC's intellectual and cultural broadcasting, is being eroded to save \$1 million next year. It is also being downgraded as the result of the ABC's priority to resource populist television programming.

## Act to save Radio National

- . Let the ABC Board know that you will not accept the ABC abandoning its Charter responsibilities to inform, educate, promote the performing arts, reflect Australian cultural diversity and contribute to a sense of national identity.
- . Let your local Member of Parliament know that in the forthcoming Federal Budget you expect the Government to fund the national broadcaster so that it can meet all of its charter responsibilities.

More information at [www.fabc.org.au](http://www.fabc.org.au)

# ABC's foul kick to reconciliation



**John Hirst**  
The Australian

It is difficult to find success in Aboriginal affairs. The ABC has the notable achievement of encouraging Aboriginal success, then stamping on it.

The Marngrook football show on ABC2 is to be axed. This is a panel show run by Aboriginal people discussing and celebrating Australian rules football.

It is based on the Channel 9 show but is less blokey, less crude, more wholesome. I have grandchildren who are not allowed to watch the Channel 9 version; they are encouraged to watch Marngrook. It is a great moment in our troubled history when Aboriginal people are teaching whitey how to behave!

The name, Marngrook, is one of the varieties of football played before, and after, the European invasion. In the 1840s, 10 years after Melbourne's foundation, Aboriginal people were playing it on the edges of the settlement.

There has been a long argument over whether Aboriginal football contributed to Australian rules. I think there may have been an influence, evident in the high mark and the quick open play.

If there was no influence, it is more strange that Aboriginal people excel at the game. It seems that they were made for it. Apart from in jails, this is where Aboriginal people are most over-represented. Ten per cent of the AFL players are Aboriginal.

The presenters of Marngrook are Aboriginal and have a particular interest in Aboriginal players, present and past. It has a recognisable Aboriginal tone - the presenters call each other brother or bro - but it is in essence Aboriginal people talking about our common interest in a game in which they excel.

The standard fare of the show concerns the game, the teams, the players and of course predictions. When teams are listed, Aboriginal names are discreetly highlighted but not otherwise talked about. The guest panellists are most often not Aboriginal.

The show began on community station Channel 31, migrated to the ABC and now the ABC, citing its cost (which must be minuscule), has chosen to ditch it. If the ABC takes seriously its obligations to indigenous people, it would do anything rather than kill this show.

The ABC and the government should adopt this fundamental principle: where there is Aboriginal initiative, nurture it. Billions have been spent on Aboriginal programs that have not worked. It may be time to spend only on projects that work.

Until Aborigines take charge of their lives very little improvement will occur. But in remote communities the situation is so dire that we insist that governments intervene; yet intervention delays the time when Aborigines take charge. Having programs to encourage self-determination is a contradiction in terms.

We have lived with that dilemma for along time now. The alternative is

to step back; have no programs, no targets, no measures of success.

Instead use the funds in a highly flexible way to assist those projects where Aborigines are in charge. If Aboriginal women are running a night patrol to protect children and remove drunks, don't make them fill in forms; don't leave them in doubt as to whether funding will continue. Drop the programs run by outsiders and fund the women.

But what about accountability? Even if such projects fail in their outcomes, they will have succeeded in encouraging responsibility; in creating a society that cares and acts.

Marngrook is a different case. It is run by Aboriginal people who are far from remote communities, but they do have connections with the old missions and reserves in the settled parts of the country. Their work is furthering that elusive goal of reconciliation. Some people seem to assume that reconciliation will be reached at a certain point in time.

I think of it as a process that has been going on for some time and will run for a long time yet. It will take many forms, many different encounters and mergings. Marngrook is reconciliation in action: indigenous people talking about a game indigenous to Australia in which millions of Australians are interested.

Don't talk about ratings or cost; when something like this emerges, treasure it. 

**Historian John Hirst's book *Looking for Australia* discusses the Aboriginal contribution to Australian football.**

# Mark Colvin's 'incisive voice' still guiding, 15 years on

Nick Leys  
The Australian

FIVE years ago, Media spoke with ABC Radio broadcaster Mark Colvin on the occasion of his 10th anniversary as host of nightly current affairs program PM.

This week, the veteran journalist and former foreign correspondent celebrates another five years in the PM chair and has reflected not only on changes to journalism and the ABC, but also on his own situation and the reality of life.

"I didn't know I would still be alive, to be honest," he said of this milestone.

"When they gave me this job in 1997 I really had no idea if I would last another five years.

"The disease I have shortens life considerably and I thought I had five years, maybe 10, max. It's all jam from there."

The disease the velvet-voiced journalist talks of is an auto-immune condition contracted in Africa in 1994 while on assignment. It signalled an end to a much-respected career on the road and instead led him down the road of treatment, hip and knee replacement surgery, relapse, remission and -- when the drugs ravaged his kidney -- dialysis to stay alive. "It is also the second



In a complex and busy world, the calm, incisive voice of Mark Colvin helps Australians to cut through and determine what is important

anniversary of waiting for a kidney," he said.

Colvin, 60, is one of the ABC's great assets and audiences are better and richer for his contribution. His career has been remarkable, even for the generation that gave us Peter Cave, Andrew Olle and Kerry O'Brien.

He readily agrees he has seen great

change at the national broadcaster. "The biggest change is we are now on every platform -- aggressively on every platform," Colvin said. "When I started at PM in 1997 there were no transcripts . . . that in itself is an enormous change.

"I spent the first half of my broadcasting life thinking everything I did was something that went out on the breeze. Now it is something that exists as a living resource."

In three decades with the ABC, Colvin says, he is used to budget cuts and accepts them as part of the working life there.

"Since 1974 the ABC has undergone budget cuts on a regular basis -- you just learn to live with it. In radio we run on the smell of an oily rag, anyway.

"The important thing is there are some fantastic reporters here. Tim Palmer, Matt Peacock, Peter Lloyd . . . and, while we have recently lost Peter Cave (who retired this year), I'm looking over at where he used to sit and Sally Sara is there. A fair exchange is no robbery."

The other big change he has seen is the advent of social media and the immediacy of interaction with his audience. Colvin is a habitual communicator on Twitter, with 28,000 followers.

In November he will deliver the Andrew Olle Media Lecture and will speak on "how the media can survive at the moment of extreme crisis". "The target keeps moving as more and more journalists face redundancy," Colvin said.

"And I will also talk about the perennial battle between journalism and public relations."

ABC managing director Mark Scott described the PM and Friday Late host as a "charming host and probing interviewer".

"In a complex and busy world, the calm, incisive voice of Mark Colvin helps Australians to cut through and determine what is important," Scott said.

**Colvin delivered the Andrew Olle Media Lecture in Sydney on November 2.** 

# Radio drama facing the OFF switch



Mathew Westwood  
The Australian

**RADIO drama makes you listen differently. Without having actors on a stage or screen to give the visual cues, the listener has to do the imagining.**

The experience is different from ordinary talk radio or an audio book: it's more like listening to music. While listening to the words and comprehending them, you also have to interiorise the sound world to fully make sense of it. Voices take on characters on a virtual stage inside your head.

Rodney Fisher, a stage director who is producing his first play for Radio National's Airplay program, also uses a musical analogy to describe his work with actors in the studio: "It becomes a bit like conducting an orchestra of voices," he says.

For the past 15 years, Airplay has been an active producer of new Australian dramatic writing, commissioning writers such as Noelle Janaczewska, Jane Montgomery Griffiths, Louis Nowra and Paul Livingston. Fisher's two-part drama, *Wild in the Heart*, is based on the writings and interviews of Dorothy Hewett. It will be broadcast later this year. RN also broadcasts radiophonic compositions, book adaptations and made-for-radio versions of classic drama, such as Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* and Strindberg's *Miss Julie*.

Radio drama on the national broadcaster goes back many years. Gwen Meredith's *Blue Hills*, which started in 1949, ran for 5795 episodes and 27 years. The radio drama studio at the ABC's Sydney headquarters is named after her.

But this history is likely to be disrupted when Airplay, the ABC's only dedicated outlet for radio drama, is discontinued at the end of the year. The program is being axed -- along with book readings and programs *Creative Instinct* and *The Night Air* -- as network management seeks to save money and give the schedule an overhaul.

“

The radio medium allows for imaginative sound design to be part of the listening experience...

"We understand that this is a break with a very longstanding tradition," RN acting manager Michael Mason writes in an email to staff.

Mason says he wants to free up resources dedicated to drama and invest them in other forms of narrative radio. Among other things, he wants RN to tap into the "storytelling movement", popular in the US and growing here, where people stand up in front of a crowd and tell their stories. US public radio programs such

The Moth have turned the impulse to yarn into successful radio. But Australian writer Vanessa Bates, who has had several plays produced by Airplay, among them *Checklist for an Armed Robber*, says free-form storytelling is different from fictional drama that has been crafted by a playwright. "What seems to me to be a particular form of drama and literature is in danger of disappearing from Australian cultural life," Bates says. "People have said that we will be able to bring in new forms like The Moth. But The Moth is a storytelling program; it kind of began among friends telling stories on a porch . . . The stories that come out of it are brilliant, but I don't think (the storytellers) are paid, and storytelling is different to writing drama."

Radio plays require a specific form of writing and production. Bates compares them to short stories, where the writer has a direct line of communication into the mind of the individual listener. It's an intimate rather than communal experience.

Actors say they love radio work because they get to perform a new or classic play and the production period is a matter of days rather than weeks. Costs are a fraction of those for live theatre, television or film. The radio medium allows for imaginative sound design to be part of the listening experience, combining music, sonic effects and clever engineering to create, in effect, a sound stage.

"As long as you say, 'There's an elephant in the room,' there really is an elephant in the room," Bates says of radio's conjuring powers.

And while Airplay's weekly audience of 45,000 to 60,000 listeners may be small, it is more people than would buy tickets

to the entire run of some state theatre company shows. The radio is free to listen to and broadcast nationally, giving people access to drama wherever they live.

In Britain, radio drama remains a powerful medium. Last year BBC Radio 4 broadcast a dramatisation of Vasily Grossman's epic novel *Life and Fate*, in part about the siege of Stalingrad, with a cast including Kenneth Branagh, David Tennant and Greta Scacchi. The eight-hour series was broadcast during a week, taking over most of the station's drama programs (apart from the BBC's long-running serial, *The Archers*). Critics described it as a reminder of radio drama's power, a peak of the dramatic form. This is the kind of event programming that could give local radio drama a boost. But there are signs from the ABC that radio drama has been simply set adrift.

RN programs are highly popular as podcasts -- about two million are downloaded each month -- but radio drama is not available in this format. Mason says that obtaining the rights to podcast drama programs has been extremely difficult. "If you have rights and it could be podcast, we don't know what those (audience) figures would be," he says. "And would it make a difference? We're not too sure that it would . . . Last year *The Book Show* was one of our most successful podcasts, yet we still went ahead and changed the direction of that program."

Another sign of neglect is the unused drama studio in Perth. The studio was built as a production centre for radio drama but, according to one insider, it has never been used for that purpose.

Mason says up to five staff may be redeployed or made redundant by the decommissioning of *Airplay*. The production unit that will take its place, the creative audio unit, will employ just 3.5 full-time staff. Mason says the commissioning budget will be increased, however, allowing RN to collaborate with partners such as theatre companies on drama programs.

“

The support of Australia's national public broadcaster is a strong recognition of the need to nurture and broaden the field of creative audio storytelling in this country's own voices

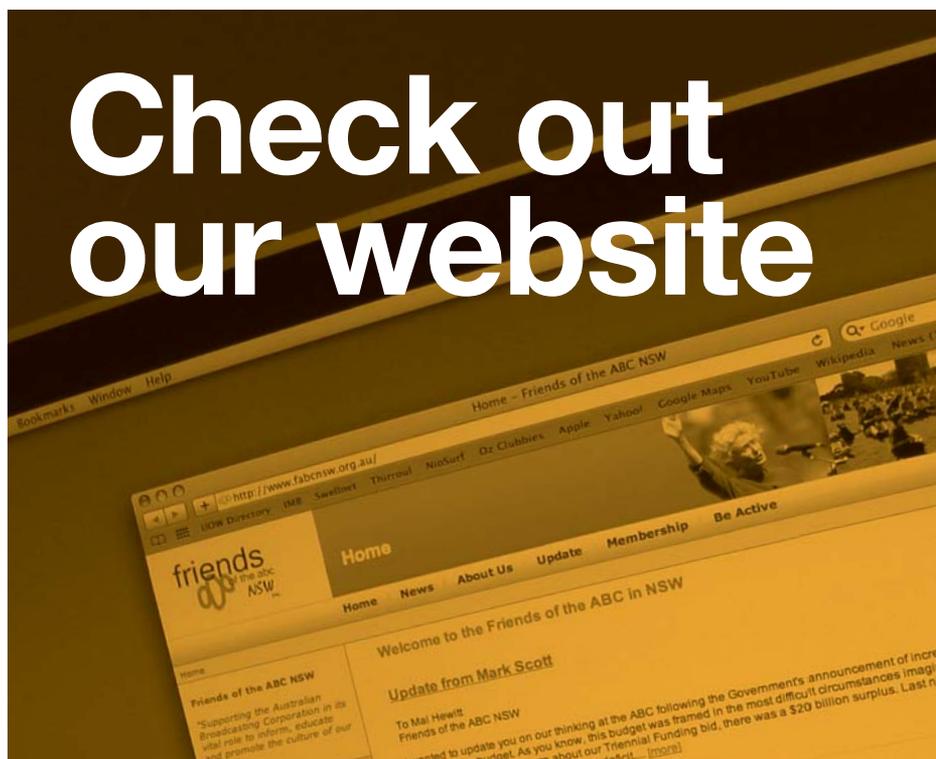
The new CAU will be charged with finding ways of presenting "new writing, performance and contemporary storytelling". The Sunday afternoon program that will replace *Airplay* will feature narrative-driven content, fiction, real-life storytelling and creative features. Radio drama will be part of the mix but will no longer have a dedicated program.

Among the additions to RN's schedule next year is Melbourne-based podcaster *Paper Radio*. A cross between little journals such as *Kill Your Darlings* and the narrative documentary style of *This American Life*, it presents two "stations" of fiction and nonfiction.

"The support of Australia's national public broadcaster is a strong recognition of the need to nurture and broaden the field of creative audio storytelling in this country's own voices," say founders Jon Tjhia and Jessie Borrelle.

Projects such as *Paper Radio* and the imaginative narrative styles emanating from the US all point to an exciting future for the medium. But loose-form storytelling should not replace the ABC's obligation to present high-quality plays by the nation's writers, actors, directors and production experts. Drama can be a vital part of the radio renaissance. 

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Go to:

[www.fabcnsw.org.au](http://www.fabcnsw.org.au)

Or check out the National Portal (links to all states):

[www.friendsoftheabc.org.au](http://www.friendsoftheabc.org.au)



The Hon James Spigelman AC QC

# 25 YEARS OF DOING MUCH MORE WITH MUCH LESS

**This is an extraordinary story, worth spreading far and wide – take it to your communities and your Federal Member of Parliament to justify a dramatic increase in funding for the National Broadcaster. It also provides ample evidence with which to answer the ABC’s critics, especially in the Murdoch media.**

Over the 25 years between 1987 and 2012, the ABC significantly expanded the services it provides to the Australian community, and did so with fewer staff and less funding. In 1987, the funding available to the ABC, excluding the separately funded transmission costs, was \$967 million with a full time equivalent staffing level of 6,400. By 2012, the ABC’s inflation adjusted funding had reduced to \$840 million and the full time equivalent staff to 4,600. (Both were even lower in some years.) However, the expansion of the broadcasting services offered to the public over this period was dramatic.

At the beginning there one analog television channel. At the end, that channel, ABC 1, was both analog and digital, and there were 3 additional digital channels: ABC 2, ABC 3 and ABC News 24, providing an additional general channel, a specialist children’s channel and a 24 hour news channel.

In 1987 there were 38 local radio stations and two national services (Radio National and Classic FM) serving significantly less than 90% of the population. triple j was accessible only in Sydney. By 2012, there were 60 local radio stations, Radio National, ABC Classic FM and triple j were available nationwide, as was a new service, ABC News Radio. Furthermore, all four national stations were available on digital radio in the 5 mainland capitals and there were 5 digital only services, including a specialist jazz station, a specialist country music station and a triple j station broadcasting the discs of amateur “garage” bands, which is where our record companies look, almost exclusively, for new talent.

The transformation was not only quantitative, but qualitative. The speed and radical nature of change in the technology of broadcasting and communications has transformed audience expectations and capacities. The ABC has sought to meet those expectations and liberate those capacities.

In radio service delivery, podcasting became widely available. In television, the ABC pioneered vodcasting services and the online catchup service, iview. In 1995 the ABC began offering services on the world wide web. There are hundreds of websites providing

text, audio and visual services both nationwide, on ABC Online, and in local regional radio services. Many ABC radio and television services became available on mobile smart phones and tablet devices.

ABC radio and television services extended their capacity for interaction with their audiences by the use of social media. The expectations of Australian audiences has been transformed – from passive recipients to real interaction with content creators. Earlier this year, triple j passed the landmark figure of 500,000 Facebook friends, an extraordinary number in a market the size of Australia.

These new services were largely funded by internal efficiencies, as well as reallocation of resources. No additional funding was provided for the content costs of ABC 2, the delivery costs of online services, the content of digital radio, nor for the creation of ABC News 24. Television studios that only a few years ago required 14 people to function now require only 4. The search for new ways of operating in the digital era continues, but it must be stressed that all additional services were developed with fewer staff and less funding.

*(With acknowledgement to the ABC Chairman, The Hon James Spigelman AC QC)*



**THE ABC will axe its radio plays, an 80-year tradition, as old as Aunty herself, in a major overhaul of Radio National which will see 11 staff and seven programs disappear to save \$1 million.**

The ABC will axe its radio plays, an 80-year tradition, as old as Aunty herself, in a major overhaul of Radio National which will see 11 staff and seven programs disappear to save \$1 million.

Radio National manager Michael Mason told staff of the sweeping changes today, which include the cancellation of the radio drama program - called Airplay - as well as other programs MovieTime, The Book Reading and Sunday Story. MovieTime’s veteran film specialist Julie Rigg is retiring and her co-host Jason Di Rosso will

work as a movie reporter across the network, management sources told The Australian. Rigg was told today her program won’t survive beyond her retirement. Eleven staff including presenters, producers and back office staff have been made redundant by the de-commissioning of Creative Instinct, Lingua Franca and The Night Air. From soap operas to science fiction and children’s stories, radio plays have been performed on the ABC since the 1930s. Between 1936 and 1938 all 36 of

Shakespeare's plays were produced and broadcast.

Before the advent of television they were the main source of entertainment and the plays have given employment to generations of playwrights and actors.

"Radio National will no longer include radio plays or book readings on its schedule in 2013," Mr Mason said in an email to staff this afternoon. We understand that this is a break with a very long-standing tradition, and will directly affect a number of staff.

Radio National received seed funding from the global ABC coffers last year to launch a new schedule but it was left to find savings in order to work within a budget. "In the context of the broader RN offer, maintaining an innovative and creative output for our audience, and considering financial constraints, we believe that the time has come to move away from this output. Radio plays and book readings have, for many years, faced declining audience numbers, while remaining an expensive activity for the network".

"We continue to believe very strongly that ratings are not the only measure for RN, but the decline in listenership does indicate a lack of engagement in radio plays amongst our audience". Mr Mason argued he took the "tough decision" in order to free up funds to engage in other types of creative radio, including working with "young writers and artists looking for different ways of working with sound and story". With a mission to "nurture the intellectual and cultural life of this country", Radio National has been shifting its direction in recent years, moving from highly-produced specialist programming towards "flow" programming found on ABC local radio stations like Sydney's 702 and Melbourne's 774.

To the established broadcasting team of Fran Kelly, Geraldine Doogue, Robyn Williams, Norman Swan, Julian Morrow and Phillip Adams, Radio National has recently added non-broadcast personalities Waleed Aly and Andrew West to the line-up. 

# Branch News

## Blue Mountains

### BLUE MOUNTAINS BRANCH IS ENDING 2012 AFTER A REASONABLY ACTIVE YEAR.

Five delegates enjoyed attending the State Conference at Wyong.

In September several members of Blue Mountains Branch travelled by train to Orange to meet a group of local Orange and Bathurst members who may be interested in reforming a local branch of the FABC.

We met at the Highland Heritage Winery Restaurant with Quentin Dempster as Guest Speaker. Enjoyed a nice lunch and spirited talk from Quentin about the ABC. Quentin is such a good friend of the FABC.

The Branch had its AGM on 17 November and the new committee was elected.

#### New Committee as follows:

**President:** Margaret Foy

**Vice President:** Pam Fitzpatrick

**Secretary:** Eunice Goodberg

**Treasurer:** Julia McGill

**Membership Secretary:** Janelle Clark

**Webmaster:** Penny Tayler

**Committee:** Tony Tayler, Alison Burnard

We are finishing 2012 with an End of Year Dinner at the Grand View Hotel, Wentworth Falls on 11 December and recommencing Branch meetings on the third Saturday in February with renewed energy.

*Eunice Goodberg*

## Armidale

### 2012 PROVED A BUSY AND SUCCESSFUL YEAR FOR FABC ARMIDALE.

Firstly was a film evening premiering "Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy" to a full house. The successful evening raised around \$2,000 for our fighting fund as well as to support the work of a local community group.

Then our annual feature event - this year Kerry O'Brien - delivered a well-received talk on the future of public



Barbara Barton - Publicity Officer for FABC Armidale with Kerry O'Brien who delivered the local group's Annual Talk in August.

broadcasting in the digital age with particular reference to journalism. Kerry outlined the challenging transition not least of which was the 24 hour news cycle which journalists faced in delivering well-resourced news and current affairs with an ever decreasing number of qualified and experienced practitioners. Kerry was an expected popular personality and the 250 strong audience welcomed him with many probing questions.

To finish the year FABC Armidale held an end-of-year get together for all members, now numbering more than 120, to celebrate Aunty's 80th birthday as well as welcoming in the festive season. Our special guest was Mr Tony Windsor and his wife Lyn who has been a long term supporter of FABC assisting in the lobbying for the successful re-instatement of a staff member to the ABC board.

We look forward to an equally interesting 2013 and are in the throes of inviting another high profile ABC personality to talk along with our usual lobbying activities to help support the valuable work of the ABC and promote its importance to the Australian community.

*Barbara Barton*



Tony Windsor MP and his wife Lyn at Aunty's 80th Birthday celebrations in Armidale

# Branch News

## Hunter

The 28th of October was a day for technophiles (and wannabes) as Newcastle ABC personality Anthony Scully brought the Hunter FABC members up to date on the ABC's new media platforms. It is encouraging that Auntie is looking to the future, and the future of the ABC will be programmes delivered on demand, anytime and anywhere. A highlight of Mr Scully's presentation was learning about ABC Open, with which only a few members had previous familiarity. It is good that the ABC is promoting this offering within the broader community as there are certainly many great local stories out there waiting to be told. The day finished with the Hunter FABC AGM.

*Allan Thomas, President*

## Central Coast

In 2012 the committee of volunteers included Klaas Woldring and Paula Murray (Co-convenors), Pat McDonnell (Treasurer), Ross McGowen (Membership), Des Moore (Minute Secretary), John and Margaret Hale (Newsletter; distribution), Audrey McDonald, June Ashton and Alison Brisbane. Pippa Preston returned later to the committee after a period of absence in Melbourne. Several non-committee members assisted actively as well.

We organised three guest speakers for Central Coast branch functions this year and hosted the FABC NSW State Conference in Gosford/Wyoming during a weekend in August. Attendance numbers at these functions vary from 65 to around 90.

The three ABC journalists were Scott Bevan, in June (ABC Ch. 24); Eric Campbell (Foreign correspondent) in August, both functions in the Central Coast Leagues Club, Gosford. Adam Spencer is scheduled for 18th December 2012, in the Anglican Church Hall, Wyong. We hosted the Biennial NSW State Conference in the Quality Inn The Willows. This was well attended and enjoyed by NSW branches' delegates. Key speakers were Michael Millett, Quentin Dempster and Linda Mottram. NSW President Mal Hewitt provided spirited commentary,

pep talks and musical accompaniment as well. Treasurer James Buchanan kept a watchful eye on the expenses.

Our membership number increased somewhat during the year.

It has risen to around 155 by the end of the year. The financial health of the branch is secure with a bank balance of around \$5,000. Regular committee meeting and coffee afternoons were held throughout the year. An elaborate Newsletter, in both hard copy and eFormat, is prepared and distributed by John and Margaret Hale.

The Branch gained a presence on Facebook, which should expand and facilitate its communication opportunities, with the general public and media, other branches and its own members. We started to use our web page more actively during the year. There is a growing realisation that younger members urgently need to be attracted to the FABC. This is a high priority objective of the new committee. All high schools are regularly informed about functions. While we have been successful in attracting sufficiently high profile ABC speakers, some invitations have gone unanswered or several declined.

At the State Conference the problems with poor ABC reception on the Central Coast were again raised. Approaches to MD Mark Scott and the local MP Deborah O'Neill have been made again, also via Michael Millett. Although responses have been received from the ABC executive concerning several queries, the technical problems have not been resolved as yet. Suggestions have been made to our committee to organise a Special Conference about this problem during 2013 with input for all relevant players in this field. A decision will be made early next year. The branch will hold its annual Xmas lunch at the Gosford Hotel on Saturday 8th December.

*Klaas Woldring, co-convenor.*

## Illawarra

### ROVING ABC PRESENTER ENTERTAINS ILLAWARRA FRIENDS

Melanie Tait is a radio broadcaster, playwright and author. At 21 years of age she wrote the comedy theatrical production *The Vegemite Tales*, which has played in London over seven



Melanie Tait.

years including two on the West End. During her 5 years in London, she was also the Artistic Director of the Old Red Lion Theatre.

Melanie is now based in Canberra but came to Wollongong on Sunday 25 November 2012 for the Friends of the ABC Illawarra's 10th Christmas Party/Afternoon Tea.

Melanie told us how, on her return from London, she began her radio career as producer for the John Laws Morning Show at 2UE in Sydney (she had to wear a skirt). However she knew to have a real career in broadcasting in Australia she had to get her leg in the door of the ABC.

She applied and gained a traineeship as a rural reporter for the ABC starting in Darwin. She has since worked in ABC Rural and ABC News throughout NSW, South Australia and the ACT. As a rural reporter she had to record three stories for broadcast every day. This was no small ask considering the travel required (she drove, no helicopters then) and the microphone-shy people of the Australian bush.

She currently has a roving brief doing relief work in Canberra, Sydney, Wollongong and Newcastle. She can be heard in Sydney overnights and on ABC Local Radio throughout NSW.

Last year Melanie created a series of storytelling nights (inspired by "The Moth" podcast) called "Now Hear This". Themes included "I learned the hard way", "Love is a four letter word" and "Changes". She hopes this project will continue in 2013.

Melanie entertained Illawarra Friends with her tales of being a producer and a presenter at 2UE as well as the ABC. Her experiences with talk-back callers provided some very humorous stories.

*Chris Cartledge*

# Friends of the ABC (NSW) Inc

## 2012 Biennial Conference Papers

### 1. Primary reasons for an increase in the ABC budget

Primary reasons for an increase in the ABC budget, after the most basic necessity of adjusting the budget for inflation, are to provide funding for:

- 1.1. Capital Works. For additional staffing and capital works upgrade of stations to facilitate information gathering and dissemination during periods of emergency. ABC local radio plays an essential role in alerting people to the up to the minute situation during emergencies such as bush fires and floods.
- 1.2. Education Role. To restore that ABC's role as an educator as is outlined in the Charter. This role has diminished in recent years and should be restored. Also the ABC has obligations in the quality training of journalists and other media personnel.
- 1.3. Quality of Production. To ensure media balance, high quality journalism, high production values and comprehensive coverage in the light of media ownership concentration. Australia has the highest concentration of media ownership in the developed world and potential changes within Australian media organisations may exacerbate this situation.
- 1.4. Keeping up with Technology. To accommodate the changes in technology and to facilitate innovation.
- 1.5. Overseas Reporting. To maintain the number of overseas correspondents but at a reasonable work load.
- 1.6. Local Content. To provide adequate capacity for local content, including radio broadcasting of local events, and to boost the amount of local content available to Australians travelling and living overseas (e.g. through iView).

### 2. Additional reasons for providing funding

- 2.1. Online. To maintain on-line content
- 2.2. Values. To allow ABC production of uplifting, non-violent television shows which portray positive values instead of negative values. With high quality content produced by the ABC now able to be accessed throughout the world, such positive shows will advertise Australia's values overseas.
- 2.3. The Arts. To provide additional television coverage of the Arts, the coverage of which has decreased in recent years. Also to support other specialised areas not covered by the commercial media.
- 2.4. Archives. To maintain archival material for the production of retrospective programs such as 50 years of 4 Corners as part of our cultural history.
- 2.5. Staffing. To better provide for in-house mentoring and training.
- 2.6. National Interest Focus. To broadcast parliament and public events such as Anzac Day.
- 2.7. In-House Production. To enhance the capacity for in-house production of drama, light entertainment, documentaries and children's programs when outsourcing becomes prohibitive or when the national interest is not served by private suppliers.
- 2.8. Quality. To ensure that the Australia Network provides a high quality service to the region.

Any justification of the need for additional funding needs to be cognisant of the relative costs of ABC versus commercial media with regard to tax deductions available to commercial media issues including tax deductibility of advertising costs, and the impact these have on government revenue.

# State and Regional Branches

## National Web Portal links to all State Branches.

Go to:  
[www.friendsoftheabc.org.au](http://www.friendsoftheabc.org.au)

## New South Wales

Mal Hewitt (President) FABC NSW  
 PO Box 1391 North Sydney 2059  
 Phone: 9637 2900  
[malandal@optusnet.com.au](mailto:malandal@optusnet.com.au)

## ACT and Region

Margaret O'Connor  
 Phone: 0422 975 848  
[margoforte@hotmail.com](mailto:margoforte@hotmail.com)

## Armidale

Val Sherwell (Secretary)  
 167 Markham Street  
 Armidale NSW 2350  
 Phone: 6772 0342  
[valsherwell.hawkey@gmail.com](mailto:valsherwell.hawkey@gmail.com)

Bruce Hansell (President)  
 Phone: 6775 1889  
[hansells@bordnet.net.au](mailto:hansells@bordnet.net.au)

## Blue Mountains

Margaret Foy  
 10 / 19-21 Fitzroy Street  
 Leura NSW 2780  
 Phone: 4784 1139  
 Mobile: 0425 233 450  
[Margaret.foy@bigpond.com](mailto:Margaret.foy@bigpond.com)

## Central Coast

Co-convenors:  
 Klaas Woldring  
 Phone: 4341 5170  
[woldring@zipworld.com.au](mailto:woldring@zipworld.com.au)

Paula Murray  
 Phone: 4385 3783  
 Mobile: 0428 578 535  
[paula.murray1@bigpond.com](mailto:paula.murray1@bigpond.com)

## Cowper

Joyce Gardner (Secretary)  
 7 Royal Tar Crescent  
 Nambucca Heads NSW 2448  
 Phone: 6568 7532  
[fabccowper@gmail.com](mailto:fabccowper@gmail.com)

## Eastern Suburbs

Nizza Siano (Secretary)  
 16 Holland Rd  
 Bellevue Hill NSW 2023  
 Phone/Fax: 9327 3423  
[nizzamax@gmail.com](mailto:nizzamax@gmail.com)

## Great Lakes & Manning Valley

Margaret Gardner  
 PO Box 871 Forster NSW 2428  
 Ph: 6554 9181 (H) 6591 3704 (W)  
[margaret.gardner@tafensw.edu.au](mailto:margaret.gardner@tafensw.edu.au)

## Hunter

Allan Thomas  
 c/o PO Box 265  
 Merewether NSW 2291  
 Phone: 4930 7309  
[allan.thomas2@bigpond.com](mailto:allan.thomas2@bigpond.com)

## Illawarra

Jan Kent (Secretary)  
 Friends of the ABC Illawarra  
 PO Box 336, Unanderra 2526  
 Phone/Fax: 4271 3531  
[jan kent@hotmail.com](mailto:jan kent@hotmail.com)

## Mid North Coast

Drusi Megget  
 24 Arncliffe Ave  
 Port Macquarie NSW 2444  
 Phone: 6583 8798  
[fabc.midcoast@gmail.com](mailto:fabc.midcoast@gmail.com)

## Northern Rivers

Neville Jennings  
 PO Box 1484 Kingscliff 2487  
 Phone/Fax: 6672 4619 (H)  
[neville.jennings@scu.edu.au](mailto:neville.jennings@scu.edu.au)

Byron Bay Sub-branch convenor  
 Jill Keogh  
 Phone: 6688 4558

## Parramatta

Mal Hewitt  
 31 Queen St Granville 2142  
 Phone: 9637 2900  
[malandal@optusnet.com.au](mailto:malandal@optusnet.com.au)

## Victoria – FABC

Glenys Stradijot - Campaign Manager  
 Friends of the ABC (Vic)  
 GPO Box 4065  
 Melbourne VIC 3001  
 Phone: (03) 9682 0073  
[fabcvic@vicnet.net.au](mailto:fabcvic@vicnet.net.au)

## Queensland – FABC

Professor Alan Knight  
 Creative Industries Faculty QUT  
 GPO Box 2434  
 Brisbane 4001  
[Knighta1949@gmail.com](mailto:Knighta1949@gmail.com)  
[fabcqld@hotmail.com](mailto:fabcqld@hotmail.com)

## South Australia – FABC

Anne Levy  
 PO Box 7158 Hutt St  
 Adelaide SA 5000  
 Phone: 08 8232 5075  
[annelevy@adam.com.au](mailto:annelevy@adam.com.au)

## Western Australia – FABC

Harry Cohen  
 PO Box 534  
 Subiaco WA 6904  
[fabcwa@hotmail.com](mailto:fabcwa@hotmail.com)

## Tasmania – FABC

Melissa Sharpe  
 PO Box 301  
 North Hobart TAS 7002  
 Phone: 0427 041 161  
[melissa.dms@bigpond.com](mailto:melissa.dms@bigpond.com)

## FABC RESOURCE CENTRE

Darce Cassidy  
[www.friendsoftheabc.org](http://www.friendsoftheabc.org)



## Membership Form

Please fill out the form below and return it with your payment to:

The Treasurer, Friends of the ABC (NSW) Inc.  
 PO Box 1391, North Sydney NSW 2059.

**NOT for membership renewal**  
 – use only if joining.

Existing members please await reminder notice in mail on subscription due date.

Mr, Mrs, Ms, or Title	First Name	Last Name
(PLEASE PRINT)		
Partner Mr, Mrs, Ms, or Title	First Name	Last Name
Email	Partner Email	
Address	Suburb	P/Code
Phone (Home)	(Work)	Mob

Age  to 30  31-50  51+  I would like to receive my copy of Update Magazine electronically

**My details will be passed on to my local FABC branch.** (Strike out if you disagree)

<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	1yr.	3yrs.
<input type="checkbox"/> Family/Household	\$20	\$55
<input type="checkbox"/> Student	\$25	\$70
<input type="checkbox"/> Pensioner (or Pensioner couple)	\$15	\$40
<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate (covers 3 people)	\$15	\$40
<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate (covers 3 people)	\$60	-
<input type="checkbox"/> I would like to make a donation	\$	
<b>Total \$</b>		

I am paying by  cheque in favour of FABC (NSW) Inc.

visa  mastercard  money order

Card Number

Name on credit card

Expiry date

Cardholder Signature

Date