

Blue Mountains Branch Friends of the ABC Newsletter February 2013

VALE TONY TAYLER



We were very saddened by the news of the sudden death on 19 January 2013 of Tony Tayler, who was the immediate past President of our Branch.

On behalf of the Committee and Members we send our sincere condolences to Tony's wife Penny and his family.

Tony was President of the BMFABC from July 2010 till November 2012. During that time he was responsible for many innovative ideas for both building up the membership of our branch and some interesting and different branch activities. Tony was very keen to add a younger membership dynamic to our group and to this end he was keen to commence a Media Club that would emphasise the role of social media and how successfully the ABC was integrating this technology with mainstream media.

Before the last AGM in November Tony made the decision to stand down as President and channel his energy more directly in membership recruitment and other more specialised areas. Several members from BMFABC as well as representatives from the State Committee attended Tony's funeral service on Thursday 24 January at the Blue Mountains Crematorium Chapel, Leura, and the Wake was at the Grand View Hotel Wentworth Falls.

Tony will be missed.

Margaret Foy
President, BMFABC

NEXT MEETING

WHERE: Grand View Hotel,
Wentworth Falls
DATE: Sat, 16 February 2013
TIME: 10:00 AM



Check out our Branch Website...

Go to: Friends of the ABC NSW

<http://www.fabcnsw.org.au/>

Go to Local branches(left column) and click on 'Blue Mountains'

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Please contact any committee member to find out more about Friends of the ABC.

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE BLUE MOUNTAINS BRANCH OF FRIENDS OF THE ABC.

We look forward to an active few months in what could be a volatile Federal Election Year. Our aim is to keep the major political parties aware of the importance of maintaining a balanced, democratic and vigorous Public Broadcaster by insisting on a written public statement declaring their policy regarding the ABC.

Our Branch intends to hold a Public Forum consisting of all the selected candidates for each Party once the date of the election is known.

URGENT REQUEST_ We are in need of an editor for our monthly newsletter. Would someone please volunteer for this position.

Included in this newsletter is an updated list of the new office bearers as elected at the AGM on Saturday 17 November 2012. I would like to thank the outgoing committee for the hard work done in the previous twelve months.

I have also included a letter from our State President, Mal Hewitt and a report written by Allan Thomas, highlighting the misinformation often published or broadcast opposing the ABC. How can we, as a group, counteract these false allegations?

A reminder that the BM Branch meetings are held on the third Saturday of the month at the Grand View Hotel, Wentworth Falls at 10.00 a.m. The next meeting will be on 16 February 2013. Everybody is welcome and invited to stay on at the Grand View for lunch and some convivial socialising.

An enthusiastic committee was elected at the 2012 AGM. I look forward to working with them in what may be a most exhilarating and unpredictable year ahead.

Margaret Foy
President BMFABC

MESSAGE FROM OUR STATE PRESIDENT, MAL HEWITT.

To all Friends of the ABC a happy New Year!

I am grateful to Allan Thomas for sending me the comments below on the recent diatribe against the ABC from The Australian.

Like many of you, I cannot bring myself to read the Australian, but it is certainly very important to know what the enemy is up to, and I thank Allan for that.

There are two very important events in 2013 – the govt will determine the ABC’s budget for the next triennium, and there will be an election.

Friends will have a job to do in relation to both, and there will be early advice as to how we should run our campaign in relation to both.

It will be an interesting year!

Thanks again, Allan,

Mal

Dear Mal and other Friends,

SOME THOUGHTS ON THE FUTURE OF THE ABC SHOULD THE COALITION WIN OFFICE

From Allan Thomas, Hunter Branch

31st December 2012

I know not many of you read The Australian so I thought you might be interested in what has been happening over the last month. About four weeks ago a Letter to the Editor complained about the left wing bias of the ABC Insiders programme. That unleashed a torrent of anti-ABC letters which is only now slowly abating. Of course the paper itself then also ran articles and editorials on the same anti-ABC theme. About a week ago the tirade moved to Robin Williams' comments on a Science Show relating paedophilia in an oblique manner to climate change deniers. No big deal I would have thought but the letter writers think otherwise. Some have called for the ABC to be privatised. There have been a couple of pro-ABC letters published, probably about one for every ten against. I myself submitted two letters neither of which made it into the paper.

A few days ago, Michael Millett, ABC Director of Communications, who addressed us at the recent FABC conference, had a letter defending Robin Williams, with his letter starting with reference to The Australian's "obsession" with the ABC. And obsession it is. Apart from the Letters to the Editor and the various anti-ABC articles and Editorials, they have a section called Cut and Paste which essentially ridicules comments by various people over a time period. Probably three quarters of these are comments from ABC announcers and presenters with the remainder Fairfax journalists. Michael Millett's letter immediately unleashed another torrent of anti-ABC letters. The interesting thing is that most of the letter writers must watch or listen to the ABC. For example one letter about began by saying "I was listening to The Science Show when Robin Williams made the comment". So these people appreciate the ABC except when it does not accord with their right wing views.

That brings me to some thoughts on the future of the ABC should the Coalition win the next election. Given the anti-ABC obsession of The Australian, and since that is the leading newspaper of the Murdoch Empire which controls 70% of the newspapers in Australia, we might be fearful of a Coalition victory. But, for a number of reasons, I don't think we need to be too worried.

Firstly it is obvious that most Coalition politicians appreciate the ABC. For example, most of them must listen to AM judging by the number of times one of them will ring up during the program to comment on an earlier segment. They know that the ABC provides the premier news and current affairs programs, presenting both sides of an argument. Just this morning John Doyle interviewed Joe Hockey on Radio National. Joe started by telling John how much he enjoyed listening to his program. A week or so ago Tony Abbott was interviewed on radio regarding the ABC. He said something like how he valued the ABC and how in his family if anyone turns on the radio or TV, nine times out of ten it will be the ABC. His family probably dislikes ads as much as we do. He then added that there does seem to be some left wing bias in some programs but he didn't make a big deal about that. For all Abbott's faults he is an educated man and I think that he knows that the ABC provides programs which commercial media could never provide. I just think that Abbott will have different views on the ABC than did John Howard.

Then of course there is the popularity of the ABC in the bush which means the Nationals should support the ABC. To maintain this support I think ABC services to the bush need to be top priority.

Finally there is Malcolm Turnbull, who presumably would either be Communications Minister or Prime Minister if the Coalition should win. It's hard to think that Malcolm would be too anti-ABC.

So, those are my thoughts, for what they are worth, as we enter the election year.

HAPPY NEW YEAR,

Allan