

From the pen of President Margaret

Hello to all our members of the ABC Friends in the Blue Mountains. Have you noticed our new name and logo? At the State Conference in August an overwhelming vote was in favour of both the new name and the change of logo.

The new name is meant to reflect a more modern era and a name that emphasises the ABC first.

We hope everyone approves. I must admit it took me a few days to adjust, but now I have to admit that I prefer the change.

A large contingent of members attended the Annual Dinner at the lovely Cello Restaurant in the city last Friday evening and was completely enchanted with the talk given by the Guest Speaker, Margaret Throsby. The dinner was a big success, and everyone enjoyed the experience. Margaret Throsby was gracious as always, and made the effort to talk to guests at every table in the room.

The State AGM was held last Saturday, 27th September, at the Mechanics Institute in Sydney, with Mark Colvin as the guest speaker. Mark is a gifted journalist and joined the ABC in 1972. He spoke about the vast changes in broadcasting between then and now, and about many of his experiences during several overseas postings. The vast audience was bowled over by his candour and humility. He is one of Aunty's most senior and talented journalists. The voting for the committee left an almost unchanged team at the top, and as they all work very well together it should be a very successful year ahead.

Since the last newsletter, many more redundancies have been announced at the ABC, and further cuts in funding.

Sadly, broadcasting of the very last programs from the Australia Network and Radio Australia took place

NEXT MEETING

WHERE: Grand View Hotel,
Wentworth Falls

DATE: Sat, October 18

TIME: 10:00 AM

Check out our Branch Website...

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

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

over the weekend 27/28th September. Our most valuable Overseas Network has closed for good. Funding will not be replaced. These networks gave priceless connections, diplomatically, socially and economically between the countries of South East Asia and the Pacific, as well as China. We are saddened, devastated even, by the loss of these invaluable assets.

Susan Lamont has quite recovered from the effects of her broken elbow, and will be re-commencing the letter-writing group.

This is very important, and at the conference, guest speaker after guest speaker repeated the mantra: keep writing letters. Send them to politicians, newspapers and both the management and Board of the ABC, reminding them of the value of an independent, balanced and factual broadcasting service, that does not have to comply with any commercial sponsor and their beliefs and opinions. Every member is encouraged to write letters as well. Every single letter written to any of the above, that stands up for the democracy of independent broadcasting is written by a person who votes; this is quite powerful.

To try and do our bit to save on printing and paper wastage, would all members try and bring a copy of both the agenda and previous minutes to each meeting please. It saves in many ways, - paper, time, and the boredom of having to repeat many items.

Cheers
Margaret Foy
President ABC Friends BM

I have just been looking at some photos from the snap public rally outside the ABC in Harris St called by our NSW Branch, CPSU, MEAA and GetUp for October 1, with just 48 hours notice. I was unable to make it due to a prior commitment but it is encouraging to see so many Blue Mountains members featured.

Faced with imposed budget cuts the ABC Board and management have a difficult task to grapple with and resolve one way or another. As I write this no decision has been forthcoming. It will be interesting to see whether the cuts are indeed confined to the 'back office' as claimed will be the case by the

Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, or whether program cuts do eventuate.

I heard a comment recently on an ABC radio overnight program that staff on a salary of \$300K or more should receive a \$100K cut, and those on between \$150K and \$300K, a proportional sliding reduction. It would be interesting to see how much this would save. Personally I suspect that in the greater scheme of things it would not make all that much difference.

While I was in South Africa last month I made an effort to look at the offerings on TV from the SABC. They seemed to have 7 or 8 channels and while I found local in depth versions of current affairs, nowhere could I find quality entertainment programs of the type we get on our ABC1. Lots of quiz and reality programs and advertisements!!

And now to finish off this somewhat political newsletter, here is a bit of political humour.

Politics is the gentle art of getting votes from the poor and campaign funds from the rich by promising to protect each from the other.

~Oscar Am ringer, "the Mark Twain of American Socialism."

I offered my opponents a deal:
"if they stop telling lies about me,
I will stop telling the truth about them".

~Adlai Stevenson, campaign speech, 1952

A politician is a fellow who will lay down your life for his country.

~Texas Guinan. 19th century American businessman

I have come to the conclusion that politics is too serious a matter to be left to the politicians.

~Charles de Gaulle, French general & politician

Instead of giving a politician the keys to the city, it might be better to change the locks.

~Doug Larson (English middle-distance runner who won gold medals at the 1924 Olympic Games in Paris, 1902-1981)