

From the President's Desk

ABC Friends Mediawaves, News and Headlines

Hello Members and Friends,

A happy group of ABC Friends enjoyed our first meeting on February 20 at the Grandview to renew friendships and to saddle up for the fight of Our ABC's life at the elections (anytime 2016). The jam packed agenda concentrated on the minutes and business arising from the February 9 Committee Meeting over dinner. The dominant item, the 2016 Election ABCFBM campaign plans and activities and a special call to action for your help and support from Garth Taylor to be part of our team. Please contact gartht@aapt.net.au or telephone 47843301 to register for your optional campaign preferences.

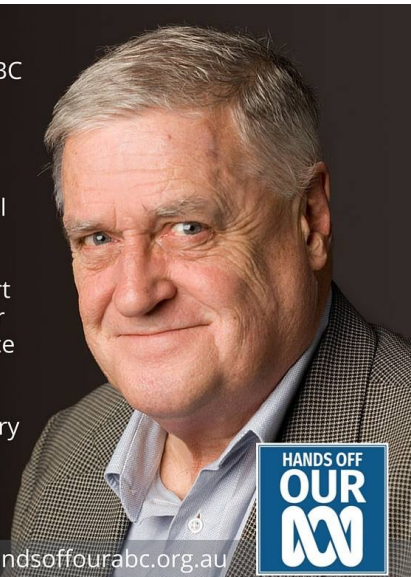
With the Pre-Election Games already in Parliament, our preparations are continuing. Our Campaign Coordinator Phil Greenidge is visiting Canberra on March 2, 2016 with the ABCF State Presidents for a series of meetings with the Communications Minister Hon. Mitch Fifield, members of the Parliamentary Friends of the ABC and our local Member Louise Markus MP. He will report to our Committee soon after. We can then make our final plans and call on you for your help.

*Barry Redshaw
President ABCFBM Branch*

"The centrality of the ABC to Australian identity, national cohesion and cultural expression makes it an **essential ingredient** of our social infrastructure. It goes with our public health, education and transport systems. Like that other core element, our justice system, it relies on **adequate public funding** for its necessary independence."

Max Gillies
Performer

www.handsoffourabc.org.au



Next meeting

Grand View Hotel,
Wentworth Falls
Saturday, March 19, 10:00am

Media Ownership Laws

Australia is about to experience its biggest shake-up in media ownership laws in nearly 30 years.

The rule to now has been that a broadcast licence-holder can own only two out of three distribution platforms in any one market i.e. newspapers, radio and television and restricts TV networks from broadcasting to more than 75% of the population.

Although digital technology has changed the way we view and listen to the media those rules remain valid. It is in the public interest to have a diversity of voices in the news media ownership.

Policy Challenges

The majority of people now get their news online from the ABC, News Corp and Fairfax and to a lesser extent to a few emerging new players such as Crikey and The Guardian Australia.

If the mooted rule changes go through, the mergers already foreshadowed by the media industry will mean less diversity.

Some of the most vehement opponents of reform have been the Nationals, fearing city-based mega-conglomerates will spell the end of regional news services – the political lifeblood of many MPs in the bush.

The ABC's outgoing managing director, Mark Scott, has said he will argue for more money specifically for regional and rural news, but success here looks a long shot in the current federal budgetary environment.

*The Conversation
February 29, 2016
Author: Dennis Muller*

Possible merger of ABC and SBS touted

The ABC's outgoing managing director Mark Scott has called for a "grown-up conversation" about merging the nation's two public broadcasters, arguing it could save the Federal Government \$40 million a year.

Mr Scott made his speech in his last National Press address and as the Federal Government finalises the ABC's funding arrangements for the next three years.

Mr Scott noted the Gillard Government gave the ABC an extra \$20 million a year during the last funding round, and urged the Coalition to maintain that funding.

"That News funding represents 10 per cent of the ABC's News budget, and to cut it now will mean significant cuts to jobs and programming," he said.

"If it was not renewed, it would represent the third substantial cut to the ABC's budget since the Coalition Government was elected on a platform not to cut the budget."

Since the Coalition Government was elected Mr Scott said the ABC's funding had been cut by \$350 million.

"The ABC's share of Government expenditure is effectively at its lowest level in decades now and the per capita spend on public broadcasting is significantly lower than many other nations, and dramatically lower than the BBC," he said.

SCOSE

At our February General Meeting, a former ABC journalist, Ron Fuller, gave a very interesting talk on SCOSE (Standing Committee on Spoken English).

Many of us despair at times of the lack of attention paid to grammar, the incorrect stresses on content words and even the incorrect pronunciation of Australian towns.

SCOSE was run by language specialist Irene Poinkin before Irene and SCOSE became casualties of ABC budget cuts early in 2015.

Every month, Irene would address and rule on reader complaints about how the ABC approaches issues of language, as well as using her own knowledge and close attention to ABC presenters to pick up on odd emphasis, clunky metaphors or even, occasionally, slip-ups in other outlets.

Now SCOSE is back with a different name. ABC Language is authored by young Radio National producer and presenter, Tiger Webb. Webb's academic background is in linguistics, and he's worked on several of the ABC's language programs as well as hosting his own Radio National series on given names. He's got big shoes to fill — Poinkin had led the SCOSE team for many years, and the body itself has existed since 1946, originally as a body external to the ABC that was, in recent decades, brought in-house.

Stop the Chop!
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abcfriendsnsw.org.au 

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For membership enquiries or changes, please contact the Membership Secretary.

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