

March, 2019.

Next Meeting: March 16th 2019. 10.am.

Grandview Hotel Wentworth Falls.

President's Report.

Happy Not-so-new Year to all! This year will be a particularly active and vital year for ABC Friends. A dedicated group of Friends attended our first meeting of 2019, at the Grandview Hotel Wentworth Falls. We had a very full agenda, as you will see when you receive the minutes.

The Wentworth By-election last November was a huge event for ABC Friends in that electorate. President of ABCFNSW/ACT Ed Davis reports that the most impact made by the 30 Friends involved, was in handing out flyers and "Vote to Save Our ABC" cards, which detailed candidates commitment, or otherwise, to the ABC, and engaging in conversation with voters. They were certainly a presence! Many people took away membership forms.

As you are aware, the ABC is seriously under threat. The NSW Friends committee has pledged to support the Friends campaign in marginal seats, such as Macquarie and our neighbouring seat Lindsay, helping us to meet the significant costs associated with our campaign.

To that end, we have two events for your calendar for March and April. We have booked a stall at the Penrith CBD Festival on Saturday 16th March (our regular Friends meeting will still be held). We hope to talk to many Lindsay residents about the impact of continual and persistent threats to Our ABC.

A great opportunity for our Blue Mountain branch will be Springwood Foundation Day on Saturday April 27th, a date close to the Federal Election in May. We have secured a stall, centrally located on Macquarie Rd., and will be handing out flyers, joining up new members, selling ABCF merchandise (such as fantastic tote bag, "Imagine life without your ABC") and attracting attention with our popular Bananas Without Pyjamas banner, "Hands Off Our ABC". Hope to see you there.

Thanks to our members who have volunteered to work on these stalls. Without your commitment, time and effort, we couldn't participate in these community events.

By the time of our next Newsletter, we hope to have a date and venue for a Candidates Forum, where Macquarie electorate candidates will have the opportunity to share their views about and commitment to ensuring the ABC is a strong, properly funded and Independent broadcaster. Just waiting on the announcement of an election date.

Meanwhile we would love to see you at our meetings this year, each month on the third Saturday of the month.

Sue Noske.

Editor's Note.

Hello and a happy New Year to members and friends of Our ABC. Since the last ABCFBM branch Newsletter in November, there has been tempest, storm, flood, fire and dark skies. No! I am not referring to the shenanigans of 2018 and the Cuts to the ABC. With a federal election just weeks away we must brace ourselves to fight the fight of our lives to defend Our ABC before the election in May. In a move of desperation, we will again be confronted with a damaging budget, the appointment of the new ABC Chairperson from a list of consultant candidates, some with dubious connections who may not support ABC independence, as evidenced by their backgrounds. In the past few days an "out of the blue" candidate, Ita Buttrose has been added. The list of nominees will be taken by Communications Minister Mitch Fifield to Cabinet who will undertake the process to appoint the new ABC Chairperson with less

than 3 months to go before the May election. This sounds almost as “fishy” as the “The Murray- Darling Fish Kill.” While the ABC Act requires the Prime Minister to consult with the Leader of the Opposition on selecting the Chairperson the Prime Minister refused the Opposition Leader’s appeal for a bipartisan approach and failed to commit to genuine consultation. The Prime Minister’s Office denied the Opposition’s request for a briefing on basic facts about the nomination Panels process to short list candidates.

With a new Chairperson in place there would be time for the new Chairperson and the Board of the ABC to appoint a new Managing Director just weeks out from the Federal Election and lock in an if elected Labor Government to a thoroughly stacked ABC! Sounds like an IPA tactic, strategy, policy to attack and destroy Our ABC.

The recently advertised position for a new Managing Director to fill the vacancy left by Michelle Guthrie’s unusual dismissal will await the ABC Board confirmation of selection and appointment.

We should acknowledge the splendid work following the 2018 “Drama in Pyjamas” debacle events by the Acting Board Chairperson and the Acting Managing Director in restoring both interim stability and calmness at Our ABC headquarters.

As we go to press the Prime Minister has announced his intention to recommend to the Governor General to approve that Ita Buttrose be appointed to fill the vacant ABC Board Chairperson role.

Queensland ABCF Federal Election Campaign Launch.

Join our ABCF Campaign Launch in Brisbane, Sunday 3rd March 2019 to “Stop the Destruction of the ABC.” Kerry O’Brien will give the keynote address explaining why the election is vital for the ABC to remain politically independent. Margaret Reynolds- ABC Friends National President will outline how the Federal Election is crucial for the ABC and its future. She will reveal details of the Friends’ National Campaign and seek the support of Queensland and all other states.

For more information visit ABC Friends National website.

Latest headlines and News.

Margaret Reynolds. I Love the ABC and I VOTE!

Pearls and Irritations – John Menadue 14/2/19.

Several public policy issues will be vigorously debated when Australians vote in this year’s Federal Election. But the one policy area where a vast majority of Australians can agree is that our National Public Broadcaster- The ABC- must be protected. More than 80 percent of Australians trust the ABC above all other media and value its services to the community. In recent years the ABC has been under continuous attack and successive governments have slashed funding. Leading the charge against the ABC is The Institute of Public Affairs, which advocates a full or partial sale of the ABC. In July 2018 the Federal Liberal council debated and adopted a policy of privatization of the ABC.

<https://johnmenadue.com/margaret-reynolds-i-love-the-abc-and-i-vote/>

Quentin Dempster The ABC is now Fighting for its survival.

A speech by Quentin Dempster to Politics in the Pub Sydney on 7th February 2019. Quentin writes in trying to defend the ABC as an institutional pillar of a fearless free media in Australia’s robust democracy, first, we have to confront paranoia. It comes in the form of constant Murdoch Press complaints that the ABC is biased and a force for “left-wing” ideology.

<https://www.abcfriends.org.au/index.php/2019/02/1/quentin-dempster-the-abc-is-now-fighting-for-its-survival>

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