

March, 2020.

Next Meeting March 21st 2020. 10.am.

Grand View Hotel Wentworth Falls.

Vice President's Report.

With President Sue Noske interstate I have taken the liberty to report on the events and happenings this month.

What a great branch first meeting for 2020 with more than 30 people present and welcoming 6 new members to our branch. It is very encouraging when this happens, making us realise that the work we are doing is not going unnoticed! The meeting confirmed that the branch will participate in Winter Magic Festival 2020 at Katoomba.

The Northern Suburbs of Sydney (NSoS) organized a rally outside the Minister for Communications office on the Pacific Highway Lindfield at afternoon peak hour requesting the Federal Government to REVERSE the BUDGET CUTS to the ABC. The message was clear! "Minister Fletcher: STOP THE CUTS" the ABC has had to divert funds to cover the whole period of the Bushfire crisis. The cuts have caused the ABC to lose many of its most senior operatives to redundancy, so much wisdom and experience has been lost to our National Broadcaster! President Sue Noske ABCFBM was one of the speakers. We displayed our banners and held them high. Some of the signs asked people to "HONK" their horns if they supported the ABC. At times it got so loud we could not hear the speakers and not only cars but trucks, ambulances, fire brigades and even the police honked. Log on to ABCF NSW/ACT to see photos. Following the Rally about 100 of us moved across the road to have dinner to the sounds of classic harp and to raise donation funds for Wires and the animals injured in the Bushfires. We heard from Gavin Morris, ABC Director of News, who reported breaking news "that all of the bushfires were under control".

Barry Redshaw Vice President.

Bushfire Crisis! An inspiring story from an ABC Friend.

Posted latest News from ABCF 13th Feb. 2020 (selected extracts)

"Residents of the north-eastern side of Blackheath were on alert from the moment the Gospers Mountains Fire entered the Grose Valley in the early hours of December 16th, and not just for their home but for the iconic wilderness and the animals who live there. On the 22nd December the fire hit the eastern edges of the town. After a number of close calls, and many sleepless nights, with us gasping for breath in the smoke, the fire finally hit my property on New Year's Eve. It was terrifying, and at the same time my family was feeling frustrated, angry and deeply saddened for the scale of the loss of the bushland we love."

"My family is in a lucky position. I have a big woodworking workshop where my daughter makes harps. That made it easy to quickly set up and invite other ladies with a bit of woodworking nous to make shelters and nesting boxes to replace burnt habitat. It's becoming quite a production line! We're also hooked in with local WIRES members for distribution and installation."

Di Shanks. ABC Friends member Blue Mountains.

This story originally appeared in our National magazine Update sent to ABC Friends.

Australia's Catastrophic Bushfires: Media Reporting and the ABC

Emeritus Professor Ed Davis ABC Friends NSW & ACT President gave a WEA lecture about the "Catastrophic Bushfires and Media reporting." Ed explained in great detail about the way ABC Emergency Broadcasting works and the funding that it requires. NSW alone has lost 33% of our National Parks, 50%

Heartlands and 33% Rainforests. Billions of animals and extinction threats to koalas and platypus.

The environment allows us to have a great economy without a good environment we would not have any economy. Not only does the government ignore our Scientists but would not have any discussions with Greg Mullins (RFS) before the fire season started.

Media coverage by the ABC, Fairfax and the Guardian of the bushfires and their causes were fantastic, News Corp Media was very limited and of course, Denying Climate Change but the exit of journalists Speers, Atkins, Morton and Farr along with the internal criticism by James Murdoch on their ignorance may create some imprint on future attitudes in News Corp. Media.

Social Media led by bots and trolls blamed arson when experts say only 1% of the fires were from arson.

ABC Emergency Broadcasts increased in frequency from 2017/18 @ 256, 2018/19 @ 371, 2019/20 (mid Jan.) @ 825 and 120 News staff in the field.

It is imperative that OUR ABC Funding is restored as OUR ABC is fundamental to all for our safety.

We must be independent and hold government to account for their decisions, policies and actions!

Senate Moves to Thank ABC.

Posted in the Latest news from ABC Friends 6th Feb. 2020.

A motion praising the emergency work of the ABC and noting the stress on already dwindling ABC Funding was moved in the Senate.

The Senate voted and passed the motion that included and acknowledged the ABC's funding is decreasing at a time when emergency broadcasting events is increasing and calls on the Federal Government to reverse the \$83.7 million paused indexation funding, as a matter of urgency.

New Branch, Western Suburbs of Sydney (WSoS)

With the inaugural meeting to establish the new branch (WSoS) just a few weeks away March 28, 10am to 1pm at Penrith Council City Library Theatre (free light lunch provided) we are pulling out all stops to encourage community attendance and involvement. We are encouraged by the recent successful launch and support of the Northern Suburbs of Sydney (NSoS) branch, the news of a new branch at Ballarat, Victoria and the confirmation of the Shoalhaven (Nowra) branch on May 9 next.

It is almost one year ago that the idea of a Penrith branch of ABCF might work. We later expanded the idea to include surrounding suburbs in the Western Suburbs of Sydney region. (WSoS). The 2019 Federal Election, gave us an opportunity to present ABC Friends to the Penrith (Lindsay) electorate at polling booths for the first time. The positive and immediate responses from ABC viewers and voters who did not realise that their ABC was under attack from the current government cutting OUR ABC funding, that ABC Friends existed to Defend OUR ABC and who then expressed interest and support was encouraging.

OUR ABCFBM Branch is giving strong support to the project! You are encouraged to come along on March 28 and bring family or interested friends to hear John Cleary, former ABC presenter "Religion and Ethics". John was also a staff elected member of the ABC Board. He will recall and reflect on - "WHY the ABC is so important to all Australians." Emeritus Professor Ed Davis NSW President and National Vice President, ABC Friends, will explore - "Why we need to Defend and Maintain Strong, Independent Public Broadcasting." Mal Hewitt former President NSW/ACT and National Vice President ABC Friends, will explore the history of support for ABC in Parramatta/Penrith region. Then a Q&A, comment and discussion.

We really look forward to welcoming you to this important event for the WSoS and the Friends of the ABC.

Copyright 2020 All rights reserved FABCNWB. M.

While every care is taken to ensure accuracy, the editor and publisher cannot assume responsibility for inaccuracies in article in this Newsletter.