

## President's Report. Keeping in Touch (in a restricted sense!).

Nine members of our committee were able to meet via Zoom on 29<sup>th</sup> September to discuss topics such as our AGM, the launch of the new Southern Highlands branch of ABCF, (see Barry and Bev's report) the Stand Up for Our ABC webinar (2/9/20), and our participation at the local community events.

We plan to hold our AGM at the Grand View Hotel 10am on 28<sup>th</sup> November. **You should have received an email recently explaining the change from the usual third Saturday of the month to the fourth Saturday, due to circumstances beyond our control.** Please consider becoming more involved as a Friend, by nominating yourself as a 2021 Committee member. (more details to follow)

During the stimulating and compelling webinar, Ed Davis stated that Kerry O'Brien sets the standard for investigative journalism. Ed spoke about: the excellent Getup report on the impact of the cuts to the ABC, which received huge attention; the government's distraction technique, with 30% of funding being cut over the last 30 years; endless surveys showing ABC to be on top as the most trusted media organisation in Australia; the continual and damaging accusations of bias, despite 80% of reports showing the ABC to be fair and balanced and the pandemic of misinformation being corrosive to democracy.

Emma Dawson, Executive Director from think tank/ policy researcher Per Capita, spoke about the challenge of engaging young people in the fight to save the ABC. She spoke of the unprecedented hostility of the current government to the ABC, the \$40 million given to Foxtel over the past 6 years and the trashing of the media diversity laws under the Turnbull government and the need to appeal to Independent MPs to stand up for the ABC.

Kerry O'Brien lamented that, "The ABC needs its friends more than ever before. We must redouble our efforts to save this precious institution..... close scrutiny of the major issues of today has never been so important: growing tensions with China, climate change, the growth of inequality in Australia and the increasing power and secrecy of our intelligence services- all these issues require close questioning and analysis by the media. **We have never needed the ABC more. What ABC Friends has done over the years has been quite a precious part of the whole thing. It's meant a great deal to me over the decades to know that you guys are there and prepared to put in the time to keep the flame alive.**" You can view the Webinar via You Tube, on the ABCF National website".

The latest news on the National ABCF website declares: Northern Sydney residents forced to go to Canberra to find Minister Fletcher. Janine Kitson, fearless convenor of the Northern Suburbs of Sydney branch and a group of nine Friends headed down to Canberra for the occasion of the Budget. Brandishing their banner, "Paul Fletcher the **NON**-communications Minister", the delegation was met by MPs Susan Templeman, Mike Freeland, Kristina Keneally, Zali Steggall and Senator Jacqui Lambie. Zali organized coffees for the crusaders. **To quote Janine, "Paul Fletcher, as Minister for Communications seems to have a real problem communicating. He doesn't appear to want to talk to his constituents, the majority of whom love their national broadcaster."** The dedicated group of Friends held a candlelight vigil as the Budget was read.

During the ABC Friends Federal Election Campaign next year, our ABC Friends stalls at local events will be vital opportunities to share the facts and fears about the persistent defunding of OUR ABC and to grow our Friends membership. Despite the very taxing heat at January's Glenbrook Australia Day festival this year, we agreed that it will be worthwhile participating again next January. We also plan to be present at Springwood Foundation Day in September and hopefully Katoomba Winter Magic Festival in between. As major public community events, we will seize the chance to be good and faithful Friends!

We discussed a possible end-of- year picnic at Wentworth Falls Lake. Given that we've hardly assembled as a branch this year, a safe get-together outdoors in early December would be a grand opportunity to catch up. Yours in Our ABC Sue Noske Ph: 0421 020610

## Hot Headlines.

1. ABC Kids' Hardball scores International Emmy Kids Award nomination.  
About the ABC, posted 11/9/20.
2. ABC's radio flagships move out of Canberra.  
SMH 12/9/20 Broede Carmody.
3. Ita Buttrose asks ABC staff to vote on 6-month wage freeze.  
The Guardian 11/9/20 Amanda Meade.
4. The Rise of the Murdoch Dynasty documentary spoiler: 10 things you need to know.  
The three-part epic made by the BBC comes to Australia on the ABC and Iview and has something for Rupert Murdoch lovers and haters.  
The Guardian 19/9/20 Amanda Meade.
5. Two ABC Board position available end September.  
ABC Friends has identified political interference in past selection process with some former Board members being well known associates of the government.
6. ABC and SBS may be included in ACCC code requiring Google and Facebook to pay for news.  
Daniel Hurst The Guardian 23/9/20.

## ABC Friends NSW/ACT Welcomes The New Southern Highlands FABC Branch.

We travelled to Bowral on 23/9/20 for the "soft launch" of the new Southern Highlands Branch at the Bowling Club.

With around 30 locals present, Mal Hewitt (ABCFBM branch member) and Vice President of ABCF NSW/ACT addressed the meeting and presented his enlightening, interesting, frightening and encouraging recollections and experiences of and with Our ABC. His punchline revealed that since 2014 and Abbotts "No More Cuts to ABC and SBS promise" ABC has lost 2,000 jobs.

With the recent arrival of Belinda Wright, former treasurer of ABCF Tasmania and husband Trevor to Bundanoon in the Southern Highlands they contacted Angela Williamson ABCF NSW/ACT and they set the wheels in motion towards the New Branch and the soft launch, that resulted into, The New Southern Highlands FABC Branch and recruited a number of members onto committee to Fight the Fight.

We wished the branch Good Luck into the future on behalf of ABCFBM

## \$5million for AAP: Good for media diversity- but what about the ABC?

The recent announcement indicates that the Minister can build on this initiative by also recognising the role of public broadcasting in the forthcoming Covid-19 Recovery Budget.

ABCF wants to see recognition of the special work of the ABC during the last 6 months when health and education programming has been so important to all Australians. There is no doubt that the ABC has been an essential service during the Pandemic so there must be additional funds for the national broadcaster to now help it in the coming community recovery period.

A delegation of ABC Friends from North Sydney, Southern Highland and ACT branches will be heading to Canberra for the Budget when they hope the Minister will have additional good news that can strengthen the ABC.

## Western Suburbs of Sydney WSoS) Report.

Just a reminder that we are still around, hopeful and ready to go! Things seem to be moving along slowly with Covid-19 restrictions still in place but with light at the end of the tunnel (hoping it's not the Indian Pacific) so we hope we can resume our fight early next year. We can still only hope that March 27, 2021 remains possible.

**We need you to come to our FABCBM AGM 28<sup>th</sup> November 2020. We need your help!**

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