



President's report

Our first stall at the Glenbrook Rotary Markets was a memorable event. Beautiful autumn weather, a great site location, and enthusiastic Friends managing our colourful and inviting stall. Bluey welcomed the kids (and thereby the parents) with her friendly wave! We hope to return to Glenbrook Markets every three months. The market attracts people from Penrith and surrounding western suburbs, and thus provides a golden opportunity to reach out further afield.

142 visitors to our stall signed the Friends' petition to the House of Reps, demanding the restoration of funding to the ABC. Bev and Barry Redshaw have reported that over a quarter of those people live in western Sydney. The petition generated much interest and discussion. Our bold bumper stickers proved popular as well.

As previously advised, our **Guest Speaker** on Saturday 15th May, is **Cassandra Parkinson, NSW /ACT Friends President**.

Cassandra has been an active member of ABC Friends since joining the NSW committee in 2018. She became President of the NSW and ACT branch of Friends in October 2020 and national Vice-President in November 2020. She has a strong interest in public policy and has chaired and been a member of the boards of several government and non-government organisations, including chairing the first National Plan of Action for Women and TAFE.

In 2019 Cassandra coordinated the ABC Friends election campaign in NSW (with Sybille Frank).

Cassandra is a very engaging speaker, and she will be very happy to answer your questions. We urge our Blue Mountains Friends to attend this special meeting at our regular venue, the Grand View Hotel, Wentworth Falls. We will begin as usual at 10am. Cassandra's address will commence at 11am. You may wish to bring a friend!

Please remember to check your ABC Friends membership status on the ABCF NSW/ACT site. If you'd rather not submit your details on-line, you can print out an application form to renew your membership.

Retiring veteran **Chief Foreign Correspondent Philip Williams** was farewelled on Media Watch this week, after 40 years reporting for the ABC. As host Paul Barry stated: Phil has reported on more wars, disasters and revolutions than most of them. Phil urged viewers and listeners to treasure and support the ABC. Over his career he has witnessed countries lose their previously-held strong public broadcasters, thus diminishing their democracies. Let's hope he joins the ABC Alumni!

Sue Noske

Enquiries. 0421 020 610

Glenbrook Markets Stall—May 1

As stated in Sue's report, The Blue Mountains and Western Suburbs of Sydney Branches shared a stall at the Glenbrook Rotary markets on May 1, garnering over 140 signatures on the ABC Friends' petition to government to restore funding to the ABC. This is indicative of the level of concern in our community for the future of the national broadcaster. Some conversations with local people also reflected growing alarm at the current concentration of media ownership across the country, sometimes in stronger terms than appear here! People were interested to hear Bev Redshaw explain the relationship between the Liberal Party and the Institute of Public Affairs, and their ideologically-based hostility to public broadcasting.



Two views of our successful first foray into the Glenbrook Rotary Markets. Thanks to all who could attend.



Political Parties and the ABC

The ALP has taken an early step before the next election of declaring its support for the ABC, pledging to restore the current \$84 million of cuts and circulating on-line a petition calling for restoration of funding. Hopefully other political parties will make explicit (and factual) statements regarding their degree of commitment to the viability and independence of the national broadcaster so that voters may make informed judgements at the next Federal election.

<https://www.alp.org.au/petitions/save-the-abc/>

ABC Friends (Western Suburbs of Sydney)

The next meeting of the new Western Suburbs of Sydney branch will take place on 29th May at the Red Cow Hotel, Penrith (corner of Jane and Station Streets), 11.45am—1.45 pm. The new branch's email is WSoS@abcfriends.org.au

So, in closing -

In the words of Philip Williams: *"For all its foibles, the ABC remains the most important media institution in the nation. It is a vital part of our democracy and must be protected and preserved."*

Next ABC Friends (Blue Mountains) meeting: 10 am, Saturday, May 15, Grand View Hotel, Wentworth Falls. Special guest: Cassandra Parkinson, NSW /ACT Friends President.

Ian Bate, editor

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Website: www.fabcnswbm.org.au

Editorial contact: sribate@tpg.com.au