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## Conveners' Report.

**Please note: our new email for WSoS is [WSoS@abcfriends.net.au](mailto:WSoS@abcfriends.net.au).**

We hope you are all safe and well in this lockdown that is creating uncomfortable and restrictive lifestyles for so many. We must stay separated from friends and family to eliminate the virus. Please remain careful and aware!

The Covid-19 threat has shut down WSoS events, cancelling branch meetings and plans into the near future. We will return to physical meetings when it is safe to do so.

Meanwhile, we have been zooming in all directions to maintain communications amongst Friends from other branches and participating in election strategy meetings. Last week we participated in a zoom meeting with Margaret Reynolds (National President). Margaret reflected on the humble start of a powerful ABC Friends nationwide movement. 45 years ago the need to protect our public broadcaster saw the launch of "Friends of the ABC", as the organization was originally christened. Margaret also outlined the challenges our ABC faces and how we can help it prosper. Decades later there is no less need to maintain a strong, independent ABC.

ABC Friends National have now published the August Update which will inform you on current matters. It can be downloaded or read online. The Update is produced 3 times a year.

My stars this month appropriately gave good advice: "Take stock of your assets and not dollars and cents. It's the non-tangibles like love of family, partners and Friends that bring greater rewards. Let them know how much they mean to you".

We will keep in touch with you all until we meet again and will let you know by email when it is safe to do so.

Stay Safe and Well,

Barry and Bev Redshaw/ Co-Conveners WSoS

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## FABC NSW/ACT Pre-election Strategy Planning Committee.

FABC NSW/ACT Sub-Committee are speeding up their planning of election commitment.

As we wait for announcement of the 202(?) Federal Election, ABC Friends National and State Branches are already lobbying sitting MPs and making early decisions about campaign approaches, including National/State Branch campaigns.

In preparation for the election, ABC Friends Victoria have prepared a Style Guide PDF which is a detailed catalogue which includes election brand, logos, layouts, typography and fonts that can be used for flyers, billboards, social posts, T shirts, bumper stickers, tote bags and bookmarks.

In addition, Victorian branch members have been invited to submit taglines and logos in a competition.

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## The Essential Role of the Public Broadcaster in the Nation's Health and Well-Being

This title may sound a little grandiose, but the absolute necessity for an independent not-for-profit ABC was demonstrated by a 'Media Watch' edition in mid-July which called public attention to erroneous and potentially dangerous misinformation expressed on Sky After Dark concerning vaccination efficacy and the health dangers posed by the Delta strain of the Coronavirus.

As Jeff Waters wrote for ABC Friends (Vic) in an article entitled '[Jock Shocking – The ABC Mouse That Roars](#)' (26/7/21), '*For more than 30 years, one of the smallest programmes in the ABC suite has been punching well above its weight.*

*'An excellent example of this influence was on display recently, when a letter from Media Watch resulted in a video conversation between Sky News presenter Alan Jones and controversial former Liberal MP, now independent, Craig Kelly being pulled from the internet ... Even though Sydney radio shock-jock Ray Hadley had pointed out the dangerous claims were wrong to his own audience, it was not until Media Watch wrote to Sky News management that Sky issued a correction to the madness, and deleted the irresponsible exchange from its website.'*

Mr Waters' article can be read here:

<https://me.abcfriendsvic.org.au/index.php/2021/07/26/jock-shocking-the-abc-mouse-that-roars/>

The Media Watch report that exposed the inaccuracies:

### **Sky News forced to correct the record after Alan Jones and Craig Kelly broadcast misleading information about COVID-19, vaccination safety and the Delta strain.**

Broadcast: Mon 19 Jul 2021, 8:50pm      Published: Mon 19 Jul 2021, 9:18pm

<https://www.abc.net.au/mediawatch/episodes/jones/13450962>

Sky and other Murdoch organs, in Australia and abroad, are increasingly relying on populist stances – as we see from this case sometimes grossly misinformed—in order to preserve shrinking audiences. The need for an ABC to provide clarity and truth is clearly a national imperative. The national broadcaster must be adequately funded and pressure from ultra-conservatives for its privatisation resisted.

As I write, the audience reach of Sky News is about to enormously boosted by its deal with WIN and Southern Cross Austereo, which will see it broadcast in many regional areas. Potential audiences of 7 million people are anticipated. The Guardian's report on this (and WIN's axing of regional journalism jobs and content):

<https://www.theguardian.com/media/2021/jun/16/sky-news-to-launch-dedicated-regional-australia-channel>

## Letter Writing

If you're in search of a lockdown project, and you feel inspired to pen a letter in support of the ABC, the ABC Friends (Vic) site has a great online resource which provides useful tips:

<https://me.abcfriendsvic.org.au/index.php/write-a-letter/>

**So, in closing— the words of Chief Foreign Correspondent, Phil Williams, who retired in April:** *"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 (Western Suburbs of Sydney) meeting: to be advised. Until then—all the very best to all members in these difficult times. We'll meet again ...**

Ian Bate, editor

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