

President's Report

Greetings Friends and Supporters!

It was a truly momentous occasion when many of our branch members met up (at last) on the 19th March at the Grand View Hotel at Wentworth Falls. Quite the reunion! A big welcome to our new members who attended the meeting. **Our April meeting is this coming Saturday (April 16).** If you plan to attend, maybe consider staying for lunch. The Grand View has a great lunch menu, and it's a good opportunity to chat with fellow ABC Friends.

Due to the quashing of our use of the ABC logo, our new NSW / ACT Friends campaign materials must display only our temporary logo. All "older" ABCF t-shirts are fine to wear anytime, except when actually out on the hustings, at pre-polling stations and on polling day.



Our questionnaire to Macquarie candidates will be sent out this week to ascertain the candidates' degree of support for our ABC. Once we have their responses, we'll be able to formulate our flyer, "Vote to Save Your ABC".

Thanks to all our Blue Mountains Friends who have volunteered to **letter-box** our flyer, and those members who have volunteered to hand out our flyer at **pre-polling and polling stations**. We'll be in contact with you as soon as our flyers are ready. We'll deliver them personally, along with your choice of campaign t-shirt.

Our stall at **Glenbrook Market on Saturday 2nd April** generated much interest, with 16 people providing their contact details to receive our monthly newsletter, and potentially join ABC Friends! We also sold lots of ABC Friends t-shirts and tote bags.

Our **next market will be the Magpie Market at Lawson, on Easter Sunday 17th April**, the day after our meeting. We'd love to see you there. Fingers crossed for good weather!

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More ideological (and base political?) attacks on public broadcasting in Australia and the UK

March (Media) Madness

Ahead of the federal election, the **Murdoch** media (and other media organs of similar stripe) has stepped up its attacks on the national broadcaster and renewed the **push for the ABC to become a privatised subscription service**. Clarissa Bye in the News Corp paper The Hobart Mercury (30/3/2022) opined that “If the ABC is as cherished as activist groups claim it is, then it will flourish as a private media organisation” (“Aunty’s Billion Dollar Bills Spark Subscription Switch Call”). The day before, Lachlan Murdoch himself, in the inaugural speech for the IPA’s newly established Centre for the Australian Way of Life, **accused the “national broadcaster” of portraying Australia as a “uniquely racist, selfish, slavish and monochromatic country”**. Interestingly, this brief and oblique reference to the ABC was paraphrased, amplified and sensationalised by right wing on-line tabloid The Daily Mail (not a News Corp organ) under the headline **“Lachlan Murdoch Claims Australia's Way Of Life is 'Under Attack' and that “a woke ABC is undermining the country”** (30/3/2022). <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10666269/Lachlan-Murdoch-claims-Australias-way-life-attack-woke-ABC-undermining-country.html>

Perhaps not too coincidentally, the Hobart Mercury’s rhetoric about a publicly-owned media organisation “flourishing” in the commercial environment is not dissimilar to the rhetoric employed by the UK Conservative government in its **proposal to privatise Channel 4**, a TV channel which bears some similarity in funding to our SBS, in that it is publicly owned but funded by advertising revenue. The BBC reports that UK Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries recently tweeted that "government ownership is holding Channel 4 back" and that selling it to a private owner would give it "the tools and freedom to flourish and thrive as a public service broadcaster long into the future". <https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-60993888>

For background on the proud history of Channel 4, the Conservatives’ push for privatisation and opposition to this move:

<https://www.theguardian.com/media/2022/apr/04/what-you-need-to-know-about-the-privatisation-of-channel-4>

A Bit of Fun...

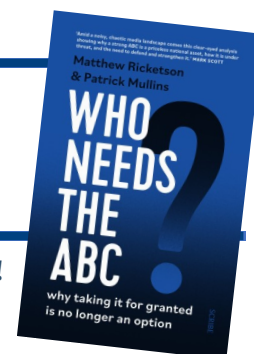
A penetrating, frank (and entertaining) critique of the antagonism towards public broadcasting exhibited by both British and Australian Tories can be found in this You Tube video: “Jonathon Pie: This Is About The BBC But Also About Our ABC” (21 Feb 2020): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6HoVUcxAtI4>

Strong language warning!

(Jonathan Pie is a fictional political correspondent created and portrayed by English actor and comedian Tom Walker. He has been a frequent guest on ABC’s “The Weekly with Charlie Pickering”.)

New Book about the ABC and its vital importance to a healthy democracy

Matthew Ricketson and Patrick Mullins, Who Needs the ABC? Why taking it for Granted is No Longer an Option, Scribe, March 2022, \$29.99



So, in closing ... the new edition of ABC Friends National “Update” newsletter is out!

The April edition has just been published online. It’s an important read in preparation for the federal election.

https://assets.nationbuilder.com/abcfriends/pages/95/attachments/original/1648696903/Update2022_04.pdf?

Next meeting of ABCF Blue Mountains: Saturday, 16th April, 10am till 12pm, Grand View Hotel, Wentworth Falls.

-Ian Bate, editor

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