

President's Report

Post-Election Greetings, Friends and Supporters!

Congratulations to Labor's Susan Templeman on her re-election as Member for Macquarie. Ms Templeman is a Parliamentary ABC Friend and huge supporter of our ABC. We are confident that she will advocate in Parliament for a strong and independent ABC.

During our **Blue Mountains Friends election campaigning** our committed team of 25 letter-dropped thousands of flyers in the Hawkesbury and Blue Mountains. The flyers declared: *"During an Emergency, ABC broadcasting saves lives. So why have the Liberals and Nationals slashed the ABC's funding?"* Rewards for this activity (apart from contributing to the return of an ABC-supporting local member) included discovering new streets and suburbs, healthy exercise and burning loads of calories, especially when deftly dodging puddles and sloshy grass!

Wearing our campaign tee-shirts (*"Saving the ABC Saves Lives"* and *"Our ABC: Trusted, Valued, Endangered"*) at pre-polling booths and on Election Day, we handed out "Vote to Save Your ABC" flyers. We also engaged with many interested and concerned Macquarie residents.

We placed ads portraying the "Emergency Broadcaster" slogan, with stark bushfire and flood images, in the Blue Mountains Gazette, Hawkesbury Gazette and the Hawkesbury Courier.

Five of our Blue Mountains members represented our branch at the **ABC Friends Rally ("The ABC Deserves Better!")** at the NSW Teachers Federation Auditorium in Sydney on May 15th. Guest speaker Kerry O'Brien spoke passionately about the issues at stake for the ABC. Other guest speakers were ABC Friends National President Margaret Reynolds, ALP's Michelle Rowland (now Communications Minister), independent MP Zali Steggall and Greens senator Sarah Hanson-Young. It was a packed-out event, with inspiring and varied speeches in support of a strong ABC. The full video of the rally is available here: <https://www.facebook.com/FriendsOfTheAbc/videos/515679110054706/>

On the broader front, the ABC Friends NSW/ACT branches campaigned extensively in selected marginal electorates, including , Eden-Monaro, Gilmore Wentworth and our own Macquarie. With targeted messages on social media, the Populares social media agency tripled the Friends' supporter base, along with record donations made to support the campaign.

Well, Friends, no more slashing for at least five years, with Labor's promise of a five-year funding plan, and of course the return of \$83 million to the ABC. However, **ABC Friends must continue to pressure our new government for way more. There's still a long way to go to restore ABC to adequate funding and editorial independence.** To quote ABC alumnus Jonathan Holmes: "In real terms the ABC is still going backwards."*

Our next meeting at the Grand View Hotel at Wentworth Falls is next Saturday, 18th June, 10.00am. The Grand View has a terrific menu, and you can use your NSW Dine vouchers there. And of course, it will be a timely opportunity to chat and exchange ideas with like-minded Friends.

Hope to see you there!

Sue Noske

Phone: 0421 020 610



Euние Goodberg, our campaign coordinator for the upper Mountains, at Katoomba Nth Public School.

* (<https://abcalumni.net/2022/03/31/in-real-terms-the-abc-is-still-going-backwards/>)

Recent developments that may be of concern to ABC supporters and advocates

1. The establishment of a new ABC complaints process: a complaints unit headed by an Ombudsman, appointed by the ABC Board, who would, in the words of Ita Buttrose, “report directly to the Managing Director and the ABC Board”, bypassing editorial management.

You can read a critique of this new complaints structure by ABC Alumni Jonathan Holmes here:

<https://abcalumni.net/2022/05/18/4271/>

Crikey's David Hardaker has an article on the new process, in which he asserts that “ABC chair Ita Buttrose has established an independent ombudsman to handle complaints, delighting its harshest critics.”

<https://www.crikey.com.au/2022/06/13/abc-speaks-a-mistruth-to-power-buttrose-takes-control/>

2. The abolition of 58 librarian and archivist positions at the ABC

The Guardian report can be read here:

https://www.theguardian.com/media/2022/jun/08/abc-to-abolish-58-librarian-and-archivist-jobs-with-journalists-to-do-archival-work?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other&s=03

ABC Friends' response can be read here:

https://www.abcfriends.net.au/sacking_58_archivists

ABC Friends campaigning in Macquarie ...



Noel Bjorndahl and Carole Dent at Woodford



Nick Franklin at Katoomba



Sue Noske at Richmond Public School



Pattie Smith at Katoomba

So, in closing ...

there is still much to be done to ...



Next meeting of ABCF Blue Mountains: Saturday, 18th June, 10.00am at the Grand View Hotel, Great Western Highway, Wentworth Falls

-Ian Bate, editor

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