

IRONY ALERT!

**- INSTANCES OF EXTREME
IRONY LATER IN THIS ISSUE -**

President's report

Happy New Year ABC Friends and supporters!

Our first meeting for the year will be held on Tuesday 14th February, at our usual venue, The Grand View Hotel, Wentworth Falls, at 10.30am. As is customary, we invite our members to stay for lunch to continue the conversation and Friends' fellowship.

A constant objective of our branch this year will be to raise awareness of funding threats to the ABC. We know that our presence at various markets across the Blue Mountains (and in the Hawkesbury) is a great way to do just that. We've signed up many interested and concerned people to receive our monthly newsletter, and given out lots of ABCF bumper stickers and Update magazines (and Bluey stickers!).

To quote Michael Henry of Victorian ABC Friends:

There is at least 'one good reason' why we should all continue to support the ABC and its Friends. Because the job is not done and will never be finished. The enemies of the ABC are not going away – their objection to the ABC is ideological and they have deep pockets. We, like them, need to be in for the long term.

We'll also endeavour to grow membership of our branch. Please consider joining us at one or more of our regular meetings, and maybe bringing along an ABC-loving friend!

Please check out our **Facebook page** if you are a social media fan (please register "likes" of the items, share them and become a follower of the Facebook page). Our dedicated **webpage** will also keep you informed of upcoming events and committee details. It also features an archive of past newsletters. In addition, a reminder that we now have an ABCF Blue Mountains branch library: great books are available at our meetings, with a focus on political or media themes. We welcome book donations to build this library for our members.

Hoping to see you in person in 2023!

Yours in Our ABC,

Sue Noske

Phone: 0421 020 610

State branch request for feedback

NSW ABC Friends has requested feedback from branches regarding their activities. They have asked us to give our local insights into how we build and maintain connections, what opportunities we see for the future, and current and future challenges.

Our Committee will be considering ideas for this feedback and there will be an opportunity for members to contribute at our first meeting on 14th February. If you would like to email suggestions before the meeting, please send to Sue and Ian Bate on sribate@tpg.com.au and we can incorporate these in our discussion at our Blue Mountains Branch Meeting.

Ian and Sue Bate will represent our branch as Joint Vice Presidents at a State Planning Day in Sydney on 18th February in order to present our feedback.

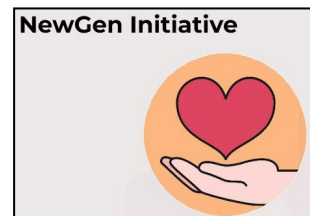
ABC Friends NewGen Initiative

The Victorian state branch is implementing a strategy to engage young people with support for the national broadcaster. This is in response to findings that show that young people are "largely unaware of who funds the ABC and the importance of independent public broadcasting"; and that "only 41% say that they trust the ABC most for news/current affairs – only 28% of the 16-19 year-old cohort trust the ABC (compared to 46% in the 30-34 year-old cohort, and over 70% for the general population)."

ABCF Victoria have commissioned a Youth Engagement and Social Media Officer and are in the process of forming a reference group of young adults to help implement this "multi-layered and multi-year initiative."

A list of strategies under consideration can be found at: https://www.abcfriendsvic.org.au/new_gen

Donations are requested to help fund this worthwhile project.



When a mob is not a mob: the ACMA findings on 4 Corners’ “Fox and the Big Lie”

On Dec 21, 2022, ACMA (Australian Communications and Media Authority) handed down its findings regarding a complaint it had received over the 4 Corners program “Fox and the Big Lie” (broadcast August 2021), including the criticism that “The program included a considerable range and number of opinions, several of which were expressed in strong terms ... emotive and strident ...” Reporter Sarah Ferguson’s choice of the word “mob” in reference to the people who stormed the US Capitol on Jan 6, 2021 was cited as an example.

ABC Friends Victoria has published an article on the affair, “ABC V the industry watchdog” which includes the ABC’s statement in response and ABC Alumni’s criticism of the ACMA ruling.

https://www.abcfriendsvic.org.au/abc-v-the-industry-watchdog-utm_campaign=news_jan_2023_1&utm_medium=email&utm_source=abcfriendsvic

On Dec 22, the ABC News website published a response from Sarah Ferguson which defended the program and concluded with the statement:

If anyone thinks the ABC – which has strongly defended its reporting – should choose this moment to dilute the sharp focus of its investigations and the fearless nature of its reporting, they are seriously adrift from the values of public interest journalism.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-12-22/acma-four-corners-sarah-ferguson-fox/101799722>

Newscorp print organs and Sky News (unsurprisingly) “reported” on the ACMA judgement and the ABC’s rebuttal with undisguised relish and a veritable tossed salad of hyperbole. Links to Sky News articles are provided for those who may yearn to savour the rich professional standards that have earned the Murdoch media outlets the levels of respect and trust in Australia that they enjoy today.*

(Ed note: ACMA claims that Ferguson’s reference to Fox commentators as “outrage generators” was a lapse in journalistic standards!)

- “ABC found by broadcast regulator ACMA to have ‘materially misled’ viewers in two-part Fox News program hosted by star reporter Sarah Ferguson” <https://www.skynews.com.au/business/media/abc-found-by-broadcast-regulator-acma-to-have-materially-misled-viewers-in-twopart-fox-news-program-hosted-by-star-reporter-sarah-ferguson/news-story/038bbf1caee2d3deco47cb45b847b7e3>
- “‘Crying like a bunch of sooks’: Senator mocks ABC for its attack on broadcasting regulator ACMA after being hit with multiple code breaches for misleading viewers in Sarah Ferguson special report” <https://www.skynews.com.au/business/media/abc-launches-attack-on-broadcasting-regulator-acma-after-being-hit-with-multiple-code-breaches-for-misleading-viewers-in-sarah-ferguson-special-report/news-story/bcaea413d38df524069d53c8e943d8c4>

The Guardian has in the past reported concerns about ACMA’s record of investigating complaints about Sky News (<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/aug/07/where-was-the-broadcasting-regulator-when-sky-news-australia-was-airing-misinformation-about-covid-19>); as has Crikey: (<https://www.crikey.com.au/2021/08/18/acma-looks-fewer-one-in-10-complaints-sky-news/>).

Kevin Rudd has called for ACMA’s abolition over its failure to censure Sky News over Covid-19 claims. (SMH, 16/8/2021). <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/monumentally-failed-rudd-calls-for-media-watchdog-to-be-abolished-over-sky-news-covid-19-claims-20210812-p58i79.html>

The two-part 4 Corners program is still available on the ABC News website, as is the transcript.

* <https://tvtonight.com.au/2019/08/abc-by-far-still-most-trusted-media-company.html>

* <https://johnmenadue.com/john-menadue-news-corp-australia-is-not-trusted/>

First general meeting for 2023: Tuesday, 14th February, The Grand View Hotel, Wentworth Falls, at 10.30am.

-Ian Bate, editor

While every care is taken to ensure accuracy, the editor and publisher cannot assume responsibility for inaccuracies in articles in this Newsletter.

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