

## **Biennial State Conference of ABC Friends,**

Our president, Bruce Stevenson, attended the conference (held mid year), as did the new CEO of the ABC, Michelle Guthrie (pictured). She expressed her respect for the aims of the ABC and for the importance of good programming, but gave no further indication of her expectations for its future. Much conference discussion concerned Friends' activities leading up to the Federal election, in which, it must be conceded, the ABC did not feature as a major election issue. Since Ms Guthrie has replaced Mark Scott several changes have been announced. There has been the axing of the Fact Check Unit, which had been set up in 2013 to keep accountable politicians and other public figures in this "post-truth" age. *The Drum's* website has been shut down. The science series, *Catalyst*, is to be replaced by 17 one-hour science programs and seven staff members have been made redundant. There will be major changes to Radio National's schedule; in particular, its four major music programs are being



decommissioned, a move described by Missy Higgins as "a fundamental blow to diverse, vibrant and independent sectors of the Australian music industry". Randal Macdonald, spokesperson for ABC Friends, has called this "a disappointing start. We want the vision, the ideas, the concept" (*SMH*, Dec. 10-11, 2016, p.23).

## **Annual General Meeting**

The AGM for the Armidale Friends of the ABC (FABC) was held on a balmy evening in the lovely bush garden of the home of Bruce Stevenson, our president, and his wife, Annette. There were thirteen people present and eight apologies. Our long-serving treasurer and committee person, Linda Andrews, has resigned because of her many commitments with Zonta, and Jenni Ford is finishing as the publicity convenor but will continue as our Facebook editor. Warm appreciation of their work was expressed by everyone. Happily, Bruce will continue as president and Peter Galbraith has agreed to take over as treasurer. Elizabeth O'Hara, a new committee member, will be the membership secretary with the assistance of Jeff Siegel, who has done an excellent job over many years. Kaye Mill volunteered to do publicity, a role which includes trying to gain an ABC presenter as our annual speaker. Despite her persistent efforts, Jenni was unable to gain a positive response for this year from the many ABC personalities whom she contacted, including some who had given a provisional 'yes'. It seems that many staff are now under contracts which deter acceptance of Friends' invitations. Other members of the committee are Elizabeth Peach, Izabel and Hani Soliman, Gai Galbraith and Priscilla Connor.

## **UNE FABC Media Prize**

Armidale FABC is now giving a yearly \$1000 Media Prize for students in the final year of the Bachelor of Media and Communications at UNE. Applications closed on October 31, and there were three applicants. Unfortunately, none of them were eligible as they were not in their final year of the degree. They have been thanked for their interest and asked to reapply in a year or two when they will be eligible.



## **Good wishes to all Armidale FABC members for a happy Christmas and New Year.**

(If YOU would like to assist in any way, PLEASE contact us: FABC, PO Box 1448, Armidale, or [priscilla.connor@inet.net.au](mailto:priscilla.connor@inet.net.au), phone: 6772 2217. The committee can co-opt members and would be glad to do so. The one-hour meetings number only four or five per year.)