

Annual FABC Talk by Matt Peacock

FABC Armidale thanks all its members for the excellent attendance (about 100) at the annual lecture in October by Matt Peacock. Matt talked about his current role in the ABC Alumni and his work in investigative journalism covering the asbestos industry.

The talk was generally well received and seen as pertinent to issues today. However, FABC regrets that the sound system was being uncooperative, leading to some people being unable to hear properly.



Annual General Meeting

Our Branch President Bruce Stevenson, welcomed everyone then gave an overview of the year's activities. These included having a stall at three end-of-month markets. A petition of 139 signatories to the Federal Parliament asking for improved reception of Radio National was received and the resulting advice has been pursued. Before the Federal election another market petition went to all nine electoral candidates asking their support (or not) for the ABC. Three replied; their responses were outlined in an article to *The Armidale Express*. The last market was used to advertise the annual talk. Following Federal Police raids on the ABC offices a submission from the group went to the Federal Government on media freedom. This year's FABC Media prize of \$500 went to the top student in the UNE's Media Studies program (Melanie Kennard). Bruce gave two talks on the importance of public broadcasting to two Rotary Clubs during the year and expressed his willingness to speak to other local organisations in 2020.

Bruce then spoke passionately about the current need for the ABC to have the active support of all its listeners and viewers. Conversations with Armidale people at our market stall suggest that 9 out of 10 value the ABC. Yet during the last decade or so its budget has been repeatedly cut: from 8 cents per day per person, to only 4 cents per person. These cuts have led to a reduction of its staff from 6000 to a mere 3000. Its budget of \$1 billion per year contrasts with that of the annual subsidies given to the fossil fuel industry of \$4 billion.

Further about Armidale FABC, Bruce reported that finances are healthy (\$9000 in credit), memberships stand at seven local and 71 ABC Friends NSW/ACT members, and publicity was effective on several media.

Before vacating the chair to Elizabeth Peach for the elections, Bruce thanked the committee, particularly retiring members Tom Tait (treasurer) and Robin Jones (publicity). Bruce himself was enthusiastically congratulated and thanked by all present for his persistent, inspiring work as president.



Speaker Don Hine and President Bruce Stevenson at the AGM.

FABC committee for 2019-2020:

The following were elected (all unopposed): President: Bruce Stevenson; Vice President: Brian Byrne; Secretary: Vic Wright; Treasurer: Greg Clarke; Publicity: Annette Stevenson; Membership Secretary: Elizabeth O'Hara; Newsletter: Narelle Clarke with help, if needed, from Priscilla Connor and Jeff Siegel); Facebook page: Elizabeth O'Hara, Narelle Clarke and Annette Stevenson. Committee members: Sally Cater, Michael Duffy, Gaynor McGrath, Elizabeth Peach, Val Sherwell, Lilo Szlavek, Hani and Izabel Soliman.

Refreshments followed; then a most stimulating talk was given by Prof Don Hine, whose research interest is how human behaviour and attitudes change. He used as his focus the Extinction Rebellion and the challenges of global warming. Many thanks to him!

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**Season's greetings to all our FABC members,
and good wishes for a safe and fulfilling 2020.**