



NEWSLETTER

Newsletter from the Northern Tablelands Branch of ABC Friends

JUNE 2021

New branch name



This month saw Committee Members vote on a motion by “flying minute” to adopt a more “regional” and inclusive name. We have been the Armidale Branch of ABC Friends (formerly, “Friends of the ABC”) since 1996, but will now be the Northern Tablelands Branch of ABC Friends; our NSW/ACT parent Branch are only now being advised (so be prepared for an incremental change in our name). Our branch includes the following postcodes (principal towns shown): Armidale (2350), UNE (2351), Walcha (2354), Uralla (2358), Bundarra (2359), Inverell (2360), Guyra (2365), Tingha (2369), Glenn Innes (2370), Deepwater (2371), and Tenterfield (2372).

This is the Northern Tablelands as defined by the Bureau of Meteorology and Local Land Services (see map from LLS). It is quite different to the state electorate of the same name, which ranges out to Mungindi, and the federal New England electorate, which runs as far south as Aberdeen. We are proud to acknowledge that 8 Aboriginal nations fall within this region – Ngarabal, Dainggatti, Anaiwan, Kamilaroi, Banbai, Gumbainggir, Bigambul and Nganyaywana.

New Website



We will soon have a new Northern Tablelands ABC Friends website, which will be accessed via the [NSW/ACT Regional Branches website](#). This will be in addition to our [Facebook website](#) which continues to provide current information related to the ABC as a public broadcaster.

This website will provide a range of information, including branch news, history of our branch, and how to access ABC and community radio in the region. As a local member you will be notified by email when the website becomes active.

There will also be information on how to become a new member, or update one’s existing membership. In becoming a NSW/ACT member of ABC Friends you can determine your level of activity, from only signing up through to active participation in branch events. Simply being a member is important in itself as you then contribute to national membership numbers, which are used to express the importance of independent public broadcasting in Australia.

The “Pub Test” - Fact or Fake News? - July 4th



On July 4 the Northern Tablelands branch will hold a public forum, top floor Wicklow hotel (Armidale), from 4:00 to 6:00pm. The topic is disinformation in the media (AKA *fake news*). Panelists in the fields of media & communication, sociology, economics and psychology, will be discussing how information is created and distributed in Australia. Sometimes that information is not correct (misinformation), and sometimes this is intentional (disinformation). How can we identify and deal with disinformation, and the role of a public broadcaster such as the ABC? Bar will be open for drinks, and finger food will be provided. Gold coin donation for entry and to win a door prize.

Zoom Meeting with Margaret Reynolds - July 6th



On July 6 the Northern Tablelands ABCF committee will be meeting with the national president, Margaret Reynolds, via Zoom. There will be a discussion on our role as a regional branch, from both our perspective and that of the national branch. If you have any questions you would like us to ask of Margaret, or would like to participate in this session, please contact Vic Wright, our secretary, on armidale@abcfriends.org.au (note the old ‘Armidale’ name is still active for the moment).

New Look Market Stall - June 27



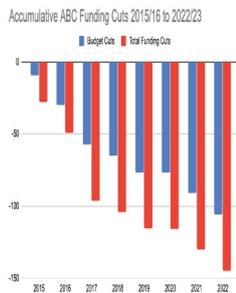
We will have a stall at the Armidale market on Sunday June 27. As usual, we will be promoting the role of public broadcasting in Australia, plus activities our branch will be engaged in for the second half of the year. We also have a new look display to hopefully fascinate those at the market. Thanks to members who volunteer to be on the stall - especially in the depths of winter!

Media Prize Awarded to UNE Student - 2020



Northern Tablelands ABC Friends each year donates a prize of \$500 to an outstanding UNE Media & Communication Studies student. The 2020 award went to Sharnee Rawson. Sharnee has now started a UNE Honours project in media, here in Armidale. Sharnee has already accumulated a substantial portfolio of relevant media work experience and placements. We wish her all the best for any future career in the field of media.

Current pressures faced by the ABC



As Australia's primary public broadcaster, the ABC faces ongoing pressure in the form of [budget cuts](#) and accusations of bias, while trying to adhere to its charter of providing impartial reporting on events of public concern, independent of political and commercial interests. The prospect of ongoing funding cuts, at the discretion of the government of the day, results in political pressure on the ABC. Similarly, regular accusations of bias, which consistently result in no finding of organizational bias by independent investigators, again results in pressure from vested interests. The ABC already has its own internal processes for ensuring no organizational bias in its reporting, and of course you might be aware of its own public self-scrutiny in the form of [Media Watch](#).

ABC Annual Conference - July 24

On Saturday July 24 the [NSW/ACT ABC Friends](#) will be holding its annual conference in Sydney. This conference attracts representatives from the 17 NSW/ACT regional branches, including your local Northern Tablelands branch. A range of topics will be discussed, with primary focus on ensuring a supportive ongoing Australian context for public broadcasting. If there are any specific issues you would like to see raised at this conference, please contact our secretary, Vic Wright, via email - armidale@abcfriends.org.au.

Next Branch Meeting - August 12



The next branch meeting is on August 12, in Kent House (141 Faulkner st. Armidale) at 5:30pm. All local members are welcome to attend in person, and bring a friend if you wish. Now that we are a regional branch, we also welcome members outside Armidale who may wish to participate in meetings via an online link that will be emailed to all members with an agenda prior to each meeting date.

armidale@abcfriends.org.au : for direct contact with our Northern Tablelands ABC Friends branch

www.facebook.com/fabcarmidale : entertaining and informative posts by Liz O' Hara

www.abcfriends.org.au : for information from the national branch, with a regional website coming soon