

TALK BY JENNIFER INGALL

Armidale ABC Friends who attended the September get-together were treated to a lively and informative talk by the manager of the regional ABC office at Tamworth, Ms Jennifer Ingall. Her topic was 'Talkback radio'. Whilst this title evoked dismaying echoes of metropolitan commercial 'Shock jock' programs, in her treatment the subject proved to be wide-ranging, balanced and educative.

Ms Ingall called local regional radio 'the town square of broadcasting', as it provokes intelligent, and at times, emotive discussion of current local and national issues. She summarised the roles of presenters, producers and their audience. Interestingly, only about 1% of listeners ever call in, despite regular encouragement to do so. This, they say, is because they fear recognition of their voices by members of their community – a 'problem' not faced by residents of greater Sydney or Melbourne



A range of related topics was covered: the sources, choice and types of stories, events and interviewees; different recording methods for interviews and field reports (the modern mobile phone now is the major technology used); some impressive examples of current series, using local experts, such as the University of New England's historians; time constraints; the efforts made to achieve balanced information and discussion. Types of talkback include comment, sharing, nostalgia, information and views on local issues and/or ones suggested by and/or to ABC staff. An issue first covered quite extensively by New England and Northwest radio was that of the therapeutic benefits of medicinal marijuana and the impossibility of obtaining it legally for very needy patients. This matter has now been taken up more widely; change appears to be on its way.

ABC local radio's key role as an emergency broadcaster is now officially recognised. This task has been made easier and much more efficient by the appointment of a State Coordinator of Emergency Broadcasts. 'Red alert' emergencies are now reported on every 15 minutes, improving safety and potentially saving lives.

Radio is changing, and the duties of ABC staff are becoming more diverse and numerous, not least because of online provisions and the use of multimedia (photos, videos, blogs, links worldwide). ABC's Tamworth-based staff members number ten. All are competent, hardworking and enthusiastically committed to their jobs.

NEW OFFICE-HOLDERS AND COMMITTEE (elected at the November AGM)

President:	Jeff Siegel	Vice President:	Bruce Stevenson
Treasurer:	Linda Andrews	Publicity:	Barbara Barton
Membership:	Jeff Siegel	Minutes Secretary:	Priscilla Connor
Newsletter:	Priscilla Connor & Jeff Siegel		

Committee Members:

Jenni Ford, Gai Galbraith, Jan McKelvey, Kaye Mill, Elizabeth Peach, Val Sherwell, Hani Soliman, Izabel Soliman (immediate past president)