

Cartoon courtesy Clement and The Sydney Morning Herald

## Lamenting Digital TV

*"The ABC is very disappointed. We argued in a logical, consistent and candid manner, that without a modest increase in our budget, programs would suffer.*

*The Government has decided to reject that request in the full knowledge that it would have a negative effect on ABC programming. The ABC must now assess its position. Hard decisions must be made*

*The Board will need to consider the ramifications...over the coming months.*

This low-key statement by ABC Managing Director, Russell Balding, was the corporation's initial reply to the Government's very pointed Budget in which the ABC received not one additional cent.

"Hard decision" were confronted swiftly: within days, Russell Balding had announced the closure of ABC Digital TV. It will run only until June 30.

"The difficult decision has been made as a result of the inability of the ABC to secure funds for these services in this year's Federal budget," Balding said.

"This is the first of several hard decisions the ABC will make over the coming months concerning its output."

Friends of the ABC (FABC) said the closure of national Digital TV was a blow to the ABC's status, coverage and creativity, but it was a prospect the ABC had foreshadowed, subject to funding.

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## On Sentry Go The Bias Barricades

Where the ABC is concerned, you can never afford to lower your guard.

Its 70th birthday had been celebrated appropriately, the Shier era of bad memory was over, Russell Balding was confirmed successor, the Government seemed to be toning down its sometimes strident attacks on the Corporation, outstanding issues were basic, not tumultuous and amongst those of us 'heaving a sigh of relief' there was a widespread feeling that we could also draw breath. Wrong! The 'peace' was disrupted in May. The 'rough winds shook' but for the ABC there was nothing merry or darling about it: With no increase in ABC funding, Russell Balding, with no dilly-dallying, dismantled ABC Digital TV. The government was embarrassed and furious.

So no sooner had Balding cut, then Senator Santoro (Qld.) launched into a tirade about instances of 'ABC editorial bias', a proposition quantified with his ministerial colleague, Senator Alston, as a list of 68 allegations of anti-Americanisms committed by AM.

Shrewder or illusion-less veterans saw it somewhat differently. NSW FABC President Gary Cook noted the Government's discomfort over other matters - the GG, the Prime Ministerial wine bill, another Amnesty International attack on us and Mr Howard's hotel bill in Rome.

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## Greg Wilesmith Briefs Northern Rivers ABC

*In an age of uncertainty, where does the truth lie?*

In late March the Northern Rivers FABC branch was addressed by the Executive Producer of Foreign Correspondent Greg Wilesmith – a meeting crowded by Friends, other local people and high school and university students.

Greg spoke about his varied experiences in Brussels, the Balkans, the Middle East and Africa under a universal heading - "The Role of the Foreign Correspondent in an Age of Uncertainty".

His comments on conflict in the Gulf Region had particular relevance, given the events then unfolding in Iraq.

After his address, question time ran to an hour and he shared some particularly memorable and harrowing moments from an eventful career.

Northern Rivers FABC branch President Neville Jennings said after the meeting:

"Those who attended were treated to a first hand account of modern day journalism. Greg gave a timely warning that in an age of uncertainty we should keep in mind that no media source has a monopoly on the truth. We are indebted to him for making time in his busy schedule to share insights on the role of the foreign correspondent with us. We also thank him for addressing a group of journalism students and lecturers at Southern Cross University in the afternoon."

Mr Jennings said the branch planned to run similar events later in the year in Lismore and Byron Bay. Further details would be posted on the branch web site at: <http://home.iprimus.com.au/web-formation/friendsabcnr>

## Central Coast Branch More Ideas Please!

Central Coast FABC is keen to keep its program of an encounter with guest speakers going. Two more are planned for August and November. Guest speakers are being arranged.

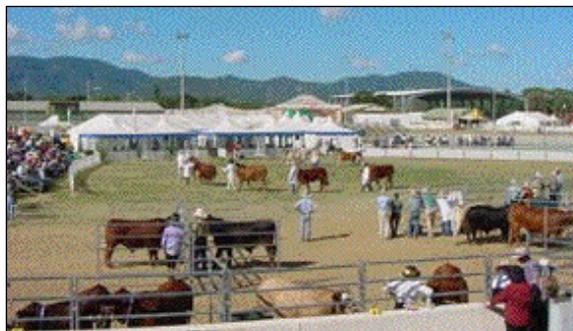
Cost of course is a factor. Central Coast Convenor, John Hale, says the Committee is exploring methods of fund raising and invites suggestions from members. 29 members have given the branch their email addresses; would others who haven't done so please notify John at [jhale@tac.com.au](mailto:jhale@tac.com.au)

The branch enjoys a venue at no cost in the Central Coast Leagues Club - an ideal central location for which the branch is most grateful ... but other costs have to be met.

## ABC OnLine Covered 'Beef Australia 2003'



Held in Rockhampton, Queensland 24 April - 4 May, Beef 2003 was a signature event for the Australian beef industry. The Queensland Country Hour team was on-site, and specialist online reporters covered all the news and colour in Rockhampton.



The expo included 1800 head of cattle representing 30 different breeds, making it one of the largest beef exhibitions in the world



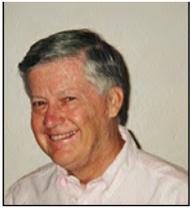
It's not all serious beef business just take a look at the singing butchers belting out their latest hit, Amazing Steak

## Bathurst Branch Wearing of the Green

FABC Bathurst looked back to the city's colonial origins this month with an Irish night in a pub, on the eve of Bloomsday. If any blarney was involved it was to persuade patrons not only to support the ABC but to sign up and join the Friends.

Replete with great Irish food and grog, the evening included prizes and giveaways that were in the mood.

So in the comfort of a roomy, fire-warmed lounge (alas, no peat) in the Family Hotel, Bentinck Street, guests, patriots all, were invited - expected - to entertain with dramatic sketches, verse, readings, music and song... impromptu if you liked but featuring local and national talent, including Blue Mountains FABC president, writer and actor John Derum, well known for many distinguished roles, particularly that of C.J Dennis.



# The President's Report

When our last edition went to print, war in the Gulf was imminent. Of course, history will record the events of March/April 2003 and we have our personal views of the justness or otherwise of that war.

It was hardly a surprise though, that the Communications Minister, Senator Alston, should launch into an attack on the ABC program, AM and the Director of News and Current Affairs, Max Uechritz for what he alleged was a serious anti-American bias in its coverage of the war. Senator Alston and his staff trawled through tapes of AM from 21 March to 14 April, citing more than sixty examples – “where it appears that appropriate journalistic standards may not have been upheld”.

Most of the allegations are absurd and totally lacking in objectivity. It would be no more difficult to find as many examples which, to a reasonable person, would convey the impression of being pro-American or pro-Coalition.

Senator Alston readily reminds the ABC and the Australian people that the ABC is funded by the taxpayer. Perhaps it is now time to deliver a not so gentle reminder to the Minister that he and his staff are also paid by the taxpayer and, as such, should have better things to do than embark on witch hunts. Staff of the ABC are also better served in creating and delivering quality public broadcasting than answering the Minister's baseless allegations.

The ABC's charter dictates that it is accountable to Federal Parliament, not the Government of the day, as Senator Alston asserts, and nowhere in that charter is the ABC obliged to echo or support the opinions or policies of the United States administration.

Preceding the Minister's attack on the independence of the ABC, due to the Government ignoring the ABC's Triennial Funding submission for additional funds, it was forced to axe its multichannel television services, FLY TV and ABC Kids.

Senator Alston sought to blame the ABC for the closure of its digital television channels by claiming that funding had been maintained in “real

terms”. This, of course, ignored the fact that, as minister, Senator Alston on coming to office in 1996, carved 12% from the ABC budget. A recent study by Macquarie Bank reveals that ABC funding, in real terms, has fallen by \$200 million since 1986. The ABC continues to provide more with less resources – but there is a limit to those efforts.

Immediately after the budget, The Australian newspaper issued a particularly vicious attack on ABC competence and balance – a bit rich coming from the Murdoch camp after the coverage of the Gulf war on its Fox News channel.

At the beginning of May, the long awaited announcement of the replacement on the ABC Board for Michael Kroger was made by the Minister. Predictably, in the person of Dr Ron Brunton, another political appointment has been made. From 1995 – 2001, Dr Brunton was at the Institute of Public Affairs, a Melbourne based neo-liberal think tank, consistently and openly antagonistic towards the ABC.

On 27 March, the Federal Opposition announced that they would adopt a transparent and non-partisan process for filling Board vacancies which would be similar to the Nolan rules in the UK.

During May, talks resumed in Hawaii between representatives of Australia and the U.S. in negotiating a Free Trade Agreement (FTA). There are many issues which will have far-reaching effects on life in this country to which we have become accustomed. Negotiations have been carried out behind closed doors which immediately heightens our suspicions, and once agreement is reached, remember that it only goes to Federal Cabinet to be ratified – the Parliament is bypassed – just as it was with the recently ratified Australia – Singapore FTA.

Trade Minister, Mark Vaile, in a speech made in Canberra on 23 May, said that “we have made clear that we will not compromise fundamental objectives in health care, education, consumer protection and cultural identity”. Yet, Communications Minister Alston, on the ABC Insiders program just over a week later, when asked about the US challenging Australian

content rules in film, television and music as barriers to trade, stated that every effort would be made to preserve local content but as the negotiations were in the early stages, all issues had to be discussed. Mark Vaile has consistently said “everything is on the table”.

Next year is an election year in the US and the powerful industry lobbies will be exerting political pressure on and providing vast sums of money to both political parties. With Australia's economy only 4% of that of the US, our bargaining position is weak. Let us see how grateful the United States is for Australia's participation in the “Coalition of the Willing”. (Further rounds of these talks are in July and October).

Another looming challenge in Australia is the likelihood that the Government will follow the lead of the United States in relaxing the cross media ownership laws which presently prevent a media company from owning both newspapers and television stations in the one city. Such a move here would concentrate more newspapers and television in the hands of the media moguls with only the ABC remaining to display independence and the ability to undertake true investigative journalism.

Other activities during this period were:

- a regular meeting with ABC State Director, John Graham on 20 March.
- a public meeting in Newcastle on 2 April organised by the Hunter Branch at which 2 Federal politicians attended. The theme was ABC Triennial Funding and the Hunter Branch deserves congratulations for their initiative.
- attendance at an address by historian, Professor Ken Inglis entitled “Aunty at Seventy – a Health Report on the ABC” – a forthcoming book.
- ABC Local Radio Awards at Darling Harbour.

As you can see, the ABC remains under threat. Its funding is inadequate, its independence is regularly being attacked and your ongoing support is valued in maintaining your membership, recruiting new members and letting the government know that unjustified attacks on the ABC will not go unanswered.

Gary Cook,  
President

## Hunter Valley Branch Tracking Down a Dollar

Hunter Branch staged a Forum on Funding inspired by the risk of the Iraqi war draining off money needed not only for the ABC but for other decent things like social security, health and education. But as Branch president Hank Willems remarked in that list :“our ABC is precious.”

There was a good roll up, with more than 40 people and several MPs and special guest NSW FABC President, Gary Cook present.

The focal point of the evening was Allan Thomas's analysis of the way the ABC has been funded over the last 30 years or so - (see Page 10)

Dr Thomas concluded that from its peak funding in 1985 of 12 cents a day per head of population, ABC funding was now down to about 7 cents a day.

Of the Federal politicians invited for the evening, only the Member for Hunter, Joel Fitzgibbon, and the Member for Charlestown, Kelly Hoare, attended.

Each spoke of their perception that the ABC was significantly in need of proper funding, but weren't prepared to put a figure on it. What they were positive about was the introduction of a more transparent method of selecting ABC board members, along the lines of Britain's Nolan Rules.

Gary Cook, also spoke on the need for better funding for the ABC. He stressed the threats posed by a possible free trade agreement with the US. “We must keep a close eye on negotiations that could spell an end to local content and local production.” he said.

The Forum welcomed Martin Babahkan, who handles weather forecasting for Newcastle local radio. Martin put his ideas on educating the public, farmer communities in particular, about coping with droughts, curbing salinity and seeing an important future role for the ABC in the promotion of these goals.

The meeting carried a resolution of ‘first principles’ regarding the legally binding character of the ABC charter and the Board's task of management in accord with the Charter; the crux of it was that “once a Government charges a Board with a set task, it cannot ethically deny the funding required for the execution of that task.”

## CAMPAIGNING

We are updating our data base of members willing to be involved in political campaigning on behalf of the Friends.



We need to be ready to take the initiative or respond to issues relating to the ABC, particularly leading up to and during election campaigns.

Please contact our Membership Secretary, Carolyn Green, by e-mail at [fabcnsw@optusnet.com.au](mailto:fabcnsw@optusnet.com.au) or by phone on 9144 1351 or write to her at PO Box 1391, North Sydney NSW 2059 to register your name and contact details.

If you have previously indicated that you are willing to assist, please re-register your intent.

– REMEMBER –

We are not a party political organisation.

## Great Lakes Friends

Meet your Local Federal Member  
Bob Baldwin MP



And Seek Answers as to Why the Federal Government continues to Erode the Funding of the ABC  
Forster-Tuncurry Golf Club  
Strand Street Forster

Saturday 26th July 2003 - 2.00pm

Grahame Burns  
President Great Lakes Friends branch.

## Lamenting Digital TV

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The SMH's Cosima Marriner described it thus: "The latest accusation of bias is the government's thinly veiled attempt to seek retribution for the ABC's decision to axe its digital multi-channels."

NSW FABC President, Gary Cook, said "We Friends can only support Mr Balding's decision, particularly if it serves to protect mainstream programming and services."

"The government pushed for the ABC to convert to digital broadcasting as a step forward and as something of a pace setter for commercial broadcasters, but without extra funding to do so."

"The ABC's request for extra money included funding to cover digital TV establishment and expand the service; instead the government ignored the request."

"Make no mistake it's the government that's shut down ABC

digital TV," Mr Cook said. "Digital TV has gone and with it at least 38 jobs."

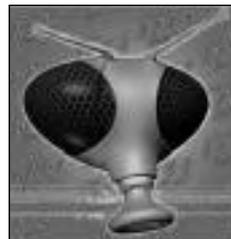
"As a major medium of the future, digital TV in Australia has been a creation of the ABC - online documentaries, children's program, cartoons, music programs interlinked with audience participation, multi-dimensional, and interactive, including programs made as co-productions with the AFC and the Victorian and South Australian Film Commissions; quite a number of them nominated at International TV Festivals and several were award-winners."

"Now I wonder where else the Government's budget is going to cut into ABC programming?" Mr Cook said. "We are left in trepidation that more losses are in the offing."

Stories about New Media, were being 'set' for this issue as Mr Balding's announcement was made. They're now marked with a wreath.



## Sad Day as Fly Falls



*I was shocked and appalled to hear that the ABC has axed the youth-oriented digital channel Fly TV.*

*I have had the distinct privilege of working with people at Fly over the past few months through a program that allowed students to interview politicians such as Defence Minister Robert Hill, Education Minister Brendan Nelson and next week's guest Prime Minister John Howard.*

*Now that Fly TV is gone, where will young people go to be informed on youth issues? None of the commercial channels seem to care about young people unless they are interested in "extreme" programming. Only Fly TV was interested enough, and now it is gone.*

*This has been a sad day for the youth of Australia.*

Simon Atkinson, Holt, ACT  
Letter in The Daily Telegraph  
28 May 2003

## When Your Audiences Are All Inclusive, as are the ABC's

*Here's an offer you surely can't refuse - \$15,000 to make a music video.*

ABC New Media and triple J in partnership with the South Australian Film Commission are seeking innovative individuals or teams who will each receive \$15,000 to create a multi-platform music video clip for one of triple J's 'unearthed' music finalists.

The winning clips will be shown on ABC Online and on ABC TV's Saturday Morning fly TV program.

The competition, first choosing the best proposed treatments, is open to all South Australian residents, but particularly people working, or aspiring to, in new media, design, animation, multi-media, film and associated areas, to boost those skills in that state.

Being run in rounds, the competition, in June, is open for Round 4 entries. In round 3, the songs to create clips for were; 'The Bomb' by The Fuzz, 'You are Expendable' by Yunyu and 'Evil Knieval' by Ikey Mo.

MP3 versions of the current songs are on 4 Minute Wonders Australia at <http://abc.net.au/4minutewonders>.

The South Australian Film Corporation (SAFC) and ABC New Media say the first rounds of 4 Minute Wonders Australia have been a wonderful success, with more than 150 entrants offering a great range of creative, innovative and inspired video clip treatments.

Entry forms to submit concepts are available on <http://abc.net.au/4minutewonders> but **ring ABC to see if it's still on.**

## In Black and White

Cancelling the digital channels exposed ABC managing director Russell Balding to the wrath of Communications Minister Senator Richard Alston. **The Australian's** Luke Mclveen identified the move as "blatantly political". "When the digital channels were established two years ago, Alston hailed the ABC's initiative in promoting digital television.

"The failure to generate consumer interest in high-definition TV since then has plagued the minister... **The Sun Herald's** Brian Toohey said: "Alston's crude attack on the ABC should be dismissed as a display of blatant political bias from a minister in trouble over digital TV."

And the **Herald Sun** editorialised: "Digital TV is an area on which Senator Alston has conspicuously failed to deliver" and urged him not to delude himself that "thought police and financial blackmail are the answer".

**from The Weekend Australian  
7-8 June 2003**

# Alston's American Defence Lands in a Minefield

*To what and to whom does the ABC owe its loyalty and its answers?*

*Let's take a step back and the space to consider Senator Alston's extraordinary complaint in a wider context. For South Australian friend, Joan Laing, the implications for the future of the ABC were "extremely serious". WA's Roger Raven concluded that "Alston seeks to drive the issue to attack the ABC's independence – "the campaign is not going to stop; the government is only interested in winning." Gary Cook said Alston was "embarking on a taxpayer-funded witch hunt."*

*Those of us who took comfort from public outrage, firm ABC rebuttals and a satirist's field day were appalled however to hear Alston counter-attack, demanding more evidence 'for the defence' from the ABC, contradicting an Auditor General's report and – ominously – declaring "I am not spelling out a definitive blueprint at this point of time."*

*There were two providential replies – one from the ABC Chairman and the other from Robert Manne in the Fairfax newspapers in an article of chilling perception, but one in which everything seemed to fall into place.*

The right in Australia is growing greedy. It is not enough for them that we have the most conservative government in Australia for over 40 years. Nor is it enough that views of which they approve are disseminated daily in the popular press, on talkback radio and on commercial television.

It appears that they will not be satisfied until one of the most important sources of independent opinion in this country, the current affairs arm of the ABC, has finally been brought to heel.

For a long time the right's campaign against the supposed left-wing bias of the ABC has been led by the Melbourne neo-liberal think tank, the Institute of Public Affairs...(whose)...then IPA Fellow with special responsibility for the media (was) Michael Warby.

"If the current attempt to reform the ABC fails, "Warby argued, "if the collective wins yet again, if yet another attempt at imposing accountability by management is defeated by the ABC collective, then it must be smashed and replaced as the principal public broadcaster."

For the right, the most important move to 'reform' the ABC came with the appointment of the hapless and hopeless Jonathan Shier as managing director. Shier must be regarded as one of the right's more spectacular recent own goals.

Following his removal there was an attempt to recover lost ground by the imposition as managing director of Trevor Kennedy of Packer media. The attempt misfired. The chairman of the ABC board, Donald McDonald, a true conservative and thus a genuine believer in due pro-

cess and the independence of the ABC, turned down Kennedy's belated job application...Russell Balding was appointed.

A few weeks ago the campaign against the ABC resumed...the Howard Government's appointment of Ron Brunton to the ABC board.

Shortly after (the) appointment an attack on the ABC was mounted, for no apparent reason, by The Australian. An editorial of May 22 (re left-wing bias) suggested that to save money the ABC get rid of Radio National...of interest only, it claimed, to the aging baby boomer left.

This struck me as a genuinely outrageous suggestion. In its range and depth, Radio National is one of the finest achievements of contemporary Australian culture.

Four days after this editorial a detailed attack on the political independence of the ABC was launched at an estimate hearing by Senator Santo Santoro of the Queensland Liberal Party.

The main target of the attack was the head of ABC news and current affairs, Max Uechtritz. Santoro asked Balding to explain why Uechtritz had described the military as "lying bastards" in a remark to an overseas conference many months ago.

(He – Santoro – asked Balding to investigate Lateline, Four Corners and AM.)

Two days later Senator Alston used a dossier on AM to show how anti-Americanism had distorted the ABC's coverage of (the Iraq) war. He demanded an urgent investigation.

In Alston's dossier the claim that "the city's hospitals are over-stretched" or that the tasks before the coalition commanders were "becoming increasingly complicated on a number of fronts" are provided as examples of anti-American bias!

The war against Iraq was mounted on the basis of claims Saddam Hussein was a new Adolf Hitler (threatening) not merely Iraqi people but the US and Britain (and) he was developing a nuclear capacity and already had at his disposal a vast arsenal of weapons of mass destruction of a chemical and biological kind. A month-and-a-half after the fall of Baghdad, no weapons of mass destruction have been found.

**The most important role of the media is to question the truthfulness of government. Never has the need for a fearless and independent Australian media been more vital. Never has a more calculated assault on the independence of the ABC been mounted than in the past week. Never has the public defence of the ABC mattered more.** (Emphasis ours - Ed.)

# The ABC's Chairman writes —



"Dear Minister,

I am writing in response to your letter of 5 June 2003. You will recall that the Auditor-General in his report found no evidence to indicate that the ABC did not comply with its Charter requirements.

The ANAO considered that the ABC's News and Current Affairs Division has effective procedures and practices in operation that assist it to deliver news and current affairs programs that reflect the Charter requirements of independence, accuracy and impartiality...The distinction between factual news and analytical material or comment...is acknowledged in the Division which has suitable arrangements designed to ensure satisfactory differentiation of the two formats, for the achievement of the legislated requirements of independence, accuracy and impartiality.

I wish also to recall your letter to me of 14 May 2002 about the ANAO Report, in which you said "I am pleased that the report is positive about ABC improvements in governance, accountability and benchmarking...the ABC has significantly improved over the last two years in areas such as its annual report, its Outcome/Outputs framework and its corporate plan. The report confirms this."

Your apparent change in sentiment now is surprising....

In your letter of 14 May 2002 you suggested that a central body be established, within the ABC, independent of program makers and production areas to deal with audience feedback...As you are aware, the ABC introduced enhanced complaints handling procedures in August 2002. Press reports at the time quoted your spokesman as saying that the government supported the changes and that you were pleased with them...

...In addition...the Board has made other significant improvements since the release of the ANAO report:

- Completion of a major review of Editorial Policies, overseen by a Board sub-committee chaired by John Gallagher QC, and approved by the Board. The revised policies were introduced in August 2002.
- Public disclosure each quarter of the volume and nature of audience contacts, including complaints.
- Monthly governance reports to the Board from each Executive Director of the Corporation (including) adherence to Editorial Policies.

You are aware that the ABC last year re-commenced a contractual arrangement with Newspoll to undertake an annual survey of Australian community perceptions of the work which the ABC, in accordance with Recommendation 9 of the ANAO Report. Eight out of ten respondents in 2002 believed the ABC was balanced and even-handed when reporting news and current affairs.

Your criticism of the Newspoll survey commissioned by the ABC was premised on the notion that "the bulk of the population do not watch or listen to ABC News and Current Affairs on a regular basis." I feel it is necessary for me to challenge that assertion, which would appear to be inconsistent with any currently available audience data...Over 13 million people watch ABC television at least once a week, more than 6.5 million people listen to ABC radio at least once a week, and in excess of 1 million people use ABC On-line monthly. By any standard, this surely constitutes "regular" use ...

I seem to have far greater faith than you in the capacity of ABC audiences to make reasonable assessments about news and current affairs broadcasts...You do not seem to recognise or acknowledge the substantial body of reform work which the ABC has undertaken.

In view of the level of interest in public accountability and the role of the ABC, I will also be releasing this letter publicly.

(signed)  
Donald McDonald Chairman

## The Bias Barricades

Continued from Page 1

"When an attack albatross bares its teeth at the ABC," Cook said, "you can be sure a defensive Government is looking for a diversion."

One core issue centred on 'qualifications' AM placed on some assertions by the US military; but given the then competition between the UN, the US and intelligence agencies to be believed, Alston's complaint was a brave one. He could not have imagined the firestorm he was to stir up. The response was ferocious.

Mike Carlton ridiculed Alston's "attack on your ABC shooting to new heights of absurdity", "deliciously loopy - a document of plodding fatuity and nitpicking paranoia." Adele Horin was more formal:

"The ABC's charter sets out the many functions of our national broadcaster. But nowhere does it require the ABC to favourably reflect the opinion of the current US administration. Richard Alston has overstepped the mark. Improperly and incorrectly he has claimed the ABC is 'accountable to Government'."

"This is scary stuff coming from the minister in charge of communications. The ABC is accountable under law to parliament, not the government, and 'by law and convention neither government nor parliament seeks to intervene in editorial and program decisions.'"

**The Herald's and The Australian's** letter columns were brimming with bile. Here's a taste:

★ Will the government's inquiry into the ABC be conducted by the House Un-American Activities Committee?

★ Born in the US, I detect the odour of bovine faeces...in Alston's attack. His threat to cut funding reminds me of Senator Joe McCarthy's vicious campaign against the 'liberal' American media.

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## A National Treasure: Radio National's Social History Unit

The Unit was founded in 1986, on a wave of pre-Bicentennial interest in the real-life stories of Australia. It was particularly inspired by Taim Bilong Masta, Tim Bowden's wonderful sprawling series on the Australian colonial experience in Papua New Guinea, fueled by the memories of patrol officers, public servants, explorers, miners, wives and children who had done their time up north over the previous fifty years

The emphasis in the early years was to capture the day-to-day details of times past, everyday stories of everyday people. Early series looked at memories of bush schools, aviators, miners, soldiers, migrants, women, Aboriginal people - trying always to cover as much of the country as feasible and to reach back into the past as far as possible.

As well as its major series (including POW: Australians Under Nippon, Being Aboriginal, The Snowy, , Minefields and Miniskirts: Women in Vietnam and Unfinished Business: Federation, Republicanism and Reconciliation) the Unit has recorded thousands of interviews that have served as the basis of hundreds of one-off documentaries on other aspects of Australia's history.

The Unit's interests and emphases have broadened over the years. There is great diversity in the topics and people covered on Hindsight (which has shifted its focus to more recent history - often throwing new light on current events), Verbatim (stories of ordinary people) and Street Stories examining the contemporary scene.

In recent years, the Unit has covered histories of bush-walking, shopping centres, nursing, crime, zoos, suburbia, travelling, nuclear testing, the Catholic rural movement, shipbuilding, the theatre and the rag trade.

A founding members, Perth-based Bill Bunbury, worked on the production of the current six-part series, View from the North, for over a year with historian Geoffrey Bolton. The

series presents the story of northern Australia in relation to the rest of the continent, from the north looking south rather than the other way.

Bill says that as the Social History Unit evolved in the '90s its focus broadened to include not only the stories of so-called ordinary people, most of them extraordinary, but also the broader context of our history, looking at migration, the effects of war and, in more recent times, environmental and social histories of the regions.

For Jane Connors, for those of us lucky to have worked in the unit, the fabulous thing is the opportunity to meet people from every kind of background, visit their homes and hear their stories. The extent to which they are prepared to share their memories, often painful and private moments, and then trust us to broadcast them with respect, is humbling.

The Unit, which has won national and international awards, is unique in public broadcasting. There is plenty of history broadcast in other countries, but the ABC's Unit is the only specialist unit dedicated to Social History, where producers can learn and practice the art of oral history, and an audience can tune in from week to week with a guarantee of learning something about the country's history directly from its participants and witnesses.

(from "inside the ABC")

On Radio National: Hindsight 2pm Sun & 1pm Thurs, Verbatim at 5pm Sat, Street Stories 5.30pm Sat & 10.15pm Fri.

## A Flash in the Can

*The ABC does most things well, and how well it does when it excels!*

The ABC Online 'Game On' website has won 'Best Game' category for one of its programs, 'Kelman to the Rescue' at Canada's international Flash in the Can awards. It was also chosen for screening at a Spanish Web Festival in Barcelona.

Kelman to the Rescue, one of five 'Game On' site games, each one commissioned and funded by Film Victoria and ABC New Media and Digital Services, was created by Melbourne illustrator Nathan Jurevicius. It's an adventure story with an environmental theme in a number of episodes.

The boy hero, Kelman, disabled after a tragic skateboarding accident, is visited by a bug guru, who tells him the local bug colony is being attacked by a group of evil bugs. Kelman becomes a superhero for a small world, riding on flying bugs and borrowing grasshopper legs to save the colony from extinction. The supplementary message is how we can all do things to help 'save' our environment.

Exquisitely animated, Kelman to the Rescue features Dylan Lewis as the voice of all the characters and the music is by Spiderbait. Extra features on the 'Game On' site include the creation of Kelman, original sketches and storyboards, and shots of Dylan Lewis and Spiderbait in the studio creating the characters, voices and music. Drop in on <http://abc.net.au/gameon>

The 'Game On' site has been exceedingly popular since it went live in March. It is receiving around 140,000 hits a week and is attracting attention from the national and international game and animation industry.

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*The ABC does most things well, but how well it does when it excels!*

The ABC Online 'Game On' web-site has won 'Best Game' category for one of its programs, 'Kelman to the Rescue' at Canada's international Flash in the Can awards. It was also chosen for screening at a Spanish Web Festival in Barcelona.

Kelman to the Rescue, one of five 'Game On' site games, each one commissioned and funded by Film Victoria and ABC New Media and Digital Services, was created by Melbourne illustrator Nathan Jurevicius. It's an adventure story with an environmental theme in a number of episodes.



The boy hero, Kelman, disabled after a tragic skateboarding accident, is visited by a bug guru, who tells him the local bug colony is being attacked by a group of evil bugs. Kelman becomes a superhero for a small world, riding on flying bugs and borrowing grasshopper legs to save the colony from extinction. The supplementary message is how we can all do things to help 'save' our environment.

Exquisitely animated, Kelman to the Rescue features Dylan Lewis as the voice of all the characters and the music is by Spiderbait. Extra features on the 'Game On' site include the creation of Kelman, original sketches and storyboards, and shots of Dylan Lewis and Spiderbait in the

studio creating the characters, voices and music. Drop in on <http://abc.net.au/gameon>

The 'Game On' site has been exceedingly popular since it went live in March. It is receiving around 140,000 hits a week and is attracting attention from the national and international game and animation industry.

*Sadly this is viewers' last chance to see it. ABC Online closes June 30.*

## In Memory of the Pickle Farmer

A group of former ABC colleagues and musicians who enjoyed work and friendship with the late Mike Hayes, the Prickle Farmer, are to stage a Memorial Concert at the Canberra Southern Cross Club Auditorium, Woden, in 0. August

The Concert will coincide with the launch of Mike Hayes' final book, 'Angry Skies', co-authored by a retired RAAF Wing Commander Ken Lewellen, a recollection of wartime experiences by RAAF fighter pilots and aircrew who fought in World War Two.

Mike completed the manuscript just prior to his death.

The Concert will pay tribute to and highlight his achievements and the contributions he made as an ABC journalist, author, songwriter and musician.

Mike was the creator of the popular "Prickle Farmer" series on ABC radio for many years and enjoyed considerable prominence in the Australian country music industry as a songwriter and musician in the genre of progressive country music.

The Concert will feature a selection of television vignettes, interspersed with a selection of live music performances showcasing many of Mike's music compositions.

Performers will include Anne Kirk-patrick, legendary Australian country rock band 'Cactus Jack', fiddle virtuoso Marcus Holden, guitarists Dave O'Neil and Scotty Ingram, The Borderers and many more.



### Mike Hayes "The Pickle Farmer" Memorial Concert



**Southern Cross Club Auditorium,  
Woden, ACT**

**Saturday, 9 August -7.30 pm**

Tickets, a very reasonable \$15 each, are available from the Southern Cross Club, Phone 02 6283 7200.

For further information  
Phone 02 6296 4880.

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# The Govt Rebuffs ABC - Friends of ABC Stage Funding Forum

Year 2001 dollars to run until 2006

*It's almost as certain as the Melbourne Cup, an Ashes series, or an Archibald prize, it will occur and it will attract intense public interest, often controversy. But in the case of the ABC's budget it almost inevitably brings with it - grief.*

*Why would this year's triennial funding decision be any different? The Howard government does not exactly enjoy a love affair with the corporation - distant echoes of the Shier era and more, very recent, ones spring to mind.*

*In the leadup to dthis year's event, "ABC programing and coverages must be in doubt" Russell Balding warned, repeatedly.*

Future ABC programing and coverages must be in doubt; Balding has repeatedly warned that without an increase some would have to go.

The ABC had sought an extra \$250 million over the next three years to increase local television content and upgrade its digital television capabilities.

The government's phrase 'maintaining funding' is a fairly dubious one, even in 'real terms', between now and 2006; the allocation is also the bare minimum the Government could give the ABC without breaking the campaign undertaking it made in 2001, one that seems to just scrape into the category 'core'.

Communcations Minister, Senator Alston, spoke - smoothly reassuring - of the funding enabling the ABC "to continue to educate and entertain its audiences, through-out Australia and internationally."

Friends of the ABC spokesperson Darce Cassidy said: "The government seems to have a problem with understanding figures...figures produced by the Macquarie Bank show that since 1986, ABC funding, in real terms, has fallen by 200 million dollars."

"To be fair to the government, a significant part of that reduction was made by Labor. Then the Coalition broke an election promise and cut another 12% from the ABC's budget, in one hit, on top of the Labor cuts."

"The figures speak for themselves. Since 1986 \$200 million has been cut from the ABC budget. In that time the ABC has introduced a new radio network, NewsRadio, and two digital TV channels, Fly TV and Kids TV. ABC Online has been established as one of Australia's most frequented web sites. The productivity of ABC staff has gone through the roof."

"Unless the government faces facts, the ABC can't continue this way. Something - or someone - will have to give."

## Facing Financial Facts

ABC Friend from the Hunter Branch, Dr Allan Thomas, has undertaken a breakdown of sometimes conflicting, often misleading figures to unravel some authentic statistics

For instance, the government claimed to have increased ABC funding from \$522.2M in 1995/96 to \$715.3M in 2001/02. But the \$522M did not include the transmission costs; whereas in the 2001/02 figure of \$715.3M it does.

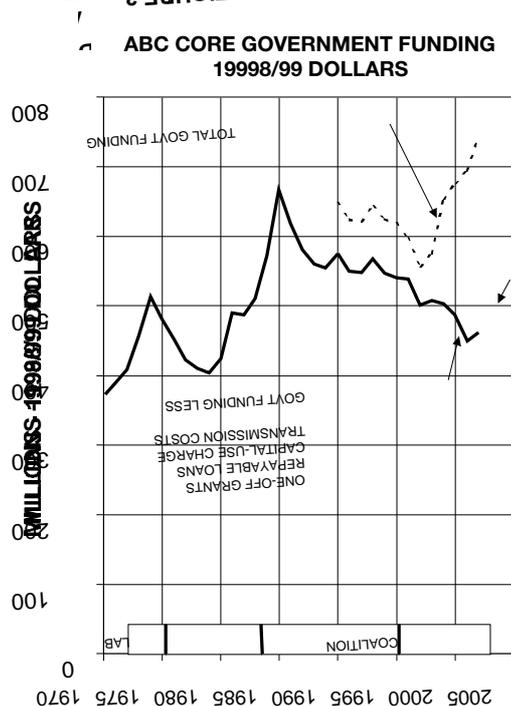
Next, a Capital-Use Charge, introduced with the Accrual Budgeting in 1999/2000 and levied on Commonwealth authorities and agencies to reflect the Commonwealth's investment in those entities meant that in 2001/02 the government provided an additional \$64.1M to the ABC to provide for this levy. But it was not actually available to the ABC for broadcasting purposes - only for paying the levy!

Other amounts in 2001/02 which should not be included are:

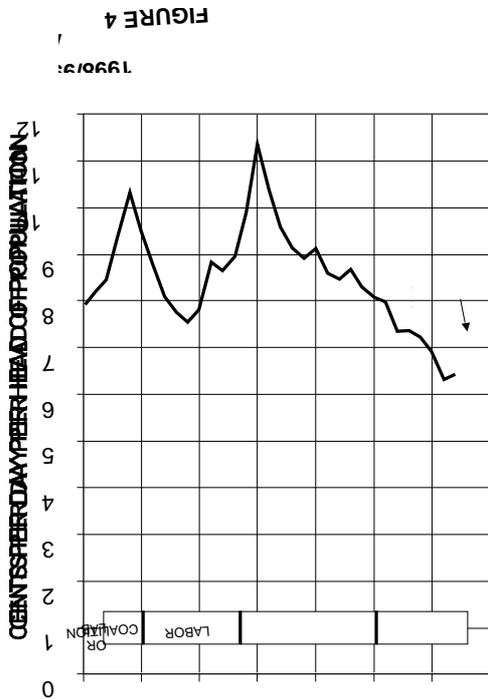
- A \$46.5M one-off grant for digital conversion which was a mandatory requirement by the government.
- A \$20M repayable loan.
- \$18M for the new overseas Australia Television service

Deducting all these and similar items from the \$715.3M, the nett funding in 2001/02 actually reduces to \$493.3M, so instead of an apparent increase from \$522.2M in 1995/96 to \$715.3M in 2001/02 there was in fact a nett decrease to \$493.3M, a reduction of 6%.

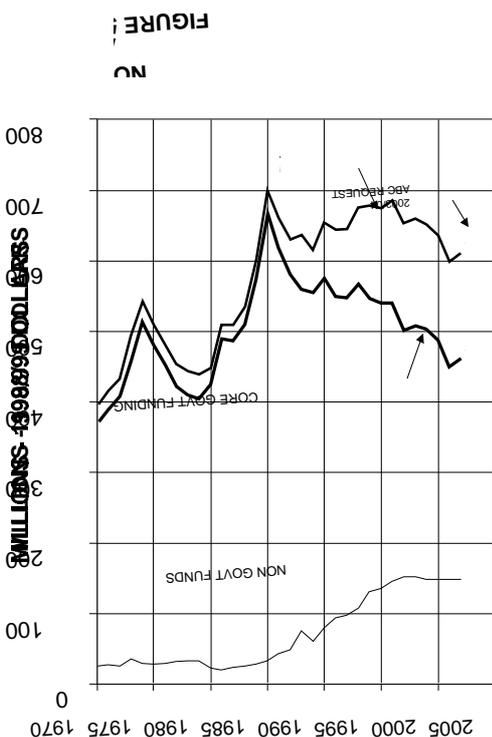
In fact, ABC core funding has remained approximately static since 1990, while the figure below shows that in real (1998/99) dollar terms the ABC's core funding has steadily decreased since its peak in 1985/86. (The cross indicates the modest increase currently requested by the ABC for 2003/04)



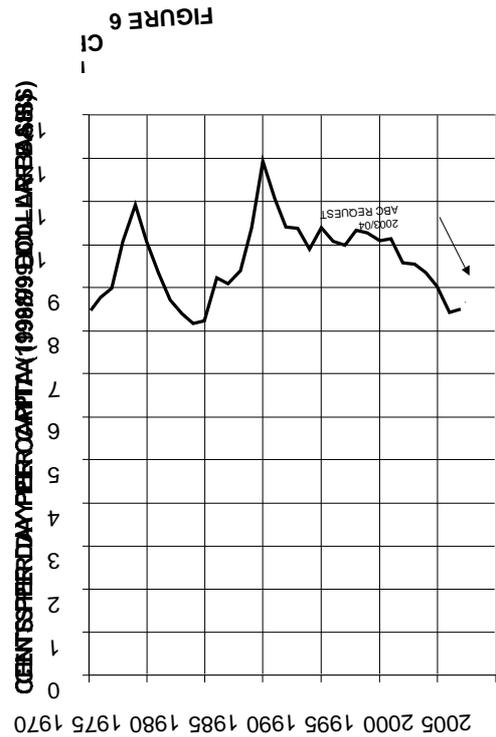
The population of Australia has increased from 12.8 million in 1970 to around 20 million today, an increase of over 55%. Other things being equal the government must be collecting a similar increase in taxes. (Given the GST almost certainly considerably more!) So the ABC is required to service the larger population. So, under these circumstances, it is not unreasonable to consider ABC funding on a cents per day per capita basis as shown in the next graph in 1998/99 dollar terms.



It shows that ABC government funding reached a peak 11.3 cents per day per capita in 1985. Currently it is just over half this amount at 6.4 cents per day per capita (1998/99 dollar terms). The cross indicates the modest increase currently requested by the ABC for 2003/04.



Dr Thomas' final graph (below) shows total ABC funding (core funding plus non-government funding – ie, ABC merchandising income) on a cents per day per capita basis. Total ABC funding has decreased by 1.6 cents per day per capita or 15% since the present government came into office.



## SUMMARY

- Government funding to the ABC has been falling steadily since 1985.
- The present government claims to have increased funding since it came to office. But this apparent increase is illusory since it includes such items as Transmission Charges, Capital-Use Charge, grants for additional new services such as digital television and the overseas Australia TV service, and repayable loans. When these are removed core government funding has remained roughly constant over the 8 years of the present government.
- But after allowing for inflation core funding has decreased by about 15% over this period. The ABC is asking for a modest \$47M increase next year which would lower the reduction from 15% to 12%.
- On a per capita real dollar basis government funding has decreased by 45% since 1985 and by 20% since the present government came to office.

# A 'Wake Up Call' From America'



*The Americans are heading down an Australian path and not all are particularly happy about it.*

Far from it. While the Bush Administration this month argued that it was okay for the U.S. Federal Communications Commission to relax media ownership laws, so that owners could own more, a community storm broke

In prospect: American's local TV stations, newspapers, radio station and cable proviers could all be owned by one company. "Deeply destructive of democracy" complained one critic.

A leading opponent is the 'on line' MoveOn organisation whose report this is:

After the FCC and Congress (previously) relaxed radio ownership rules, corporate giant Clear Channel Communications swept in and bought hundreds of stations. Clear Channel has used its might to support pro-war political rallies and conservative talk shows, keep anti-war songs off its stations, coerce musicians into playing free promotional concerts, and bully them into performing at its music venues. In many towns that used to have a diverse array of radio options, Clear Channel is now the only one on the dial.

Why worry about who owns the Media?

Mergers are decreasing coverage of local political races, local small businesses, and local events. There are only a third as many owners of newspapers and TV stations as there were in the 1970s (about 600 now; over 1,500 then). It's harder and harder for Americans to find out what's going on in their own back yards.

Democracy is built on the idea that the views and beliefs of an informed citizenry are the best basis for political decision-making. Without access to fair and balanced news, the system doesn't work.

## **Rich Media, Poor Democracy**

And media corporations can't be trusted: they're willing to sacrifice journalism to improve the bottom line. That's why we need many

media entities -- to provide the information and ideas that make democracy happen.

At 1:30 on a cold January night, a train containing hundreds of thousands of gallons of toxic ammonia derailed in Minot, North Dakota. Town officials try to sound the emergency alert system, but it isn't working. Desperate to warn townspeople about the poisonous white cloud bearing down on them, officials call their local radio stations. But no one answers any of the phones for an hour and a half. According to the New York Times, three hundred people are hospitalized, some are partially blind, and pets and livestock are killed.

Where were Minot's DJs? Where was the late night station crew? As it turns out, six of the seven local radio stations had been purchased by Clear Channel, a radio giant with over 1,200 stations nationwide. Economies of scale dictated that most of the local staff be cut: Minot stations ran more or less on auto pilot. No one answered the phone because hardly anyone worked at the stations any more. Minot's nightmare may become our national reality.

## **Our Right to Know**

Why did the media do such a poor job of reporting on the Iraq war? The boosterism of news anchors, the suppression of antiwar views, and the sanitized images of war (in the television coverage are not matters of bias or ineptitude, says media analyst Danny Schechter. He draws attention to the connection between the decisions made by journalists and the lobbying efforts of owners who will profit immensely from the FCC decision.

## **Death of Local News**

*"This is a dark day for American democracy," said Chellie Pingree, president of Common Cause. "The FCC has ignored mounting public pressure and given the green light to a handful of media moguls to control what the American public sees, hears, and reads. If only a handful of large conglomerates control the press citizens will lose viewpoints vital to a healthy democracy.*

# Pressing on Down Under

*Whatever eventuates in the United States, the Australian Government is moving to lift the ban on Australian media proprietors owning more than one newspaper, radio or TV station in the same metropolitan market...even if it takes a double dissolution to do it.*

Speaking at an Australian Broadcasting Authority conference in Canberra, Senator Alston warned that a double dissolution might be the only way to push the proposed new media ownership laws through the Senate.

If the Senate blocks it twice after an interval of three months, the bill becomes a trigger for a double dissolution. "If that happens, so be it. There's not much we can do except in the context of the next election," Senator Alston said.

The Senate independents are concerned about further concentration of media ownership in fewer hands and a lessening of diversity.

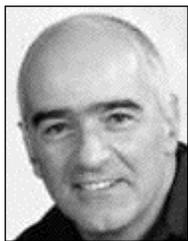
The Senate debate was due to resume this month with the Government needing four extra votes in the chamber to pass the new law.

The Sydney Morning Herald's Cosima Marriner Marriner claimed the Government was close to doing a deal with independent Senators Meg Lees and Len Harris. "Senator Shayne Murphy is holding out for an overhaul of the Trade Practices Act and the recognition of Pay TV as a fourth media market.

"Senator Harradine is waiting to see what agreement Senator Alston reaches with the other independents before indicating his vote." Andrew Murray, the Democrat most suspected of splitting from the party room, said there was no need for him to do so.

Democrats communications spokesman, John Cherry, said-"We aren't negotiating anything."

# I'm Sorry -The Doctor Is In



of the integrity of the BBC's Nolan Rules.

This profile of Dr Brunton by The Age writer Ewin Hanna includes the university years Brunton shared with the Friends' spokesman, Darce Cassidy.

Ron Brunton, now a pin-up boy for the political right, spent his formative years as a long-haired socialist. At Monash University in 1967, he set up the New Left Group, a forum designed to promote left-wing thought.

But Brunton was no campus revolutionary. "He was big on the theory, but never big on action," recalled Darce Cassidy, who was at Monash with Brunton.

"I didn't enjoy it," Brunton recalled this week. "I hated the false sense of solidarity. I did go to the anti-Johnson demonstration (against the Vietnam War), but I left early."

These days, the Sunshine Coast-based anthropologist is despised by a left that depicts him as a cultural warrior, a leading conservative commentator intent on undermining indigenous rights.

## Indigenous Issues

Brunton, 58, certainly has the right stuff. Prominent during the indigenous rights debate, he was notable for a scathing critique of the 1997 Bringing Them Home report.

He was a research officer with the Liberal Party's Victorian division before and after the 1982 state election. At the time, the party's state president was Richard Alston.

From 1995 until 2001, Brunton was at the conservative Institute of Public Affairs, locking horns regularly with left figures, including academic

Dr Ron Brunton's appointment to the ABC Board perpetuates the continual politicalisation of the Board. To the ABC's Friends it is also an unedifying reminder

and Age columnist Robert Manne, over indigenous issues.

Brunton is unfazed by attacks on his politics. He says it is wrong to label him right-wing, a term he associates with fascism. "My politics are eclectic," he said. "It's unfair, it's misleading to pigeonhole me. Obviously, on a number of issues, I take a position that would be more conservative. On other matters, I take a position that is left of centre."

## Bias

Brunton, a regular columnist in the Murdoch press, politely dodged a number of questions about the ABC, including whether he believed the broadcaster has been guilty of biased coverage. However, a 1998 Courier-Mail column, prompted by Alston's then assertion that the ABC had been "biased in dealing with the waterfront dispute and other matters", is revealing. Brunton wrote:

"The ABC and its friends say it is balanced and responsible. Who is right? Personally, I am with Alston on this issue, although when he also said that 'most of the time the ABC is an institution of which all Australians can feel justifiably proud' I thought he was being faint-hearted.

"Certainly, I believe there was a time when such sentiments were appropriate. But that was long ago. I could cite much anecdotal evidence to support my case, including conversations with ABC staff who privately admit that the culture in sections of the organisation is hostile to anything that might be identified with the Liberal or National parties."

## ABC Accused of Falsifying

His column suggested the ABC had doctored a survey saying 95 per cent of people thought it did a good job of providing accurate news and current affairs coverage. "I can't help wondering whether those interviewed were chosen on a truly random basis, and whether they actually listen to the ABC," he wrote. He suggested the ABC's content analysis could be monitored by an outside board.

Labor's communications spokesman, Lindsay Tanner, said (Dr Brunton's) appointment showed the Howard Government's assault on the ABC had "reached a new, extreme level". Brunton, he said, had no significant background or expertise in public broadcasting.

## Balance

Cassidy, said it was fair to describe Brunton as an "ideological zealot". "This in itself does not disqualify him from the ABC board," he said. "Our problem is with the political balance on the ABC board, and with the appointment process."

The nine member board includes the PM's friend, Donald McDonald, conservative economist Judith Sloan, former Liberal MP Ross McLean and the Australian Stock Exchange chairman, Maurice Newman.

"We are concerned that the ABC board fails the balance test," Cassidy said.

Manne said Brunton was "no fool", with a "reasonably good analytical mind". But he predicted Brunton would seek to make the ABC a "more conservative organisation". "It shows how ideological the government has become," he said. But Brunton's friends and colleagues say it is unfair to describe him as a blatant Liberal barracker, pointing to Brunton's regular criticisms of Howard's performance in office.

Brunton said his lack of broadcasting experience should not disqualify him from the ABC board: the majority of government-appointed board members in 70 years had no broadcasting experience.

"I regard it as an extremely important cultural institution...and I have a very strong commitment to public broadcasting," he said.

Ewin Hannan is an Age senior writer. The Age - 10/05/2003

(abridged)



Cartoon courtesy Allan Mackay

## A Bit Fishy

If the claim is that the Government has never heard of the Nolan rules, then the following must only be a coincidence!

On 29th March, in *The Australian*, the government advertised vacancies on the board of a statutory authority, including an outline of the criteria, the qualifications required and the presence of a selection committee which would make a recommendation to the Minister.

No – not the ABC, but the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation.

The advertisement called for nominations to fill six vacancies on its board. Friends' issued a media release congratulating the Government on its wisdom and looking for the same to apply in replacing Michael Kroger

"Failure to do so would smell very fishy indeed," said the release

## Schubert's Symphony

A company chairman was given a ticket for a performance of Schubert's unfinished symphony. He passed the invitation to the quality assurance manager.

The next morning, the chairman asked him how he enjoyed it, and, he was handed the following memorandum:-

For a considerable period, the oboe players had nothing to do. Their number should be reduced,

and their work spread over the whole orchestra, thus avoiding peaks of inactivity.

All 12 violins were playing identical notes. This seems unnecessary duplication, and the staff of this section should be drastically cut. A large volume of sound could be obtained through the use of an amplifier.

Much effort was involved in playing the demi-semiquavers. This seems an excessive refinement, and it is recommended that all notes

should be rounded up to the nearest semiquaver. If this were done, it would be possible to use trainees instead of craftsmen.

No useful purpose is served by repeating with horns the passage that has already handled by the strings. If redundant passages were eliminated, the concert could be reduced from 2 hours to 20 minutes.

One can only conclude that had Schubert given attention to these matters, he probably would have had the time to finish his symphony.

## update

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## Odd Man Out at the Card Table – Who’s dealing?

*Rarely has a national issue crept forth so quietly, attracting as little attention to itself as possible, with the government only occasionally exclaiming “Oh that issue!” - that issue being the International Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), and likewise a free trade agreement with the United States (FTA). The spin the government puts on an FTA portrays it as an economic grail, but will it be and what’s the trade off ?*

NSW FABC issued this media release after the first round of negotiations:

### **FABC calls for ‘sanity’ in US-Australia Free Trade Talk**

NSW President, Gary Cook, said it was unbelievable that Trade Minister Vaile declared no areas in the negotiations off-limits and refused to exclude Australian programming and local content, claiming it was “tactical”.

“Whatever that means,” Mr Cook said, “it exposes Australia to American pressure to eliminate local content and take an unfettered flow of film, television, music and other programs made in the US for the US.”

“It’s incredible that Mr Vaile fails to safeguard them, with yet another round of talks to begin where the Americans will resume the horse-trading, including one report that they would agree to extra funding for the ABC, provided local content rules were dumped.”

“This is crazy,” Mr Cook said. “Australia’s cultural heritage is tradeable: tradeable for what - inferior American films and television; putting our own writers, actors and producers out of work.”

“The ABC’s charter, by act of parliament, requires the corporation to broadcast programs that contribute to our national identity; that inform, entertain and reflect the Australian community; that encourage international understanding of Australian attitudes and promote musical, dramatic and other performing arts in Australia.”

Mr Cook said that if the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was any example it was not just the cultural and entertainment sectors at grave risk.

“Before we sign anything we should consider these examples -

US corporations have sued the Canadian and Mexican governments for billions of dollars: challenging Canada Post’s ‘monopoly on letter delivery’; and British Columbia for hampering a US corporation’s plans to export water from the province. They overturned a Canadian public health ruling banning a fuel additive; and won damages from a Mexican municipality that refused them permission to build a hazardous waste dump in the area.”

Among other requirements here’s what else the Americans want:

- Abolition of the Foreign Investment Review Board
- Foreign corporations able to sue the government for decisions that might cut into corporate profits
- Opening up services like telecommunications, health, education and water to foreign corporate control.
- Abolition of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme
- Abolishing food labelling for genetically modified foods and reducing quarantine practices
- Abolishing the right of all levels of government to purchase from local suppliers

“The way the Government is handling these and other trade negotiations seems almost Orwellian.”

## By Way of Comparison -

We are finalising a Free Trade Agreement with Singapore SAFTA.

The Agreement (SAFTA) removes all tariffs and other trade barriers between the two countries. It is not subject to parliamentary vote and goes only to Cabinet for ratification. The Joint Standing Committee on Treaties (JSCOT) concludes its inquiry by 24th June. The treaty has a “negative list” approach which means everything is included - unless specifically excluded.

Consultation involved contact with industry, but very little with civil society groups. The JSCOT review is the public’s and parliament’s only opportunity for input and scrutiny, but the Government is proceeding with the legislation before the review is finished

### ‘Negative List’ Dangers

‘Negative list’ means foreign investors/service providers must be treated as ‘locals’ with market access in all areas.

The services chapter claims it does not apply to “services applied (by) governmental authority .” But many public services are now supplied on a commercial basis or in competition with other service providers.

A future government would not be able to implement policy contrary to the agreement without facing disputes procedure and payment of penalties or compensation.

### Restriction of Services

Listed as exceptions are Australia Post’s delivery of standard letters,

Comcare, (Workers’ Compensation Insurance for Commonwealth employees and Air Services Australia, the air safety authority.

Listed exceptions open to change in future include restrictions on media ownership, agricultural marketing authorities, audio visual services, creative arts and cultural heritage; as well as “social services established for a public purpose: welfare, public education, training, health, child care, public utilities and public transport”.

### Right to Sue

Two enforcement processes enable a corporation to take legal action to force changes to Australian law if they can argue the law is not consistent with the agreement. They can sue the Australian government for damages.

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## Membership form

Please fill out the form below and return it with your payment to:  
The Treasurer, Friends of the ABC (NSW) Inc.  
PO Box 1391, North Sydney NSW 2059.

Name		Email:	
Please Print			
Address		Suburb	P/Code
Phone (Home)	(Work)	Mob	
Federal Electorate		Give my details to my local FABC Branch <input type="checkbox"/>	
Age Group	<input type="checkbox"/> 30 or under	<input type="checkbox"/> 31-50	<input type="checkbox"/> 51+
Membership No. _____			
I would like to join <input type="checkbox"/>		I would like to renew <input type="checkbox"/>	
I am interested in helping <input type="checkbox"/>		I would like to join the phone/fax/email network <input type="checkbox"/>	
(and help pass on information to members)			
I/We apply for membership of FABC (NSW) Inc. and accept it's objectives and rules. Signature. _____			
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$20	I am paying by <input type="checkbox"/> cheque in favour of FABC (NSW) Inc. <input type="checkbox"/> money order <input type="checkbox"/> bankcard <input type="checkbox"/> mastercard <input type="checkbox"/> visa Card number _____ Name on credit card _____ Expiry date _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Family/Household	\$25		
<input type="checkbox"/> Student	\$15		
<input type="checkbox"/> Pensioner	\$15		
<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate (covers 3 members)	\$60		
<input type="checkbox"/> I would like to make a donation	\$ _____		
Cardholders signature		Amount \$	