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FABC Notices

More funds for the ABC

The Rudd Labor Government's first Federal Budget to address ABC funding was welcome after the decades of neglect and hostility of former governments.

Not only did it provide the largest increase in the public broadcaster's funding since the ABC moved from being a commission to a corporation in 1983, it will deliver that funding through the ABC's base triennial funding – important because the broadcaster's triennial funding is ongoing and promotes the ABC's arms-length operation from government.

Nevertheless, other than funding that will allow the ABC to increase its abysmally low drama output, the extra funding is only for new initiatives - a digital advertising-free Children's Channel and new regional broadband hubs. The Government has not increased funding to enable the ABC to rebuild its declining existing services. And a significant amount of the new funding will be spent on production outsourced to the private sector.

It is also disappointing that the Government has not taken greater advantage of the ABC's proven capacity to produce high quality information and educational material. The independent national broadcaster should be better resourced to utilise the vast potential that digital television and radio, together with high-speed broadband are opening up for increased community access to information.

The Past Should be the Future

IN THE LIGHT of the difficult economic circumstances in which the Budget was framed, and which we may face in the future, it is interesting to think about the ABC's beginnings.

The Australian Broadcasting Commission began on July 1, 1932, when Joseph Lyons, the United Australia Party prime minister, opened the ABC broadcasting



Well, perhaps that wasn't quite what Communications Minister Senator Stephen Conroy said to Mark Scott. But that's what FABC is working towards.

system and spoke of its task to minister "to the culture as well as the gaiety of the nation". The ABC was to encourage local talent and to provide news and information relating to current events.

Think of the date, July 1932, and realise that this was the depth of the depression. Here was a government strapped for cash, but with the forethought to establish a new public enterprise that would be of great value to the nation.

Information and analysis on the Budget and what it will enable the ABC to deliver is on page 2

ABC Managing Director thanks YOU

IN A LETTER after the Federal Budget, ABC Managing Director Mark Scott thanked Friends of the ABC for the strong support it gave while the Government considered the broadcaster's funding. In conclusion he wrote: *The ABC approaches this new era with vigour and excitement. We look closely to working with the Friends of the ABC over the coming years as we pursue our goals of being a new media innovator, a connector of communities and a trusted source of distinctive and unique content.*

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Renew NOW



Friends of the ABC needs your support to ensure the ABC remains independent, is well-resourced and continues to play a prominent role in Australia's media landscape.

A form will accompany this newsletter if your membership renewal is due. Please renew promptly and recruit a friend.

Thank you

The ABC got/needs more funds

What the May 2009 budget delivered

Over the next triennium the ABC will receive additional funding of:

Around \$67 million to support the ABC's plans for a digital children's television channel and \$70 million to increase its output of new Australian drama.

ABC3 is expected to be on air 6am to 9pm by November, and take three years to reach a target of 50 per cent Australian content. Its programming, aimed at eight to twelve year-olds, will be complemented by interactive elements and online content. Viewers will require a digital television or set-top-box to access ABC3, and ABC2 which will cater to pre-schoolers.

The Government expects the ABC to lift original Australian television drama to 90 hours per year by 2012. (1.7 hours per week is around the same level required of commercial television.) Last year the ABC screened 17 hours, and, not long ago, 3 hours a year – a drop from 102 hours in 2001.

While high production values do not always equate to quality content, Friends of the ABC believes the funding is insufficient to deliver 90 hours drama of a reasonable standard.

\$15.3 million for more than 50 new regional broadband hubs; ie websites and portals that will operate as town squares by creating online avenues for local communities to communicate, and where the ABC will encourage and assist the development of user generated content.

What the ABC didn't get

THE AMOUNT WAS DISAPPOINTING when measured against the ABC's existing needs. With the exception of local drama, the extra funding is for new initiatives. The Government appears to have ignored the funding shortfall revealed in leaks from the former government's KPMG report on the efficiency and adequacy of ABC funding. Beyond drama, there was no funding increase to halt the decline and to rebuild the ABC's resources in existing services; for example, documentary and science programming, news and current affairs, live cultural performance broadcasts, the ABC's domestic and international radio networks.

Furthermore, a significant amount of the new funding for the Children's TV channel and drama will go to outsourcing production – a consequence of government assistance to the private sector being delivered in a way that results in private



A Budget Winner: Kids get a new dedicated TV channel, ABC3. *CJ the DJ*, a 52-part animation series that incorporates an integrated online DJ experience that will feature on ABC3's web portal.

producers being able to sell programming to the ABC more cheaply than the ABC can produce it.

ABC proposals that the government failed to fund include an education channel and a 24/7 news and public affairs channel; also sports, children's and health digital radio stations that the ABC had been keen to launch.

Funding to maintain the ABC's independence

The former government increasingly subverted the ABC's independence by tying the ABC's expenditure of funds to specific areas. Importantly, the Rudd Government has incorporated the additional funds it delivered into the ABC's base triennial funding.

Nevertheless, targeted funding still exists in practice. Until there is a process that guarantees the public broadcaster is well-funded, regardless of which party is in office, the ABC has little choice but to float proposals likely to entice the government to increase its funding. This practice allows governments to cherry-pick what they want. And with governments liking to be seen to introduce new initiatives, it inevitably results in new areas being funded at the expense of rebuilding or maintaining existing services.

Also cause for concern

A significant proportion of the new funding committed in the May Budget is not due until 2011–12. In other words, after the next election.



Budget Losers: The Budget delivered no increase in funds to rebuild existing services like Triple J and Radio National that have suffered in recent years. TOP: Noriko Tadano performing at the 'Under an Eastern Moon' concert hosted by RN's Music Deli in June. BOTTOM: J Awards 2008 Album of the Year award winner, The Presets (Julian Hamilton & Kim Moyles).

The next struggle

Charles Sowerwine

THE ABC IS BIASED. No, I don't mean the ABC is too favourable to Labour, the Greens, or the 'left.' On the contrary, John Howard's culture wars have successfully transformed the ABC into an instrument of the right.

At 7:20 this morning, Sunday 5 July 2009, ABC NewsRadio *Weekend Breakfast* sought comment from an American journalist on Sarah Palin's sudden withdrawal from politics. Did they go to National Public Radio? Or to the *New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Boston Globe*, *The Los Angeles Times*, or another newspaper of record? They went to *The Washington Times*.

Now *The Washington Times* sounds respectable. But in fact it is a mouthpiece of Sun Myung Moon's far-right 'Unification Church,' its founder and publisher. Not surprisingly, the columnist (who seemed to think he was speaking to a UK journalist!) ran the current line of far-right US commentators, that poor Sarah Palin is withdrawing from politics because US media—'left-wing' media!—are so nasty to her that they're destroying her family.

Another example: *Sunday Profile* with Monica Attard today featured an interview with Israel's Deputy Foreign Minister and our own Deputy Prime Minister, both running,

It's no accident that the Howard government's first budget cuts, in 1996, targeted universities and the ABC. Howard packed the ABC board with his cultural crusaders: the IPA, the climate denialists, the history warriors, in short the people who brought you the current economic crisis...

obviously, the current Israeli line. That would be fair if we heard from a Palestinian representative next week! Or someone from the Israeli peace movement! But the last political interview, a fortnight ago, was with Geert Wilders, the far-right Dutch politician...

Or take the news. Remember David Hicks? He was captured by fundamentalists, sold to the US and spent five years in Guantánamo Bay. To get out, he accepted a plea bargain in a kangaroo court. ABC news subsequently referred to him as 'convicted terrorism supporter.' A fair approach would recognise that the whole process was completely



The sort of ABC the former government sought. Cartoon by Fiona Katauskas www.fionakatauskas.com

illegitimate, an opinion which led to the US decision to close Guantánamo Bay. A fair descriptor would have been, 'former Guantánamo Bay inmate.'

Australians trusted the ABC. For 80 years. It effectively represented Australia's political culture.

What changed was not the ABC, but Australian conservatives, who moved from traditional conservatism (changing only things that were broken) to a radical new programme based on Thatcherism (changing everything). To succeed, they had to shift the ABC. It's no accident that the Howard government's first budget cuts, in 1996, targeted universities and the ABC. Howard packed the ABC board with his cultural crusaders: the IPA, the climate denialists, the history warriors, in short the people who brought you the current economic crisis.

The new right skilfully used claims of bias to skew the ABC. But the point is not simply to have two sides: we don't need a creationist for every scientist, a tobacco spokesman for every cancer question, a climate change denialist for every issue. Those are the right's tactics.

We should speak of fairness and the need

for truth. There must be a spread of opinion and the views of the extreme right should be placed in context. We need to demand that the weight of reasonable opinion is catered for. Experts should be leading scientists, academics, and commentators accepted by their peers, not employees of Reverend Moon! That's fairness.

So keep your ears open for unfairness. When you hear it, note the details so the ABC can locate the programme. The ABC website can help. Complain to the ABC, and send a copy to FABC.

Our struggle is not only for decent funding. Let's restore fairness and truth to the ABC!

Charles Sowerwine is a Professorial Fellow in History at the University of Melbourne. His most recent book is *France since 1870: Culture, Society and the Making of the Republic*. He is a long-standing member of Friends of the ABC.

It is important to give feedback, good or bad, to the ABC. And please send copies to Friends of the ABC. Friends of the ABC and the ABC can provide you with information on further steps you can take if you are dissatisfied with the reply you receive on any serious matter.

The longest-serving PM

On July 7, 1969, Australians were introduced to a new form of radio broadcasting. For the first time journalists were allowed to present a current affairs program, use ‘sound bites’ in their reports and interview politicians on air.

By Tim Bowden

LISTENING TO ABC RADIO IN 1969, you might wonder if you were in Australia as announcers spoke with the rounded vowels of an upper-class Englishman (and there were few women announcers).

ABC radio current affairs programs were few. *News Review*, a 15-minute backgrounder after the main news, was once a flagship radio program, but since television started in 1956 it was a graveyard slot. *AM*, at 8am to 8.30am, began in 1967 but struggled for an audience on the ABC’s second network (now Radio National).

In 1968, I was asked by the director of current affairs Peter Hollinshead, to return to Sydney from New York to start the evening version of *AM* - imaginatively titled *PM*.

Before returning I surveyed the scene in New York and London, and felt that such programs were best hosted by journalists, who had street cred and could react professionally on air to the breaking news stories.

This was not the case with *AM*, hosted first by an actor, and then by staff announcers. The formidably named ABC general manager, Talbot Duckmanton, once an announcer, took a keen and intrusive interest in its on-air presentation.

I literally sketched out a staffing structure for *PM* on the back of an envelope and had it approved.

For some reason, I thought it best to alternate two journalists as presenters – John Highfield and Lawrie Bryant, a recently arrived New Zealand journalist. They tossed a coin to see who would front the first program, and John won.

We used to get to air with difficulty, as *PM*’s offices were in William Street in Sydney, and the studios were up what became known as Coronary Hill in Upper Forbes Street.

Tape cans and scripts were hastily stuffed into a briefcase at 6pm (there was a five-minute news bulletin) and rushed up the hill



The PM Team July 1969. FROM LEFT: Paul Raffaele (reporter), Cathy Munro (researcher), Cliff Neate (reporter), Tim Bowden (Executive Producer), John Highfield (presenter/reporter), Anna Wareham (secretary)

by our studio producer Bill Weir, a broadcast veteran not in the first flower of his youth. Poor Bill, I fear those dashes up Coronary Hill were at personal cost. He died a few years later.

We had no way of taking phone interviews live into the program from the very basic facilities in the bowels of the Forbes Street tower block. These studios were a legacy of World War II, designed to be bomb-proof. We were probably using the same microphones. John or Lawrie would pant in after Bill and the technicians had laced up the tapes on a bank of replay recorders, their shortness of breath often evident to listeners.

We had more listeners than we thought. By happy chance, an ABC programmer had also put us out on the third (regional) network all over Australia.

... He said it was utterly inappropriate for news journalists to be interviewed in this impromptu way as they might inadvertently “express a personal opinion”...

PM did sound different, and we thought of it as a great adventure. *AM*’s feared and irascible executive producer, Russell Warner, decreed that no item would go to air for more than 90 seconds.

We disdained such a formulaic approach to radio and ran stories for as long as necessary. Colour pieces were part of the

mix. I recall our first program included a report by Paul Raffaele from Speaker’s Corner on the Sydney Domain with Ada, a tambourine-playing Salvation Army identity.

Strict rules on reporting federal parliament were bent by our Canberra correspondent, Paul Murphy, who gave the most wonderfully acerbic word pictures of what went on in parliament. John Gorton was then the prime minister, and the Vietnam War was turning ugly for the allied cause. The economy was hardly mentioned, not only by us, but all the other media. That changed quickly with the nickel boom, and the Poseidon adventure. Fortunately Lawrie Bryant was financially literate, and we managed to find economists who sounded vaguely human.

A rabid turf war between the News Department and Talks (current affairs) made life difficult. News executives were mostly old newspaper men, and they regarded the tape recorder as an instrument of the devil.

The ABC was the first to place a team of news correspondents in Asia. They filed copy by cable or telex, which was read by announcers in the news bulletins. Sometimes they were allowed to read a couple of sentences of their reports as a concession to radio.

Often, when first with a scoop, ABC News would wait until the story was confirmed by AAP or Reuters news agencies before running it. *PM* began interviewing the news correspondents in New Delhi, Tokyo, Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta on the phone to background the day’s breaking news. The often bored journos loved working for *PM*,

and we started getting more mileage out of them than the News Department.

This was quickly stamped on by the controller of news services, Keith “Boots” Fraser. He said it was utterly inappropriate for news journalists to be interviewed in this impromptu way as they might inadvertently “express a personal opinion”. We protested, and triggered Fraser’s famous Act of God memo that said the Q&A technique could be used in the case of natural disasters such as flood, fire, famine, earthquakes or eruptions – but only after permission had been granted by News executives. Fortunately this silliness ebbed away fairly quickly, but it was a big problem for us in 1969 and 1970.

I was wrong in splitting the presenter’s role, and after I left the program in 1970 my successor Clive Speed began the practice of having one presenter. Huw Evans and Paul Murphy were the distinctive voices of *PM* for two decades, followed by Ellen Fanning, Monica Attard and others. Mark Colvin is the present on-air persona.

The program has expanded, and now runs for two 50-minute editions, first on Radio National at 5.10pm and then the ABC’s local radio network an hour later. *AM* and *PM* (and *The World Today*) are trusted current affairs outlets listened to by millions of Australians and every politician in the land. And 40 years on, *PM* has its own purpose-built studio in-house, and no one has to bust their boiler scrambling up Coronary Hill.

This week, an Australian current affairs institution celebrates its 40th anniversary.

By Sue Jave

ASKING THE THREE longest-serving presenters of ABC current affairs program *PM* - Huw Evans, Paul Murphy and Mark Colvin - to nominate their most memorable program is a little unfair. How to choose between wars, coups, terrorist attacks, natural disasters, business scandals and umpteen other stories? *PM* has been an authoritative voice providing strong analysis and commentary on news events during the past four decades, from the moon landing, the Vietnam War and Watergate through to the September 11 attacks, Bali bombings and the election of President Obama.



Evans, who hosted the show from 1970 to 1972 and again from 1974 to 1983, hesitates the least when nominating his most memorable program - the Whitlam dismissal on November 11, 1975. “That sort of story only happens once in a lifetime”, he says. Evans had just finished a special lunchtime broadcast on the growing turmoil in Canberra when word began to circulate that something big was about to happen. *PM* stayed on air as the momentous afternoon unfolded. “The idea of putting a program to air at short notice, without a script and without any confidence about what the content would be, was the sort of thing that gave ABC executives the terrible wobbles,” Evans says. “It came together well and established a benchmark for live coverage of major events.”

Paul Murphy, who followed Evans for the next decade, nominates the final caucus showdown between Bob Hawke and Paul Keating. “It was a huge story because the ALP was deadlocked. We were on air for three hours. It was the shootout at OK Corral.”

Another memorable interview involved fugitive fraudster John Friedrich, the subject of a continent-wide manhunt. Murphy was interviewing a policeman from Perth headquarters when the officer matter-of-factly revealed Friedrich was sitting next to him as they spoke. Murphy says he went into “outrageous bullshit-mode, even for me” but Friedrich wouldn’t come on the line.

When pushed, Mark Colvin, who has hosted the program for the past 12 years, settles on the 2003 invasion of Iraq and September 11, “which occurred the same day Ansett collapsed so we had two gigantic stories to juggle in one program.”

The US election result in 2000 between George Bush and Al Gore also stands out.

“It occurred right in the middle of our time zone. Michael Carey was in Austin with Bush. Agnes Cusack was in Nashville with Gore. Peter Cave was in Washington. We kept updating because no one knew whether Bush or Gore had won. We had an American professor of politics on, who said at one stage, ‘I’ve been listening to your program and watching the American networks and you’ve done a far better job.’”

Articles slightly abridged. Full articles first published 6 July 2009: Tim Bowden, *The Australian* and Sue Jave *The Sydney Morning Herald*.

PM airs weekdays on Radio National at 5.10pm and on 774ABC at 6.10pm. More information on the history of *PM* can be found at www.abc.net.au/pm/40years



PM, still going strong today with presenter Mark Colvin.

A Perfect Storm

ABC supporters have looked with envy at the British licence fee that guaranteed funding for the BBC. Robert Beveridge reports on public broadcasting in the United Kingdom and the push by commercial broadcasters to get a share of the BBC's licence fee.

By Robert Beveridge

THE COMBINATION of economic depression with structural changes in the business models of media industries is placing immense pressures on public service broadcasting in the UK. Public service broadcasting beyond the BBC may have a limited life.

Advertising revenue is migrating to the internet as well as declining in response to the credit crunch: the response by the main commercial broadcaster ITV (known as *Channel 3*) is to cut costs. This is being done by closing regional production, centralising production geographically and limiting genres.

ITV is clearly moving away from being a public service broadcaster in any but the most minimal sense. In the 1950s ITV was created as a federal organisation which spoke to, for and about their regional cultures and communities and was a corrective to the somewhat London centric nature of the BBC. A system of regional licences still exists but most of these are now held by one company, ITV PLC.

There are three exceptions – in the channel islands, in Northern Ireland and in my country, Scottish Television in Scotland. ITV in England is interested in the possibility of one UK licence and/or going direct to market in Scotland, bypassing the main Channel 3 broadcaster STV.

Were they to do this what would become of Scotland's national commercial broadcaster? How would Scotland's newly energised democracy and reconvened Parliament receive adequate coverage? How would Scotland receive an acceptable level and character of cultural representation? These are serious questions which go to the nature of the relationship(s) between state and society, culture and community. Could STV become little more than a small independent production house?

Meanwhile the UK's Channel 4, in some ways a forerunner of SBS, has a funding gap



The future may be more of a worry than *The Doctor* realises. Catherine Tate (*Donna Noble*) and David Tennant (*The Doctor*) in *Doctor Who*.

of £150 million per year and the case is being made for one of several merger possibilities.

While this is going on, local and regional radio, press and journalism is downsizing or combining content and/or going to the wall thus reducing pluralism and diversity. Hard times indeed. One solution occurs. That is top slicing the BBC licence fee and giving it to a contestable fund to distribute to the competitors of the Corporation. Thus far the Corporation seems to have headed off the threat of top slicing – which would in my judgment presage the beginning of the end for the BBC – mainly by offering to enter into partnership with Channel 4 and also with ITV/STV by sharing studios, facilities and some content. This might involve, for example, the sending of only one TV crew to a press conference and the footage shared across platforms and with a variety of clients/other broadcasters. However would the saving be worth the probable damage?

More problematic might be the issue of state funding for news and current affairs as opposed to funding a powerful institution like the BBC, which is rooted in the history and polity of the UK, and able to stand up to the government and secure its relative independence. In these and many other questions of trust and quality in broadcasting, the UK's Voice of the Listener and Viewer, with President Jocelyn Hay and Chairman Richard Lindley, is a voice of sanity in the public interest. Like sister organisations such as yours, it serves a valuable function in ensuring public debate about broadcasting policy issues which are so vital to the future of our societies.

Long may all of us continue this important work.

Robert Beveridge lectures in media policy and regulation at Edinburgh Napier University.

The Chaser

Outcome could be more damaging than the skit

FABC RECEIVED a range of public comment on The Chaser's 'Make a Realistic Wish Foundation' skit.

We heard from people who found the sketch deplorable. However, many had not seen the sketch at all or rang only after they heard talkback radio informing them that they should be appalled. They had not seen it in the context of watching a program of satire and black comedy in which the viewer has an expectation that some content may be offensive to some groups or even to them personally. Some people were not aware that children in the sketch were actors.

Friends also received feedback from people who, though they differed on whether or not they found the sketch to be funny or its intent clear, nevertheless thought that it was acceptable black humour. They believed the activities of any organisation that appeals to emotion or seeks donations should be subject to the scrutiny of humour no less than any other group.

SATIRE AND BLACK HUMOUR are an essential element of free speech in a democracy. They are art forms that disturb our complacency and pillory hypocrisy and cant. Sometimes they raise issues that people dare not speak about, and can result in our considering aspects of life and human nature that we may otherwise not address.



We expect *The Chaser* to be outrageous sometimes – otherwise we wouldn't think it was doing its job! Chas Licciardello as Osama bin Laden during *The Chaser*'s infamous motorcade stunt at APEC that turned a government's national security credentials into a national joke. (Sydney 2007)

Black comedy, by its very nature, depends on shocking us at least a little. So, how far is too far? Who is it not acceptable to offend? When is offence real harm? The line between acceptable satire and offending reasonable community standards is sometimes not obvious until it is crossed.

The Chaser's War on Everything takes risks. It wouldn't be doing its job if the audience didn't at times find its sketches outrageous. Add to that the pressure under which programs like *The Chaser* are produced – the need for a constant flow of ideas and content that is current – and there are bound to be some wrong decisions.

If we want innovation in ABC programming, which the ABC Charter requires, we have to expect some mistakes will be made.

The ABC and The Chaser team apologised for the 'Make a Realistic Wish Foundation' skit. The Chaser's young producers will have learnt from the community's response to the sketch. The proverbial sledge-hammer was not required – the suspension of the program for two weeks and a manager stripped of responsibility for comedy.

The outcome is likely to be the pre-emptive buckle of program-makers. Lower-level ABC management will now feel more inclined to refer anything risky up the management chain. When higher management has to deal with something potentially controversial self-interest will tend towards greater caution and censorship.

The result: free speech jeopardised and bland programming.

Big Ted Plays the Pokies

Yet again, the ABC's commercial activities are undermining its responsibilities to the community.

FRIENDS OF THE ABC VICTORIA was shocked to learn that the ABC is staging *Play School* concerts, which arise from the broadcaster's trusted children's program of the same name, in NSW clubs and pubs.

Cheap entertainment is not provided by clubs and hotels as a community service. It is a strategy to draw people to their venues to spend money on their primary activities – gambling, alcohol or both. The provision of entertainment has also enabled the gaming industry to entrench itself in the life and culture of many Australian towns and suburbs to strengthen its political viability.

Businesses that sell alcohol and gambling are not suitable places for children's entertainment. Any wall of separation of *Play School* audiences from these activities is a mere fig leaf.

The publicly funded broadcaster should not assist any commercial operation to attract business. It is reprehensible that the ABC is aiding the alcohol and gaming industries to promote themselves as family-friendly by staging its iconic children's program in their venues.

And it is downright irresponsible that the ABC is drawing children to activities that are associated with pleasure, in the environs of activities that can potentially be harmful.

THE ABC has not disputed the inappropriateness of staging children's activities in licensed venues. It claims to have

conducted NSW *Play School* concerts in them for eight years without objection, that they are the only suitable venue in some locations, and that the entertainment areas are separated from the gaming activities.

The lack of objection says much about the extent to which the gaming industry's strategy of normalisation has already succeeded in NSW. Imagine the outcry in Victoria or many other states if *Play School* was staged at the casino. Well, for now!

And if the ABC's claim about a lack of venues in NSW is true, it says something extremely worrying about Australia's cultural future that towns and suburbs with populations sufficient to attract reasonably-sized gambling venues don't have a suitable civic facility, church or school hall.



City of Port Phillip Mayor – Frank O’Connor welcomes Friends of the ABC to its new office in the South Melbourne Town Hall Community Hub. FROM LEFT: Gael Barrett (Vice-President), Judy McKenzie (Committee member), Glenys Stradijot (Campaign Manager), David Risstrom (President), Lauri Clarkson (member), Cr Frank O’Connor, Elizabeth Paull (Administrative Officer) and Georgina Simmonds (Secretary)



FABC members Jenny Hunter, Shirley Campbell and Peter Jenkins working to send to you the Autumn 09 edition of News & Views. PHOTO: Georgina Simmonds



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ABC Board; Mark Scott –
ABC Managing Director

Friends Notices

FABC Office Move

FRIENDS OF THE ABC has moved across the road. All our contact details remain the same and are on the front page of every newsletter. If you visit the office, we are at the second Fishley Street entrance, South Melbourne Town Hall, 208 Bank Street.

FABC ABC Children’s Media Group



WITH THE DEDICATED children’s channel ABC 3 to be launched soon, FABC is establishing a group that will monitor and take an interest in ABC children’s programming. This group is likely to be of particular interest to parents. Please contact FABC if you might like to be involved.

Travelling Exhibition on ABC

‘THE ABC - OURS, INDEPENDENT AND FREE’ is a travelling exhibition about the ABC as seen through the eyes of Australians from different walks of life. It contains photos of ten different people, with their short commentary on the ABC.

Curator Morag Loh and photographer John Werrett who produced the exhibition for Friends of the ABC are respected professionals whose work is in major cultural collecting institutions nationwide.

Please speak with your local library, schools and other relevant bodies, or even businesses (like doctors’ surgeries), that may have an interest in displaying the exhibition. Propose it to organisers of community festivals and exhibitions that are being planned. Or provide FABC with contact details so that we can approach them.

An information sheet with further details is available from FABC.