



ON AIR

INSIDE:

Presidents Report cont..	-2-
ABC Playback	-2-
Your FABC Committee Members	-2-
A Better ABC Board	-3-
ABC 666 wins Major Award	-3-
Membership Renewal form	-4-

Newsletter of Friends of the ABC (ACT & Region) Inc

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Membership renewal time has come again. With this issue of On Air you will receive a personal membership renewal letter. If you've lost your letter or would like to sign up a new member, please use the generic form at the end of this issue. Your membership dues are extremely important to the Friends. It is extremely important that we continue to strive for an independent and relevant ABC.

EDITOR'S NOTE

As the new editor of On Air, I'd like to take this opportunity to ask our members for letters. Do you have an ABC issue you would like to bring to the attention of the Friends?

On Air is the perfect forum to voice your concerns and raise awareness of ABC issues. If you are interested in an ABC topic, chances are the rest of us will be too.

-Ben Chaplin (Editor)

I can be emailed at editor@fabcact.org

Or send snail mail to:

Friends of the ABC,

1 Bonney St, Ainslie ACT, 2602

YOUR ABC

What is one recent ABC program you've thoroughly enjoyed?

What is one really memorable program you've recently seen or heard?

What is one ABC service you would be lost without?

For my part, I was thrilled recently to listen to Donizetti's opera, 'The Daughter of the Regiment' on ABC radio. A week or so previously I'd seen the film from the Metropolitan Opera series and it was wonderful to listen again to that sparkling production, in effect to have a night at the opera - except that it was at home, listening to Classic FM.

Really memorable for me were Andrew Denton's Enough Rope programme on mental illness and Tony Jones's hosting of Oasis: Australia's Homeless Youth. Indeed, as I wrote to ABC Managing Director, Mark Scott,

"Not only was the subject matter, in both cases, uncomfortable, unattractive and little known except to the people devoted to improving the lot of the homeless and the mentally ill. It compelled the viewer to face up to serious, but little reported, issues faced by our fellow Australians.

In doing that, the programmers were commendably skilled. Their productions were non-judgmental - of the subjects or of the audience. The coaxing touch of Andrew Denton drew the audience into a shared horror of the experience of mental illness, and the gentle understanding of the Oasis Director aroused sympathy and patience, not to mention huge respect for the Oasis Director himself, his family and his staff".

I thought this was ground-breaking social investigation. Only the ABC would present such memorable programs.

A great service lately has been Media Watch, especially as Jonathan Holmes has been exposing some of the more worrying aspects of new media. Take for example his revelation that a headline-catching story, "13-year-old steals dad's credit card to buy hookers" - headlined by the Australian, the Herald Sun, the Daily Telegraph, indeed the entire News Ltd. stable - was completely untrue. The fake story had been planted by an expert in getting websites to appear prominently, and often, in search results on sites like Google. Apparently, at least for News Ltd., it's just not possible to check every story they pick up on a website.

Wonderful isn't it!

cont..page 2

YOUR ABC... cont

Jonathan Holmes is also asking the critical questions necessary to probe the credibility of the internet's "democratic journalism", and to expose the commercial capture of websites where the record of widely read stories increasingly determines the type of news which will be covered.



The excitement and expectations surrounding the Prime Minister's 2020 Conference may have subsided, but we Friends of the ABC must look forward and look back so that we can champion the best that our public broadcaster can be.

ABC PLAYBACK

by Ben Chaplin

As part of the ABC's very impressive online presence, ABC is currently trialling a new web interface called ABC Playback. This service provides a portal into the TV programmes on ABC online. Through Playback users can catch up on TV programmes from ABC1 and ABC2 and access straight-to-web programmes.

ABC Online already provides programme downloads and podcasts of many of the ABC TV programmes but accessing it is not

tremendously easy. Users must know what they are doing if they intend to watch last night's Lateline, for example. Playback takes significant steps forward in simplifying this. Anyone can log in, quickly find Lateline and begin watching in their browser, even in full screen. No direct file download, no extra media software, just immediate access to the programme.

If this system can be integrating into products such as the Apple TV and Windows Media Centre or even the

Xbox, PS3, and Wii consoles then this could really usher in a new era of accessing ABC content through the internet.

Playback is still in Beta testing but you can go to abc.net.au/playback to see the preview and video tour or to sign up for the Beta trial. You will need at least a 1.1Mbps internet connection and be mindful of your download quota.

I'm signed up and I love it! ■

Looking forward, we are told that new technologies will create communication which crosses boundaries between different nations and between different media. Radio, television, the internet, mobile phone technology will be interchangeable, and the range of choice available to us will be bewildering. When and what we watch and listen to will no longer be determined by the Radio Guide or the Television Times. Where we watch will no longer be determined by being in Australia - as we read in February's On Air letter from Mark Notaras in Japan - let alone by which room the TV set or the sound system has been installed in.

The ABC was originally created to give 'wireless' listeners, across Australia, a wider variety of programmes in the then new media. That was in 1932. As we said in our 2020 Summit submission,

"In a digital world with a bewildering range of choice, available on many platforms, variety no longer justifies public broadcasting. Distinctiveness, however, does."

Distinctively artistic, distinctively daring, distinctively credible, our ABC must have a place in 2020 and beyond. ■

Jill Greenwell
President ACT & Region

YOUR COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Jill Greenwell
President
☎ 6253 3531
president@fabcact.org

John Keen
Vice President & Newsletter
coordination
☎ 6254 2118
keenbavay@aol.com

Barbara Godfrey
Minutes Secretary
☎ 6291 3680
secretary@fabcact.org

Jane Timbrell
Organisation Secretary
☎ 6249 8657
janetimbrell@homemail.com.au

Janny Corry
Membership Secretary & Treasurer
☎ 6236 9294
treasurer@fabcact.org

Barbara Godfrey
Secretary
☎ 6291 3680
secretary@fabcact.org

John Ley
Public Officer
☎ 6254 6018
publicofficer@fabcact.org

Howard Silcock
Webmaster
☎ 6260 8415
webmaster@fabcact.org

Ann Hosking
Newsletter Co-Editor
☎ 6247 3506
anngeo@ozemail.com.au

Ben Chaplin
Newsletter Co-Editor
☎ 0438 250 688
editor@fabcact.org

Don't forget to renew your membership

A BETTER ABC BOARD

In case you hadn't noticed, Ron Brunton, prominent IPA member, *Brisbane Courier-Mail* columnist and overt Howard government sympathiser, has disappeared from the ABC Board. John Gallagher has also gone. The terms of both Directors expired this year, and the ABC Board is now functioning with the minimum number of members allowable under the ABC Act.

The vacancies have not been filled because the Government has been working on its promised transparent Board appointments process. We understand that the procedure is close to being ready.

We Friends of the ABC have been pressing for years for a process similar to the British "Nolan Rules". The essential ingredients are that Board vacancies should be advertised, with selection criteria that include a commitment to public broadcasting. A selection panel at arms length from the Minister should make up a short list from which the Minister selects an appointee. The Minister must publish reasons for making a selection outside the recommendations submitted by the panel.

Senator Helen Coonan, when Minister for Communications, objected that this process in Britain was long and cumbersome and the results were not

worth the effort: it did not appear to produce people any different from the usual suspects on government boards and agencies. (This was in conversation with me on 12 August 2004)

She missed the point. The Board's independence can be believed in only if its members are known to be selected on the basis of what they know, not who they know. At present, however valuable the contribution of Board members, however impartial their decisions, the public cannot be confident of their independence of the government of the day.

Would the decision to show "The Great Global Warming Swindle" have aroused suspicions of Board interference if Board members had been appointed by a process at arms length from the government of the day - last year, John Howard's government?

It is not only a Liberal government which should let the ABC broadcast independently of political interference. The Rudd Labor government must honour its promise so that its appointees to the ABC Board are seen by all of us to be transparently selected, on their merits. ■

Jill Greenwell
June 2008

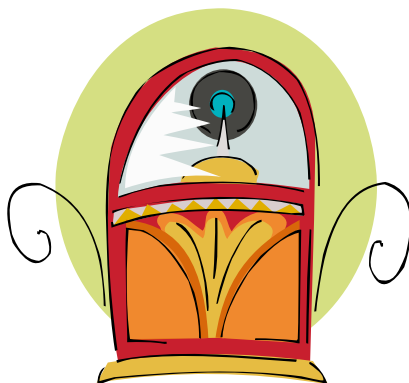
ABC 666 CANBERRA WINS MAJOR AWARD

666 ABC Canberra shone at this year's ABC Local Radio Awards, held in Sydney in early May winning four of the five categories that the station and individual members were finalists in.

666 was awarded the ABC's prestigious Metropolitan Station of the Year, seeing off worthy competition from the local ABC stations in Melbourne and Hobart. The award acknowledges the close connection that the station has with its community, and reflects the ongoing ratings success that 666 has been achieving over the past year.

In addition to the station's achievement, 666 ABC Canberra's Ping Lo scooped the prize pool at the awards. Ping was jointly

awarded the Best New Talent gong alongside ABC Hobart's Andy Muirhead. Together with 666's Nick Kittel, she also won Best Website for abc.net.au/Canberra as well as Best Online Feature with ABC Darwin's Fiona Churchman for their comprehensive coverage of the Government's Apology to the Stolen Generation earlier this year.



The Awards were established in 2001 and are open to all staff contributing to the ABC's nine metropolitan and 51 regional stations – they are designed to celebrate the best of Local Radio across Australia.

Director ABC Radio & Regional Content - and Awards judge - Sue Howard said the awards celebrate the diverse range of work produced by ABC Local Radio from across the country. "These Awards highlight the talent of our staff and their commitment to producing entertaining and inspiring radio for audiences. I congratulate everyone recognised this evening," Ms Howard said. ■

Source: ABC Canberra Website



Friends of the ABC (ACT & Region) Inc
GPO Box 2625
CANBERRA ACT 2601

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP OR RENEWAL

Please fill out your details below and return with subscription to: Friends of the ABC (ACT and Region) Inc, GPO Box 2625, Canberra ACT 2601

1. Membership

I wish to:-

Become a member Renew my membership

Enclosed is:

\$30.00 \$15.00 concession
(Pensioner/Student)

Direct Deposit (See Item 5)

\$30.00 \$15.00 concession
(Pensioner/Student)

2. Personal Details

Mr/Ms/Miss/Mrs

First Name

Surname

3. Contact Details

Street Number

Street Name

Suburb

Postcode

Home Telephone

Work Telephone

Mobile Telephone

Email Address

Your Age (optional)

Under 35 years 35 to 55 years over 55 years

4. Activities

I can assist with the following activities:-

Help with Newsletter:-

(a) Reports/articles

(b) Preparation for Posting

Help with Fundraising Letter Writing

Help with Stalls Committee member

Rallies Telephone Tree

Letterbox Drop Lobby Group

Can you offer any special skills? eg: useful contacts, writing

5. Direct Deposit Payment Option

Direct Deposit Facilities are now available for making payments to FABCACT.

Bank: St George Bank Limited
BSB Number: 112 908
Account no: 040643051

If renewing
email all details correct to:
treasurer@fabcact.org

6. Further Information

For further information, please contact 6236 9294 or visit our website at www.fabcact.org

Office use only Member No:..... Valid to:.....