



# ON AIR

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## AGM

The AGM will be held on Saturday 24 October at 2:00 PM at St Andrew's Church Hall, 1 State Circle, Forrest. The guest speaker will be Mark Carmody (of local radio and TV weather fame). Come along to have your voice heard and to hear our wonderful guest speaker!

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Don't forget to keep your membership up to date. Thanks to your support we can continue to campaign for ABC issues.

## SURVEY

In this edition of On Air we have included a survey to help us gauge members' opinions. If you have a spare moment, please fill out the survey and return it to us.

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

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear Friends,

This is my first report as the new President of Friends of the ABC (ACT and Region). I must thank the hard working members of the Committee for their diligence and support, and thank them for agree to take on their respective positions which ensure the continued success of the Friends.

Whilst we are half way through 2009, the major issue of the year is clearly the **Triennial Budget** for the ABC and what a success! The budget has ensured that we will have an "ABC3 Kids TV", that local drama content will be significantly improved and that our digital infrastructure will be in place. Jill Greenwell has provided us with an important report on the budget in this issue of On Air.

Our lobbying efforts contributed to the success of the ABC in the budget process, particularly in such difficult economic times. I take the opportunity to congratulate our Lobby Group who approached all the Government Senator and MPs with impressive presentations.

We are not going to sit back and wait for Kids TV to arrive, and to this end, we have decided to run an advertisement in **Canberra's Child** which is a foremost magazine for parents of young children. It is our view that the best way for us to represent the issues associated with Kids TV is to have some parents in our membership whose opinions we can call upon as we await the arrival of ABC3.

Our AGM will be held on Saturday 24 October 2009 at **St Andrew's Church Hall in Forrest** and **Mark Carmody** our well know local weatherman and former 666 gardening adviser has agreed to be our guest speaker. Please put this date in your diary. We will be sending out the AGM notice in accordance with our rules.

With our AGM being held in spring, we have decided to move our annual dinner to the autumn (March or April 2010) and therefore pace our two major events in the year. We are still in the planning stage and will announce the details in the next issue of On Air. ■

**Jane Timbrell,**

*President  
FABC (ACT & Region)*

## AND THE WINNER IS .....US!

Well, it's our ABC isn't it? And we've been lobbying long and hard for more funding for it.

At last the ABC has been given an increase, and a significant one, to its budget. It is the biggest increase for the ABC since 1983. That says more to me than \$167 million, which is way beyond my imagining: "biggest increase in 26 years" is something I can get my mind around.

So at last we will have a commercial-free dedicated Children's TV channel which will present Australian programmes, telling Australian stories to our children and grandchildren. The ABC has been asking for this since at least 2003. Does anyone remember "ABC Kids" or "Fly TV"? They were the ABC's channels for young children and for young adolescents back in about 2002. Despite the success of these innovative dedicated channels, the then government denied the ABC the funds it needed, so in 2003 those channels were closed. The ABC persisted in asking for the necessary dollars, but again in 2004, and in 2006, its requests were knocked back.

It was rather late wasn't it for the Howard government to make an election promise in 2007 of \$80m over the next four years for a children's channel?

The delight in this budget is not just that there's more for the ABC, but that it is not tied to the next four years, or three years, or any limited number of years. The funds have been added to the ABC's overall budget, not cutting out at the end of this triennium.

Friends of the ABC can take a bit of the credit for that. ABC Management, keen not to be seen to 'cry poor', did not press - as we have consistently done - for funds to be rolled into their base funding. Mark Scott told Friends of the ABC that of course untied funding would be nice, but his assessment was that funding given was funding that could not easily be taken away.

Friends of the ABC were not so confident. Furthermore, we'd seen the way tied funding was dangled, like a bone to a dog, in the case of the National Interest Initiatives Programme. Initiated in 2001 for four years, it was renewed in 2004 for a further three years, then in 2007 for a further year, after the Howard government rejected the ABC's requests to include the funds in its triennial budgets in 2003 and in 2006.

Even the much applauded \$80million given by the Howard Government to the ABC in 2006 was tied to the 2006-09 triennium. Any tied funding has the potential to control the ABC: here's money for local content, but if it's not the local content the government likes, there'll be no more dollars where these come from.

In lobbying the political parties Friends of the ABC has made the case that an independent ABC has to be independent of any government interference in programming. Programming independence is inconsistent with funding limited to a good behaviour bond. The Minister for Communications, Stephen Conroy, said when in Opposition that he wanted an independent ABC. As Minister he's putting his money where his mouth is.

### And we're pleased!

But it's not just children's television; it's local drama production which will also be much better funded from now on. It is hugely important for the ABC to get back to the days when it produced 100 hours of Australian drama each year. The figure is currently about 25 hours a year, and even that's better than it

was a few years ago. So \$70million for local drama is a welcome boost. It will not only entertain us but it will create jobs in the very labour-intensive film production industry. (As a comparison for that \$70 million, in 2006 the ABC got \$30 million for local television content, restricted to the three years 2006-09).

Did the ABC get all the funding it asked for? Mark Scott says no, but he's coy about revealing what they did request.

Another first is that failure to make public what was in the ABC's Triennial Funding Submission. Perhaps it doesn't matter when this has been a fat year for the ABC, but in a lean year it does. In calling for "an adequately funded ABC", we Friends of the ABC have relied in large part on what the ABC itself has said it needed. We mustn't be kept in the dark.

However for the moment, let's celebrate!

**Jill Greenwell**

*Vice-President  
FABC (ACT & Region)*



## RADIO AUSTRALIA'S ASIA PACIFIC PROGRAM—UPDATE ON TIMES

### Radio Australia's Asia Pacific Program—Update on Times

While Radio Australia broadcasts widely 24 hours a day, its only program to be heard by mainland Australians is heard 5 times a week at specific times.

These have been extended and as now are as follows:  
10:05 PM on News Radio—in the ACT at a frequency of 103.9 MHz FM—Mondays to Fridays. A repeat of the same at 12:05 AM and 05:05 AM the following morning on Radio National, 846 kHz AM in the ACT.

Asia Pacific provides up to date news covering a wide geographic range including Australia itself, much of its content not broadcast on any other ABC outlet and commentary of a sustained high quality.

The average listener who is not a night owl will no doubt appreciate access to the 10:05 PM addition.

For more information on Asia Pacific, visit the website at [abc.net.au/ra/asiapac](http://abc.net.au/ra/asiapac).

You can listen to Radio Australia live on the internet, through shortwave radio, or by satellite.

For more information visit [radioaustralia.net.au/waystolisten](http://radioaustralia.net.au/waystolisten) ■

**Helen Wiles**  
*Overseas Monitor*

## JOIN THE COMMITTEE

The Friends of the ABC (ACT & Region) committee is calling for nominations from members to join the committee. The committee can have up to 11 members at a time and we are currently seeking passionate, enthusiastic team players to volunteer with and share new ideas with the team. The committee is presently very active in pressing for adequate funds in the ABC's forthcoming triennial budget. That will be announced in May 2010, but meantime we must raise public awareness and direct the public support for the ABC to Ministers who set the ABC's funding framework.

A committee member could have a role in organising stalls, preparing information fliers, seeing our local politicians and suggesting new ways of gathering support for the ABC.

Please fill out the nomination form attached on below for yourself, or nominate someone else to the committee. Nomination forms can be submitted at the AGM on 24 October or sent by mail beforehand to:

GPO Box 2625  
Canberra ACT 26011 ■

### NOMINATION FORM FOR THE ACT COMMITTEE

NOMINATION

I would like to nominate \_\_\_\_\_ for a position on the committee of the Friends of the ABC (ACT & Region) Inc.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Seconded: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

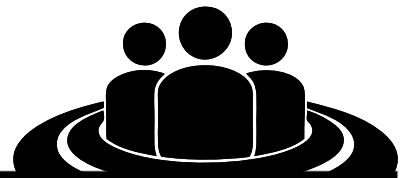
ACCEPTED

I agree to the above nomination

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (nominee)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# YOUR COMMITTEE



	Position	Phone (h)	Email
<b>Jane Timbrell</b>	President	6249 8657	janetimbrell@homemail.com.au
<b>Jill Greenwell</b>	Vice President	6253 3531	jgreenwell@ozemail.com.au
<b>John Keen</b>	Vice President	6254 2118	keenbavay@gmail.com
<b>Barbara Godfrey</b>	Secretary	6291 3680	bgodfrey@netspeed.com.au
<b>Janny Corry</b>	Treasurer		barada@ozemail.com.au
<b>Rick Godfrey</b>	Committee	6291 3680	bgodfrey@netspeed.com.au
<b>John Ley</b>	Committee	6254 6018	john_ley@apex.net.au
<b>Ben Chaplin</b>	Webmaster		wombat@chapmac.com
<b>Margaret Hulme</b>	Assist Secretary	6262 7261	margaret.hulme@gmail.com
<b>Margaret Wallace</b>	Committee		margaret.wallace@canberra.edu.au

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

If you are paying your membership subscription by direct deposit please notify the treasurer that you have done so by emailing [treasurer@fabcact.com.au](mailto:treasurer@fabcact.com.au).

Last year we received a couple of anonymous direct deposits and were unable to find out who they came from.