



# ON AIR

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

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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

## WHATS ON

### AGM & NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

It's that time of year again. Our speakers this time around will be either one or both of Canberra based comedy cabaret act John Shortis and Moya Simpson ([www.shortisandsimpson.com](http://www.shortisandsimpson.com)). Afternoon tea included. As part of the AGM, members are heartily encouraged to nominate for positions on our committee (see Committee Nomination Form on page 6).

**2:30pm, Saturday 27 October at the Griffin Centre, Genge St Civic**

Your best parking bet is under-cover at the Canberra Centre car-park, since there is no access from Genge Street to the off-street car park behind the Griffin Centre. Both parking areas are accessed from Ballumbir Street.

### THE BOSS FOR XMAS

Great Scott! FABC has secured ABC Managing Director Mark Scott as the guest speaker for our annual Christmas dinner. Start preparing your questions for him and order your tickets early because they run out fast! See Mr Scott's bio and a booking slip on page 7.

**6:30pm, Wednesday  
28 November, CIT Reid  
\$50 for a 3 - course meal**

## VOTE NO TO ADS ON OUR ABC!

By the time you are reading this we may well be into the real election, as distinct from the phoney one we've been having all year. Friends of the ABC, as a non-partisan organisation, does not tell people which way to vote. However it is our function to alert you to the impact on the ABC of the various parties' policies on the ABC (see how the parties stack up on page 3)

### Remember the ABC when you vote

Because our branch includes the region as well as the ACT itself, we have been holding stalls in Braidwood, Queanbeyan, Cooma and Bungendore to raise awareness in the electorate of Eden-Monaro of the threats to the ABC (see Jane's report on page 5). We are urging people to think about the ABC when they vote.

### Save the Senate to save our ABC

In the ACT it is a real possibility that our votes could Save our ABC by saving the Senate as a House of review.

### What will save the ABC?

- ▶▶ No advertising – on TV, radio or on ABC websites
- ▶▶ A Board elected on the basis of merit through a transparent process
- ▶▶ Adequate funding

Advertising keeps cropping up as a threat to the ABC's commercial-free zone. Even Mark Scott's recent reassurance that the ABC has no plans to introduce advertising, is dependent on "current funding conditions" remaining.

However, the ABC Act would have to be amended to allow advertising on ABC radio or on ABC TV. If the Coalition is returned and did move to amend the ABC Act, that legislation would pass the Senate unless there is a change in the balance of power in the Senate.

An alternative scenario is that, if elected, Labor would legislate for a ban on all ABC advertising – on ABC websites as well as on ABC radio and ABC TV. It is supported in this by the Democrats and the Greens. However that legislation would not be sure to pass in the Senate unless there is a change in the Senate balance of power.

*cont..page 2*

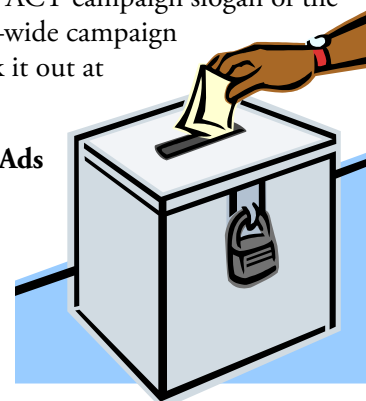
## Vote no to ads on our ABC!... cont

Labor, if elected, would change the process of making Board appointments. That is not dependent on the passage of legislation, but restoring the Staff Elected Director is. In other words if Quentin Dempster (the elected "Director-in-exile") is to be brought out of exile, the ABC Act has to be amended. All parties except the Coalition support restoring the position of staff elected Director. However legislation which, if Labor won Government, would pass the House of Representatives, would (again) not pass in the Senate unless there is a change in the Senate balance of power.

Friends of the ABC have a direct interest in restoring the Senate as a House of Review. "Canberra Can Change the Senate" is the ACT campaign slogan of the current GetUp! Australia-wide campaign to Save our Senate. Check it out at <http://www.getup.org.au>

**Remember – vote No to Ads on Our ABC! ■**

*Jill Greenwell*  
President ACT & Region



## EDITORS' NOTE

### "Not Just An Audience"

*By Mark Notaras*

Have you ever heard a naysayer exclaim that ratings of 15–16% for ABC television, or 2% for Radio National, demonstrate that the ABC is not as relevant as those of us in the Friends believe? This argument fuels flippant and false suggestions that the national broadcaster is consumed mainly by the mild mannered middle classes and the "chardonnay" sipping elitists of the left, rather than by a broad cross – section of the Australian population.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

In the ACT & region, two things of late have reinforced the reality that the ABC's intrinsic value, beyond its independence and quality of content, is its relevance and appeal to the broadest cross – section of the Australian population.

Firstly our community consultations through our stalls in the lead up to the next federal election (see Jane's report on page 5) have demonstrated that right throughout the electorate of Eden – Monaro, the ABC is cherished by people of all ages, all areas and all lines of work.

Whether it's the issues of advertising or board members compromising content or poor reception to local radio in rural towns, people generally feel strongly about the ABC but often for very different reasons.

Secondly, the recent radio ratings survey in the ACT places ABC local radio 666 first in the territory with 18.7% of total radio audiences (10 years and over). But this figure on its own can be misleading. In addition, youth – focused station 2JJJ came in 4th with 9% of listeners with ABC FM and News Radio rating 6.2% and 3.4% respectively. In aggregated terms, over 37% of the ACT radio audience tunes into the ABC. Add together the ABC television audience and [www.abc.net.au](http://www.abc.net.au) visitors, and you can see how most Canberrans access ABC in some way.

The enthusiasm of visitors to our stalls and the breath of coverage of ABC radio networks in Canberra, accord strongly with the common statistic that the ABC captures 70 – 75% of Australians through at least one of its main three mediums: radio; television; and website.

While individual ABC outlets may not get the smash bang ratings that drive commercial competitors to capture individual audience types at the expense of content and other audiences, the ABC successfully honours its charter to service the widest possible cross section of the Australian population.

Whether it is kids, oldies, generations X and Y or baby boomers; or whether it is farmers, gardeners, inventors, collectors, travelers, teachers, singers, philosophers, theologians, scientists or satirists, the ABC is the only place to inform and entertain all these groups, and in turn derive an audience from these groups.

The ABC does not just have AN audience. It has MANY audiences.

**That's why it's EVERYBODY'S ABC. ■**

Ed

Send your letters by mail to:

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(ACT & Region)  
48/77 Northbourne Ave  
Turner ACT 2612

Alternatively by email to:  
[editor@fabcact.org](mailto:editor@fabcact.org)

**WHY NOT CHECK IT OUT**  
**[www.fabcact.org](http://www.fabcact.org)**

**Don't forget to renew your membership**

## FABC ELECTION CAMPAIGN 2007

The ABC will be on the minds of some voters as they make their election choices later this year.

The so-called 'bellwether' seat of Eden-Monaro, where some of our members reside, will be crucial in deciding the outcome of the election to the House of Representatives.

As far as the Senate is concerned, it's the ACT which could be crucial. A second non-Coalition ACT Senator could restore the Senate as a House of Review. The feeling in the community, which we have ascertained through our market stalls in the electorate (see Jane's report on page 5), is that the issues of advertising, funding and independence are critical to ABC consuming voters. But what do the political parties themselves say about each of these issues?

We have compiled a list of what position the Coalition, Labor, Greens and Democrats take on each of these issues.

"We report, you decide"; as they say.



### NO ADS ON OUR ABC – WHAT THE PARTIES SAY:

#### AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRATS

Oppose the introduction of any commercial advertising on ABC radio, television or websites. They fear that creeping commercialism, of which the threat of advertising is only a part, is corrupting the ABC as an independent public broadcaster.

#### AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY

"will ensure that the ban on advertising remains in place. Labor will also ensure that advertising is not permitted on ABC branded websites" (*ALP Platform, paragraph 59*).

#### GREENS

Oppose commercial activities which risk the ABC's editorial independence and therefore do not support commercial advertising on ABC radio, television or websites.

#### LIBERAL PARTY

Minister for Communications, Helen Coonan, thinks that:

- ▶ advertising on ABC TV and radio is "something that we can look at down the future" (*The Bulletin, 21 Mar. 2006*)
- ▶ if the Board wanted to consider some form of advertising, consistent with the ABC Charter, for the next triennium, then it could do so (*AM 15 March 2006*).
- ▶ "Discreet and regulated advertising" on ABC radio and television could fund more local drama

(as suggested by Backbench Communications Committee Secretary, ACT Senator Gary Humphries, in October 2005 when the ABC's triennial funding was being determined).

### VOTE NO TO ADS ON OUR ABC

### ABC FUNDING – WHAT THE PARTIES SAY:

#### AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRATS

"The ABC should be in a position to produce high quality local material. It should be funded at the base level of funding before the Howard Government cut 12% from the ABC's budget in 1996. Funding should be on a recurrent basis, not 'one-off'"

(*Democrats' leader, Lyn Allison Sept 2007*).

#### AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY

"Over time I envisage a major investment in the ABC. The only way to get Australian voices and stories in the new world of converging media is from the ABC" (*ALP Shadow Communications Minister, Stephen Conroy Sept 2007*)

#### GREENS

The Greens support a funding increase to restore cuts made since 1996.

#### LIBERAL PARTY

A pre-election promise of the Liberal Party in 2004 was that it would inquire into the adequacy and efficiency of ABC funding.

What happened? The Government has never released the recommendations of that review that took place, conducted by KPMG. It is reported that KPMG recommended increased ABC funds of \$125.8m over three years, just to maintain current projects.

In 2006, the Coalition Government gave the ABC an increase of \$88.2m dollars for the next three years. The increase was very welcome, but why is it restricted to just 3 years?

### VOTE YES TO ADEQUATELY FUNDED ABC

## FABC ELECTION CAMPAIGN 2007 ...cont

### AN INDEPENDENT ABC BOARD – WHAT THE PARTIES SAY:

#### AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRATS

“No-one in Parliament has been as vigilant as the Democrats in urging a transparent and merit-based appointments procedure”

*(Democrats' leader, Lyn Allison Sept 2007).*

Staff elected Director: It is important to have staff represented on the Board. We support the restoration of the position.

#### AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY

The ALP Platform (2007), paragraph 58, sets out:

“a new ABC Board appointment process in which board members are appointed on the basis of merit. Candidates will be considered by a panel established at arm's length from the minister who will appoint Board members from a shortlist prepared by the panel.....the staff elected commissioner position on the ABC board which was abolished by the Howard Government will be reinstated.”

#### GREENS

Support an independent ABC Board at arms length from the government, along the lines of the British “Nolan Rules” model.

Support the reinstatement of the staff-appointed position on the ABC Board.

#### LIBERAL PARTY

Retain the present system of ABC Board appointments.

Under the Coalition Government, the following appointments have been made to the ABC Board:

Ron Brunton (2003 – 08)

Janet Albrechtsen (2005 – 10)

Steven Skala (2005 – 10)

Peter Hurley (2006 – 11)

Keith Windschuttle (2006 – 11)

John Gallagher (reappointed: 2005 –08)

Maurice Newman – Chairman (from January 2007)

Legislation to abolish the staff elected Director position passed both Houses of parliament in 2006 after the Coalition gained control of the Senate. Quentin Dempster is now “staff elected director in exile”. ■

**VOTE YES TO AN INDEPENDENT ABC BOARD**



#### YOUR COMMITTEE MEMBERS



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**WHY NOT CHECK IT  
OUT**  
**www.fabract.org**

**Don't forget to renew your membership**

## POWER TO THE PEOPLE – US!

By Jill Greenwell

### *Did you see The Great Global Warming Swindle on ABC TV in July?*

In the last edition of On Air I wrote with great concern about the significance of the ABC's decision to show the discredited Great Global Warming Swindle.

The concern was not, of course, about controversy, but the reasons for the controversy. The ABC had announced in May, in triumphant tones, that the documentary had been described as "the definitive retort to Al Gore's An Inconvenient Truth". ABC TV Director, Kim Dalton, said in support of its showing that "there are people who still question the link between human activity and global warming". However the scientific methodology and the professionalism in this production had been dismissed by credible scientists and journalists, including the ABC's own Robyn Williams.

I also wrote in protest to ABC Managing Director, Mark Scott. I put to him that "The ABC's reputation for

### FABC Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Friends of the ABC (ACT & Region) will be held on Saturday 27 October 2007 at 2.30 pm in the Griffin Centre, Civic. (The Griffin Centre is in Genge Street, off Bunda Street). The meeting will be in Room 6, Level One, which is accessible by lift. Our speaker will be one or both of John Shortis and Moya Simpson of "Shortis and Simpson", the comedy cabaret duo.

Those of you who've enjoyed Moya's and John's witty musical shows will know that they are great supporters of the ABC, and they are resident of our region - from Bungendore. For four years now they've been delighting audiences with their slant on a merry Christmas, and for a lot longer they've been entertaining us with musical commentary on life in general and political practices in

### STALLS, STALLS AND MORE STALLS

By Jane Timbrell

There is nothing like a Federal Election to spirit the Committee and volunteers of the FABC (ACT and Region) into action. We are sufficiently resourced to be able to run two stalls each weekend. The first of our stalls were at Bungendore Markets and at the Cooma High Country Market on Sunday 19 August.

It was an exciting day with our new banner, our new merchandise and lots of balloons to bring the children to the stalls. Children are of course followed by their parents who willingly signed our "No



reliability, its trademark – credibility – have been hard won over 75 years. It could be lost very quickly if the ABC takes more interest in being seen in the marketplace of divergent views than in being believable", and urged him to reconsider showing the programme.

The reply I received was very interesting. "The ABC is aware that there has been some criticism of its decision to broadcast this program." It went on to say that it was not the original, but an amended version of it, which the ABC had purchased (No mention of that in the May trumpeted media release!).

The letter then outlined – what we all saw in July – the way the ABC proposed to present the documentary, with an hour-long debate and a public forum immediately after the showing. No mention of that either in the May media release.

*I couldn't help wondering whether people power really is alive and well. Maintain the rage! ■*

particular. Their send-ups of the political animals who inhabit Canberra combine humour and poignancy, presented in original music and in favourite old songs. We are very happy that they've agreed to speak to us at the AGM, and we encourage all our members to come along and hear them after the formal part of the meeting, and to join us for afternoon tea afterwards.

*An important note about parking. There is no access from Genge Street into the off-street parking nearest to the Griffin Centre. Access is further away, off Ballumbir Street, where there is also access to the Canberra Centre under-cover car park. Both are paid parking, and both use the pay stations inside the Canberra Centre. So your best bet is the under-cover Canberra Centre car park. ■*

ads on our ABC" petition and we have also enrolled new Friends of the ABC members.

The positive response from the Eden-Monaro community has been consistent at all our FABC stalls. Within the first month of our campaign we have had stalls at Cooma, Braidwood, twice in Bungendore, and the Riverside Plaza at Queanbeyan, and we are about to commence a second month of campaigning.

The success of our petition lies in the dismay and disappointment of the community to what has happened on SBS. We now have more than 400 signatures to our petition, and we propose to present them to the main candidates before election day. ■

## OVERSEAS BROADCASTING UPDATE: Radio Australia has a New Director

By Helen Wiles, Overseas Broadcasting Monitor

Jean Gabriel Manguy, Director of Radio Australia for many years, has a new appointment as manager of an international training program funded by AusAID that aims to redevelop Vanuatu's radio and TV.

Radio Australia's new Chief Executive since May has been Hanh Tran, who was recently Executive Producer of Vietnamese content of Radio Australia programs. From 1997 to 2001, he was head of the Vietnamese series of the BBC World Service. He came to Australia in the early 1970's as a Colombo Plan student and studied forestry at the Australian National University (ANU) and later studied Media at the University of Canberra. He has since been recognised as a professional photographer and lectured in media. He has spent 10 years in Canberra and expresses warmth towards Friends of the ABC.

A project styled ABC International has been set up by Mark Scott to share and coordinate expertise between the different arms of overseas broadcasting such as radio, TV and the internet. Training programs have been set up in the areas of language teaching and journalism. Radio Australia's training program for East Timor has focused on technicians who will rebuild transmission stations in the country that were destroyed in the independence referendum period. The training program has completed with 90% of these transmission stations now operating.

Radio Australia also continues to train those engaged in East Timor's own station RTTL with interactive audience programs.

Radio Australia has extended its satellite service to the Cook Islands and Kiribati and by the end of this year its 24 hours a day service will reach Samoa.

ABC's TV arm Australia Network continues to extend and consolidate distribution in the region. In Japan where its satellite service could previously only be distributed by receivers who owned a satellite dish, it is now reaching 2 out of 3 homes by using the fibre cables of Japan's telephone service. The service's popularity remains impressive across Asia. For example research in India indicates that there were more than 3 million viewers per week in India at the end of 2006.

Unfortunately for Australians on the mainland, Asia Pacific remains limited to one 25 minute program 5 mornings per week (from Tuesday to Saturday) at 1am and 5am on Radio National. On News Radio (103.9 FM in the ACT), the show is only broadcast 31 weeks of the year (when Federal parliament is not sitting) at 10:05pm weekdays. Overseas TV consumption in Australian homes is also confined to 25 minutes of the Asia Pacific Focus program which airs on ABC TV on Sunday mornings from 11:05am. All of the above programs have their own online services. ■

## 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 campaigning for a well funded, independent and

uncompromised ABC through stalls and direct lobbying of politicians. A committee member could have a role in these activities and could contribute to the newsletter, the letter writers group and help run our events and meetings. Our friendly committee meets in person once a month and slightly more frequently in cyberspace i.e. through email.

Please fill out this nomination form for yourself, or nominate someone else to the committee. Nomination forms can be submitted at the AGM on Saturday 28 October or sent by mail before hand to:

GPO Box 2625,  
Canberra ACT 2601. ■

### 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: \_\_\_\_\_

Don't forget to renew your membership

## Mark Scott, ABC Managing Director – Short Bio



Mark Scott was appointed to the position of ABC Managing Director for a five year term from 5 July 2006. Prior to his appointment as ABC Managing Director, Mark Scott spent almost twelve years in a variety of editorial, editorial management and organisation development positions with John Fairfax

Publications. From 2003 to 2005 he was Editor-in-Chief, Metropolitan newspapers, and during 2005 became Editor-in-Chief of Metropolitan, Regional and Community newspapers. From November 2005 he was Editorial Director, with responsibility for the management and editorial direction of the newspaper

divisions and websites along with the editorial and commercial performance of the Fairfax newspaper magazine division.

From 1993–94 he worked in education policy research at the Centre for Learning and Competitiveness at the University of Maryland.

He was employed in the New South Wales Government from 1988–92 in the roles of Chief of Staff to the Education Minister, Director of Communications in the Education Ministry, and Policy Advisor to the Education Minister.

Mark Scott holds a Bachelor of Arts, Diploma in Education and a Master of Arts degree in Government from the University of Sydney. During 1992–93 he completed a Masters degree in Public Administration at Harvard University. ■

*Information from "<http://www.abc.net.au/corp/board/scott.htm>" <http://www.abc.net.au/corp/board/scott.htm>*

### INVITATION

## DINNER WITH MARK SCOTT

**When:** 6.30pm For 7.00pm, Wednesday 28 November

**Where:** Canberra Institute of Technology Restaurant, Constitution Avenue, Reid.

**Cost:** \$50 per person ( three course meal, Vegetarian on request) drinks not included

**RSVP:** 14 November

**CIT RESTAURANT IS A FULLY LICENSED VENUE**

**Enquiries:** Barbara Godfrey 6291 3680 (ah)  
Ann Hosking 6247 3506



**PLEASE BOOK EARLY AS SEATS ARE LIMITED**

### DINNER WITH MARK SCOTT

Name(s): .....

Address: .....

Telephone: .....

Total Attending: ..... Vegetarian ( How Many?).....

Enclosed \$.....( Tickets will Be Posted On Receipt of Payment)

Post to: FABC c/- 22 Darambal St. Aranda 2614