

# Friends of the ABC

**Blue Mountains Region    September 2008**

## From the President...

Carole Goodwin, Margaret Foy and I had a productive meeting with local member Bob Debus in his Springwood office on September 8.

We began the meeting by establishing the credentials of FABC in the Mountains – 220 members; functions during the last 12 months: Meet the Candidates, Hugh Mackay, Fran Kelly, Jonathan Holmes, Monica Attard, Neil Inall; monthly meetings and newsletter; 1200 letters signed at 3 community festivals; and attendance a State Conference in Wollongong.

We indicated that we wanted to get his support around 3 issues – untied and adequate ABC funding; closure of a loophole in the Act that enables the ABC to advertise on the internet; and a transparent process for ABC Board appointments.

Bob emphasised what he thinks is universal support within government ranks for the ABC and when reminded that this might not translate into a funding increase he said he will be an active advocate for it, and will work with us to this end. He thinks the ABC's success in accessing new audiences with technological innovations like iPod and iView will help the cause, as will the decline in the capacity of commercial providers resulting from fragmentation of the mass advertising market with the advent of the internet. He thinks the ABC is in 'good shape' and has indicated his support during the budget process to General Manager Mark Scott

He was not aware of the loophole in the Act that made ABC advertising on the internet possible and undertook to write immediately to Minister Conroy and call attention to his April 2007 announcement that the Act would be changed to make this unlawful.

We checked the FABC mailbox on the way to the meeting and found a positive response from Senator Conroy to our July letter enquiring about progress in changing the rules for appointment of ABC Board members. Bob Debus reinforced the point made in the letter that the process being developed will see candidates considered by a panel established independently of the Minister who will then select Board members from a shortlist prepared by the panel. He also highlighted restoration of the ABC staff-elected Director position on the Board, a point made also in Senator Conroy's letter.

All in all a satisfactory meeting, and a good basis for continuing interaction in support of the ABC.

## Next Meeting:

**Where: Grand View Hotel**

**Wentworth Falls**

**When: Saturday September 20**

**Time: 10.00am**



## FABC Committee

President – Bob Macadam  
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Vice President / Newsletter Editor  
Colin Bull.

Secretary – Carole Goodwin  
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Treasurer – Julia McGill

Membership Secretary – Janelle  
Clark

Publicity Officer –

Pam Fitzpatrick

Merchandise Officer –  
Joan Macadam.

Web Officer & Newsletter  
Publisher – Bob Foster.

*Friends of the ABC NSW*  
<http://www.fabcnsw.org.au>

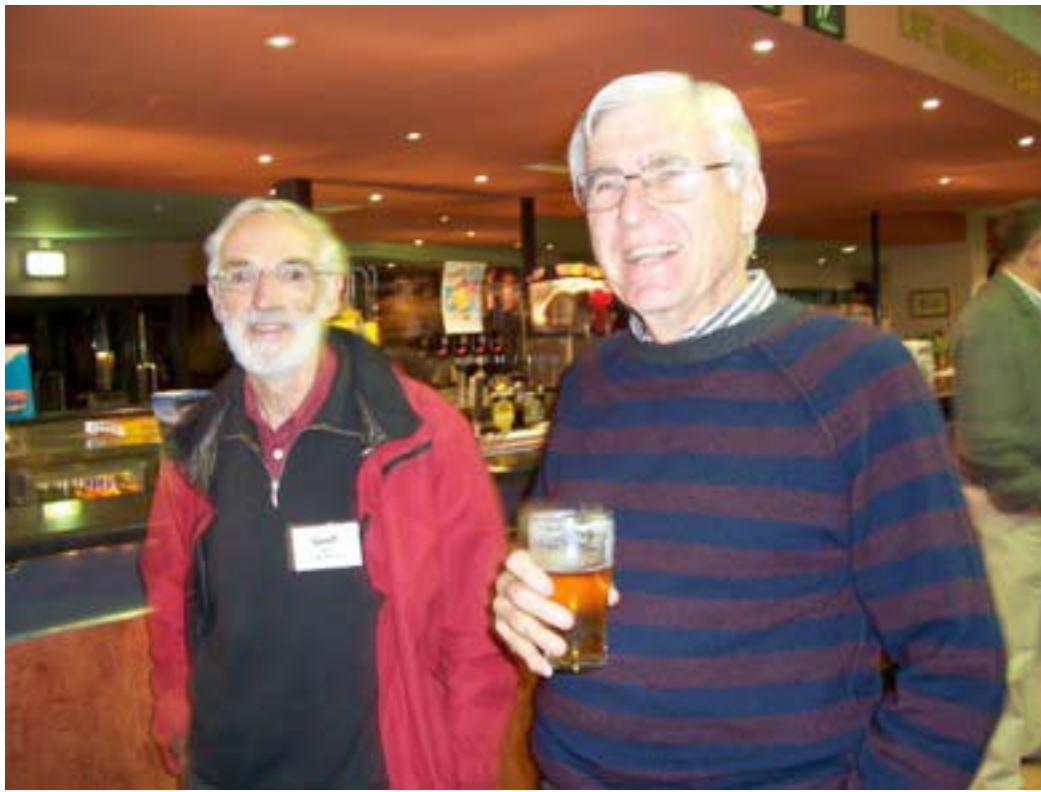
*Check out our Branch Website...*

*Go to:*

*Friends of the ABC NSW*

<http://www.fabcnsw.org.au/>

*Go to Local Branches and click  
on 'Blue Mountains'*



Bob Macadam taking a break at the State Conference

## State Conference

The 2008 FABC Conference was held at Wollongong on August 9 and 10. Following is the Government timetable for funding decisions and a few suggestions from the State Conference on how we can help the Government make the right decisions!

### Timetable: ABC's Triennial Funding

**AUG/SEPT** ABC prepares its funding submission for Minister's approval;

**SEPT/DEC** Minister for Communications, Stephen Conroy, approves ABC's submission (amending or otherwise);

**FEB 2009** ABC publicly releases its submission ([www.abc.net.au/corp](http://www.abc.net.au/corp));

**FEB/MAY** Cabinet Expenditure Review Committee decides what

the ABC - and all other govt. agencies - will get in the budget.

### A Few Ideas About What Friends Of The ABC Could Do:

- Raise public awareness that the ABC is NOW preparing its 2009 budget submission for adequate funding;
- Hold stalls, get a petition up, about funding for a dedicated, commercial-free ABC Kids TV channel;
- Ask your local Member to ask questions in Parliament about what this Government thinks is "adequate" funding, whether it will fund a dedicated, commercial-free ABC Kids TV channel, whether it will deliver its policy on more Australian drama on the ABC, etc. etc.
- Ask your local Member to raise these issues in an adjournment debate or as a Matter of Public Importance;

- Check out past ALP statements about what they'd do for the ABC if they got government;
- Check out what the Coalition has said (esp. about Kids TV) and get them to ask questions in Parliament (Opposition members love being fed questions - they don't have big staffs now!).

#### SEPT/DEC

- Raise public awareness when the Minister is deciding what the ABC can include in its 2009 budget submission for adequate funding;
- Parliament is sitting from 26 August to 4 December, so get questions asked in Parliament; get petitions signed in your area (see above);
- Mark Scott is addressing the National Press club; publicise his statements about funds for the ABC;

#### FEB 2009

- Write letters to the editor, get on local radio etc. etc to get support for what the ABC is asking for this budget;

#### FEB/MAY 2009 Crunch time!

- Write, visit, petition the Treasurer and the Minister for Finance (Lindsay Tanner, a former Shadow Minister for Communications) asking for the ALP to live up to its promises for an adequately funded ABC;
- Write to your local Member asking him/her to ask the Treasurer and the Minister of Finance to adequately fund the ABC; (Members' letters get quicker replies from Ministers than the public's letters do, and it also lets your local Member know what his/her electorate's concerns are).