

Friends of the ABC

Blue Mountains Region June 2007

From the President

Three years ago FABC in the Blue Mountains nearly folded. The then branch leaders advertised an advance screening of the documentary "Outfoxed", a critique of Fox News in the US that attracted meeting newcomers, myself included. After the screening John Derum moved that the branch be closed for lack of support by members. It was a smart move. The contrast between Fox and the ABC shook attendees and a coalition of regulars and newcomers formed, with Denise Thorpe at its helm.

Today the branch is thriving, as evidenced by attendance at our last meeting where an unusually large number of apologies was countered by new faces, including Bev Curmode, Jana Kinsman, Margaret Foy and Sue Astor-Smith; one of whom said she was attracted by a sense that there 'was something happening'.

The 'something' is an outcome of an effort over time to harness the energy and enthusiasm of individuals while maintaining a sense of collective ownership and support for what they are doing on behalf of the branch. Colin Bull expands on this below.

A challenge now is to build on our expanding membership with a commensurate increase in activity. A working group is currently planning a public forum on 'Media, Democracy and the Role of the ABC' at the Carrington Hotel in Katoomba on July 28. Earlier in the year the possibility of a 'Meet the Candidates' function in the lead-up to the Federal election was mooted. Perhaps a new working group might form to take the lead on this. Maybe there are other initiatives members have in mind. We will make space for this in the June 16 meeting agenda:

Welcome to newcomers, apologies, business arising from minutes, treasurer's report, generation of possible initiatives, working group activity and reporting to meeting, resolution of action proposed by working groups, general business.

We are grateful to Ben Tufrey and his Grand View Hotel staff in Wentworth Falls for hosting our monthly meetings from 10am-12pm on the third Saturday of each month. They are undergoing renovations that will make an attractive hostelry even more so and they went out of their way to accommodate us and the renovations at our last meeting.

Bob Macadam

Next Meeting:

Where: Grand View Hotel

When: Saturday 16 June

Time: 10.00am Start

FABC Committee

**President – Bob Macadam
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**Secretary – Carole Goodwin
47512680**

Treasurer – Julia McGill

**Membership Secretary—
Janelle Clark**

**Publicity Officers –
Bev. Plazier and Dave Davidson.**

**Merchandise Officer –
Joan Macadam.**

**Web Officer & Newsletter
Publisher— Bob Foster.**

**Vice President / Newsletter Editor
– Colin Bull.**



Our Branch is now on the Web

**Find us by going to the
NSW Friends of the ABC**

www.fabcnsw.org.au

**and go to *Local Branches.*
Click on *Blue Mountains***

Supporting Friends

Supporting the ABC sometimes takes more than passion and commitment. The continual attacks on the independence of the ABC can be discouraging. Coming together with other ABC supporters can recharge and sustain our efforts.

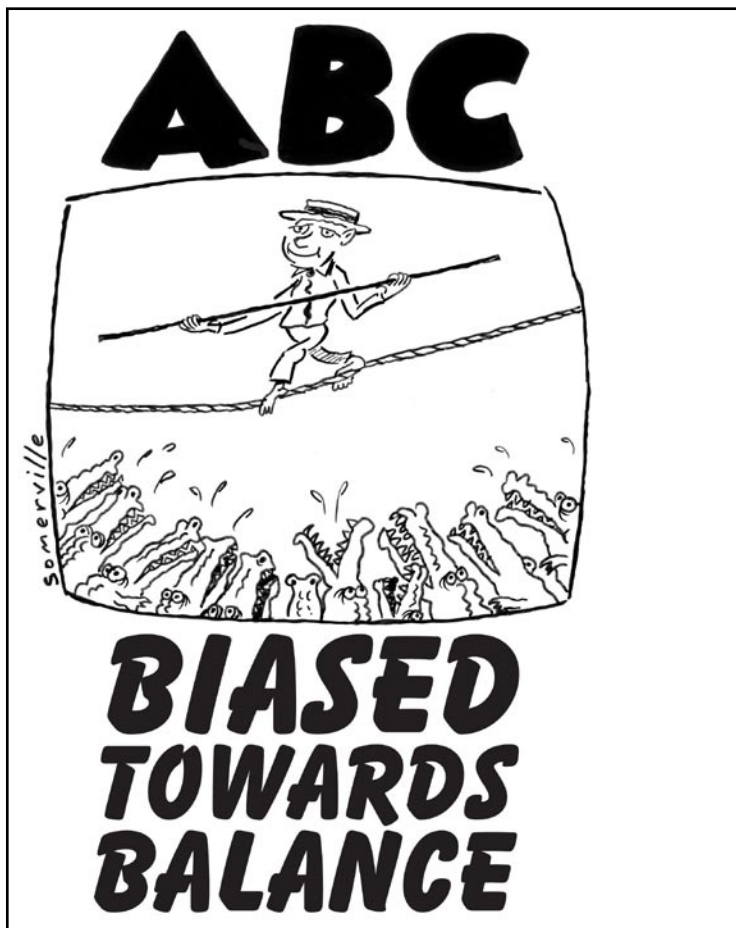
Meeting with like minded people can provide emotional support. Such meetings offer encouragement, affirmation and validation for different points of view, as well as the freedom to express feelings. Supportive groups also provide an opportunity to share knowledge and learn from each other.

A supportive atmosphere generates enthusiasm for action. Imagination is stimulated, resulting in creative proposals for activities. Group support and cooperation turns the work of planning and carrying out activities into an enjoyable experience.

Currently, the Branch is engaged in three main activities, stalls at Festivals, organising a public forum on 'Media, Democracy and the ABC', and informing our supporters of the ABC policies offered by candidates for the coming Federal election.

The Branch is keen to utilise the interests and talents of members. So, don't feel discouraged by the non-stop attacks on the ABC, come along to our meetings and feel the support!

Colin Bull.



Democracy and the ABC

"The importance of an independent ABC is vital. The question is how we can best preserve it? I do not pretend to have the answers but I think it obvious is that one way is to place pressure on Government to clarify its future intentions for the ABC, to lobby individual members of Parliament in support of the ABC and to bring to public attention the dangers and the prospects that would face us in its absence. This organisation is well placed to do that and its importance is even greater than it has been in the past in the present situation. I wish that I had other solutions, but I do not believe that they exist. The fact that we still live in a democracy, albeit an imperfect one, does leave a glimmer of hope. The destruction of the ABC would do much to extinguish it".

Speech to the Friends of the ABC (Victoria) by the Hon. Alastair Nicholson, AO, RFD, QC, former Chief Justice of the Family Court of Australia.

The ABC - Important to Australia

- The ABC is Australia's *independent* and *comprehensive* national public broadcaster. The ABC's independence - from government and commercial influence - enables it to report without fear or favour.
- The ABC is responsible to inform, educate, entertain and to promote Australian culture. It is Australia's open university, accessible to all.
- The ABC's significance is even greater in a country where the highest concentration of media ownership in the western world results in less diversity of information and opinion.