

# Friends of the

# ABC

Blue Mountains Region May 2007

## From the President

Included in this Newsletter is a leaflet designed by Bob Foster for distribution at stalls and other FABC functions. In sets out 'in a nutshell' what our aims are, what we do, and why. Thanks Bob

We decided at our last meeting to hold a public forum around the theme 'Media, democracy, and the role of the ABC'. John Stafford and I undertook to progress it and John negotiated a good deal with the Carrington Hotel – an ideal venue. The outline below is the one used in our approach to potential panelists, including Senator Peter Andren, Chris Masters, Quentin Dempster, Sally Neighbour and Peter Manning. Responses to date are positive and supportive but participation on a particular date is, as always, problematic.

**Date and time:** Saturday July 28, 2 to 4.30 pm

**Venue:** Carrington Hotel, Katoomba

**Topic:** Media, Democracy and the role of the ABC

Structure:

- 2-3 pm : Introduction by Chairperson; Presentations by 3 panelists  
– 12 minutes per presentation + 5 minutes for questions.
- 3-3.30 : Afternoon tea.
- 3.30 – 3.45 : Inter-Panel discussion moderated by Chairperson.
- 3.45 – 4.15 : Interaction between Panel and audience moderated by  
Chairperson
- 4.15 -4.30 : Closing remarks by Panelists

Ingrid Haydon, Carole Goodwin and Denise Thorpe all know the ups and downs of organizing a public forum and Carole has undertaken to consult them and others with a view to producing a 'how to' checklist. It is clear for example that negotiations with potential speakers/panelists should be handled by the same person.

Feedback on the format of our last meeting was positive and we will use it on May 19 to pursue the following agenda:

Welcome – particularly to newcomers  
Business arising from minutes  
Treasurer's report  
Working sub-groups: forum, stalls, writers  
Tea break  
Reports from sub-groups  
Decisions arising  
General business  
— Bob Macadam

## Next Meeting:

**Where:** Grand View Hotel  
**When:** Saturday 19 May  
**Time:** 10.00am Start

## Active Friends

Columnist Adele Horin recently (SMH, March 24-25) outlined how some politicians ferociously attack the ABC. She described how, in one month alone, the disgraced former Senator Santoro had demanded explanations from the ABC management for 973 allegations of bias! One example of "bias" was that the newsreaders referred to the troops in Iraq as "Australian troops" instead of "our troops"!

Clearly, politicians need to be told how much this type of attack is out of step with community sentiment. One way this can be done is by writing individual letters. Various activist organisations have offered the following suggestions for writing an effective letter to a politician:

- Start the letter with sender's name, address, telephone number and date, followed by the politician's name and address. Ensure the politician's title is correct.
- Ideally letters should be typed and signed, but can be handwritten
- Begin the body of the letter by specifically and courteously stating the reason for writing.
- Concisely outline thoughts about the issue of concern. Make about three persuasive points, mentioning any personal consequences resulting from the issue of concern.
- End with a specific request for action. Perhaps a meeting with the politician to discuss the matter of concern.
- Be polite and avoid hostile remarks, threats, and rude or offensive language.
- Ensure the content of the letter is factual.
- Ask for a response to the letter and contact the politician's office if a response is not forthcoming in a reasonable time. Respond to a satisfactory reply with a letter of thanks.
- Also write letters to politicians who support the ABC to ensure they stand firm.

For further assistance with letter writing, join the letter writing group at our next meeting.

Colin Bull

friends  
of the abc