

NSW/ACT Bulletin

The Complacency Challenge

The past few months have provided the opportunity to reflect on the ABC Friends' Pre-Election Rally last April and the outcome of the Federal Election in May. Several features come to mind.

Firstly, numbers at the Rally were relatively small compared with previous such events and the attendees predominantly were of the more mature kind. Taken at face value, the absence of younger attendees may not bode well for the ABC's future.

Indeed, those of us who currently advocate strongly for the organisation may well have been stalwart members of the Argonauts Club – the ABC's Children's Hour hit that began in 1933 and ended in 1972. Perhaps, in this modern era an ABC Astronauts Club may entice upcoming generations.

The upside of the Rally was a sense of urgency from all speakers about the importance of the ABC as an independent force in Australia's democracy. Also, given the outcome of the Federal Election, there is cause for some optimism for the ABC. Certainly, the expectation is warranted but potentially is tempered by warnings from Geoffrey Watson. In a passionate address Watson proclaimed that 'THERE IS NO PLACE FOR COMPLACENCY' and ended his address with the plaintive plea 'DON'T LET THEM TAKE IT AWAY FROM US'.

In the context of the current Government's majority, there may be

a greater need to maintain the rage. In the short term, it may be easy to sit back in the hope a notionally empathetic government will deliver for the ABC. Unfortunately, there is no guarantee the Albanese Government will act accordingly. Hence, it is incumbent that ABC Friends, along with others, vigorously pursues its objectives and Strategic Plan. Specifically, the next two-and-a-half years constitute an opportunity to enhance the status, good standing and welfare of the ABC. A positive outcome is paramount.

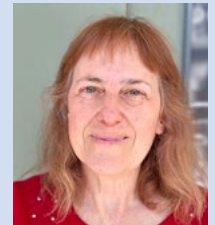
On another front, the accusation of ABC bias in its coverage of the conflict between Israel and Hamas in Gaza continues to smoulder. Accusations of bias have long been levelled at the ABC, not unusual in a democratic society. However, the proposal by the Special Envoy, Jillian Segal, to eliminate antisemitism from a range of public institutions warrants careful attention. While the core issues associated with antisemitism and Islamophobia clearly are unacceptable, the notion of media censorship, as proposed by Segal, entails significant danger for the freedom of the press and impartial journalism. It is an important issue for ABC Friends to monitor, in the hope that the Government will reject Segal's core censorship intent.

Not all is gloom and doom by any measure for the ABC. Past traumas are gradually being remedied. Also,

congratulations must go to the ABC for its success at the Logies. A record for the ABC of eleven won across several categories, with the highlight of five won by the sitcom *Fisk*.

Finally, this Bulletin pays tribute to Peter Ryan, the ABC's long-serving Senior Finance journalist who died recently, and features an interview with the ABC's Managing Director, Hugh Marks.

Note: Please send any comments to the editorial team of Rory Sutton (rcesutton@gmail.com) or Sue Zeckendorf (sue_zeck@hotmail.com).



This issue:

Editorial	1
President's message	2
Interview with ABC Managing Director, Hugh Marks	3
A flight to the future	4
Macquarie University media interns	5
Call to action from NSoS	6
Branch Updates	
- ACT/SE NSW	7
- Northern Tablelands	7
- Central Coast	8
ABC Friends 50th anniversary celebrations begin	9
Poem - Double Down	10
Vale Peter Ryan	10
ABC Friends Spring Dinner	11
Branch contacts	12



President's Message

How Do We Value the ABC? Let Us Count the Ways

Welcome to the Spring 2025 edition of our Bulletin.

My theme is inspired by words from the timeless Elizabeth Barrett Browning sonnet *How do I love thee, let me count the ways*.

Importantly, thanks must go to all the Friends who participated in our Federal Election campaign. Your activism and community support were essential to our success. Now, despite the result, it is essential that we hold the Government to account. Specifically, there is a requirement for policies that ensure the viability of the ABC and enable it to sustain ideological and politically-motivated attacks over the next few years.

Before writing this piece I reflected on two statements recently made by long-standing Friends: Geoffrey Watson SC reminded us at our Federal Election Rally that we cannot afford “to be complacent”, a theme Rory explores in this edition; and Corin Fairburn Bass, a founding member of ABC Friends at the Premiere of the documentary *A Conversation with Corin* invited us to think of a world without the ABC – no news, current affairs, Australian stories, drama, children’s programs, music, arts, entertainment, radio, emergency services and more. Both comments serve as a powerful reminder of the importance of our ongoing commitment to protect the ABC, and how we should “count the ways” and evaluate the organisation, some of which are set out below.

Social connections and emergency broadcasting. The ABC is the foremost broadcaster that keeps us connected, entertained and informed. Also, it is a key player in

keeping us safe during emergencies, much recognised by the NSW RFS and SES who rely on the support of ABC radio and emergency services. The ABC has a responsibility borne with generosity and community spirit, and unmatched by any commercial media organisation.

Cultural contribution: telling Australia’s story. The ABC is Australia’s national storyteller. It develops unique Australian content that, for example, ensures the voices of Indigenous and rural and regional communities are heard. Equally, documentaries that explore our history and celebrate our unique cultural identity foster a shared cultural consciousness that is largely absent in the commercial media.

Political contribution: holding power to account. The ABC delivers public interest journalism that holds power to account. The ABC’s investigative journalism – independent, rigorous and publicly accountable – scrutinises institutions of power, informs voters and raises controversial issues that stimulate national debate. There is no comparable media outlet in Australia. The ABC is a cornerstone of our democracy.

Educational contribution: education for all. The ABC captures the hearts and minds of children and adults at all stages of their educational development. Programs and channels like *Playschool*, *ABC Kids* and *Behind the News* (BTN) promote an interest in learning and help children and adults alike engage with complex topics in accessible ways. The ABC represents an intangible educational asset that is priceless.

Economic contribution: jobs and industry growth. As one of Australia’s national broadcasters, the ABC drives economic activity by supporting thousands of direct and indirect jobs – including in regional Australia – as well as investing in Australian content production. The ABC nurtures talent, promotes innovation in digital media and strengthens the creative economy. The ABC represents a national investment in the future prosperity. Thank you ABC.

The ABC is more than a broadcaster – it is a national treasure that enriches our society in countless ways. It fosters a shared sense of belonging and common purpose. When Friends campaign for “our ABC”, we mean it.

One of our new projects, *A Business Case for the ABC*, will attempt to calculate the strategic return on investment of our ABC. An initial calculation suggests that for every \$1 invested, the ABC delivers approximately \$2.11 in public value through its services. However, after being contacted by representatives from the disability and homeless sectors, I remain convinced that the ABC SROI is much greater than this and yes, it can be quantified.

There is no doubt that the ABC delivers extraordinary public value for a \$1 billion p.a. investment. It informs, educates, entertains, protects, and connects us. Like Browning’s timeless sonnet, the ABC expresses a deep and enduring love – for truth, for culture, and for the people of Australia.

Dr Tess Howes
President, ABC Friends (NSW & ACT)

Interview with: ABC Managing Director, Hugh Marks

“Leaders establish the vision for the future.”

John P. Kotter

In September 2025, the new ABC Managing Director Hugh Marks was interviewed about his visions for the ABC by Rory Sutton and Tess Howes. Below are the key messages discussed.

The vision

Hugh Marks admits that ‘he is an inherent risk taker’, an attribute that has been ever present during his media industry career. Where the ABC is concerned, Marks has no doubt that ‘more is going to be needed from the ABC than less’ and especially ‘in terms of accuracy and truth’. His vision entails an ABC that has a ‘lot deeper content slate’ with an increasing range of platforms that deliver a ‘lift and growth in the value, trust and impact the ABC is having in society’.

Content on demand

Marks acknowledges that budget constraints are a fact of life, with the result of putting pressure on the ABC to produce more within imposed budget restraints. Viewing habits are changing. Audience use of traditional linear formats of television and radio programming is on the decline. Increasingly, people are opting for on-demand content.

Marks’ solution is the use of digital tools that facilitate the multi-formatting and re-purposing of content, tailored

to meet specific audiences. This capability enables national content to be quarried and re-produced to cater for local needs. The benefits for those living in rural and regional areas are great, enhancing local connectivity and lifting the visibility of the ABC and its staff as trustworthy sources of information.

The program strategy

Marks, as Editor-in-Chief, quips that the ‘we need the silly and we need the clever’. However, on a serious note he asserts that ABC productions ‘are a little bit weighted towards studio-based entertainment panel type shows’ and seeks ‘a shift to our scripted family area and high-impact documentary storytelling’ – the latter becoming the responsibility of his News Documentary Unit.

At the same time, he assures ABC Friends that news and current affairs programs will remain a high priority. Based on his commercial experience, Marks suggests that the 7pm news bulletins would benefit by adopting a more local slant and include greater coverage of sport.

A further aim is to boost the ABC’s income from its commercial activities. He wants greater investment in and ownership of Australian IP (intellectual property). The hope is that this policy will improve revenues both locally and globally, providing additional sources of finance for more productions.

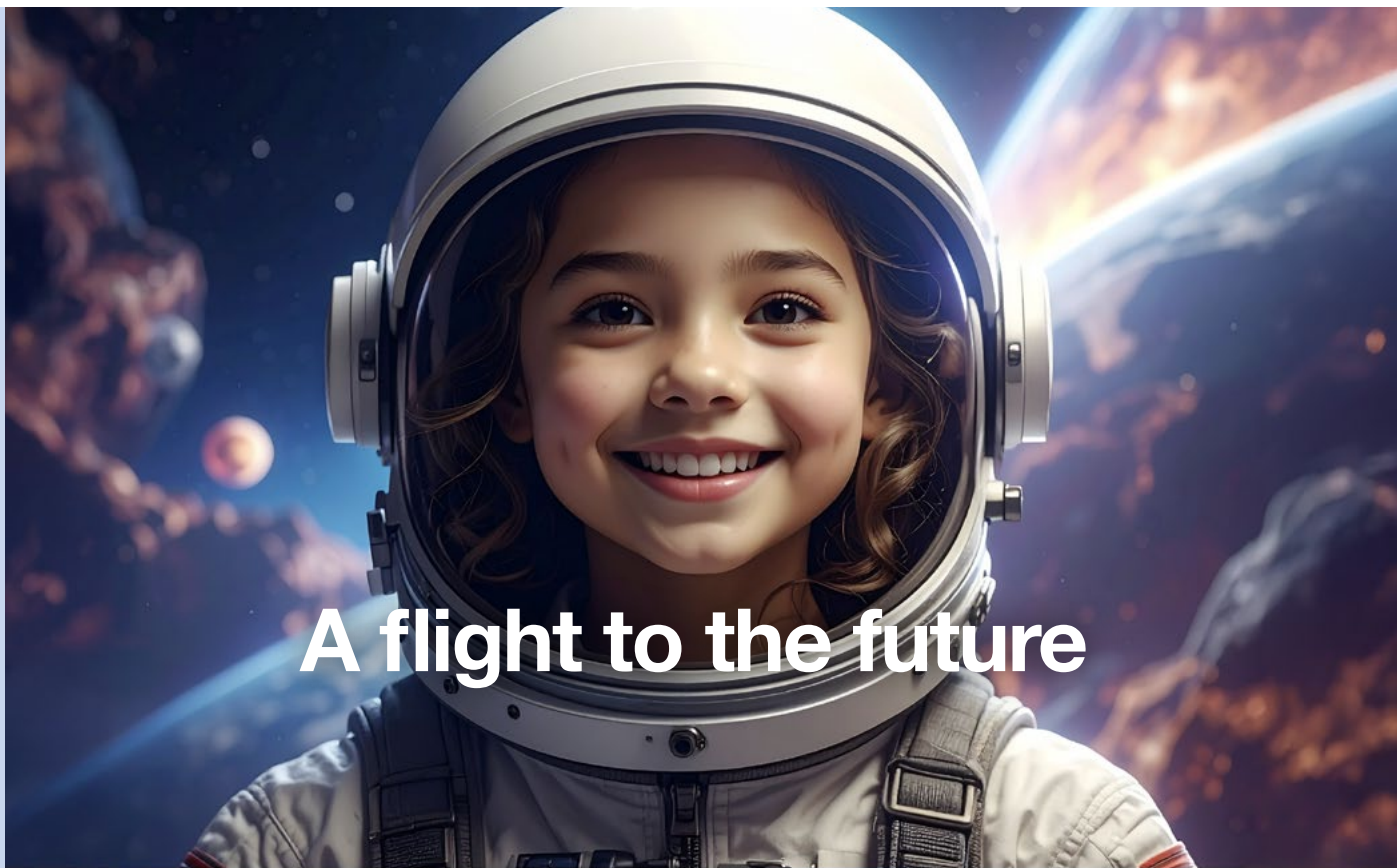
Another source of content creation is his newly-established Podcasting Department, which already has achieved a mutual arrangement with the BBC to share podcasts on a real-time basis.

ABC – the future

Hugh Marks is adamant that the ABC must do ‘a great job of telling the audience of positive things the ABC is doing, not just being reactive to the negative things that happen’. To implement this goal, he has appointed a Brand Strategist who has worked with most of Australia’s iconic companies. Another innovation is a new Editorial Department. Its remit is to either loosen or tighten editorial guidelines, depending on the area of production. The idea is that editorial constraints for news and current affairs will be much stricter than those applied to a comedian, where ‘not much is expected of you from editorial matters’. Other appointments include a Communications Director and, more recently, a Head of Audiences with the task of marketing the ABC.

Finally, Hugh Marks claims that as the commercial media undergoes change and contraction, the ABC offers an opportunity for those ‘still wanting to do great work’. The NSW/ACT Friends thank Hugh Marks for his insights and look forward to a re-energised ABC under his leadership.

Rory Sutton and Dr Tess Howes



A flight to the future

Our ABC Friends in Victoria recently have received a \$1.5m donation from Margaret Bales, an 83-year-old ABC lover. The aim of her donation is to ‘enhance the science and medicine coverage of the ABC in a way that attracts youth to the ABC’.

It is an opportunity, perhaps, for ABC Friends to play a part in deriving new program concepts with potential to be developed by ABC program makers.

As an example, history shows how followers of the Argonauts Club played a key role in the life of ABC. Open to children of ages 7 to 17, the Argonauts Club was a hugely popular children’s radio program (1941-1972) and one that created a generation of ABC loyalists.

Coincidentally, it was members of the Club who were significant in the formation of Friends of the ABC. This view is endorsed by Corin Bass, a co-founder of ABC Friends way back in 1976.

In an interview with Tess Howes, Corin emphasises that ‘*the Argonauts program had a palpable influence on the minds and hearts of children*’. The program introduced children early to arts and music, often led by notable figures like Jeffrey Smart, A D Hope, Lindley Evans and many others. Corin Bass is certain that many early supporters of the ABC Friends gained their devotion to the ABC through being an Argonaut.

Argonauts v Astronauts

A revival today of the *Argonauts Club* is unlikely to be anything other than a nostalgic nod to its legacy. A more modern concept is warranted, namely an *Astronauts Club*.

Whereas the Argonauts are sea adventurers reliant on classical Greek mythology, Astronauts are modern adventurers in space, a notion that could have more relevance for today’s tech-savvy kids. In particular, the *Astronauts Club* would keep the spirit of curiosity and discovery alive. Astronaut members will travel the universe of ideas related to science, technology, engineering and space: hot topics for discussion in schools, in the media and probably with parents.

Unlike the radio-based *Argonauts Club*, the Astronauts will thrive on an interactive ABC Kids app or website, offering interactive games, space missions, creative challenges and badges. Members of the *Astronauts Club* potentially will acquire their own ID numbers and be able to upload entries (drawings, videos, poems, stories, science projects) to the site for review and possible broadcast. The prime emphasis will be on creativity, problem solving, exploration and storytelling.

The aim is to build a loyal, engaged community of young Australians who grow up with ABC as their trusted companion — just as *The Argonauts Club* did for a past generation — by combining the magic of belonging with the thrill of discovery in a digital, broadcast and real-world club experience.

Rory Sutton

Macquarie University media interns

A feature of the Northern Suburbs of Sydney (NSoS) Branch meetings is the involvement of students from the above University. The aim is to enhance the age profile of the Branch's membership by highlighting the views of the younger generation. Most recently two students, Serene Palleygedera and Sandra Sy Quimsiam, were invited to address NSoS members, summaries of which are set out below.

Serene Palleygedera



(Serene is finishing a Bachelor of Arts, majoring in English and Psychological Science, with a minor in Media, Culture & Communications at Macquarie University. She deeply values the ABC's vital contribution to public interest journalism, cultural enrichment and fostering informed and inclusive communities.)

In the lead-up to the May election, I found myself questioning whether I could trust the information being presented, or is it being filtered, exaggerated, or even fabricated? We need media outlets that operate independently and influence-free. It is why the ABC matters more than ever.

During the election I turned to the ABC on social media to better understand and engage with issues that we as young people face. I found the content relevant and easy to understand. In a media

world that often feels chaotic and overwhelming, outlets like the ABC help us find direction and meaning. The ABC doesn't just report on what's happening – it helps make sense of it.

When we tune in to the ABC, we're doing more than just receiving information – we're placing our trust in a system that prioritises truth and accountability. But that trust isn't enough on its own. It needs to be backed by action – by ensuring that the ABC is properly funded, supported, and resourced so that it can continue doing this crucial work.

For many, it's more than just a broadcaster – it's a reliable guide. And I see my own role, as someone younger, as part of the bridge between generations. I want to help ensure that the values the ABC stands for – truth, integrity, independence – continue.

Good journalism protects democracy. That's not just a slogan – it's a fact. And in today's world, where truth is often contested and facts are under threat, we need good journalism and the ABC more than ever.

Sandra Sy Quimsiam



(Sandra is finishing a Master's degree in media and communication

at Macquarie University. She has a unique combination of industry experience, and technical proficiency in video and audio production.)

Let's establish a simple fact – everything is changing. As ABC Chair Kim Williams has said: "we can receive, read and absorb almost everything instantaneously". This compares with the 1900s when people waited for ships and visitors to arrive so they could get news and information from across the world, often out of date. Once, we could not get enough information. Now we can. To quote Kim Williams again: "it leaves us uniquely vulnerable".

So how does the ABC – our national broadcaster – meet these challenges? The first way is MEDIA LITERACY. I believe ABC should be at the forefront of teaching people how to spot reliable information, how to think critically about what they see and hear, so people can better understand how media shapes the world.

Second, it is imperative that ABC invest in new and innovative content that speaks to all Australians, no matter their age or background. Further, it means expanding the ABC's presence, not just on radio and TV, but also in the digital environment.

Finally, the ABC must continue to invest in regional reporting and ensure local stories are told by local voices. ABC programs must always consider diversity and make sure everyone can see themselves reflected in the ABC programs.

Ultimately, if they invest in people, technology, reliability and credibility, they can ensure the ABC remains a vital part of Australian life, even for generations to come. And that is why, AS ABC FRIENDS, we continue to support the ABC and its values.



Holding MPs to account

– action needed now: restore the ABC’s funding

Now that the 2025 Federal election is over, the hard work begins again.

Secretly many dream that the \$1 billion cuts to the ABC budget since 2023 will be magically restored by a benevolent government. No. The only way this is going to happen is by concerted demands from 80,000 ABC friends and supporters around Australia.

For the ABC to produce exemplary quality programs that bring the nation together, through news, current affairs, education and the arts, this requires massive and serious commitment for future structural funding increases. This is now even more important as we face the tsunami of AI-generated misinformation and disinformation, and as we are seeing the polarisation of nations around the world where truth is abandoned for partisan tribal propaganda.

NSoS has now written to all its Federal MPs (10 July 2025 & 1 September 2025), congratulating them on winning their election and calling on them to implement the ABC Friends Federal Election Platform 2025. NSoS now needs YOU to write to them to back us up.

NSoS TEMPLATE LETTER:

Date

Dear MP

I wish to enquire on your progress to:

1. Ensure the Australian Government adopts the ABC Friends Federal Election Platform to ensure adequate and comprehensive restoration of funding for the ABC so it can fulfil its Charter.
2. Promote and attend ABC Friends events.
3. Join the Parliamentary Friends of the ABC.
4. Inform me about relevant developments affecting the ABC including reports, legislation, inquiries, pre-budget submissions, and Senate estimates hearings.

I look forward to meeting with you to discuss these important issues with you.

Best wishes ... *ABC Friend*

The main points for discussion include:

1. Restore ABC funding by \$140 million per year to be phased in progressively over a 3-year period commencing in 2026.
2. Fully fund the ABC’s emergency service through a supplementary fund dedicated to keeping Australians safe in times of crisis.
3. Guarantee that the ABC remains free-to-access for all Australians: no ads, no subscriptions and no downgrading of services.
4. Provide additional funding to ensure that high-quality ABC services can be received by all Australians across the country.
5. Guarantee the ABC’s independence.
6. Change the indexation formula for the ABC to cover the impact of real-world inflation, including the cost of content production.

Janine Kitson

Convener ABC Friends NSoS

Branch Updates

ACT/South East NSW

Australian voters demonstrated in the 2025 Federal Election that they reject the politics of division and Trumpian-styled ideologies. This was strongly evident across Australia, where people want politics that value inclusion, evidence and integrity rather than imported culture wars.

It is well documented that the ABC best represents an objective and impartial view of Australia and the world. For the people of the ACT, this role is particularly vital. Canberra is home not only to a diverse community of residents, but also to the nation's decision-making institutions, the public service, and a large population of students, academics and researchers. Accurate and timely information is critical to these and all communities, especially in times of emergency. From bushfires and severe weather to public health crises, the ABC has repeatedly proven itself to be the most trusted and relied-upon source of local and national information.

Australian residents expect high standards of media coverage. In Canberra, we depend on the ABC for parliamentary reporting, analysis of national policies, local issues reported in a timely way and a balanced accounts of international affairs.

During the 2019–20 bushfire season, also known as Black Summer, which was one of the worst on record for the ACT, the ABC provided lifesaving advice and reports. This emergency information is crucial for Australians and must be further strengthened and not diminished, as we see in America with its cutting of public broadcasters.

Beyond politics, the ABC also provides coverage of local culture, the arts, and stories that reflect the character of Canberra. Without strong public broadcasting, the ACT would be left with a media environment dominated by commercial interests, where serious,

independent journalism is not covered as well as the ABC can do.

To keep doing its job, the ABC needs increased and secure funding that supports its vital services and staff. This is not simply a matter of keeping things as they are. Canberra residents, like Australians everywhere, expect the ABC to evolve with changing technology and to continue to be a leader in innovation. From digital platforms to traditional services, the ABC must be adequately resourced to meet future operational needs.

We call on ACT federal representatives to recognise the central role of the ABC in our national life and our local community. The people of Canberra have made it clear they value unity over division, and we trust the ABC, which continues to serve all Australians with independence and accuracy.

Rob Kennedy

Convenor ABC Friends ACT & South East NSW

Northern Tablelands

Role and impact of ABC Radio in regional Australia (Northern Tablelands)

As Australia's foremost national public broadcaster, the ABC strives to provide a nonpartisan account of current news plus analysis. It also generates content that seeks to reflect Australia's rich cultural diversity. While these aims are easily stated in generic terms, how does the ABC fare in addressing the needs and

aspirations of communities within regional Australia?

The Northern Tablelands branch is interested in the impact of the ABC on (i) those living in regional Australia and, more specifically, (ii) those communities that fall within NSW's New England and North West. This is a large area, serviced by ABC

state and national radio/TV/internet, but also with a dedicated New England & North West (NE&NW) radio station located in Tamworth. The following will focus on the role of radio in regional Australia.

The station broadcasts around 168 hours of programming each week with a mixture of Australia-

continued overleaf.

Northern Tablelands Role and impact of ABC Radio in regional Australia

continued from previous page.

wide, generic and regional content. Specifically, NE&NW ABC Radio broadcasts the most comprehensive source of local information across the region, including the *Upper Hunter + NE&NW Rural Report*, *NE&NW Breakfast*, and *NE&NW Saturday Sport*.

In summary, this ABC radio station provides non-stop broadcasting (168 hours per week), of which 13% is specific to local communities and a further 16% concerns Australia-wide regional news, analysis and related content, leaving 71% of content which is not specific to regional areas/activities.

While this is more than that offered

by commercial media, what would be the optimal exposure/time ratio for regional versus generic state/national content? This would depend on a number of factors, including quality and precision of the content, but if one were to decide that a little under one-third is insufficient for content that directly relates to the daily activities of most regional listeners, then these figures could be used to make a case to local federal MPs for an increase in targeted funding of regional programs. This might take the form of new programs or increase the exposure of existing ABC regional programs such as *Heywire* (which focusses on regional youth), which are currently underfunded.

An increase in targeted, long-term funding could arguably assist regional communities. Consideration could also be extended towards additional assistance for regional community radio broadcasters (of which there are six in the NSW Northern Tablelands) plus SBS Radio.

To this end, the Northern Tablelands ABC Friends branch will be approaching our federal MP, Barnaby Joyce, for his support in achieving greater ABC and community radio coverage in regional Australia.

Bruce Stevenson
ABC Friends Northern Tablelands

Central Coast

The Central Coast branch meets at the Elanora Hotel in East Gosford on the second Saturday of each month. The annual ABC Friends NSW and ACT excellence awards generated considerable interest and discussion amongst our members, with both committee and branch members becoming engaged in the nomination process. There were several programs and presenters nominated, many of whom featured in the submissions from other branches and state committee members.

Regarding speakers in our future meetings, our branch has been in contact with Macquarie University lecturer in the School of Communication, Society

and Culture, Catherine Fargher. Catherine had spoken to the Northern Suburbs of Sydney branch earlier this year and has been invited to speak to us on the *Changing Face of Media*. She has kindly provided us with a list of other possible speakers specialising in media and communication if she is unavailable. Unfortunately, we were unable to secure the owners of the Avoca Beach Theatre, Beth and Norman Hunter, as guest speakers. The theatre is a well-known Central Coast heritage cinema that not only screens independent and foreign films but also hosts a range of live events, bringing a variety of professional musicians and performers to the Central Coast.

Beth and Norman have suggested the coordinator of the local film group as an alternative speaker, and we will explore this possibility. We await responses from other potential guest speakers.

We are also considering a local screening of *A Conversation with Corin*, introduced to ABC Friends earlier this year on 4 July at the Roseville Cinema. The screening was a precursor to ABC Friends 50th anniversary celebrations in 2026. We will continue discussions on this possibility with our state committee and examine different options for venues.

Ross McGowen
Convenor ABC Friends Central



ABC Friends 50th anniversary celebrations begin

The new ABC Friends NSW & ACT documentary, *A Conversation with Corin*, premiered to a full house at Roseville Cinema on Friday 4 July 2025. This film celebrated all those who believe in the value of a strong, independent and well-resourced national public broadcaster.

The documentary captured the conversation between Dr Tess Howes, ABC Friends NSW & ACT President, and Corin Fairburn Bass about her memories of how the ABC Friends began in NSW in 1976. It was filmed by Macquarie University student Surya Sri Navjyoth Kumar Muntha and edited by Christian Bass. Please refer to the [Spring 2024 edition of the NSW/ACT Bulletin](#) for an article about the forming of the Friends of the ABC.

There was an eagerness to hear Corin's story of how four friends – Walter Bass, herself, Hans Bandler and Faith Bandler sat in Bassy's lounge room in 1976 and talked about what they could do to stop politicians' punitive rhetoric against the ABC and their cuts to the ABC's funding. That one conversation between four friends led to a national movement that today has over 80,000 supporters.

The evening began with a trailer film showcasing Macquarie University interns' work experience with the NSoS Branch from March-May 2025. Media student Cassandra Soto not only superbly filmed and edited the trailer film but solved the challenging technical task of reformatting the phone video footage to the Roseville Cinema's big screen. Serene Palleygedera professionally narrated the film, explaining how the interns valued their work experience with ABC Friends.

Emeritus Professor Ed Davis AM, former President ABC Friends NSW & ACT, highlighted the challenges the ABC faces in a media landscape increasingly dominated by billionaire tech companies. Davidson MP Matt Cross gave a heartfelt speech about how important the ABC has been to his life. Willoughby MP Tim James could not attend but forwarded a message that as a regular listener to ABC News Radio 'he appreciates the work of our national broadcaster and commends the work of ABC Friends Northern Suburbs of Sydney Branch'.

The evening finale was the presentation of a bouquet of Australian wildflowers to Corin Fairburn Bass, who remains active as an ABC Friends Northern Suburbs Branch Committee member. In Corin's honour everyone sang *It's Our ABC*, to the tune of *Flash Jack from Gundagai* with lyrics by Jonathan Biggins, led by former ABC Friends NSW & ACT Membership Secretary and soprano Angela Williamson, and with Wayne Richmond on keyboard. And so, the evening finished with a cinema full of ABC Friends singing their hearts out, especially when it came to the final lyrics: "Don't ever think you can defeat the ABC".

NSoS Branch wishes to thank Emma Addario and her Roseville Cinema team for hosting our premiere film, in one of the busiest slots of the week – Friday night at the movies.

More screenings of *A Conversation with Corin* are planned for 2026 when ABC Friends formally celebrates its 50th anniversary. The ABC Friends Blue Mountains Branch will screen *A Conversation with Corin* on Saturday 8 November 2025.

Janine Kitson
Convenor ABC Friends NSoS

Double Down

The title of this poem totally reflects the theme of this Spring 2025 Bulletin – hence Double Down. Our thanks go to John Clair for his poetry.

In an age of misinformation
declining trust is in the air.
We need that voice we all can trust
the ABC is there.

And fully funded it must be
to keep the lies at bay.
To inform us in emergencies
and tell our story on the way.

Now “Voice of America” has seen its day
maybe this could happen here.
We need to be ever on alert
for some pollies we should fear.

Some recent funding we have seen
which helped, we have to say.
But not enough to restore the gap
that was sadly stripped away.

The jobs, programs and services
which once were there for all
Are now a painful memory
that really gets our gall.

We need commitments from our leaders
as to what their intentions are.
Restore our funding, show your cards
we need a higher bar.

Our ABC must always be free
no subscriptions or ads to bear.
Its independence guaranteed
if for democracy we care.

So Friends of the ABC
let's make our feelings clear.
And do whatever we can do
the time to care is here.

Contact your MP, letterbox,
sign up as a volunteer.
Our trusted friend is needing help
let's all step up a gear.

John Clair

Vale Peter Ryan



It is fitting that NSW/ACT Friends record Peter Ryan's contribution following a remarkable career across some 45 years. Most recently he was the ABC's Senior Business Correspondent. Over the years Peter was a major contributor to both radio and television, including AM & PM, Radio National and the television News Channel. He spent time also as Bureau Chief in Washington, Head of News and Current Affairs in Victoria and founding Editor of Lateline Business.

Peter Ryan's death was marked by a well-attended funeral in North Sydney. The eulogy by friend and colleague, Peter Cave, highlighted the many facets of this remarkable individual's career. Cave added that it was fitting that the funeral was taking place at 1.30pm on a Friday. It was a time his friend often chose to enjoy and share a luncheon with friends and colleagues.

Peter Ryan's career and generosity encapsulate so much of the ABC at its best, as manifested in his own words as he reflected on his 45 years in journalism:

“When I look back at my start on Sydney's Daily Mirror in 1980 as an 18-year-old straight out of school, we were still printing newspapers off hot metal. People were smoking in newsrooms and there was a lot of yelling as deadlines ran down to the wire. One strong message I have is - never let anyone tell you the good old days were really that good - that's a bit of a myth. Finally, a few words of editorial advice.

“Avoid cynicism - be passionate. Be proactive. Come to the table with a great story so no one else comes up with a dud that might waste your time. Work closely with top people - shut up and absorb like a sponge - don't try to be that person who knows it all.

“Maintain a fastidious contact book. Some low-profile contacts could soon move into higher powered roles or more importantly work in backrooms where the big decisions are often made. As hard as it is these days, try not to deal with PR or corporate affairs people as they will sometimes just be getting in your way. Remember these days, the PRs outnumber us vastly. Show up to work early and prove that you're ready to take on the big story of the day. There's a lot of satisfaction being the lead story on AM. Try to have a Plan B in your back pocket just in case your original brilliant idea doesn't go anywhere, and the EP comes walking your way.

“Be kind and caring to people who need it. As my father once told me, ‘treat people on the way up the way YOU want to be treated on the way down’.”

Vale Peter Ryan.

Rory Sutton



ABC Friends Spring Dinner 2025

2 October

The Annual Dinner is the occasion where ABC Friends gather to celebrate their support for the ABC. The keynote address by Managing Director Hugh Marks provides him with the opportunity to expand on his vision for the organisation. The Dinner also celebrates the successful nominees for the ABC Friends Excellence in Broadcasting Awards.

The winner for an ABC program, series or documentary is Conversations, hosted by Richard Fidler and Sarah Kanowski. The winner of the award for an outstanding individual from the ABC is Antony Green. Antony, an ABC legend, is recognised for his outstanding election coverages over more than 30 years. Also honoured with a special Excellence Award is science journalist Robyn Williams. Robyn is recognised as a staunch defender of ABC Staff and public broadcasting.

Save the Date

ABC Friends NSW & ACT Annual General Meeting

15 November 2pm

ABC Friends NSW & ACT invite you to our AGM.

**NSW Teacher's Federation,
22-33 Mary Street, Surry Hills**

The guest speaker will be the ABC legend, **Antony Green**, who will also accept his ABC Friends Excellence in Broadcasting Award for an Outstanding Individual from the ABC.

In 36 years as the ABC's chief election analyst Antony worked on more than 90 Australian elections including 13 federal elections.

Please RSVP at:

www.abcfriends.net.au/nswactagm2025



Calling for an ABC Friends volunteer: Social Media Officer NSW & ACT

ABC Friends NSW & ACT is seeking a passionate and skilled Social Media Officer to lead the delivery of our social media strategy and enhance our digital presence. This exciting role includes leading a project on ABC Emergency Services involving approximately 1 day a week. This role may involve some regional travel – disbursements will be covered. Casual remuneration may also be negotiated to secure the right candidate.

Key responsibilities:

- Help deliver the NSW & ACT Social Media Strategy (2024–2026)
- Create engaging content to grow our online community
- Collaborate with ABCF committees, national and state officers, and local branches
- Report on impact and analytics

What you'll bring:

- Commitment to ABC Friends NSW&ACT values and purpose
- Social media experience and project management skills
- Confident digital communication and content creation capabilities
- Research and analytical experience
- The ability to work independently and as part of a team
- Graphic design skills would be a bonus!

If you have the skills and capabilities to help ABC Friends NSW&ACT increase our impact on social media, please let us know.

Help strengthen our social media presence in NSW and ACT

To discuss, please contact:

president_nswact@abcfriends.net.au or
membership_nswact@abcfriends.net.au.

Branch contacts

ACT & South East NSW
Rob Kennedy (Convenor)
kenrob2037@gmail.com

Blue Mountains
Sue Noske (President)
0421 020 610
susano2311@gmail.com

Central Coast
Narelle Knight (Convenor)
0449 223 067
narelleknight@gmail.com

Eastern Suburbs of Sydney
Nizza Siano (Secretary)
02 9327 3423
nizzamax@gmail.com

Mid-North Coast
Drusi Megget (Convenor)
0431 598 125
fabc.midcoast@gmail.com

Northern Suburbs of Sydney
Janine Kitson (Convenor)
janinemkitson@gmail.com
0428 860 623

Northern Rivers
Tim Mulroy (President)
tim2483@bigpond.net.au

Jennie Hicks (Secretary)
0431 958 991
hicksanddickson@gmail.com

Northern Tablelands
Brian Byrne (Convenor)
bbyrne@une.edu.au
Vic Wright (Secretary)
0477 877 315
northerntablelands@abcfriends.net.au

Riverina / Murray
Drew Porter
0409 369 253
drew.porter@bigpond.com.au