

Friends of the ABC Illawarra Branch

Chairperson's Annual Report 2010/11

In my 2009/10 annual report I suggested *“that the ABC is currently on track, being well managed particularly with the limited funding it receives from the Federal Government. Generally speaking, I think the public are relaxed and comfortable with their ABC”*.

For this and other reasons (eg, getting guest speakers) in November 2010 the Friends of the ABC Illawarra agreed, that as we were essentially a political lobby group, we would not expend our energies organising many social events in 2010/11.

On 25 July 2010 we had *“Sunday Lunch with Sue Spencer”* at the Port Kembla Golf Club. Thirty six attended an enjoyable and educational afternoon with the Executive Director of the ABC's Four Corners program. We rounded out 2010 with our regular Christmas Function at the Illawarra Aboriginal Cultural Centre. Due to a death in her family our special guest Pat Hall (ex National Parks & Wildlife) had to pull out at the last moment but the “old pro” that he is, Tony Arthur from ABC Radio winged it on his own and provided our guests with an entertaining afternoon.

How things have changed with the ABC since August last year. On ABC TV we now have programs repeated in very short times and now encores! Where a TV program might be repeated within a few months an encore broadcast might be in the same month or even the same week and sometimes even on the same channel!

The axing of some very popular TV programs (which must be relatively cheap to produce in-house) is now imminent. Examples are *Art Nation* and *The New inventors*. Minister Stephen Conroy rightly asks, why this is so when there have been no recent cuts to ABC funding.

Planned changes to Radio National programming to broaden the station's appeal to a younger cohort are also worrying.

I'm inclined to think that the proliferation of ABC TV channels might have been a bit ambitious or premature if the programming spread is being stretched to the extent that all content except for news and current affairs will soon be completely outsourced and programs need to be continually repeated.

On a local front, ABC Radio Illawarra is now in their new Victoria St premises and perhaps it's time we arranged a tour of this new facility.

The Illawarra Committee has met three times in the 2010/11 financial year (no meetings are scheduled for December or January each year). In this time we have accepted nine new associate members (15 in 2009/10) and financial membership of the Illawarra Branch at 8/8/2011 is 115 (127 last year). Currently we have 30 members who were financial in 2010 and have not renewed in 2011. This figure was 34 this time last year.

Of our financial membership, 64.3% have e-mail. A total of 65 take their newsletters via email, a saving of \$78 in postage in the past year.

Wendy and Eric Ladd became the first life members of the Friends of the ABC Illawarra in view of their generous monetary donation.

In the reporting year we have produced two FABC Illawarra Newsletters.

Once again, I congratulate and thank the Committee for their good work and support during the past 12 months. Once again, it has been a pleasure working with you all!



Chris. Cartledge 8 Aug 2011