

## TONY DELROY and NIGHTLIFE receive BROADCASTING EXCELLENCE AWARD for 2009

**T**ony Delroy openly admits to being a bit eccentric. After all, he does preside over the witching hour, broadcasting Tony Delroy's NightLife across midnight throughout Australia on ABC Local Radio.

Tony's career in radio began while he was studying for his HSC. As he tells it; 'I got a job in the 2SM newsroom. They always say start at the bottom, and the newsroom was in the basement.' After finishing his exams, Tony joined the ABC newsroom while waiting for University to begin. He then worked as a late night DJ at Bathurst, while studying journalism.

Tony joined 702 ABC Sydney in 1987, filling in on everything from breakfast to afternoons, Grandstand to news bulletins, before becoming the host of the late night program. Within two years, the program went national. Tony admits that his wide range of interests is carried into the program and he spends his spare time reading books, magazines and newspapers.

Tony had an ulterior motive behind wanting the late night shift. 'My previous job as News Director of 2UE meant rising at 3.30 every morning, and I vowed that I was going to find a job where I could sleep in'. He loves his hours and adores his late night family of listeners, who range from 9 year olds to 90 year olds.

Tony Delroy's NightLife is a diverse



mix of news and current affairs, lifestyle and entertainment. Regular features include the incredibly popular Challenge. Money matters, science and technology, spiritual questions, human and family issues are discussed with experts, and listeners are given many opportunities for interaction and talkback.

NSW Friends of the ABC is delighted to be able to recognise the work of another ABC broadcaster who is passionate about his craft and committed to Excellence in Broadcasting.



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# The President writes – A Report on 2009



I wrote last year expressing disappointment that the first year of the Rudd Labor Government had produced no positive benefits for the ABC. It is pleasing to be able to report that, in a very difficult budget climate, the ABC was successful in gaining an increase in funding of \$160 million over the next three years - \$67 million for the new digital children's channel (aiming for 50% Australian content in three years), \$70 million for new Australian television drama (most of which will go to independent studios in co-productions), and \$15 million for 50 new regional broadband "hubs," interactive local "town squares" where individuals and organizations will be able to contribute content and react to material being broadcast. The ABC has consolidated its leadership in new styles and techniques of communication, highlighting the importance of the ABC as a source of news, information and entertainment, particularly in rural and regional Australia.

## IS THERE STILL A ROLE FOR FRIENDS?

For those who question the relevance or necessity for Friends of the ABC, it is worth noting that one Federal MP, when asked why the ABC did so well, indicated that in pre-budget discussions in Canberra the ABC was a recurrent theme amongst our political representatives, which suggests that our concerted campaign throughout the months of the budget preparation was successful, and the intense lobbying and letter-writing by branches, individual members and state organizations paid off. Members must be reminded, though, that the additional funds are tied to specific programs. Funds for the daily operation of the ABC remain desperately short (about half what they were in 1986 in real terms), particularly in news, current affairs and radio, so the battle for adequate funding must go on. The BBC

operates on \$107 per person per year in the UK – the ABC receives a little more than that \$40 per person to do the same job.

## THE RADIO NATIONAL PROBLEM

Lack of funds to adequately fulfil its charter underlies the battle with ABC management over programming on Radio National, a battle in which Friends of the ABC was much less successful than the one with politicians over funding. The sweeping changes to the RN program lineup which produced such an extraordinary and negative response from listeners are now a fact of life, and the RN audience is the poorer as a result of the changes. We have lost the breadth and detailed analysis of programs like the Religion Report, the Media Report, The Ark, In Conversation, The Sports Factor, and none of the exciting new and innovative programs promised by management seem to have materialized. Stephen Crittenden, in the opinion of many the most knowledgeable and experienced broadcaster anywhere in the world, was, after a period in the "sin bin," reassigned to Background Briefing, where his specialist knowledge is of little use. The combined weight of Heads of Churches, Catholic bishops, distinguished former ABC staff, and thousands of letters from listeners was not enough to save the Religion Report – an interesting example of ABC management completely ignoring the wishes of its audience. Paul Collins, former Editor-Religion for the ABC, reports in this Update on the gaping holes in the ABC's coverage of religious affairs since the demise of The Religion Report.

## DEPTH and QUALITY vs BUDGET SHORTFALLS

The Radio National problem reflects a widening gap between creative people who make programs and management people who determine the budgets on which those programs depend. Program makers of long standing are

finding the relentless pressure from managers to compromise on quality and depth very debilitating. Traditional ABC values of programming based on merit are disappearing, and the assets of time, experience and dedicated staff (essential for good programming) are being steadily stripped. Long-term staff speak of a loss of diversity, and moves towards presenter-led “flow-programming” (the style adopted by 702 and ABC local radio), the very antithesis of broadcasting of depth, insight and quality, because it is cheaper to produce.

## RECOGNIZING EXCELLENCE

Friends of the ABC acknowledged this tradition of excellence in broadcasting and commitment to quality by recognizing the extraordinary contribution of Play School over 42 years to the education and development of our children, and saluted the achievements of Chris Masters, who retired after 42 years with the ABC, much of that time producing ground-breaking investigative reports, one of which brought down a corrupt government. It was a concern, though, to hear him say that “Moonlight State” could not be produced by today’s ABC – there is simply not the budget to provide the resources of time and staff that were available in 1987 for such investigative reporting. The 2009 Excellence in Broadcasting Award will be received by Tony Delroy, presenter of the *NightLife* program on ABC Local Radio, at the NSW FABC Christmas Party on 27th November (see elsewhere in Update)

## ABC MANAGEMENT

Whilst not agreeing with all of the decisions made by ABC management, it is pleasing to report that Friends of the ABC maintains excellent dialogue with Mark Scott, Managing Director, and other senior managers – Mark is readily available to attend FABC functions, and is willing to meet and talk about issues of concern. He acknowledges the support of FABC in the constant battle for funding and resources for the ABC, whilst agreeing to differ on some management decisions. Friends of the ABC also

recognizes that he has been a very strong advocate for the ABC in discussions with government, and has been passionate and effective in his leadership of the ABC into the new digital technologies. In two recent public lectures, delivered in London and in Melbourne, Mark Scott mounts a passionate defence of public broadcasting in response to the recent attacks from the Murdoch empire. Part of his A.N. Smith Memorial Lecture in Journalism is reproduced in this Update, and Darce Cassidy provides an analysis.

## BOARD VACANCIES

The Federal Government has been slow to act in filling the vacancies on the ABC Board, but the appointment of Michael Lynch and Julianne Schultz were the result of a new “arms length” method of board appointment, with nominations from the public and an independent selection process. We still await the long-promised reinstatement of the staff-elected director. We also await the report on the Federal Government review into the ABC and SBS, to which FABC made a submission which emphasized the ABC charter, funding needs, the ABC’s role in education, creative Australian content, and the needs of Radio National.

## OUR BRANCHES

The strength of local branches, a structure unique to NSW, is crucial to the effectiveness of FABC in its contact with politicians and advocacy and education of the public. Whilst some branches are in hibernation, we applaud the energy and commitment of branch leadership and members in organizing a variety of activities at the local level, typified by another outstanding forum organized by the Blue Mountains branch in July, attended by over 250 people and addressed by Mark Scott, Quentin Dempster and Annabel Crabb. ABC presenters and personalities remain very willing to attend branch activities, always expressing appreciation for the support provided by the Friends. High on the agenda for NSW FABC in 2010, and a discussion point at the 2010 state conference, will be strategies for supporting the branches in their

activities, particularly in drives for membership. There should also be an examination of ways in which NSW ABC can support the other states where, apart from Victoria, Friends of the ABC is not a strong presence.

## MEMBERSHIP in DECLINE

Membership must be a concern – our Membership Secretary reports a steady decline in membership numbers over the past two years, and it may well be that there is a perception that the ABC is no longer under threat from a seemingly benign and sympathetic Labor government. However, the reality is that, as the ABC responds to technological change, it faces even greater challenges in maintaining a quality service to all Australians in traditional broadcasting as well as in the new technologies. We must ensure that the ABC remains totally independent of both commercial and political influence, whilst maintaining the culture of quality that we value so much in our public broadcaster.

The work of NSW Friends of the ABC remains dependent on the commitment of loyal, dedicated people who give many hours to the cause. I pay tribute to the members of the NSW Committee for their support, but particularly James Buchanan, our Secretary/ Treasurer/ Public Officer, Angela Williamson, our Membership Secretary, and Chris Cartledge, Webmaster and technology consultant, without whom we would not be able to function. Their value to our organization is inestimable. I also salute the work of Jason Lowe and his Events Committee.

Our recent annual dinner, with Kerry O’Brien as guest speaker, was an outstanding example of their organizational talents, where a capacity audience was treated to a fascinating journey through Kerry’s life in journalism and with the ABC - his generosity in sharing his time and experiences with us was typical of those at the ABC who have become part of the lives of families right across the country – we trust them as we trust “OUR ABC”.

**Mal Hewitt**  
**FABC NSW President**



# Missing in Action on 'Your ABC'

By Paul Collins

Friends of the ABC will probably remember the very public fracas when *The Religion Report* was taken off air late last year by ABC radio management. What is less well-known is that the leaders of all the mainstream religious faiths in Australia quickly got together to write a protest letter to the Managing Director, Mark Scott, asking him for an opportunity to discuss this issue before the program was taken off-air at the end of last year. A representative group was organized to meet him.

The letter was sent in early-December asking for a meeting before Christmas. They received no reply and eventually, under the pressure of several telephone calls, an executive assistant of Scott informed the convener of the group, the Rev Gregor Henderson, the then President of the Uniting Church of Australia, that the MD would not see them until early February, well after the program was taken off-air.

The group comprised representatives of the President of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, the Primate of the Anglican Church of Australia, the President of the Uniting Church, the President of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry and leaders of the Islamic community and other major faiths. It was a remarkable achievement to get leaders of different beliefs together, and indicated that the religious communities took the commitment of the ABC to specialist religious broadcasting seriously. While the conventional wisdom is that religion is in retreat nowadays, these leaders still represent 75% of the Australian population.

The group that met Scott found it hard to get a word in edgeways. He had much to say about the

'commitment' of the ABC to specialist broadcasting, but he felt that, nevertheless, the kind of thing *The Religion Report* did could be done better in 'general mainstream reporting'. That is, News and Current Affairs could cover religion adequately. The group came away feeling that while they had made their point, there was no commitment from Scott beyond generalities.

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**Talking about presidents: French President Sarkozy has said that the burqa is 'not welcome' in France following a contentious discussion about Islamic dress.**

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So now might be a good time to have a look at how successfully religion has been covered in 'general mainstream reporting' across the networks as promised by Scott. When you do this you start to see the number of important religious stories that have been missed.

Taking deaths first: there has been nothing on the deaths of Thomas Berry (world famous Catholic cosmologist with an influence far beyond Catholicism - yes, there is a piece on the religion webpage, but then, that's 'specialist reporting'). Other deaths included Samuel Huntington (famous 'clash of cultures' historian involving Christianity and Islam), Irving Kristol (Jewish-American godfather of neo-conservatism), Paul Weyrich (who coined the term 'moral majority' and chief organizer of the US religious right), Cardinal Avery Dulles

(son of US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and important Catholic theologian), and Richard John Neuhaus (Catholic convert and leading neo-conservative theologian who often attended the Bush White House). It seemed like the entire US religious right died and 'mainstream' ABC reporting missed it completely.

Then there was the election of US President Barak Obama. Religion was an integral element in this. Firstly, despite the fact that a very noisy group of pro-Republican Catholic bishops attacked Obama on abortion and other social issues, 65 % of US Catholics voted for him, a startling switch from their support for Bush in the previous election when Catholic John Kerry was running. The US Catholic bishops have been in disarray since his election as shown by the shrill episcopal opposition to Obama speaking at a Catholic university, and the bishops' attack on his health care policy when the Vatican supports him. Where has this been covered in the 'mainstream' ABC?

Secondly, Obama cut his teeth as a community organizer working out of a Catholic parish on the poor south side of Chicago bringing all the churches of the area together to address social issues. It was here that he first came in contact with the writings of the great American Lutheran theologian and social thinker Reinhold Niebuhr whom Obama describes as 'one of my favorite philosophers'. There was prominent discussion of Niebuhr's influence on Obama in the US media (e.g. *The New York Times*, National Public Radio and *The New Republic*), but no analysis at all on the 'mainstream' ABC.

Thirdly, when he visited Cairo University on 4 June this year Obama gave a truly significant speech on the

relationship of the West to Islam. He said 'I am a Christian, but my father came from a Kenyan family that includes generations of Muslims. As a boy, I spent several years in Indonesia and heard the call of the azaan at the break of dawn and the fall of dusk. As a young man, I worked in Chicago communities where many found dignity and peace in their Muslim faith.' He also added that tension between the West and Islam is rooted in historical forces that 'go beyond any current policy debate ... More recently tension has been fed by colonialism that denied rights and opportunities to many Muslims, and a Cold War in which Muslim-majority countries were too often treated as proxies without regard to their own aspirations. Moreover, the sweeping change brought by modernity and globalization led many Muslims to view the West as hostile to ... Islam.' It was an important speech, but the 'mainstream' ABC missed it completely.

Talking about presidents: French President Sarkozy has said that the burqa is 'not welcome' in France following a contentious discussion about Islamic dress. And staying with Islam: there was clear division among influential Iranian ayatollahs during the recent election with some religious leaders supporting those who favored democratic reform. While these issues were certainly mentioned on the ABC there was little serious analysis of them. Then there is the pressure on Christian communities in the Middle East leading to the decline of the Christian population as many emigrate: for instance Christians in Lebanon have gone from 50% of the population to 35% in the last twenty years. It's been so bad that Benedict XVI has called a special meeting on the issue for early next year.

And talking about Benedict XVI: his recent encyclical letter 'Charity in Truth' was covered by *Sunday Night with John Cleary*, but was missed in the mainstream with no analysis of the pope's discussion of the global economic crisis and the environment. I suppose it would be too much to ask that the 'mainstream' note the 500th anniversary of the birth of John

Calvin (1509-64), the great Protestant theologian, although given the influence of Calvinism on the development of capitalism you might have expected something, especially News-Current Affairs' infatuation with the minutiae of financial affairs. Then there was the loss of \$165 million by the Sydney Anglican Diocese in the last twelve months (sure, Compass mentioned it, but that's all).

PM did get it right when it reported that the Uniting Church general assembly recognized Aboriginal spiritual heritage in Australia. But again analysis was needed because this involved an important theological concession about the nature of Christian revelation. It meant the Uniting Church acknowledged that Christian teaching was not confined to the bible and that revelation could occur through other religious traditions such as the Aboriginal. This is something the Catholic Church explicitly recognized at the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s.

The 'mainstream' ABC never seems to miss a sexual abuse case when it involves a clergyman. While it mentioned the report on sexual abuse in Ireland, it actually missed the biggest and most scandalous case of all: that of the Mexican priest and friend of John Paul II, Marcial Maciel. He was the founder of a religious order, the Legionaries of Christ and of a large lay movement. Maciel, who died last year, had fathered four and possibly more children by different women, and is reliably accused of abusing one hundred or more young recruits to his religious order. This made headlines overseas, but was missed entirely by the ABC.

These are just a few of the examples I and a couple of others have noted, and remember this only covers a six month period. *The Religion Report* would not have missed any of these issues, but they are understandably too specialist for most editors to spot, let alone cover adequately. I don't blame news/current affairs for this failure. I blame the ABC managers who took *The Religion Report* off-air.

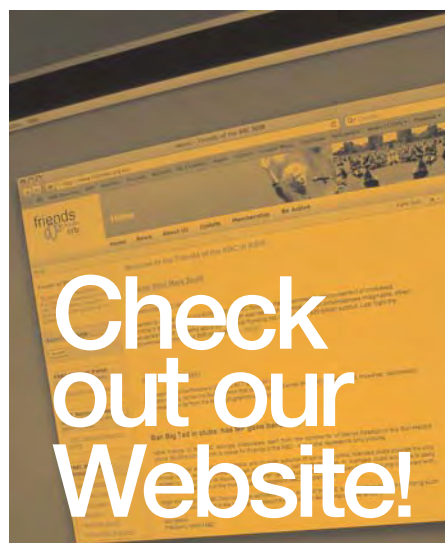
In the end this is not just about religion. It is about specialist broadcasting. Areas like science and religion simply can't be covered adequately by generalist journalists.

Just as the ABC employs specialists to cover finance, business, current affairs and sport, so they need professionally trained broadcasters to cover other specialist areas, such as religion and science. A media degree from some university doesn't make you a specialist.

At a deeper level the ABC is failing in cultural leadership. This needs people who know what they're talking about, in other words, specialization. But in the current ABC specialization is clearly seen as 'too expensive', while a fortune is thrown at so-called 'new media platforms' and editors are heading further and further down-market.

The fact is that ABC management under Kevin Rudd will end up delivering John Howard's vision of the national broadcaster. Now that's ironic.

Writer and broadcaster Paul Collins is a former specialist editor- religion for the ABC.



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# A tale of three lectures

It started in August when James Murdoch delivered the McTaggart Lecture at the Edinburgh International Television Festival.

by Darce Cassidy

While Murdoch focused on the BBC his vitriolic attack went beyond a critique of the BBC to an attack on the legitimacy of all public broadcasting. He went beyond the Murdoch dynasty's familiar claim that the BBC and other public broadcasters were unfair competition to the private sector. He described the BBC as "unaccountable" and accused it of a "land grab" that was "chilling".

Murdoch took particular aim at the BBC's mission to provide something for everyone. Based on the fact that nearly everyone pays for the BBC (and the ABC) public service broadcasters have always understood that to serve the public they were obliged to provide something for everyone, and not simply cater to a middle class elite.

Murdoch took issue with this view and argued that the BBC had become too successful – too dominant, and that it needed to be cut down to size. This statement came from the mouth of one generally regarded the heir to one of the world's largest media empires, arguably the dominant media force in the English-speaking world, at least until recently.

The corollary of Murdoch's argument was that if public service broadcasters were to exist at all they should be banished to the sidelines, filling in the gaps that weren't profitable to private enterprise.

Mark Scott was quick to respond. Two weeks later he delivered the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association Lecture at Australia House in London.

He outlined the Murdoch dynasty's historical antagonism to public

broadcasting, dating back to Sir Keith Murdoch's successful efforts to cut ABC funding because of competition to his newspaper and commercial radio interests.

Speaking of the ABC's commitment to regional audiences Scott said "we must deliver for audiences where they are, not just where the profitable markets are. We have a Charter to fulfil and must deliver service of integrity and quality."

Scott's most robust response came on 14 October when he delivered the A.N. Smith Memorial Lecture in Journalism at Melbourne University.

Murdoch had sought to portray the supporters of public broadcasting as faith-blinded creationists hanging on to the doddering dinosaurs of public broadcasting in a doomed attempt to resist the ruthlessly efficient forces of evolutionary capitalism.

In response Scott titled his lecture *The fall of Rome: media after empire*. He quoted W.H. Auden's "The Fall of Rome" and spoke of "A mosaic of decline. Greatness disappearing piece by piece as a new world emerges."

This suggested that the Murdoch dynasty's attack on public broadcasting was related to its declining fortunes in the new media world.

While Murdoch's holdings are diverse, newspapers and television make up a significant part of the empire.

Scott went on to talk about modern media empires that had been "giants in our lives", but suggested that they might become "helpless witnesses to the unravelling of all they once stood for."

Referring to Murdoch's plans to charge for online news, when previously it had been available free, Scott said:

*It strikes me as a classic play of old empire, of empire in decline. Believing that because you once controlled the world you can continue to do so, because you once sent the rules, you can do so again. Acting on the assumption that you still have the power that befits the Emperor.*

*And while it is always dangerous to underestimate Murdoch, the assumptions that underpin the Murdoch plan seem wistful, and perhaps, wishful. Some mastheads, like the Wall Street Journal and the Financial Times, will have pricing power. They have distinctive content. That content, appropriately used, is more than entertaining and informative, it can be financially valuable.....*

*But what about the rest of what is on offer online? Major events have never been reported more widely. From news reports to commentary, analysis, chatrooms. Photos and video become ubiquitous. When a newspaper breaks a story it becomes news – and everyone reports it. Unless everyone, everywhere decides they will charge – then so much content will be available free.*

Mark Scott is right to say that it is dangerous to underestimate the Murdoch dynasty. We should beware of technological determinism. Empires have survived major technological changes in the past.

He is also probably right in suggesting that James Murdoch's outburst in Edinburgh was a sign of the dynasty's insecurity.

While Murdoch may well be insecure, a sign of his continuing power and influence was the announcement that the Conservative opposition in the U.K. was considering "ripping up the BBC Charter". Given the poor standing of the Labour government in the U.K. a conservative victory seems highly likely at the next election.

The full text of the Scott lectures is available at [www.abc.net.au/corp/pubs/media/s2681848.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/corp/pubs/media/s2681848.htm) and [www.abc.net.au/corp/pubs/media/s2714080.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/corp/pubs/media/s2714080.htm)

The Murdoch lecture is at [www.broadcastnow.co.uk/comment/james-murdochs-mactaggart-speech/5004990.article](http://www.broadcastnow.co.uk/comment/james-murdochs-mactaggart-speech/5004990.article)



# The Murdoch dynasty's war on public broadcasting

Darce Cassidy



**D**elivering the McTaggart lecture in Edinburgh last August James Murdoch made an extravagant attack on public service broadcasting, and

the BBC in particular. He said that the BBC was unaccountable, that it threatened independent news and professional journalism, and would restrict innovation and the growth of creative industries.

While it was unusually forthright, Mark Scott's response to James Murdoch's attack on public broadcasting should not be a surprise. The Murdoch dynasty has had it in for the ABC for more than seventy years.

James Murdoch's grandfather, Sir Keith Murdoch, had interests in eleven of the sixty-five commercial radio stations operating in the late 1930s, in addition to his extensive newspaper interests. He took a tough line against the ABC at every opportunity.

In the first volume of his history of the ABC Ken Inglis writes that by 1937 Murdoch, through his newspaper interests, was calling for a reduction in the ABC's income from licence fees.

Herbert Brooks, on behalf of the ABC delivered a feisty response. In a speech at the opening of a new ABC radio station Brooks criticized the press "especially in Victoria" where Murdoch was based, for its efforts to cripple the ABC's news service.

Knowing that the mainstream press would not report the speech Brooks and the ABC's then General Manager, Charles Moses, arranged for a recording of the speech to be broadcast to the nation the next evening. Smith's Weekly reported the response under the heading "ABC TAKES THE GLOVES OFF"

But the Murdoch empire was able to strike back. In 1940 the Menzies government cut the ABC's share of the broadcasting licence fee from twelve shillings to ten – a sudden reduction of 16%. Around that same time Murdoch took up the wartime position of Director of Information and succeeded, but only temporarily, in taking responsibility for the main evening news bulletin away from the ABC and having it produced in his own department.



## In Conversation with Mark Colvin

11a.m. Saturday November 21  
Grandview Hotel Wentworth Falls

Mark Colvin is the presenter of ABC Radio's current affairs program PM.

Blue Mountains branch of the Friends of the ABC is issuing an open invitation to the community to interact at no cost with an outstanding journalist and broadcaster.

Mark's credits include Four Corners, Nationwide, The World Today, 7.30 report, Foreign Correspondent and Lateline. His film on famine in Ethiopia won a Gold medal at the New York Film Festival.

Mark will follow our brief AGM.

Lunch in the Grandview Hotel Bistro after the meeting will enable further discussion.

**For more information, contact Bob on 47 541620**



# Branch News

## Northern Rivers

The Northern Rivers branch has been relatively inactive over the past few months with members of the executive engaged in travel overseas and within Australia. The following is set of observations on public broadcasting from Branch President Neville Jennings who recently visited North America.



Neville Jennings

“During September and the first week of October I travelled to Washington State near Seattle, took a cruise to Alaska and then travelled east across Canada to Ontario. It was fascinating to see what was on offer in terms of commercial and public broadcasting. Thank God for PBS because the rest of media landscape was a smorgasbord of inanity. There was nothing of the quality of our ABC or SBS. The hosts that we visited were very interested in the ABC web site and the access that it provided to ABC programs through iView and podcasts. One of my retired teacher friends spent many hours enjoying episodes of Summer Heights High, Foreign Correspondent and Four Corners.

There seemed to be nothing to match the broad coverage and quality of the ABC and SBS. Upon returning

home I have come to realize what gems we have in our two public broadcasting networks. I don't think there is anything to match the integrated offerings of the ABC that are available commercial free. There appears to be nothing to compare with Radio National – a service providing food for thought in so many Australian homes and many overseas homes. Programs like Australian Story, Q and A, Message Stick and Insight provide valuable insights into our Australian way of life. What seem to be lacking however are the quality Australian drama programs that were once a feature of our public broadcasting system. We should continue to lobby for increased public funding for the ABC and SBS. We have something quite unique in public broadcasting, a point increasingly recognized by thinking people throughout the world.”

*Neville Jennings*

## Armidale

The Armidale branch of the Friends were lucky enough to have SBS's Anton Enus visit us in September this year to talk about public broadcasting, SBS and his life with the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) where he started his career over 20 years ago. He has been presenting World News Australia TV bulletins from Sydney since 1999.

The University of New England (UNE) kindly allowed us to use the



Val Sherwell with Anton Enus.

Arts Theatre for the evening for which we were very grateful. Anton's talk was most inspiring and he spoke very positively about the integrity and professionalism of SBS and its contribution to Australian multiculturalism and public broadcasting in general. About 100 people attended.

He also read bits from his as yet unpublished memoir, which was full of humour, and will prove an interesting insight into his life.

The President of the Friends contacted UNE to see if they would be interested in doing something with Anton after he had spoken to the Armidale public. They were indeed interested, and arranged for Anton to run a seminar the next day at the university, for students of journalism and English, which tied in with Open Day for the second semester. This was well attended. Many useful questions were raised and I am sure those students who attended came away inspired!

We all went out to dinner afterwards to the Green Papaya, (this restaurant subsequently got an award and mention in the Sydney Morning Herald Good Food Guide for 2009). This reinforced the relationship with the Arts faculty as Prof Jennie Shaw and her husband Adam, Prof Dugald Williamson and Helen Davies and her husband attended. We hope this will lead to further cooperation between FABC and UNE.

This event was our major fund raiser for 2009.

*Val Sherwell*

## Mid North Coast

### **Dust Storm Desolates Port Macquarie members of FABC**

Well actually Port Macquarie had far less dust than Sydney – just a pale grey imitation of Sydney's pollution on 23rd September. But the point was that planes could not get out of Sydney to deliver visitors to Port. And the visitors in question were the ABC Board, coming to Port for their annual regional meeting.

Myself and Harry Creamer, Publicity officer, were invited to the Board's drinkies session along with other

members of the community. I expect other guests to have included Gary Payne, administrator of Port Macquarie Hastings Council and Grant Heaton, Head Teacher at Hastings Public Primary school and Einstein Factor competitor. The ABC is planning to try again with the regional meeting early in the new year.

**In other news –**

- we have plans in April 2010 to travel by train to Sydney to stay for a couple of nights and visit the ABC Ultimo studios.
- We're successfully trying a new meeting venue at a local coffee bar. People seem more interested in a dry meeting if they can drink coffee at the same time.

*Drusi Megget*

## Cowper

Not a great deal to report this quarter. The committee has been busy discussing our end of year get together and preliminary planning for major events for 2010. We have approached Dr Richard Hil, who has accepted, and he in turn is going to ask his friend George Negus to also speak on the subject "The Demise of the Public Intellectual".

A few months back FABC Cowper participated in "Breakfast by the River". This event is held annually and is a big draw card for people around the Mid North Coast and especially people from around Nambucca Heads. With a backdrop like the photo....why would you not 'have brekky by the river'.

During the morning our President, Tony Waugh, noticed the station manager for ABC Mid North Coast, Cameron Marshal. Tony took the opportunity to introduce himself and to acquaint Cameron to what the FABC are doing and to make him aware of the many things that we do in this area and nationally. It is good to see how much management has changed in their attitude and relations with FABC. This seemed to happen after our concerns were expressed to Mark Scott at our regional conference in 08.

*Martin Miller*  
Vice President, FABC Cowper.

# GOVERNMENT ACTS ON BOARD APPOINTMENT PROCESS

On Thursday 29th October, the Government introduced the National Broadcasting Legislation Amendment Bill, which will ensure that appointments to the Board of the ABC and SBS are at arms length from government, are merit-based and are transparent. It will also restore the staff-elected director position to the ABC Board.

This long-awaited legislation was part of Labor policy prior to the last election – it has been a long wait!

However, the Coalition opposes the appointment of a staff-elected director, but is supported by the Greens and Senator Xenophon. So it's time to write to Senator Fielding (Family First) urging him to support the bill.



# THE FALL OF ROME: MEDIA AFTER EMPIRE

**A.N. Smith Memorial Lecture in Journalism 2009 by MARK SCOTT Managing Director Australian Broadcasting Corporation .**

**Wednesday 14 October 2009  
6.30 pm, University of Melbourne**

**This is an edited version of Mark Scott's address. He opened with an analysis of the media empires of the past, and why their time has come, largely as a result of the internet revolution. He continues:**

Much of the content, most of it, nearly all of it when you look at the totality of the web – will be free.

It will certainly be free online at the ABC. We run the most comprehensive news operation in the country, with more reporters locally, nationally and internationally than anyone else.

We report the news, break news and provide space for analysis and commentary. The public pays for the ABC to deliver distinctive, quality content to them – and if it is content we are creating and packaging for them now, they are entitled to view that content free of charge.

We are restructuring our entire operations around our ability to deliver on that commitment: redesigning the way our newsrooms operate, creating new services like our continuous news online and our internet television service, iView.

And as our content is paid for by the public and the public also currently pays for the distribution of our content through terrestrial broadcasts, we will be fighting for that content to continued to be accessed free, including through the national broadband network. 8

Today at the ABC we face plenty of challenges. In a way we are a media giant of our own and face very real demands in this new environment. Like how a public broadcaster created in an era of media scarcity survives in an era of media plenty – how to be heard amidst the clutter?

And standing up to critics who, in the face of their own competitive pressure, will turn against the public broadcaster. Attacking our content, our funding, our right to exist.

The Murdoch speech in the UK attacking the BBC in recent weeks sets up arguments we can expect to emerge here, rolled out by the usual suspects.

The ABC faces the challenge all publishers and broadcasters face to not just be an oracle, espousing the facts and analysis as we see it, but to create space for our audiences to speak to share their knowledge and insights, their creativity and ingenuity. To embed a user-generated

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**The only media organisations that will survive will be those who know and accept that all the rules have changed.**

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content experience at the same time as holding on to our brand, our values, our integrity.

We recognise that younger audiences, with so much more media choice than their parents or grandparents, lack brand loyalty. They will simply pursue the information and entertainment they want, from wherever they can get it, whenever they can get it. And further to user-generated content, many younger people every day are creating and sharing media, simply through social-media and sharing videos, through to far more elaborate and complex creations.

The key to all this is content, of course. Do you have what people want to see, read, hear? And then will they want to talk about it, share it

with others, respond to it – positively or negatively? Engage with it? And can they experience that content where they are?

At the ABC, it doesn't really matter to us how people experience the content we create or curate. What matters is that we are putting content into the media mix that people find engaging and compelling, unique, distinctive – and that we make sure there are no barriers to their seeing it.

Part of this transformation internally is a view about our online content. Unlike other media organisations, we don't need to bring audiences back to our home page so we can sell traffic to advertisers, to get the clicks to monetise. More than 8 million Australians are now spending increasing time each month on Facebook.

And at the ABC, we are now creating widgets so people can take ABC content they like – content they helped pay for – and allow them to share it through their own social networks. They become our distributors.

At the ABC, at times, we are gripped by a fear that we will not have done enough, we will not have been nimble, we will have been too protective and defensive, that we will not have been fast enough or bold enough to meet the challenges of the times.

So we are reengineering our newsrooms to deliver quality news when our audience wants it, not just when we schedule it. Turning our local radio stations into media hubs – full of content generated for broadband, user-generated content, being a community town square.

Declaring war on silos and insulated thinking. Being audience, not organisationally-centred. It affects the way we organise ourselves, the way we work together and cooperate, the way we partner with others, the way we need to cede some space, some

control to our audiences to remain compelling and relevant. If we are to survive as anything more than a shell – a legacy broadcaster, an empire in decline – this is what we must do.

Certainly we see ourselves at the ABC playing an important role in meeting some of these needs. But we all know for sure, there is a greater thirst for knowledge, for insight, for entertainment, for engagement, for viewing and sharing media today than at any other time in history. Never has the audience been bigger. Never has news travelled faster, or been more accessible in more places more quickly. Never has a big news story reached larger audiences in more ways. Ways of telling stories, making them immediate and compelling and alive, have never been more vibrant. The opportunities to connect and engage have never been more exciting.

You have a right to be asking by now – am I offering any solutions?

There are few certainties, but one thing that is certain is that no

solutions will be found through legacy thinking. So let me now make a number of hesitant suggestions:

#1: The only media organisations that will survive will be those who know and accept that all the rules have changed. That the media business has gone from one of the most simple to one of the most complex. Only those who can see now what many generals only see after devastating loss – that the tactics that won them the last battle might just be the ones that deliver them defeat in the next.

Survivors will be those who face up to how the world is, not as they might want it to be. And who are determined to secure a future in that new media world, not just squeeze out a few more years' profits, not just milk the business till the CEO's retirement and the Board moves on.

Even if you are not able to do so today, it will get you thinking about being ready to move into that space in future. At the ABC, we are thinking of a world of ten thousand channels,

not five delivered into your living room. And what that means for television. And what tonight's television schedule means when - at the touch of your remote or on your mobile phone – you can watch any program aired in the last two weeks.

But more than that, we are asking: what is television? What is radio? In doing so, we are questioning nothing less than the very foundations upon which the ABC has been built over the course of 77 years. You have to be ready to be truly bold.

We were successful in persuading Government to get behind our efforts to create more Australian drama, yet we are at the same time looking at future forms of narrative, with initiatives in games, whose stories appeal so powerfully to the generations coming through.

Why? Because we want a future ABC to be a part of their lives, just as it is for their parents and grandparents now.

#2: Successful organisations will be



"It's Mark Scott's latest idea in innovative free news platforms."

endlessly inquisitive about the new, understanding that no-one knows where the next breakthrough idea or technology will come from. You don't just need to find creative partners – you need to let them do what they do – not purchase them and crush them, as many leading media organisations do, but give them space in a strategic alliance to inform you, to build your understanding and help you find new audiences in new ways.

This can mean a different approach to innovation, that I admit is easier at a public broadcaster. Being willing to innovate and take risks so that we can produce a social benefit through the ABC is a responsibility that comes with not having to produce a financial profit.

We invest - not because a profit will be there - but because an audience might be there, someday. That is why unapologetically we have embraced Twitter – uncertain if it is a revolution or a fad, particularly since the gap between the hype and the has-been has never been so narrow. Yet it is just where our future audiences and communities may choose to spend their media time. And we need to be there – with those audiences.

#3: Successful organisations will be willing to empower their audiences to contribute, to create and to share media. Will cede power to audiences to gain engagement and respect. They will be willing to let other voices to be heard. They will learn how to protect brand integrity whilst entrusting their brand to others.

To a degree everyone is doing this, but the greatest success will come when an audience, long treated with an oligipolist's disdain, is treated with real respect and the contribution is seen as a valued contribution. The simple fact is that young audiences – the future of every media organisation, including the ABC – have the tools and now the experience and the expectation to create and share media.

They do it with their friends, they want to do it with us. It is how they connect and belong. And the media organisation that doesn't make audience contribution a central part of their strategy, fades to black. We recognised immediately that by mixing content that comes from

within the ABC with content from without, the pro-am model we end up with the most powerful content possible.

We are still working on getting the balance right.

Yet it's only by maintaining a strong editorial role that we'll reinforce, not undermine, the ABC brand. Even Wikipedia's Jimmy Wales acknowledges that the secret is in the edit – which might explain why an aggregating site which has acquired such a huge community of users - The Huffington Post – lists 62 editors and just 4 reporters. We'd shoot for a slightly different ratio ourselves!

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I suspect historians will look back on the closing years of this decade and say this was the time when the media world shook where business models failed, where technology empowered, and when opportunities erupted.

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And we have to come to terms with the undeniable fact that for the scoop on many news events, we cannot hope to compete with the "audience". We need to team up with them.

They have time, opportunity – particularly with that powerful, instant publishing double act, Twitter and Twitpic – and they have the numbers.

#4: Part of the protection of media assets will come through diversification, as has been the case with News and The Washington Post. Commercial media have found themselves long in assets greatly threatened by this revolution, like newsprint and free-to-air television, with no other growth story, will remain greatly challenged.

And finally #5: The great challenge on all this is to start within, on areas of culture and behaviours. Recognising your old internal fiefdoms came from another world. I am constantly struck by conversations with people across a range of media organisations who

would testify that despite all the revolution in the media world the old line is true "we have seen the enemy and it is us". That in our organisations, if we could only agree on a strategy that was widely understood and stick with it and we worked together – putting all the old internal battles and turf wars behind us – we would give ourselves a far better chance.

The fate of our media organisations, our industry, our future – will be determined by us.

At the ABC we are constantly at work on this. Thinking through what it means to be a public broadcaster in a digital age. Working out what it means to reach more Australians in more ways more often. To enrich every Australian's life. To be the town square.

We are committed to learning how to work with each other, to respect each other, to learn from each other. It has generated some comment, some cynicism, but finally I think that the establishment of key organisational values at the ABC - Integrity, Respect, Collegiality, Innovation - has helped us think about how we need to work to deliver our future.

The ABC is currently 77 years old. I expect we will see 100. And when we are 100, I suspect historians will look back on the closing years of this decade and say this was the time when the media world shook where business models failed where technology empowered and when opportunities erupted. Where new futures emerged through all the despair, loss and uncertainty.

I fear I have ended up taking longer than Gibbon. So let me conclude here with a line I use often at the ABC – the words of John Schaar who said the future is not the place we are going, it is a place we are making. The paths to the future are made not found, and the process of making them changes both us and our final destination.

Despite all that has happened to them and is happening now, the fate of our organisations lies with us: our strategic insight, how we can work together. Our courage, our boldness, our imagination.



# LETTERS to the EDITOR

## ABC falls far short

My concern is the lack of serious discussion by the ABC of problems with the Australian Constitution, the country's political system and its electoral systems. As an educator of the community the ABC falls far short on enlightening the electorate about (a) how the existing systems work (b) what the problems are with these systems, and (c) what strategies are advocated by critics to move in a different direction. Critical political education in Australia is woefully inadequate altogether but an independent broadcaster could take on the role of providing information. A special program could be run called "Australia's political system - how can it be improved?" and/or "What kind of Republic?" Sessions should take on a comparative character and not just be comparative in an Anglo fashion, limited to the English-speaking world. The ABC could play a major role in taking the lead in this process thereby stimulating wider debate in the media. The public needs to be encouraged asking themselves questions about the system, e.g. the adversarial two-party system (why do we have that, what are the problems with it?); the functional amateurism of Ministers (what is it so and how can it be done differently?); the inflexibility of the Australian Constitution as a result of which we have an archaic document that is out of touch with the society it is meant to serve; why should we battle on with a federal system that is no longer appropriate? There are at least five or six major subsidiary systemic issues that seem far removed from the public's knowledge and are not tackled by the major parties.

It is very important for the ABC to tackle this as it would move the organisation in the direction of objective political education, NOT indoctrination. The nation has to be politically educated in the most comprehensive, and impartial manner. The ignorance of the general public in this respect is absolutely staggering. We are talking here about political science for the general public, "Why is it so?" type programs, both on radio and TV, based on appropriate topics, appropriate non-

academic delivery of suitable duration and format, presented by carefully selected commentators, with input from practitioners, MPs, staffers, etc. Such a program is something quite different from make-belief programs whereby actors play the roles of MPs and staffers, like "Party animals" or similar, which have been aired in recent years. I think this can be done and that it would be much appreciated by viewers and listeners provided that the sessions are informative, objective, non-party political and not typically academic.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Klaas Woldring,  
Associate Professor, Political Science  
and Management,  
Southern Cross University (ret)  
Pearl Beach, NSW, 2256

*Thank you, Klaas, for your thought-provoking contribution to what should undoubtedly be a debate throughout the country. (Ed.)*

## A different approach

I felt that I should delay no longer in recognising Mal's generosity in printing an article of mine in the last Update. While open differences of opinion can be destructive, they can also expose matters that are being neglected or badly handled, or perhaps simply in need of a different approach. It should never ever be a requirement of such debate that it conforms to the convenience of particular groups within the organisation, whether those of the board or committee or management or anyone else. In this case, the exchanges between I and others would seem to have led to a rapprochement that appears to be universally beneficial to the organisation and all involved. It can only assist NSW FABC in handling important ABC issues.

Notwithstanding the criticisms of the ABC, that someone like John Howard (who worked so hard to destroy an independent ABC) should have been willing to appear on The Howard Years, and encourage others to appear, indicates how the ABC has become an institution.

FABCs, like the ABC Board, have for

a long time been tolerant of tied funding. It is a position FABCs should perhaps reconsider, notwithstanding the risks to ABC funding. Distortion of output and of structure are an increasingly obvious result, due to the need to have a commercial outlet for outsourced drama and documentaries, and due to governments funding only what gives an electoral dividend. Another consequence is to ease any decision to flog it off. If anything, such distortions increase the pressure for commercialisation. So while Labor has so far been considerably more generous to the ABC than I'd thought likely, it has only been so in two areas both likely to provide a political dividend by the next election.

Newman's and Scott's vindictiveness over the Chaser issue were not evidence of good or enlightened leadership. Indeed, it is difficult to have confidence in the integrity of either, for reasons discussed on the List. However the focus on exploiting new technologies by both they and Balding/McDonald was and is crucial.

They appear to be continuing the Howard approach to the intellectual section of the ABC, specifically Radio National. Radio National's entire network annual promotional budget is negligible, precisely because the over-50s to whom it appeals will stay for as long as the quality is there. Podcasting/vodcasting is directed more to a new, younger audience. Resigning The Chaser on ABC TV for just one year cost the ABC \$6 million after a bidding war with the commercial stations - a third of RN's entire budget, and nearly a third of the expected annual cost of ABC3.

It would also seem best to be honest about the divide between NSW, ACT and SA on one hand, and Vic FABC and its (politically and operationally invisible) satellites on the other.

No staff-elected director position is at all likely to be created in the foreseeable future without a continuing campaign. It is now very obvious that the Government has no intention of creating a position to which the ABC's Chairman M. Newman is clearly deeply hostile. It is fascinating that all these senior and affluent people trumpet the virtues of democracy, yet ensure that their deliberations are not polluted by any democratic worker-representative presence. Indeed, the regular disputes between the staff-elected directors and the Board demonstrates the lack of regard successive Boards have had towards the employees and their knowledge and experience.

Also, the point made by Darce about the excessive cost of the Macquarie broadcasting arrangements would seem eminently worthy of investigation. We will all have heard of how while the “Macquarie model” is broken, the Macquarie Group is even at the end gouging as much as possible from its satellites before sending them back towards Earth at great cost to the shareholders.

Finally, I can't emphasise too strongly that achieving any worthwhile result will require self-confidence and assertiveness. But, as with climate change, there are also consequences for doing nothing. While Zaphod Beeblebrox's sunglasses spared the wearer any feelings of anxiety or distress by going dark in the presence of danger, the question does arise as to whether such a feature was always the best option.

My thanks to the NSW Friends for your willingness to hear my views.

Roger Raven  
Former President,  
WA Friends of the ABC



## CALLING ALL ARGONAUTS

Friends of the National Film and Sound Archive, Canberra, is creating a register of former Argonauts, the famous ABC Radio Club for children in the 1950s and 1960s, which at its peak had 100,000 members.

The objective of the project is to find former Argonauts, their club names, and some details of the programs. This record of information will enhance an important piece of Australia's history and is a wonderful opportunity for Argonauts to reconnect with some terrific memories of their youth.

If you, or family and friends, were Argonauts, please pass on this opportunity to register. The website address is:  
[www.archivefriends.org.au/index.php/argonauts-registration-form](http://www.archivefriends.org.au/index.php/argonauts-registration-form)

# Reviving the Radio National Imbroglia

Peter Pockley \*

More than 12 months since major changes to specialist programs on Radio National were revealed in dramatic circumstances, ABC management, from top to middle ranks, have yet to produce any evidence or significant arguments for making changes which caused such a hue and cry from the listening public. Management gave the impression then and, by continuing silence, now that the consequential issues were trivial and worthy of only being swept under the carpet of responsibility to an audience which is broadly supportive of public broadcasting.

Managing Director Mark Scott seems to give every impression of considering this a marginal matter while he played bigger games with government for increased funding. Having had some welcome success in this campaign he would do well to mend fences with his critics over the RN imbroglia.

First, let us recall what was at stake when an internal decision was made to drop several programs from the 2009 line-up. The axing of Wednesday morning's *The Religion Report* was uncovered internally with an abrupt memorandum to staff which was leaked by affected, outraged staffers and dramatised by Stephen Crittenden's explosive revelation “live” on air.

But RR was not the only casualty as two other morning programs with specialist focus, *The Media Report* and *The Sports Factor*, were also summarily canned. The Science Unit suffered yet another blow with the silencing of *In Conversation* on Thursday evenings, a fine long-form interview program with Robyn Williams which personalised scientists. Management had form in reducing the science output with their previous closure of *Earthbeat*, the weekly environment report, and *The Buzz*, also a weekly, this time on technology.

Across in TV, the most dramatic execution was of the entire Natural History Unit which had developed world-renowned and locally popular expertise with wildlife programs which were solidly based on scientific research. Last year, too, management approved the sacking (euphemistically “surplus to requirements”) of Dr Richard Smith, one of Australia's most outstanding producers of science-based documentaries; e.g. his widely acclaimed *Crude*. Many other in-house producers were also shown the door as ABC discarded its own dedicated band of professionals in favour of “outsourcing”, a move that enshrines lack of continuity in core programming. The sole remaining in-house science program on TV, *Catalyst*, keeps its end up well but has its “seasons” limited, having been pushed into “summer recess” this year before the start of November.

Dedicated, long-term specialisation provides the heartbeat and circulation of a network like Radio National and the battering its value has taken in the past two years is nothing short of national tragedy in the making. While Scott adds resources to the internet, the medium he best understands, RN is forced to “make do” with static or relatively shrinking support.

The RN issue showed that Scott, in a kind of Napoleonic gesture, had over-reached when he appointed himself Editor-in-Chief of ABC programs. He has far too many other responsibilities as head honcho to be able to comprehend the depth of a flagship like RN. When his middle managers had made a mess of selecting programs for the chop and of implementing the changes he beat a retreat into silence. He eventually came to realise the seriousness for his status and almost certainly exercised pressure leading to the sudden departure of Sue Howard as Director of Radio (as a whole, not only of RN).

I got close to this action as a result of my letters to the editors of *The*

*Sydney Morning Herald* and The Australian Financial Review, summarising my lengthier correspondence, addressed to Scott personally, but marked as "Open Letters" in an ultimately failed attempt to get ABC management to engage in genuinely public debate. When Howard eventually responded for Scott, her letter failed totally to answer any specific point in my letters and ignored a long list I provided of criticism from other sources in the print media. Howard's letter appears to have been her final act before walking out the ABC's door for good a week before Christmas.

My response was addressed again to Scott and he eventually replied by mail but placed a ban on the letter being copied or circulated. By this act Scott revealed unambiguously that he would not engage the critics and confirmed that he was in no mood to consult with bodies in the community who were erstwhile strong backers of specialist programs like religion and science, just as his

middle managers had failed so conspicuously to do when crafting their plan for axing some specialist programs. While he may have thought this put paid to the matter, his letter did not advance any evidence or argument for the changes beyond Howard's flaccid reply.

Sure enough, the head of steam over the RN closures did dissipate in the public arena but at the expense of a weakened RN coverage. Former specialist editor, ABC Religion, Dr Paul Collins gave vent to this in a well-documented survey of major developments in religion since the RR was closed which have been ignored in ABC programs. (See Paul's article in this issue of Update)

What can be done as remedy? First, Scott should doff his Editor-in-Chief hat and anoint in his stead a highly experienced and respected broadcaster/editor to exert oversight and catalytic insertion of fresh ideas in content and not merely be a disciplinarian chasing errors of fact or judgement. This senior officer needs

to be sufficiently well qualified to earn the respect of specialist broadcast staff and the wider community.

Secondly, the composition of the ABC Board needs amendment to make it manifestly expert in *broadcasting*, not merely in supervising management. The Act should require a majority of members to have significant broadcasting experience. The government's long-delayed, recent decision to re-instate a staff-elected Board member is a useful start but that appointee will require backing from others with similar experience. Together, they should ensure the pre-eminence of broadcast programs over ancillary services like the web.

*\* Dr Peter Pockley became the ABC's first specialist science broadcaster and founding head of the Science Unit. Forty five years on, the Unit survives, though substantially shrunken. He remains an active science correspondent, now mainly in print media.*



Going  
up:

## public approval for ABC's content - and the chief executive's salary

**Ari Sharp**  
Communications Correspondent

**Sydney Morning Herald**  
October 28, 2009

The ABC chief, Mark Scott, was given a pay rise of at least \$30,000 last year but his chairman, Maurice Newman, has taken a pay cut, the broadcaster's annual report has revealed.

In his third year as managing director, Mr Scott's pay reached between \$645,000 and \$659,999, up from the \$600,000 to \$614,999 he was paid a year earlier.

But pay to the next best rewarded director, presumed to be Mr Newman, a former investment banker and stock exchange chairman, fell from between \$150,000 and \$164,999 to between \$135,000 and \$149,999.

Mr Scott, a former Fairfax Media senior executive, caused controversy earlier this month when he declared the public broadcaster would aggressively expand its online presence despite objections from commercial media figures that it would hurt their ability to make money on the internet.

The annual report also revealed that Australians are more satisfied with the ABC's performance than they were a year ago, according to a survey that will embolden the national broadcaster in its expansion plans for TV, radio and online.

Figures gathered for the ABC by Newspan found 89 per cent of people value the broadcaster and its services to the community, up 1 per cent.

Those who believe quality programming was provided by ABC television was steady at 82 per cent,

and those who agreed quality programming was delivered by ABC radio was up 4 per cent to 69 per cent.

But critics of Mr Scott's internet plans get some support for their case by the fact that the only indicator to decline was the percentage of people who thought ABC online was providing quality content. That figure was down 2 per cent, to 89 per cent.

Complaints to the national broadcaster fell more than 20 per cent to 32,130 last financial year, with the most complained about program being The Chaser's War on Everything, which caused 4995 complaints, putting it at the top of the list for a second year running.

The reason for the shifts in pay were not explained in the broadcaster's annual report.



## State and Regional Branches

### National Web Portal links to all State Branches.

Go to:  
[www.friendsoftheabc.org.au](http://www.friendsoftheabc.org.au)

#### New South Wales

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#### Tasmania – FABC

Melissa Sharpe  
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#### FABC RESOURCE CENTRE

Darce Cassidy  
[www.friendsoftheabc.org](http://www.friendsoftheabc.org)



## Membership Form *Please fill out the form below and return it with your payment to:*

*The Treasurer, Friends of the ABC (NSW) Inc.  
PO Box 1391, North Sydney NSW 2059.*

**Use only if joining** or if your membership has expired.

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

(Please Print)

Partner

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Suburb \_\_\_\_\_ P/Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (Home) \_\_\_\_\_ (Work) \_\_\_\_\_ Mob \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to join  I would like to renew  Membership No. \_\_\_\_\_

Age Group  30 or under  31-50  51+

I would like to receive my copy of  
Update Magazine electronically.

**My details will be passed on to my local FABC branch.** (Strike out if you disagree)

	1yr.	3yrs.
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$20	\$55
<input type="checkbox"/> Family/Household	\$25	\$70
<input type="checkbox"/> Student	\$15	\$40
<input type="checkbox"/> Pensioner	\$15	\$40
<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate (covers 3 people)	\$60	-
<input type="checkbox"/> I would like to make a donation	\$ _____	
<b>Total \$</b>	_____	

I am paying by  cheque in favour of FABC (NSW) Inc.

visa  mastercard  money order

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_

Name on credit card \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry date \_\_\_\_\_

Cardholders Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_