



VIC NEWS

Issue 3
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Rally at the Centenary of Parliament Commemoration

Thursday 10th May 9am sharp

Victorian Parliament House (bottom of the steps in Spring Street)

Friends of the ABC will rally outside the commemorative sitting of the Commonwealth Parliament in the Victorian Parliament House. This sitting is one of the activities celebrating the coming together of Australian states as a nation.

The ABC is being starved of funds and is in serious danger of being commercialised. This is an opportunity to let politicians of all political persuasions know the Australian nation needs its independent public broadcaster.

BYO placard, or just bring a friend.



'An Evening with Aunty'

Wednesday 18th April
7pm for 7.15pm start

at The Barn, Montsalvat,
Hillcrest Avenue, Eltham

music by the Judi Jacques
ensemble

wine & supper provided

Tickets \$15, \$12.50 concession

Bookings essential:

FABC Diamond Valley local group: Maree 9432 0190,
Jan 9439 8329, Yvonne 9439 7703

hear

**Phillip Adams,
Robert Manne,
Morag Fraser &
Merle Thornton**

on The ABC –
its people, its purpose
and its plight

Keep an Eye Out

- FABC is keen to be informed of local events and festivals at which we could conduct stalls.
- In an election year, visits of significant politicians to some electorates are likely to increase. Events addressed or attended by such politicians provide an opportunity for FABC to have a polite presence, to remind politicians of the importance of the ABC to the community. *Please help to keep FABC informed.*

Position Vacant Administrative Officer (paid)

Up to 38 hours per week

Friends of the ABC seeks a person with a wide range of skills to run its small, busy office. Proficient operation of PC office software, and ability to perform the array of tasks required for the effective operation of an office and to manage the work of volunteer workers are essential. Experience in bookkeeping on MYOB an advantage but not essential.

Please contact FABC office to obtain a position description and further details.

Bus to Parliament

In June this year FABC plans to travel in a bus and/or possibly a convoy of cars to Canberra. The convoy will stop at some major regional towns along the way to Canberra, and there will be day trips to some marginal electorates prior to leaving Melbourne for Canberra.

We anticipate our journey between Melbourne to Canberra will involve overnight stays at Bendigo and Albury-Wodonga, that we will stay two nights in Canberra, then return directly home to Melbourne.

As yet, we have not costed this activity. It may be that FABC members in Canberra could assist by providing some billets. Supporters may want to join us for some



parts of the trip, meet us at some locations along the way, or even travel all the way to Canberra.

Think you may be interested to be involved? Please contact: Michael Kinnane ph/fax 5271 1222 or Georgina Simmonds ph 9525 8552 email simmonds@enternet.com.au

Good idea for a name? FABC would welcome your suggestions on a name for this expedition to Parliament to save the ABC. Please give them to the office by your preferred method of communication. The name must be short, relevant, and contain no swear words!

Be Alert ...

Now that the public has impressed on Mr Jonathan Shier its requirements for its national broadcaster, the Managing Director's words are changing. But his words,

now seeming to address the public's concerns, are too often 'double-speak'. And there are strong indications that his actions are not matching the impression he seeks to create.



with thanks, Michael Leunig & The Age

In his recent address to the National Press Club, titled 'An ABC for all Australia', Mr Shier outlined his four principal tasks over the next four years to 'revitalise' the national broadcaster:

The Four Tasks Mr Shier Outlined:

Why worry?

- "ensure ABC access to all major distribution platforms, including analogue, digital, terrestrial, cable, satellite and G3 wireless, whether on free to air TV or pay TV"
- "engage audiences with programs and content more relevant to a broader range of community needs and interests"
- "decentralise more activities and services to better reflect the needs and multiple identities within Australia, including a 40% increase in non news and current affairs TV production in centres outside of Sydney and Melbourne"
- "ensure that the ABC operates in a fully businesslike and enterprising manner, as opposed to commercial, to deliver a social profit to the Australian community"

Instead of the country's national broadcaster being a resource accessible to all in our community, are some services, some programs, to become available only to those who can afford to pay?

What will happen to ABC content in the traditional broadcasting areas of radio and television as scarce funds are diverted toward new technologies?

Will we see more genuine diversity on the ABC, (almost impossible to achieve with insufficient funds)? Or will we see more of the programming Mr Shier believes is required to secure government support? And will ABC programming be 'dumbed down' in an attempt to achieve high ratings?

We all want increased staffing and programming in our local areas. But is this another way of cutting staff, of further culling the highly skilled people who have produced quality services and programming over many years. Is its aim to break the public broadcasting staff culture which has so fiercely protected ABC independence?

Mr Shier continues to pursue money raising activities which risk compromising the ABC's independence – for example, a business arrangement with a financial institution to introduce an ABC credit card, and sale of content, including news and current affairs, to commercial on-line operators. He has not ruled out all proposals of the Bales report for the 'Disneyfication' of the ABC.

The ABC Board, the guardian of the ABC, is not responding publicly to Mr Shier's plans and their implications. Keep writing to the media and to the ABC Board: Mr Donald McDonald, Chairman, ABC Board, GPO Box 9994 Sydney 2001. In the end, it is public opinion which must prevent the commercialisation of the ABC. When the ABC's independence is threatened, whether from within or without, we must ...

... Speak Out