



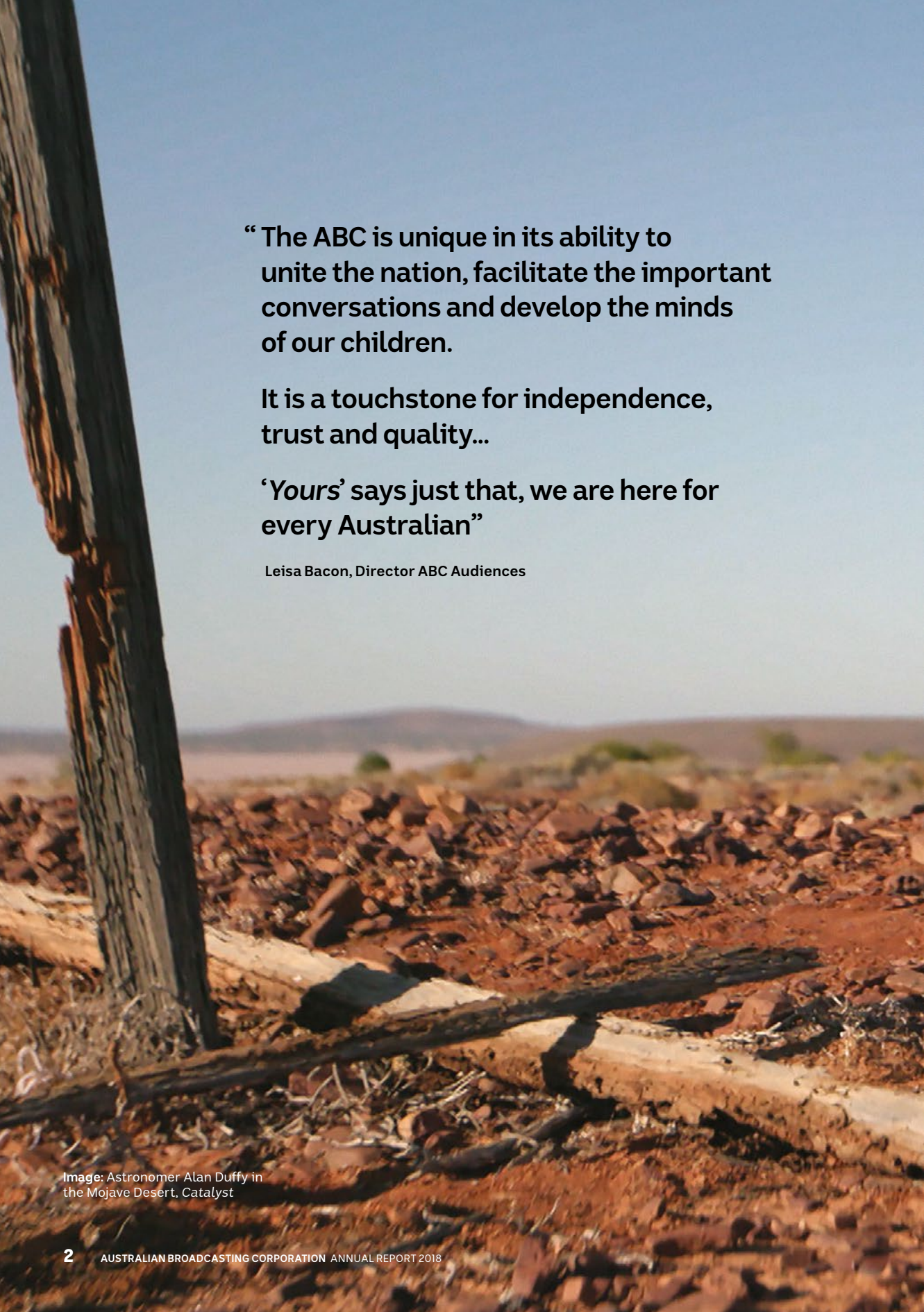
Australian
Broadcasting
Corporation

VOLUME I

*Yours. Now
& into
the Future*



ANNUAL REPORT 2018



“The ABC is unique in its ability to unite the nation, facilitate the important conversations and develop the minds of our children.

It is a touchstone for independence, trust and quality...

‘Yours’ says just that, we are here for every Australian”

Leisa Bacon, Director ABC Audiences

Image: Astronomer Alan Duffy in the Mojave Desert, *Catalyst*





Letter to the Minister



20 September 2018

Senator the Hon Mitch Fifield
Minister for Communications and the Arts
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister

The Board of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation is pleased to present the Annual Report for the year ended 30 June 2018.

The Report is prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* and the *Australian Broadcasting Corporation Act 1983*. It was approved by the Board on 20 September 2018 and provides a comprehensive review of the ABC's performance and delivery in line with its Charter remit.

The editorial theme of this year's report, *Yours, Now and into the Future*, speaks to the Corporation's commitment to create and deliver outstanding and compelling content that connects with audiences in the rapidly changing media environment.

The ABC continues to find new and innovative ways to share Australian stories. Embracing technological change enables us to provide quality content across our platforms to ensure that all Australians have access to, and a connection with, a trusted and independent source of important news, information and conversations.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Justin Milne', is positioned above the printed name and title.

Justin Milne
Chairman



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Welcome

To audiences and producers alike, change in the media sector is the new constant. But there is another constant that is becoming increasingly important as we move into a new digital era of personalised media, smart devices and instant access. It is the need for values like independence, trust, quality and community service.

Values matter because they anchor communities in times of disruption. They provide security, stability and dependability. The public places a premium on institutions that manage change while staying true to their core values. They mark down those institutions who sacrifice values for other priorities.

This is where Your ABC matters. The national broadcaster has been renowned for its ability to adapt to fast-moving technological advances and resultant audience trends to better connect Australians. Innovation is in its heart and articulated as one of its main Charter responsibilities. But adaptation has always been within a broader commitment to public service, to providing Australians with the distinctive output they expect.

Over the reporting period, the ABC, led by its Board and management team, has sought to address the twin constants of change and reliance on the values that mark the national broadcaster. We have done so within the constraints of a tighter funding envelope and increasing cost pressures. We have done so cognisant of our role within the broader creative sector and the need, in all our activities, to pay regard to what is happening in the commercial and community spheres.

The Annual Report charts our progress and our achievements.

The Investing in Audiences Strategy has been the focus of our activity. The strategy recognises that the national broadcaster must always strive to develop programming and other services that reflect Charter values, meet audience expectations and find new and innovative ways of storytelling.

It compels the ABC to be nimble and creative, getting the best out of our people and striving always to improve the audience experience.

We have done much internally and externally to realise that strategy and to adhere to the central tenets of transparency, accountability and efficiency. Our first Annual Public Meeting was important in highlighting our plans and providing a detailed snapshot of our performance. In February, we implemented the second part of our restructure, reorganising our content teams so they better align with audience needs and reduce duplication in effort and in resourcing.

We have launched our Regional Connecting Communities program, funding 80 new jobs and boosting resources for increased local news, weather and live coverage in areas outside the capital cities. At a time when commercial models are finding it hard to sustain regional reporting, the ABC's commitment in this area is crucial.

Just as vital is the ABC's commitment to hosting the national conversation and to investing in key genres like science, the arts and education. The ABC utilises its cross-platform skills, its reach and its creativity to inform, educate and entertain – often in the one event. *War on Waste* and *Stargazing* have been notable successes in galvanizing communities, encouraging participation and providing important 'water cooler' conversations.

Four Corners continues to set the agenda in investigative reporting, forcing policy makers and regulators to respond. Our investment in informing and educating children through programming and digital services is unmatched. We maintain a pivotal role in the broader creative sector, working in cooperation with the independent sector and the creative agencies to bring the best of Australian storytelling to our screens.

Industry dynamics have given rise to new calls for the ABC to abandon its Charter and to focus only on market-failure roles like children’s television and regional journalism. These calls ignore our history and our legislative remit – the ABC has always co-existed alongside commercial media and its Charter recognises that it has a broader role than just filling market gaps. It is there to provide programming that meets the needs of both niche and mass audiences. As the Minister for Communications and the Arts, Senator Mitch Fifield, has noted: investment in public broadcasting is an investment in diversity. That investment yields tangible results. While the ABC’s output and value cannot and should not be measured only in dollar terms, independent research commissioned by us shows that in 2016–17, the ABC contributed more than \$1 billion to the economy. For every three full-time equivalent jobs created by the ABC, another two jobs are created in the external supply chain.

In a rapidly-changing Australian media sector, the need for independence, quality, distinctiveness and local storytelling is paramount. As is innovation. The ABC is pivotal in developing new services and programs that engage, stimulate and reward audiences, not advertisers. iView is the standout Australian platform for video streaming. We continue to set the pace in podcasting: Australians now download more than 14 million ABC podcasts each month, led by Richard Fidler’s *Conversations*, which often has more than 3 million downloads across its episodes each month. The ABC listen app has been launched to great success.

We know that more needs to be done. We need to continue transforming our operational base, unlocking funds that can be invested in new content and services. We continue to work on fresh approaches to motivate and empower our creative employees.

Australians quite rightly expect the national broadcaster to use its funds efficiently and effectively. We are currently participating in two separate reviews into public broadcasting and will have to make significant adjustments to deal with the three-year funding freeze announced by

the Government in May this year. However, there is a limit to the Corporation’s ability to continually absorb budget cuts. They curtail the ABC’s ability to put internal efficiencies to best use – in new programming and services that audiences cherish.

The public have made clear, through our own independent tracking and through external surveys, that they support a properly-funded national broadcaster to provide diversity and quality in Australian media. They view the ABC as a valuable public asset and put their faith in a fully independent board and management working to a clearly defined Charter to deliver. It is this system that best protects the values of independence, trust and community service.

Justin Milne
ABC Chairman


Michelle Guthrie
ABC Managing Director



The ABC is Yours



Key

-  Australian locations
-  International bureaux and news correspondents

For more information regarding the ABC's domestic and international offices, see Appendix 14 in Volume II, page 247.



Darwin

Katherine

Kununurra

Alice Springs

Mount Isa

Cairns

Townsville

Mackay

Rockhampton

Longreach

Bundaberg

Sunshine Coast

Brisbane

Gold Coast

Lismore

Toowoomba

Coffs Harbour

Port Macquarie

Tamworth

Broken Hill

Dubbo

Orange

Muswellbrook

Newcastle

Port Lincoln

Port Pirie

Renmark

Adelaide

Mildura

Wagga Wagga

Sydney

Wollongong

Nowra

Horsham

Bendigo

Wodonga

Mount Gambier

Ballarat

Shepparton

Bega

Warrnambool

Melbourne

Sale

Burnie

Launceston

Hobart

Yours

for quality content

On the radio

ABC NEWS on radio

a national, 24-hour news network for radio

National Radio Networks¹

RN, ABC Classic FM, triple j

Capital City Local Radio²

available from all 8 capital cities

Regional Local Radio

available from 48 regional locations around Australia

Digital Radio³

Double J, ABC Classic 2, ABC Jazz, ABC Country, ABC Grandstand, triple j Unearthed, ABC listen and ABC KIDS listen⁴

Radio Australia

a news and information service for the Pacific region

On your TV

ABC

the ABC's primary television channel

ABC KIDS / ABC COMEDY

television for preschoolers until 7.30pm; then Comedy for the grown ups

ABC ME

a dedicated children's channel

ABC NEWS on television

broadcasting national and breaking news 24 hours a day

-
1. Also available in mainland capital cities as a digital radio service, and via digital satellite subscription services.
 2. Also available in mainland capital cities as a digital radio service. Some Local Radio services are available via digital satellite subscription services.
 3. All available as DAB+ stations and streams, except ABC Classic 2 which is only available as a stream.
 4. Double J and ABC Jazz are also available on free-to-air digital and subscription television services.

Online

ABC News Digital

live news coverage, in-depth journalism and analysis

abc.net.au

your gateway to ABC news, information, and entertainment

ABC iview

the ABC's online television catch up and streaming service

Streaming

on ABC listen and via ABC websites

ABC Open

where regional Australians tell their stories

On your phone or tablet

apps for smartphones and tablets

To buy

ABC Retail

ABC Shop Online
ABC Centres throughout Australia

Publishing and licensing

magazines, books and merchandise

Content sales and distribution

home entertainment, format and content sales, syndication

ABC Music and Events

a variety of music products and live events

Studio and Media Production

provision of surplus production facilities to the market

International

Australia Plus

television, radio and online services for audiences across Asia and the Pacific¹

ABC International Development (ABCID)


partnering with media, civil society and government organisations in the Asia-Pacific region, to assist in designing and delivering communication initiatives

1. ABC Australia from 1 July 2018 <http://www.abcaustralia.net.au/>

Purpose and vision

The ABC's **purpose** is to fulfil its functions as set out in the ABC Act, particularly the ABC Charter

Our **vision** is to be the independent source of Australian conversations, culture, and stories



The Investing in Audiences Strategy
provides a framework for our **priorities**:

Creating **extraordinary, relevant**
and **valued** content

An **outstanding audience experience**

Reaching and **engaging** more people more
frequently in the most **relevant** way

Building a **great** place
to **work**

Yours into the Future

The ABC faces a challenging environment over the next 12 months. The cumulative effects of cost and competitive pressures mean that it will need to make a number of difficult decisions in order to effectively deliver on its Charter for the Australian people. The Investing in Audiences strategy provides the Corporation with the means to navigate the challenges – and grasp the opportunities – this environment presents.

In May 2018, the Government announced that the indexation of the Corporation's funding would be paused in the next triennium, a decision that followed significant reductions in funding for the ABC since 2014. At the same time, the ABC continues to operate in a media market where audience expectations for quality content on broadcast and digital platforms are increasing rapidly. There is intense competition for audience attention from both domestic and well-resourced international companies.

The ABC is confident that the Investing in Audiences strategy announced by the Managing Director in 2017 is the key to addressing these challenges. The ABC's editorial rigour, ongoing engagement with diverse communities, and commitment to delivering ABC stories and experiences on the devices and platforms audiences use, will be crucial to its continuing to offer trusted, relevant, distinctive services to Australians at home and abroad.

Throughout 2018–19, a key focus of the Corporation's work will be furthering the transformation program that is required to implement the Investing in Audiences strategy.

In the final quarter of 2018, the first ABC Content Plan will be published. The Plan will reflect the logic of the recent redesign of the Corporation's content teams around audiences rather than broadcast platforms, and will provide a unified and transparent framework to articulate the ABC's creative vision. It will demonstrate how the ABC plans to meet its Charter obligations, and will outline the priorities that will guide and enable future content decision-making. In addition, the Plan will help the ABC's external

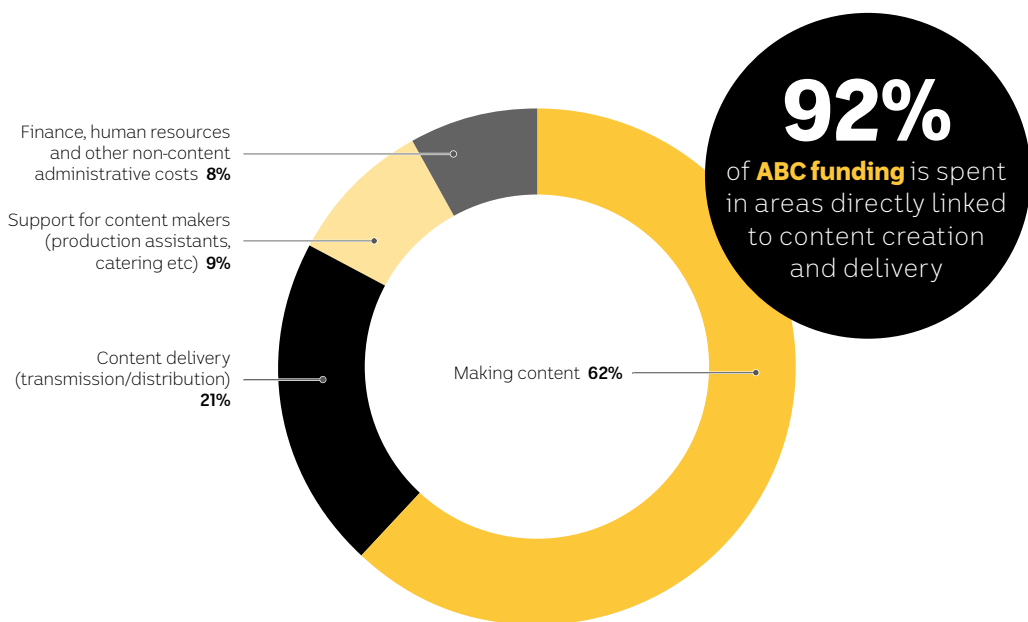
content partners understand the Corporation's focus and direction.

Informing the Australian public in order to support the democratic process will be a key pillar of the ABC Content Plan. State elections will be held in Victoria in November 2018 and in New South Wales in March 2019. Further, a Federal Election will be held during the 2018–19 financial year. In each case, the ABC will demonstrate its public value: through reporting and analysis of campaign issues; and comprehensive election-night coverage that allows Australians to make informed decisions.

The ABC will continue to share culture and experiences in ways that will entertain audiences and celebrate Australian life. It will connect with diverse communities, and deepen existing relationships, through conversations, stories and events; and it will provide tools for Australians to navigate everyday life.

The Corporation will also continue to share its wider vision with the Australian people. In February 2019, the ABC will hold its second Annual Public Meeting, at which it will outline its long-term roadmap for approaching the challenges of the coming decade. The roadmap will pull together the latest data and analysis informing the ABC's deliberations on the kind of organisation it needs to be, to meet its Charter and maintain relevance and quality as audience behaviours and the media landscape continues to change.

In order to create the conditions needed to realise its strategy and long-term vision, the Corporation will begin the substantial implementation of a program of modernisation.



This will involve a major transformation of its technology platform – works which will enable the ABC to offer audiences relevant, personalised and timely digital media experiences. A cloud-based production and infrastructure model will be implemented, so the ABC can approach the future with confidence.

2018–19 marks the final year of the ABC’s current triennial funding period. The Corporation will make a strong case to government for a funding settlement over the 2019–20 to 2021–22 triennium that includes investment to support its future development – including continuation of funding for the Enhanced Newsgathering Program, which strengthens the ABC’s local and regional newsgathering capabilities – and support for the implementation of the modernisation program.

Concurrently, the Corporation will work to identify the savings required to meet the indexation freeze for the coming triennium that was announced by the Minister for Communications and the Arts in the Commonwealth Budget in May 2018.

In the coming year, the ABC will engage with a number of government reviews relating to its activities, the first being the Inquiry into the competitive neutrality of the national broadcasters. The Inquiry was commenced in

March 2018 and is expected to report to the Minister in September 2018. The ABC provided its submission in 2017–18 and will continue to liaise with and assist the conducting panel as the Inquiry progresses.

The Minister has also initiated a further review of the efficiency of the national broadcasters. In the coming months, the ABC will engage fully with that process.

In June 2018, the Government launched a review of Australian broadcasting services in the Asia-Pacific region, including a consideration of the value of shortwave services. As Australia’s primary international media service, the ABC will make a detailed submission to the inquiry in August 2018. It similarly anticipates making a submission to a foreshadowed Soft Power review by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade that is expected to be announced early in 2018–19. The Corporation’s submissions will draw on its almost 80 years of experience delivering media services to Asia and the Pacific and highlight opportunities to expand such services.

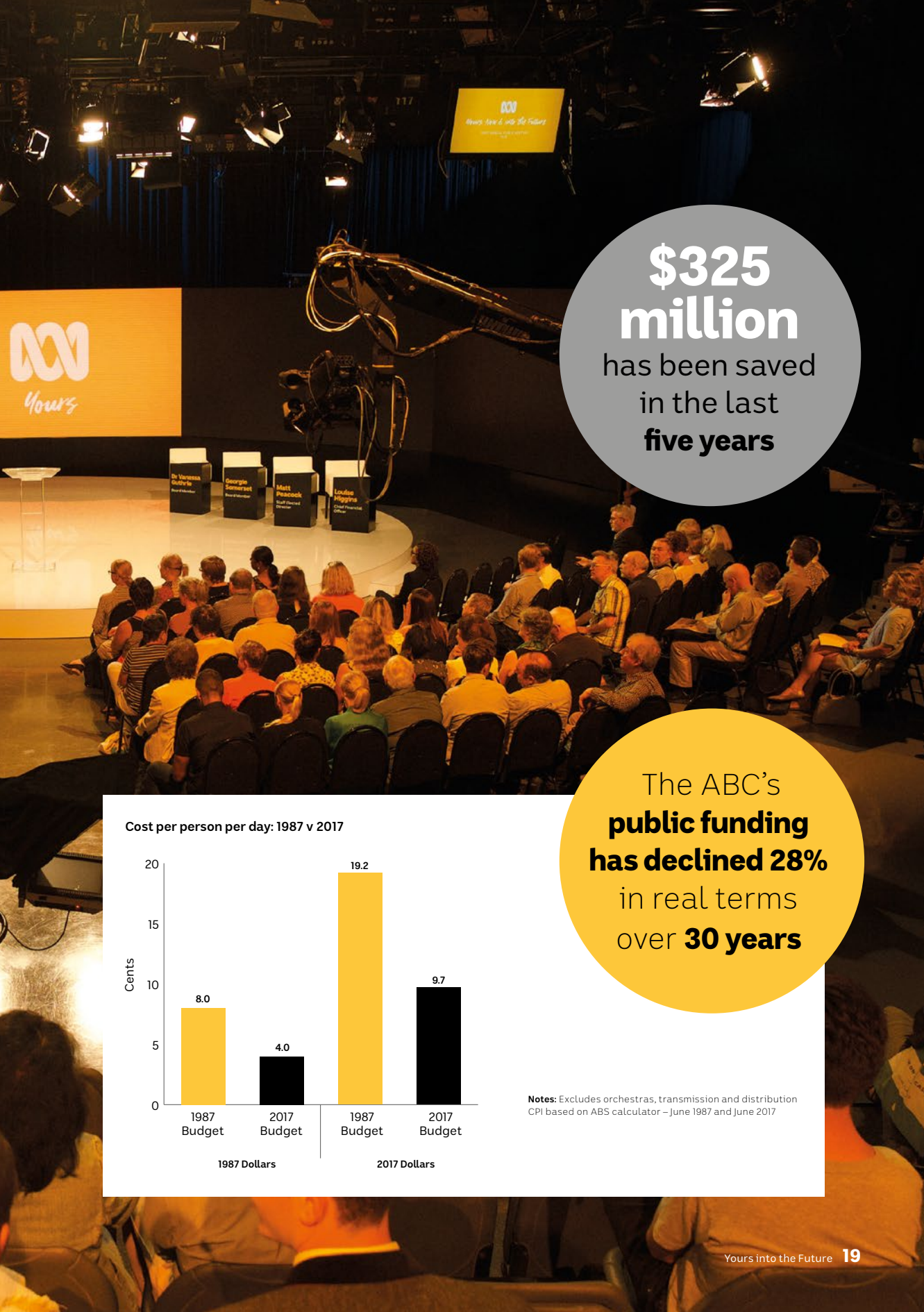


APM

Initiated by the ABC as a means of increasing **transparency and accountability** in the style of public companies at annual meetings, the ABC's inaugural **Annual Public Meeting (APM)** was held in Sydney on 9 February 2018.

More than 400 people attended the **live events** in Sydney, Rockhampton and Launceston, with the latter two live-linked to the Sydney event, while others watched via the livestream. The meeting featured presentations from the ABC Chairman **Justin Milne**, Managing Director **Michelle Guthrie** and Chief Financial and Strategy Officer **Louise Higgins**, and audience members had the opportunity to ask questions about the ABC direct to management.

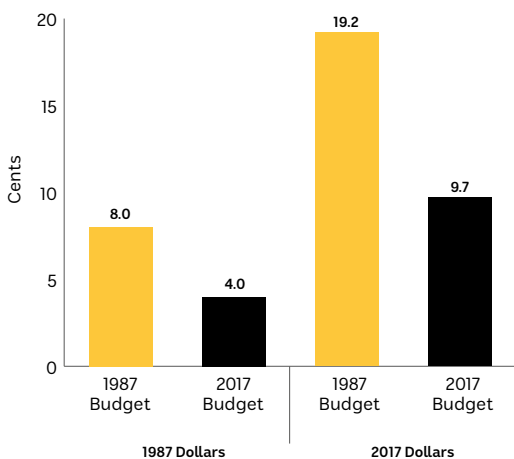
The ABC will hold its second APM in **February 2019**.



\$325 million
has been saved
in the last
five years

The ABC's
public funding
has declined **28%**
in real terms
over **30 years**

Cost per person per day: 1987 v 2017



Notes: Excludes orchestras, transmission and distribution
CPI based on ABS calculator – June 1987 and June 2017

Snapshot of 2017–18

82%

of Australian adults aged 18 to 75 years **trust the information** that the ABC provides

as compared to levels of trust recorded for
internet search engines **74%**
commercial radio **60%**
commercial television **58%**
newspaper publishers **56%**
Facebook **37%**

83%

of Australians believe the ABC performs a **valuable role** in the Australian community

The ABC **employed 4,939 people** who operated from **56 Australian and 11 international** locations

Image: Back Roads
Photo: Larissa Romensky



The ABC is the **largest creative employer** in the southern hemisphere, maintains **Australia's largest daily investigative news** team, and has one of the world's largest dedicated rural reporting teams

71.3%
were **content-makers**

50%
of **senior executives** were **women**



71%
of Australians
watch, read or
listen to the ABC
each week

The ABC
can reach
99.58% of the
population

50
years of
btn

Average audience for **7pm News**
Mon–Fri **down 5%**;
Sat edition **down 8%**;
Sun edition **down 4%**

ABC news and current affairs online
reached an average **4.8 million**
Australian users each month, close
to **one in four (24%)** of the active
online Australian population

Image: Back Roads
Photo: Larissa Romensky

1.3 million

downloads of the
ABC KIDS iView app
– monthly users
were up **20%**

ABC KIDS was Australia's
highest ranked television
channel during the day
among children aged 0-4

3,436,046 downloads
of news bulletins on
smart speakers

46,974 kids

responded to the second
btn Kids' Happiness Survey –
making it the **biggest survey**
of youth mental health and
wellbeing in Australian
history

Program plays
on ABC iView
websites and apps
increased
10% to 57 million
per month



Highlights

2017–18

Image: A young listener
tries out ABC KIDS listen.
Photo: Lisa McTiernan



The ABC produces quality, distinctive, award-winning content that informs, educates and entertains audiences across Australia and the globe



On **5 June 1968** the ABC broadcast its very first current affairs show made just for schoolkids

50 years of btn

In 2018 the ABC celebrated the extraordinary milestone of providing news and current affairs content to Australian children for 50 years through its flagship program *Behind the News (btn)*

From the loungeroom, to the TV-on-wheels rolled into the classroom once a week, to interactive online spaces, *btn* has been responsible for informing generations of Australian children about the social, economic and political world around them, in an accessible and friendly format.

On 5 June 2018, exactly 50 years to the day since the first *btn* broadcast, each ABC metropolitan newsroom hosted a *btn* 'rookie reporter' (or primary-school-aged journalist) who filed a story relevant to children. The story was broadcast on the ABC News website and on-air during the relevant state's 7pm News bulletin. Kids were also given guest spots on ABC Local Radio, as weather presenters on *News Breakfast*, and on ABC Radio *Afternoons* program all over the country.

A Q&A kids special, hosted by *btn*'s Amelia Moseley and featuring a panel and audience of children, was broadcast at the kid-friendly time of 4.30pm – with an encore at 6.30pm. The panel discussed climate change, bullying, whether to raise the voting age, social media, and fake news.

Online, a rich archive of *btn* content was made available, along with short-form historical and vox pop videos celebrating the anniversary.

A party was held at ABC Adelaide where local children celebrated with the *btn* team and alumni.

Visit:

www.abc.net.au/btn/50years.htm



Daniel Yim, Geordie Brown, Maya Sathiamoorthy, Solli Raphael, Pinidu Chandrasekera and Zahra Bilal – the exceptional young people who made up the *btn* 50th anniversary Q&A children’s special panel

Awards Snapshot 2017–18

1 Rose d'Or



Above: Series Producers and Directors Kirk Docker and Aaron Smith accepted the Rose d'Or for *You Can't Ask That*

Below: The ABC accepted Prix Jeunesse awards for *What It's Like...to Experience a Disability* and *First Day*

2 Prix Jeunesse International 2018 awards



8

**Walkley
Awards**

2017

8

**United Nations
Association of Australia
(UNAA) Media Peace
Awards**

2017

11

**Australian Academy
Cinema Television
Arts (AACTA) 2017
awards**

6

**Australian Recording
Industry Association
Awards (the ARIAs)**
2017

5

**Screen Producers
Australia Awards**
2017

3

Golden Guitars
2017

8 **NT Media** Awards 2017

10 Queensland **Clarion** Awards 2017

7 **SA Media** Awards 2018

4 **Tasmanian Media** Awards 2018

2 NSW **Kennedy** Awards 2017

5 Melbourne Press Club
Quill Awards 2017

2 **WA Media** Awards 2017

4

Logies
2018

Extraordinary, relevant and valued content

The ABC is known for its distinctive drama, and as the creator and broadcaster of innovative Australian and international comedy



Above: Wayne Blair and Deborah Mailman in *Mystery Road*



Above: Kate McLennan and Kate McCartney in *Get Krack!n*



In 2017–18 *Mystery Road* was the highest-performing drama on television and the ABC’s most popular drama to date on iView. Shot entirely in the Kimberley region, the program featured an extraordinary cast and crew; Ernie Dingo, Wayne Blair, Deborah Mailman, Aaron Pedersen, Judy Davis, Tasma Walton, Colin Friels, director Rachel Perkins, producer Ivan Sen, and EP Sally Riley. *Mystery Road* told the story of an investigation into a past injustice that threatens to unravel the fabric of a whole community.

Total audience views of *Mystery Road* across broadcast and digital expected to top **1.5 million per episode.**

In late 2017, ABC COMEDY – formerly ABC2 – cemented the ABC’s reputation as the home of innovative Australian and international comedy. The channel broadcast six new television series in 2017–18, the most aired by the ABC in a financial year to date

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Utopia Series 3 | The Ex-PM Series 2 |
| Get Krack!n | Squinters |
| Rosehaven Series 2 | Sando |

The Letdown enjoyed international success after launching on Netflix in April 2018, attracting major press attention from The New York Times and Vanity Fair.

ABC Comedy and ABC Audio Studios enjoyed successful collaborations throughout 2017–18 on distinctive podcast series, including the chart-topping *Santo*, *Sam & Ed’s Total Football*, which was filmed live for broadcast on ABC iView.



Above: Sarah Ferguson interviews Hillary Rodham Clinton for *Four Corners*

Australian Story
achieved a quality
score of **98%**

Four Corners **96%**

7.30 **97%**

Independent, high-impact reporting and the production of quality factual content are hallmarks of the ABC

In 2017–18 *Four Corners* continued to investigate the social, economic, and political stories that shape our world – across topics as diverse as Greens party infighting, the international cyber arms trade, toxic water in Australian communities, and the ‘Paradise Papers’ tax haven leak.

Sarah Ferguson spoke to Hillary Rodham Clinton in an exclusive, in-depth interview, filmed in New York, and broadcast in October 2017 on ABC television and streamed live on the *Four Corners* Facebook page. The interview was also made available as a podcast through the new ABC listen app.

Stories like ‘I Am That Girl’ captured audience attention across flagship ABC program *7.30*’s multiple platforms, motivating the NSW Attorney General to announce a review of sexual consent laws. The *7.30* series ‘Trump/Russia’ provided an unprecedented in-depth analysis of President Trump’s Russian connections, and “Mongrel Bunch of Bastards” led the federal government

to launch an investigation into the ATO. Leigh Sales also had the opportunity to sit down with former FBI Director James Comey for his only Australian interview, a year after his sacking by President Trump and on the heels of his release of an insider account of the 2016 US election.

The Digital Storytelling Innovation team, established in late 2017, brought together a blend of employees with specialist skills, with a mandate to innovate digital storytelling content and form. The team creates its own original features and works with existing content teams to improve the quality and value of digital storytelling on high-impact journalism. One example was the online survey and supporting data journalism feature ‘Good Taste, Bad Taste?’, which attracted well over a million readers, driving conversation about national culture and identity.

The ABC tells the story of Australia to its audiences by reflecting their everyday lives, and creating opportunities for their voices to be heard

You Can't Ask That

In 2017–18 *You Can't Ask That* became an example of the capacity for the ABC's quality, distinctive, original content to reach vast audiences not only in Australia but throughout the world. The program provides an unmediated platform for insight into the lives of some of the most misunderstood and marginalised people in Australia. Questions posed to these oft-stereotyped groups are answered straight to camera with raw honesty.

The series format has enjoyed immense international success. In 2017–18 the program won the Rose d'Or for Best Reality or Factual Entertainment as well as three UN Media Awards – for Promotion of Disability Rights and Issues, Promotion of Social Cohesion and Promotion of Empowerment of Older People.

4 million
program plays
of *You Can't Ask That*

"...this show started from a small idea that then grew to be recognised on a global scale. *You Can't Ask That* 100% relies on the graciousness and bravery of the participants who are kind enough to lend their voice."

Aaron Smith, Director and Co-Producer of *You Can't Ask That*



98%
Distinctiveness
score –
Employable Me

Audiences described *Employable Me* as **"educational"** **"impactful"** **"distinctive"** and **"brave"**



Employable Me

Three-part series *Employable Me* followed Australian people with neuro-diverse conditions such as autism, OCD and Tourette Syndrome as they searched for meaningful employment. The show immediately resonated with audiences, achieving a distinctiveness score of **98%** – the highest score achieved since the ABC began its Quality & Distinctiveness surveys – and a national average audience of 869,000 per episode across diverse demographics.

Above left: Marty
Above right: Krystyna



Above: *The Hub* team 2018: Michael Cathcart, Claire Nichols, Jason Di Rosso and Eddie Ayres

The ABC continues to be passionate about its Charter obligation to promote the musical, dramatic and other performing arts in Australia

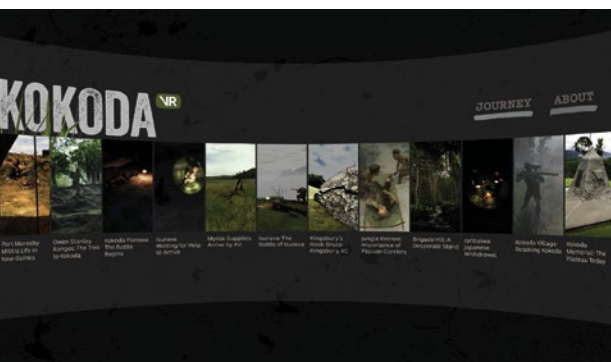
New podcast *The Hub* explored the creative worlds of the visual arts, theatre and performance, literature, film and television as well as popular culture, and was presented each weekday by a different specialist from an ensemble of artists, makers, writers and critics

Classic FM brought together traditional listening, podcasts, interactive programming and community engagement to reach dedicated and new audiences in 2017–18. Podcast *Classic Flow*, which combines yoga with live classical music, held another live yoga experience at cultural event Parramasala in March 2018. *Classic Flow* presenter Lara Zilibowitz led the community, accompanied by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra Fellowship string quartet.

The ABC's arts and culture content is brought together at abc.net.au/news/arts-culture/

An outstanding audience experience

Creating a whole-of-ABC experience that's discoverable, personal and accessible is a priority for the ABC, so audiences can easily experience the full range of what the ABC offers – across television, radio, podcasts, apps, the web and emerging platforms.



In 2017–18 the ABC began a long-term program of investment set to transform the ABC's digital audience facing products, its content management and production, and its supporting technology infrastructure. Among other things, the initial investment provided the delivery of specific audience benefits across digital products. Training in digital production, the creation of new content teams based on genre, and a focus on collaboration to provide multiplatform delivery of content, created opportunities for more audience engagement across programming.


iview

Additional investment delivered an accelerated iview product roadmap, with the aim of engaging larger audiences and providing the best possible iview experience. This resulted in video player and secure streaming improvements, livestreaming of ABC main channel from all state and territory capitals on iview, adoption of cloud technologies to provide audiences with rapid access to News programs on iview, and the release of iview 4.0 – the largest update to the interface's look and feel for several years – which was met with an overwhelmingly positive reception from the iview audience.

VR

Across 12 detailed chapters spanning June to November 1942, the main events of the Kokoda campaign were brought to life in the ABC's **Kokoda VR** experience <http://www.abc.net.au/btn/kokodaVR/>

Visitors to the council-run Brisbane Open House event at the ABC Brisbane office in October 2017 could use VR headsets to take a virtual tour of the *Play School* studio in Sydney.



Blood on the Tracks had a complete audience of **1.25 million** over the two episodes, with the related podcast one of the ABC's fastest growing

Australian Story
'Blood on the Tracks'
Part 1 & 2
ABC Television

John Safran's
True Crime crime
author interviews
ABC RN

Unravel podcast
(+ ABC listen app
and other podcasts)

The Twist
short-form
true crime
documentaries

Watch and read
material ABC Radio
& ABC News online /
YouTube

Unravel True Crime

A case study

In 2018, ABC's new podcast *Unravel True Crime* and its first series entitled *Blood on the Tracks* – a podcast and an accompanying two-part *Australian Story* television special – featured bespoke content across YouTube and digital platforms including animated digital series *The Twist* and opportunities for the audience to examine forensic evidence online. The ABC Content Ideas Lab initiative showed how an audience member's experience of a program could lead directly to a journey through other related, and new, platform and content experiences. This single story successfully told across multiple touchpoints exposed News digital audiences to podcasts, podcast audiences to *Australian Story*, and *Australian Story* audiences to Radio and News listening and online experiences.

Blood on the Tracks follows journalist Allan Clarke's five-year investigation into the death of Mark Haines, a 17-year-old Gomeri teenager whose body was found on the Tamworth train tracks in 1988. Clarke tells the story of a town divided, an investigation bungled, evidence lost, and critical leads never followed up.

"Creating distinctive and innovative content in ways that reach new audiences is exactly what the Content Ideas Lab is all about... [Unravel True Crime] is a great opportunity for the ABC to marry this fresh, multiplatform approach with trusted, quality journalism."

Angela Stengel, Head ABC Content Ideas Lab

Podcasts

14.5 million unique ABC podcast downloads a month in 2017–18

Top-ranked digital-first podcasts include:
#1 Conversations with Richard Fidler



Above: Conversations
Below: ABC top rating podcasts



ABC listen

The ABC listen app was launched in September 2017 and provided audiences with an improved digital listening experience for both live streaming and on-demand content.

The app replaced the existing ABC Radio app and, by focusing on the user's own behaviours and preferences, offered enhanced navigation, personalisation and content search functions, opening up content and allowing for much easier discovery. The main features included a redesigned homepage highlighting popular ABC programs, trending podcasts, a 'My Programs' tab for favourite content, the usual access to radio streams, and content including hourly ABC News bulletins and a personalised playlist.

ABC listen livestreaming of

4 national networks
8 capital-city radio stations
42 regional radio stations
10 digital stations
and a platform for more than
130 programs and podcasts



ABC KIDS listen

In February 2018, a new DAB+ radio station and accompanying app were launched, aimed at working families with 2–5-year-old children.

ABC KIDS listen was tested with culturally and linguistically diverse and outer suburban families who were less likely to regularly consume ABC content. The station and app provide an easy gateway to entertainment and educational content for pre-schoolers, and an opportunity for non-screen-based content engagement.

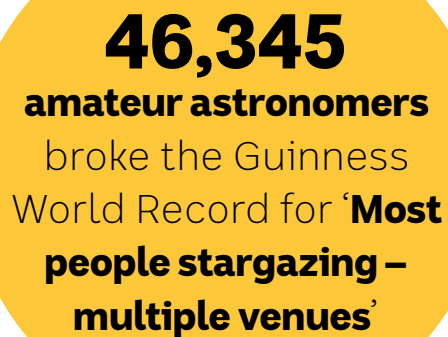
Between the February 2018 launch and 30 June 2018, the **ABC KIDS listen app** was downloaded **121,512 times**

Reaching more people

The ABC strikes a balance between investing in its large traditional-broadcast audience while continually innovating to reach rapidly growing digital audiences. We are a part of the Australian community – but through our content and services we also seek to create communities, contribute to them, and provide space for new communities to grow

The overwhelming audience success of Series 1 of *Stargazing Live* in April 2017 led to a second series, broadcast over three nights in May 2018. Hosted by Professor Brian Cox and Julia Zemiro, *Stargazing Live* was filmed live from the Siding Springs Observatory. In partnership with the Australian National University (ANU), the ABC called all Australians to help smash the Guinness World Record's title for the most people (in one country) simultaneously stargazing. Audiences gathered at almost 300 'Star Parties' hosted by community groups and astronomy societies in local parks, beaches, observatories and schools, and the new record was set on 23 May 2018 during the live broadcast, when 46,345 amateur astronomers around the country looked up at the moon for 10 minutes.

The ABC reached tens of thousands of Australians of all ages through *Stargazing Live* related content: special episodes of *Gardening Australia*, *Compass*, *Julia Zemiro's Home Delivery*, *rage* and *Giggle & Hoot*; podcast *Cosmic Vertigo* on ABC listen; a dedicated iView series on the night sky by Greg Quicke; a playlist of music to watch the stars by on Classic FM; ABC ME's *Launchpad* which did a countdown 15 minutes ahead of *Stargazing Live* each night, taking on daily space-themed missions, stories from Siding Spring Observatory, interviews with some very young space experts, and lots of space trivia; and the ABC COMEDY half-hour live chat show *Back to Earth*, which was broadcast following each *Stargazing Live* episode.



46,345
amateur astronomers
broke the Guinness
World Record for '**Most**
people stargazing –
multiple venues'

A group of people, including children and adults, are gathered at night for a stargazing event. They are using telescopes and binoculars to look at the sky. The scene is illuminated by the light from the instruments and possibly some ambient light. The background shows dark trees and a night sky.

62,000
people attended
Star Parties across
Australia

ABC Education ran two competitions for kids to get involved: **Be a Science TV Reporter** and **Design A Space Robot**

Image: Stargazing Live event



80 years of Radio in Hobart

In April 2018, and in partnership with the Bicentenary of the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens, the ABC celebrated 80 years of ABC Radio Hobart with a display in the newly-renovated 'Pod' at the Community Food Garden in the RTBG. *Weekends* presenter Chris Wisbey launched the exhibition, with Helen Shield broadcasting *Afternoons* from the Pod later that week. Community attendees took a journey through time, discovering radio as it was in 1938 through to the present, learned about DAB+ Digital Radio, and tried out the ABC listen app in the interactive listening station.

“...the story of ABC Radio Hobart is the story of Hobart itself over the past 80 years. The station has been there for every milestone in the city’s history since we began broadcasting just prior to the start of the Second World War.”

Michael Mason, Director of ABC Regional and Local

“ABC Radio Hobart gives listeners, and those who connect with us via digital platforms, a diversity of relevant local stories and connections to enrich people’s lives. The audience is always our number one focus – we constantly engage with listeners and followers to discover and share what’s happening in Southern Tasmania.”

ABC Local Radio Manager Jocelyn Nettlefold



Above: Mike Williams and Timothy Nicastri, *The Real Thing* podcast live at Woodford

In late 2017, more than 1,400 students from 31 schools took part in the second annual **Indigenous Language Song Competition**; more than twice the amount of participants than the previous, inaugural year. Primary and secondary school students worked alongside their local Indigenous community to translate and perform **Marrin Gamu** – naming parts of the body – in local language. Penrhos College Junior School in Como, WA, were the winners of the competition, singing in **Noongar**.

“When a language is lost, that deep body of knowledge is lost with it. Discussions about Australia’s first languages can help create a society that knows and respects the history and cultures of this land.”

First Languages Australia’s Faith Baisden

A live storytelling program saw presenters from **ABC Radio**, **ABC RN** and the **ABC’s** most popular podcast series join forces with the **Woodford Folk Festival in Queensland** to share some of Australia’s best yarns over New Year’s 2017–18.

“It’s a natural fit for Woodford and ABC to work together on this kind of future-forward programming. The Woodford Folk Festival has always pushed beyond where we think popular culture sits, and the ABC is leading the way in Australia with digital radio and podcasting.”

Woodford Speakers Programme Producer Mandi McIntyre

Connecting Communities

Connecting Communities provided an extra **\$15 million** per annum for up to 80 new jobs to support audience and content initiatives, and a one-off investment of **\$4 million** for tools and production equipment to facilitate increased volume, quality and diversity of regional stories, across traditional and especially digital platforms

44 sites
now have
live-linking
capability

Up to
80 new
regional
jobs



Image: ABC Regional Chiefs of Staff stand in their locations across Australia





The ABC's
New Year's Eve
broadcast reached
3.8 million viewers – the
fireworks livestreams on
Facebook had a **reach
of 2.5 million** and
676,000 views

Above: Kitty Flanagan rang in the New Year with Hoot
Next page: Peter Greste in *Monash and Me*



ABC TV's Anzac Day coverage reached **2.7 million** people in 2018 – up from 2.5 million in 2017

1.6 million viewers reached on ABC NEWS Royal Wedding May 2018

1.6 million viewers reached Queensland state election November 2017

1.3 million viewers reached Same-sex marriage survey announcement

2,386,133 votes cast in triple j's Hottest 100

2.6 million viewers of Stargazing Live and Back to Earth on free-to-air television

Building a great place to work

The 2017 Staff Engagement Survey built on the findings of the 2015 Survey, to give a whole-of-ABC picture of ABC employees' challenges and satisfactions in the workplace

Findings from the survey, and workshops held across the country by the Managing Director Michelle Guthrie and members of the ABC Leadership Team to speak directly to employees, led to several initiatives designed to address employee concerns and continue to build the ABC to be a great place to work. Some of those were:

Bureaucracy Stop which provided more than 147 employee ideas about simplification of processes, 55 of which were resolved by the end of the financial year.

Change It Up which afforded employees the opportunity to experience and understand different parts of the ABC outside of their everyday role, facilitated inter-ABC collaboration, and strengthened colleagues' relationships, through one of three channels – Mentoring, Skills, and Community Engagement. Sixty mentees were matched to mentors after just a few months, and ABC employees found greater involvement with each other and the community through unique ABC experiences such as *Stargazing Live* events.

Speak Up provided an opportunity for employees to talk to their peers about gender, sexism, racism, and other cultural safety issues and receive support. Speak Up supporters are employees who are trained in the legal framework and ABC policies on discrimination, bullying and harassment; responding to disclosures; dealing with trauma; and providing guidance.

The ABC continued to transform processes and infrastructure to make it easier for content-makers to collaborate and communicate locally, nationally and internationally. Changes to content storage and production are allowing technology to be updated more easily and at less expense.



\$10 million
investment in leadership and training to increase the digital skills of the workforce and provide outstanding content and services to Australians across all platforms

The ABC fosters its creative community by providing opportunities across teams to generate distinctive quality content. Funded from internal savings, the **Great Ideas Grant (GIG)** provided **\$10 million** to realise a range of projects put forward by ABC employees, such as the ABC listen app and #ABCWildOz. The ABC also created the Content Ideas Lab to drive the creation of new content that meets changing audience expectations.

The **Connecting Communities** initiative boosted spending in regional bureaux by \$15.4 million each year, providing more jobs and extensive digital reporting training so regional content-makers can create local stories that have greater and more lasting exposure to audiences.



Your survey, your say

Visit myABC for more information

The ABC Leadership Team



David Anderson
Director Entertainment
& Specialist



Leisa Bacon
Director Audiences



Helen Clifton
Chief Digital
& Information Officer



Rebekah Donaldson
Director People & Culture ^(a)



Michael Millett
Director Government Relations



Louise Higgins
Chief Financial
& Strategy Officer



Gaven Morris
Director News, Analysis
& Investigations



Michael Mason
Director Regional & Local



Alan Sunderland
Editorial Director

The ABC Board



From left to right: Dr Vanessa Guthrie, Chairman Justin Milne, George Somerset, Dr Kirstin Ferguson, Managing Director Michelle Guthrie, Donny Walford, Peter Lewis, Joseph Gersh AM, Dr Jane Connors



Justin Milne

Chairman

BA, FAICD

1 April 2017 – 31 March 2022

Justin is the Chairman of the ABC, MYOB, and NetComm Wireless Ltd. He is a Non-Executive Director of TABCORP Holdings Ltd and NBN Co.

During his executive career he was a Group Managing Director at Telstra, responsible for BigPond Broadband and Telstra's Media businesses. Prior to working at Telstra, he was CEO of OzEmail and the Microsoft Network. Before moving to Sydney in the 1980s, he was a film producer in Adelaide. He is a past board member of the SA Economic Development Board, Quickflix Ltd, Pie Networks, a number of Chinese new Media companies, and a past President of the Internet Industry Association of Australia.

Michelle Guthrie

ABC Managing Director

BA, LLB

Michelle Guthrie has been Managing Director since May 2016. She has worked closely with management and the ABC Board to ensure the national broadcaster provides the best service for audiences and the wider Australian community. The cornerstone of this work has been the Investing in Audiences strategy. This recognises that if the ABC is to fulfil its legislative role and to maintain its relevance in a demanding media landscape, it must draw on its strengths: an unswerving commitment to quality and distinctiveness, to public service, and to adaptation. Michelle has introduced extra accountability and transparency to the organisation and pursued new benchmarks in trust and community support.

Michelle has utilised her experience and expertise in media management, content development, and a detailed knowledge of both traditional broadcasting and the new digital media landscape. Before joining the ABC, she worked for a range of broadcasting and media organisations in Australia, Europe and Asia, including BSkyB, Star TV and Google.

Peter Lewis

2 October 2014 – 1 October 2019

Peter Lewis is the Chairman of McGrath Ltd, a Non-Executive Director of Gravity Media Group Ltd, and a member of the Advisory Board for Anacacia Capital. He previously held board and advisory positions with the International Grammar School Sydney, TXA Australia Pty Ltd, Norwest Productions Pty Ltd, Propex Derivatives, Australian News Channel Pty Ltd, B Digital Ltd, VividWireless Ltd and Yahoo 7 Australia. He has extensive experience in financial management for media companies and has been the CFO of Seven Network Ltd, Seven Group Holdings Ltd, Seven Media Group, and Seven West Media Ltd.

Peter is a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia, a member of the Australian Society of Certified Practising Accountants and a Fellow of the Governance Institute of Australia. He is Chair of the ABC Audit and Risk Committee.

Dr Kirstin Ferguson

PhD (QUT), LLB (Hons) (QUT), BA (Hons) (UNSW)

12 November 2015 – 11 November 2020

Kirstin Ferguson is an independent company director on ASX100, ASX200, private company, and government Boards. Her current Board appointments include: SCA Property Group Ltd; EML Payments Ltd; and Hyne & Son Pty Ltd. Kirstin was previously a non-executive director of CIMIC Ltd, Queensland Theatre Company, SunWater Ltd, Queensland Rugby Union, and Dart Energy Ltd, and is a former CEO of a global consulting company operating in the mining and resources services sector. She began her career as an Officer in the Royal Australian Air Force.

Kirstin is an Adjunct Professor at the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) Business School and a member of Chief Executive Women and Women Corporate Directors. She is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Kirstin is the creator of the global social media campaign #CelebratingWomen and is the author of *Women Kind: Unlocking the power of women supporting women*.

Ms Donny Walford

FAICD

24 November 2015 – 23 November 2020

Donny Walford is the founder and Managing Director of national businesses Bottom Line and behind closed doors®, and is currently on the Board of KeyInvest Ltd and the South Australian Venture Capital Fund. She is an Advisory Board member for NDA Law, and a Founding Member of International Women's Forum Australia.

Previously Donny was a Board Director for Australian Associated Advisers Pty Ltd., Australian Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Defence Teaming Centre, and the Heart Foundation (SA) and she served as Chairman for the Australian Dance Theatre.

Donny is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, and a graduate of the Institute's Chairman's mentoring program. She has an Associate Diploma in Accounting and a Diploma in Financial Planning, and is also a graduate of the Macquarie University Executive Management program.

Dr Vanessa Guthrie

Hon. D.Sc, PhD, BSc (Hons)

23 Feb 2017 – 22 Feb 2022

Vanessa Guthrie is a highly accomplished Executive and Director with a career spanning 30 years in the resources sector across diverse roles in operations, environment, community and indigenous affairs, corporate development and sustainability. She has qualifications in geology, environment, law and business management, including a PhD in Geology, and was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Science from Curtin University in 2017 for her contribution to sustainability, innovation and policy leadership in the resources industry.

Vanessa is currently Chair of the Minerals Council of Australia, Deputy Chair of the WACA, a Non-Executive Director of Santos Ltd, Adelaide Brighton Ltd, and Vimy Resources, and a Council Member of Curtin University. She is an active member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and Chief Executive Women (CEW), and a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering (ATSE).

Georgie Somerset

23 Feb 2017 – 22 Feb 2022

Georgie Somerset is a rural industry leader and strategist with a background running her family cattle business. She has board experience across the not-for-profit, government and industry sectors as a Director of the Royal Flying Doctor Service (Queensland section), the Royal Flying Doctor Service Foundation and the Children's Health Queensland Hospital & Health Service, and as Chair of the Red Earth Community Foundation, South Burnett. Georgie is General President elect for AgForce Queensland Farmers.

Dr Jane Connors

Staff Elected Director

PhD (UTS), Grad Dip Applied History (UTS)

BA (Hons)(ANU)

1 May 2018 – 30 April 2023

Jane Connors has been with the ABC for more than 25 years. Her previous roles included Executive Producer of the Social History Unit, Manager of Radio National and Head of Industry Policy and Strategy at ABC Radio. Jane is currently an advisor with the Editorial Policies team. She has a PhD in Australian History and is the author of *Royal Visits to Australia*. She is a member of several advisory bodies including Sydney Living Museums and the Centre for Media History.

Joseph Gersh AM

B Com LLB (Hons) (MU)

11 May 2018 – 10 May 2023

Joe Gersh practised law for 20 years as a senior partner and has had significant business experience with a range of public and private companies. He is currently the founder and Executive Chairman of Gersh Investment Partners Ltd, a specialist real estate investment bank. He is also a director of The Sydney Institute. From 2003–12, he was the inaugural Chair of the Australian Reinsurance Pool Corporation, and was a member of the Payments System Board of the Reserve Bank of Australia between 1998 and 2013. Joe has also held numerous board positions in the arts community, including Deputy Chair of the Australia Council.



Image: Ahn Do,
Anh's Brush With Fame





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