



PHOTO: CAMILLA BOURKE

“A remarkable change is taking place at the ABC, as we’ve been rethinking the idea of the town square. Through digital media, the public broadcaster has been able to revitalise the public space, Australia’s town square. Where more and more Australians exchange ideas, listen and learn from one another, and share in the wider experience of Australian life.”

**Mark Scott**, ABC Managing Director

For more than 75 years, the ABC has been bringing Australians together. In 2009, that tradition is continuing in new and exciting ways.

Redefining the town square.





## TOGETHER WE STAND

THE UBIQUITOUS *triple j* is a lifeline to the outside world for many youth in regional Australia. Towns without a transmitter have held sausage sizzles just to raise the cash to buy one so that they can tune in. In turn, *triple j* encourages bands to play beyond the capital cities, helping regional youth to become part of the wider music scene.

*One Night Stand*—the free, all-ages concert that visits one lucky regional town each year—is another way *triple j* helps young people in the far flung corners of Australia feel like they belong.

When the *One Night Stand* circus rolls into town, *triple j* turns on the full arsenal of its cross-platform media—radio, television and online—to shed light on life there and give locals a voice. *triple j* presenters hit the road and broadcast live from the town, while reporters immerse themselves in the local community, filing

stories, photographs and weblogs online. Young people learn what is different—and the same—about growing up in regional Australia.

“It is a great thing for staff to go out to regional areas because they come face to face with listeners,” said Linda Bracken, the then Manager of *triple j*. “Presenters like Robbie Buck are from regional towns, they remember what it was like when *triple j* came to their town. I remember when it came to Newcastle. The connection we have with these kids is really something quite special.”

In 2009, Gippsland hosted *One Night Stand* and more than 15 000 locals saw some of Australia’s top bands. But many more were a part of the action through the radio, television or *triple j* website.

When young Australians tune in or log on to *triple j*, it doesn’t matter whether they’re from Cowra or Collie, Humpty Doo or Horsham. The *js* is their town square.

BELONG



Robbie, Marieke and the Doctor in front of an enthusiastic crowd at triple j's Hottest 100 at Parramatta Park, Sydney; The Hilltop Hoods take the stage at triple j's One Night Stand in Sale, Victoria.



The Surfing Scientist—Ruben Meerman—brings science to life for school children; Below. test your environmental management skills online with Catchment Detox.

## SCIENCE CENTRAL

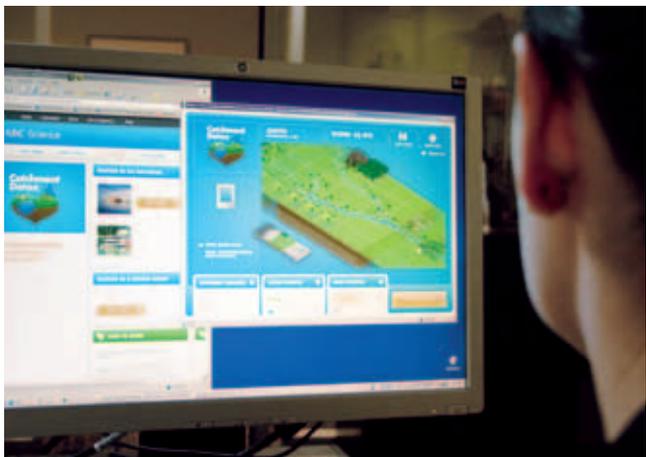
THE ABC's DEDICATION to scientific discovery has a long history and ABC Science Online is the latest meeting place for Australia's scientific community. Here they can chat on three online forums: the *Self Service Science Forum* for science-based talk, *Scribbly Gum* for all things nature and *Tech Talk*, where curly digital problems are discussed.

ABC Science Online is also the place to find original online material, including a daily science news service, in depth features, quizzes, videos, audio and podcasts.

Programs from ABC Radio and Television also feature, including the long-running *Catalyst*, which celebrated 300 episodes in June 2009. Starting from the premise that science changes all our lives, *Catalyst* has been showing us the future for 10 seasons, introducing us to scientists at the forefront of discovery.

Popular broadcaster Dr Karl Kruszelnicki has his own space where he shares *Great Moments in Science* whenever he is not talking science on ABC Radio.

ABC Science is also home to the *Catchment Detox* project, in which participants try to manage a river catchment while creating a thriving economy. Named Best Science, Health or Environment website at the AIMIA awards, the game shows how hard it is to juggle society's competing interests when trying to protect the waterways.



NEW TECHNOLOGY IS CHANGING THE WAY PEOPLE TALK TO EACH OTHER AND NOWHERE IS THIS MORE IMPORTANT THAN IN A COUNTRY AS DIVERSE AND VAST AS AUSTRALIA.



## YOUR COMMUNITY IS BIGGER THAN YOU THINK

CONNECTING CREATIVE AUSTRALIANS—with each other and with audiences—has always been central to the ABC's role. *ABC Contribute* is the latest in this heritage—an online space where our audience can upload photos, video and audio. After signing up, they get free access and can manage their own online space, maintain a profile and a blog, start discussions and add comments. They can also join groups and share content with others in their areas of interest.

A growing community of users are sharing their experiences and creativity and their work is finding its way all over the ABC. Some of the most terrifying and emotional photographs of the 2009 Victorian bushfires were those posted by people who were right there. Our contributors are also some of the first to react to news, posting photographs and accounts of events all over the country.

*ABC Contribute* is a place to engage, discuss and share ideas and just another way in which the ABC allows more Australian voices to be heard.

Always quick to adopt new technology, children have made the *RollerCoaster* website their own patch by seizing the opportunity to interact online. They can cast votes in online polls, submit feedback on a range of issues and chat in moderated online forums with other kids and special guests. It's where they post their own reviews, create art and music and learn from each other.

Some of them might aspire to even further creativity—and a new outlet for creative content makers and producers of all ages is Radio National's social media project, *Pool*.

Launched in 2008, *Pool* is a collaborative online space where audiences become creators by uploading text, music, photos, animation, video and audio and making the content available for others to view and use.

The project sits right at the crossroads between conventional broadcasting and participatory media. It is new territory for media agencies and a key role for the project is to uncover and deal with challenges that will be relevant to the whole media industry.

Executive Producer Sherre DeLys said it was important for the ABC to explore popular new rights, open frameworks and new production models.

"With *Pool*, the innovation will come from the community. Already we're witnessing the emergence of new collaborative forms of story-telling and new roles for media workers" Sherre said. "*Pool* brings together ABC professionals and audiences in an open-ended process of co-creation—both sectors coming together as a community to inform, entertain and surprise each other."

An important part of *Pool* is the capacity for members to share their work for others to reuse, repurpose and remix within a safe legal framework. Creative Commons licensing enables contributors to choose

ABC Contribute: "Smoke storm over Warburton", uploaded by Kathryn, February 2009;  
Pool: "Ferris Wheel" uploaded by Andrew May, 28 May 2009. "People of the Past in the Night" uploaded by Graeme Dunlop, 4 June 2009. "Tyler", uploaded by Morganna Magee, 7 August 2008.



which rights they wish to retain, while encouraging sharing, exposure and distribution.

The site is also designed to encourage skill sharing, as can be seen with the "City Nights" project where producers from Radio National's *360* have been mentoring audience submissions.

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"WITH A SITE LIKE POOL, WE THE PRODUCERS SET IT UP. WE GIVE PEOPLE SOME GREAT TOOLS TO WORK WITH BUT THEN IT'S A MATTER OF WATCHING IT GROW."

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*Pool's* educational potential is a major point of difference from YouTube and Facebook. Through peer collaboration and active moderation by ABC staff and industry representatives, Radio National wants to create a place where emerging content makers can hone their skills.

Digital media continually presents more opportunities to augment and improve how we present content and encourage our audience to take part in the debate.

Screening live on ABC2 each weekday, 6 am–9 am (AEST), *News Breakfast* covers national news, analysis, debate, finance, sport and weather in a style different from most regular news bulletins.

*News Breakfast* links live to ABC studios in Sydney (702 ABC Sydney and Radio National) and Melbourne (774 ABC Melbourne), the ABC's Canberra bureau and the *AM/PM/The World Today* studios, allowing viewers to see interviews they could only previously hear. The program is interactive as well as being streamed live on the internet.

"We invite viewers to send in their views and comments via text, multimedia messaging and email," Associate Producer Tim Ayliffe said. "The idea is to broadcast viewer-generated content, whether it be comments displayed on screen during the interviews, or photos and video of breaking news taken by the viewers."

Audience participation is also encouraged in programs like *Four Corners*, where they can view broadband/web specials with additional information and background material, including full, unedited interviews from that night's program. By evaluating the choices made in editing, audiences can judge for themselves whether the conclusions drawn by the program makers were correct. Online forums then host the ensuing debate between our passionate viewers.

The current affairs program *Q&A* has taken audience participation to a new, real-time level, where panellists respond to questions derived exclusively from audiences via SMS, online, and through uploaded video.





*Rupert Murdoch presented the first of the Boyer Lectures on 3 November 2008 at the Sydney Opera House. His lecture "The Golden Age of Freedom" is available on ABC Fora; Q&A's Tony Jones with guests Louise Adler, Tanya Plibersek and Senator Bob Brown.*

## MAKING SENSE OF NEWS

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS in 2009, *Behind the News* is the hugely popular children's program that strips the jargon from the headlines to help schoolkids understand the news of the day.

*BtN* uses the words, music and culture of 10–13 year olds to engage them in news and current affairs. A program might include discussion of the disputed election in Iran, swine flu and a debate about the merits of homework.

It aims not just to complement the current school curriculum but also current teaching methods, which encourage students to look at different sides of an argument.

The *BtN* website invites debate among its audience and includes input from children via online polls, surveys and a moderated guestbook. Twittering is just the latest way presenters keep in touch with their young audience. The *BtN* team is preparing to launch a range of programs for the new children's channel, ABC3.

*BtN presenters Sarah Larsen, Nathan Bazley and Catherine Ellis.*



## A FORUM FOR THOUGHT

LOCATION NO LONGER matters—if you are interested in ideas, arguments, talk and debate on a myriad of topics anywhere in the world, you can be there with *ABC Fora*.

Launched in 2008, *ABC Fora* gathers the most engaging speeches and debates from Australia and around the world and delivers them to our audience's computer screen, living room and radio.

Talks and debates happening anywhere from major conferences and inner-city bookshops to libraries, town halls and universities are displayed on the website, with a huge selection viewers can video-stream, pod or vodcast. With regular spots on ABC2 and Radio National, *ABC Fora* fans have the option of engaging in whatever way they choose.

## BREAKING NEW GROUND WITH HISTORY



THE JEWEL IN the crown of the ABC's ANZAC Day commemorations in 2009 was the launch of the groundbreaking interactive website, *Gallipoli: The First Day*. The 3D website explores the ANZAC landing at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915, providing a startlingly different way to view this crucial event in Australian history. The basis of the site is a 3D map of Anzac Cove, built using topographical data from 1916. Visitors to the site can move around the landscape—along beaches, up cliffs and over hills.

The site offers an hour-by-hour timeline of the landing, key events are illustrated with 3D dioramas and fly-throughs and a wealth of supplementary

media—including audio, video, photographs and first-hand accounts from soldiers—can be explored.

*Gallipoli: The First Day* was built almost entirely in-house by the Strategic Development team in the Innovation Division. It is Innovation's most ambitious content project to date, with technical firsts like the use of Adobe Flash 10 software to create an accurate three-dimensional environment.

The challenge was to develop a stand-alone broadband site that did not hinge on a television or radio program. *Gallipoli: The First Day* successfully demonstrates the potential for broadband to integrate a range of media content, offering audiences a rich narrative experience.



Radio Australia's Isabelle Genoux recording a soundscape in the Solomon Islands.

## SHARING REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES

AUSTRALIA NETWORK and Radio Australia are Australia's voice in the Asia Pacific. With a powerful line-up of Australian programs broadcast to 44 countries across Asia, the Pacific and Indian subcontinent, the ABC's international television service, Australia Network, is a bridge between our country and the many cultures of the region.

Australia Network's educational content such as *Living English*, *The Business of English* and *English Bites* are available on air and online to help develop language skills, while programs like *Pacific Pulse* take viewers beyond the headlines, with stories of achievers and those making a difference across the Pacific Islands.

Broadcasting in seven languages, Radio Australia is the ABC's international radio and online service working to provide an independent voice in the region. Regional news and features are broadcast on radio and available online, while multiple language podcasts make listening and learning English even more convenient. Programs like *In the Loop* demonstrate Radio Australia's ability to connect with audiences and bring together listeners across vast distances.

Between Australia Network and Radio Australia, the ABC is where international audiences can discover Australian perspectives on global and regional events.

## INTERACTION FOR KIDS

AUSTRALIAN PARENTS have trusted the ABC to inform, educate and entertain children for more than 75 years. Free of advertising at a time when we are increasingly concerned about children's health and obesity, ABC Television and ABC Online are instead full of wonder and discovery.

The entry point is *The Playground*, ABC Online's gateway to fun for preschoolers. It includes online games and activities, a radio where they can create their own playlist from ABC Kids songs and websites with all their favourite ABC Television characters. The site is designed so that preschoolers can use it without the help of adults—and parents and carers can let them explore and discover in a safe environment. Older kids enjoy the interactive mayhem of the *RollerCoaster* website, with its emphasis on fun learning—everything from reading and writing to computer skills, science and nature. The site allows kids

to get together online, with film and music reviews and online forums where they can chat about their issues. Dedicated children's television in the morning and afternoon on both ABC1 and ABC2 cater to all ages. Classic ABC Television fare such as *Bananas in Pyjamas* and *Play School* sit alongside newer programs like *The WatWots*, while *RollerCoaster* keeps older children entertained.



DottyWot and SpottyWot



# BROADCASTING THROUGH

IN THE PAST 12 months the ABC delivered on its role as the nation's emergency broadcaster on a number of fronts across the country. In Victoria and New South Wales, fires peaked on Black Saturday, 7 February, while almost simultaneously much of Queensland was covered in floods. At such times people turn to the ABC for help. It's where Australians come together—to show support and to receive it.

THE ABC'S VAST network of stations meant it was able to deliver essential information directly to those in peril. By switching between metropolitan and regional broadcasting on a number of frequencies, the ABC could address local needs. And because its staff in regional Australia live alongside its listeners, they knew the roads and paddocks, schools and halls they were discussing on air.

During both the Queensland floods and the Victorian fires, usual schedules were abandoned when needed as Local Radio provided round-the-clock coverage of the latest news and official advice. ABC NewsRadio took the stories to the nation and to the world through online streaming and our staff on the ground reported for radio, television and online.

774 ABC Melbourne reporter and producer Mary-Jane Fenech was just one of many ABC staff who worked around the clock to provide vital information to listeners during that period.

"There was an urgency in the studios that I had never witnessed in all my time working in radio," she said. "The phones were ringing constantly and mostly from terrified listeners. Some calls that I answered that afternoon I will never forget. They could see smoke. They could see flames."

Later, she watched as 774 ABC Melbourne *Mornings* host Jon Faine spoke on-air. He had a map of Victoria covering his desk and beside him an Incident Controller

from the Country Fire Authority who used a red pen to mark exactly where the fires were. "I recall him asking the Incident Controller, with astonishment, 'so the fire that started in Kilmore East, is now in Marysville?'"

On the Tuesday after Black Saturday, Fenech was still reading out urgent warnings. It wasn't until she had to inform listeners that, for a particular road in Churchill, "it was too late to leave," that the emotion of the past four days began to sink in.

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"MY COLLEAGUES WERE COMPASSIONATE, DEDICATED, PROFESSIONAL AND COMMITTED," SHE SAID. "IT WAS A TEAM EFFORT FULFILLING THE RESPONSIBILITY AS THE EMERGENCY SERVICES BROADCASTER, THAT I AM SO PROUD TO BE A PART OF."

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During the Victorian firestorm, the ABC Bushfire Community website ([abc.net.au/emergency/bushfire](http://abc.net.au/emergency/bushfire)) provided vital details to those in harm's way—from urgent emergency phone numbers, Country Fire Authority safety messages and fire maps to road closures, the location of emergency relief centres, power outages, community meetings and counselling services.

The website soon became a rallying point. In



*A huge crowd turned out to see Macca broadcast Australia All Over live from Kinglake. Macca was in Kinglake as part of his Say G'Day Tour, which has already taken him to other fire affected towns including Healesville, Calignee, Marysville, Churchill and Boolarra.*

# DARK TIMES

In addition to continuing news updates, ABC Bushfire Community was a place to send messages of condolence, for fire victims to blog their experience and for people in these shattered communities to come together. It was a meeting place, in areas where most physical evidence of community was in short supply.

The ABC's audience took advantage of a suite of new communication tools, with users posting updates and requests for information via Twitter, and others communicating further warnings via SMS. The "@774melbourne" Twitter account was a valuable source of information for both people on the ground and those outside the fire affected regions. This account grew from approximately 250 followers to 1 200 in the space of two days and was in the top three re-tweeted accounts in the world over this time.

User-generated content showed the extent of the crisis in full colour, with ABC contributors posting photographs and videos, from the heart-rending "View out our kitchen window," to the helpful—showing roads cut off by flames or smoke.

The online coverage was also important in helping Australians who were far from home to keep in touch. They listened to ABC broadcasts online and watched events unfold on the internet, telling us how important it was to stay connected: "Listening hard on ABC from the UK. Praying and thinking about all those affected by this horrible event."

## COMMITMENT TO THE JOB

IN 2009, ONE man with a hose stood between the ABC's FM transmitter in Mt Tassie, Victoria and the fire front. Battling burns, smoke inhalation and falling embers, Clem Jarvis kept the facility standing. Later, other dedicated employees from Broadcast Australia—the ABC's transmission service provider—went back in to shore up the site.

Ultimately, with no power—23km of power lines up the mountain were gone and the Mt Tassie site's emergency generator destroyed—the transmitter had to be shut down. But without Clem and his hose, the damage could have been much worse, and the ABC off-air for months. As it was, Local Radio service to the area was restored within days.

Mark Spurway, Head of Transmission Services, said the ABC's vast network of transmission infrastructure was vulnerable to natural disasters and bad weather, requiring much preparation before, and protection during, an emergency.

"Because of the nature of what they have to do, transmitter facilities are often either surrounded by forests or on top of mountains and hills. They are sometimes hard to access and often in the path of the storm or fire," he said.

He said the ABC works with emergency agencies to keep track of cyclone and bushfire threats to transmission infrastructure and our transmission service provider Broadcast Australia works with us to prepare these facilities as much as possible in times of natural disaster.

The ABC's transmitters are positioned so that most of Australia's populated areas are covered by overlapping signals. So when power is lost or equipment damaged and the ABC is off-air, many regions can take the ABC Radio or Television signals from an alternative transmitter site.



*Clem Jarvis and the remains of the batteries at Mt Tassie, Victoria.*

Being there when we are needed

Support

## THE TOWN SQUARE IN YOUR HAND

IN 2009, THE ABC made its biggest move into the mobile platform with the launch of the ABC Mobile site at [m.abc.net.au](http://m.abc.net.au). The new site brings reliable and up-to-date ABC content directly to mobile phones, including news, sport and entertainment stories; localised information like weather forecasts and radio schedules; movie reviews and session times; television guides for ABC1 and ABC2; music news from *triple j*; and more.

The site launched with a text and image service to keep data charges low and has been developed specifically for mobile phone screen sizes so content is fast to load and easy to navigate.

“The ABC is already a leading provider of digital media content in Australia,” ABC Managing Director Mark Scott said. “But we are now delivering even more with this significant move onto the mobile platform. ABC Mobile provides yet another way for Australians to access reliable, quality content wherever and whenever they choose.”

The ABC Mobile offering also includes a sophisticated ABC iPhone application and a news application for the new G1 Android handsets. Both applications are available online as free downloads.



*m.abc.net.au can be accessed via any 3G hand set.*



*Inside a control room operating with the new Ignite studio automation system.*

## IGNITION ON ALL FRONTS

ADVANCES IN TECHNOLOGY help lower the ABC’s technology and running costs, and such savings allow us to produce more content—of better quality—to our audience.

One of the major projects undertaken by the ABC has been the replacement of television news studio technology with a higher level of studio automation that will deliver considerable efficiency gains.

The Ignite studio automation system will help the ABC reduce capital and production costs and is now doing the Melbourne, Sydney and Perth news as well as *ABC News Breakfast* and *Midday*. Ignite has been used for several years at the ABC’s international network,

Australia Network. Australia Network also pioneered the use of desktop editing technology with which journalists can edit their own stories.

The ABC also has plans to improve the efficiency of graphics production for News programs by making better use of our graphic designers and equipment in Sydney and Melbourne.

In other areas the ABC is creating technical solutions to problems faced by the broadcasting industry. The Technology Research and Standards group has developed several software packages that help resolve audio problems experienced with the introduction of digital television.

## THE CORE OF OUR BEING

INTEGRITY, RESPECT, COLLEGIALITY and INNOVATION are the new cornerstones of ABC workplace culture. The ABC Values, which were launched in 2009, emerged as the result of staff consultation and were developed to guide ABC employees in the way we work and interact with others, as well as in the decisions we make.

They apply to all employees and are designed to build and support a workplace culture where everyone can do their best work.

"ABC Values encapsulate what we stand for and are a filter through which organisational behaviour, including behaviour towards each other and towards the Corporation, and decision-making, is interpreted," Managing Director Mark Scott said.



ABC Headquarters  
at Ultimo in Sydney.

## AN EYE ON OURSELVES

THE ABC IS PRIVILEGED TO OPERATE with guaranteed independence to fulfil statutory functions with public money. It maintains that independence partly by undertaking genuine self regulation.

The ABC is conducting a review of its self-regulation framework in which it has invited comment from ABC staff and the public on the Corporation's codes and practices. The review focuses on each part of ABC self-regulation, including standards-setting, complaints handling, reporting lines and the appropriate action to be taken when standards are breached.

A well-designed, strong framework for self-regulation does more than look back case-by-case, it looks ahead to continuous improvement. The ABC's review will help further its journey along this path.

## ASSURING QUALITY

THE ABC'S EDITORIAL POLICIES are based on key values of honesty, fairness, independence and respect, and are designed to ensure and encourage the best quality work in the ABC. They also help make the Corporation more accountable to the public.

Quality Assurance surveys help verify whether the ABC is meeting the standards set in its *Editorial Policies* and the ABC Act. Samples of content that have already been broadcast or published across radio, television and online are assessed for accuracy and impartiality.

In the past 12 months, the QA surveys reviewed accuracy in radio news and the impartiality of the ABC's news, opinion content and election coverage.