

## ABC Friends must keep the focus on public broadcasting

Many ABC Friends around the country will be concerned about the Coalition Government's agenda for the ABC over the next three years.

As part of our election strategy we tried to get a commitment to public broadcasting from both Coalition leaders and the Minister for Communications. Sadly we were ignored and can only fear for what could follow the last six years of relentless cost cutting and political interference.

However, as committed optimists we must look for opportunities to influence the new government and also work with those Parliamentarians who value the ABC and understand the fundamental benefits of public broadcasting in a complex, disruptive media environment.

Our first task will be to offer our support to ABC Board Chair Ita Buttrose who has a strong reputation for independence and is on the public record as being prepared to advocate for more funding for the ABC.

The ABC definitely needs its friends and we have worked hard to ensure that public broadcasting was firmly on the political agenda during the election campaign. Now we need to redouble our efforts to put clear arguments to both government and our Parliamentary ABC Friends group to ensure the ABC is funded to a standard consistent with its charter obligations.

Thank you to all those ABC Friends members and supporters who have worked so hard to defend our ABC. Your time and financial contributions have been crucial in guaranteeing that so many more Australians understand the importance of the ABC to our democracy.

There will be serious challenges ahead, but ABC Friends now has state and national structures, as well as a more aware community, to continue the fight against privatisation and any undermining of independent public broadcasting.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Margaret Reynolds'.

Margaret Reynolds  
National President  
ABC Friends National

20<sup>th</sup> May 2018