

DESPATCH BOX

TWENTY YEARS OF DEDICATED BROADCASTING



▶ SWITCHED ON: The ABC NewsRadio team in 1994

In 1994, Nelson Mandela was elected President of South Africa, Bill Clinton was in the White House, Tony Blair had just been elected the leader of British Labour and Paul Keating was our Prime Minister.

The year also saw the shooting death of NSW Labor MP John Newman and the imprisonment of former WA Labor Premier Brian Burke.

It was a sign that the pace of the news cycle was quickening and along with it the appetite for continuous news coverage, analysis and reaction which ABC NewsRadio serves to this day.

It's grown from transmitters in eight locations to 72 nationally. When parliament sits, parliamentary proceedings can be heard on those 72 analogue transmitters.

Those who want to stay with the continuous news service can do so online, on digital radio or through a mobile app.

On August 17th, ABC NewsRadio will celebrate 20 years as the nation's all-news network.

In 1988, the Parliamentary News Network (PNN) assumed the responsibility of broadcasting parliamentary proceedings. In 1994, PNN evolved to the ABC NewsRadio of today.

The requirement that the proceedings be broadcast by the ABC dates back to 1946.

For just over 40 years normal programming on ABC Local Radio on the national broadcaster throughout the country was interrupted to bring citizens live proceedings from the House of Representatives and the Senate.

The formula was simple. When parliament sat people could tune in to a dedicated frequency in the cities and the regions to listen to the deliberations of their elected representatives.

When the houses were not sitting they could listen to a new offering – continuous news from home and abroad.

Now, with the advent of digital radio, the internet and mobile apps you can quite literally get the best of both worlds, parliamentary proceedings and news – anywhere and anytime – on ABC NewsRadio.

Stay tuned for the celebration of 20 years of continuous news in August. ■

SPEAKER CHALLENGES UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

House of Representatives Speaker Bronwyn Bishop has challenged students to put forward their arguments on what freedom of speech means in Australia's democracy.

The best debater will win a cash prize of \$500 as part of the 2014 Speaker's University Challenge.

"Freedom of speech is a fundamental principle on which our democracy is built," Mrs Bishop said.

"It's exercised every sitting day here in the House of Representatives."

"So for this year's University Challenge I'm asking university students to explore the topic: 'Freedom of speech in a modern day democracy'."

Students have been asked to make a three-minute video to present their case on the topic.

The producers of the top three videos will be flown to Canberra for the announcement of the winner on 1 October 2014.

More information is at:

www.aph.gov.au/unichallenge or email: **comps.reps@aph.gov.au** or phone: **freecall 1800 139 299**.



THE SPEAKER'S
UNIVERSITY CHALLENGE