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ABC announces \$1 Million Podcasting Fund

The Director of ABC Radio, **Michael Mason**, today announced a \$1 million boost to the corporation's podcast production aimed at supporting emerging community-based podcasters and extending the range and diversity of content.

The Podcast Fund was launched at the opening of the second annual podcasting conference **OzPod 2017**, hosted by the ABC and held at its Ultimo headquarters in Sydney.

Mr Mason said the fund had been established to focus on smaller, existing community-based podcasts as well as up-and-coming podcasters with a view to giving them a larger platform and audience base. "The fund will also be used to commission podcasts around specific communities and their interests across a wide range of activities including sport, culture, lifestyle, comedy and the arts."

"We see an enormous opportunity to reach out to some of Australia's most talented podcasters and give them the opportunity to benefit from our expertise and experience as Australia's leading podcast producer," Mr Mason said. "The ABC has had phenomenal success with its podcast format over recent years and this fund allows us to invest not only in the extension of our own podcast content but also content from the brightest, freshest creative talent in this field."

Mr Mason said the project's success would be measured in the ABC's ability to extend its reach into communities and audiences of special interest through new creative partnerships. "We will deliberately preference content that fills the gaps in our current offering."

Australia has seen the rapid uptake of podcasting in recent years with 17 per cent of the population listening to a podcast at least once a month. As the leading podcast producer in the country the ABC has witnessed phenomenal growth in the number of Australians accessing its podcasts. There have been 115 million unique downloads this year to the end of July with an average monthly download of 16 million. The ABC's most popular podcast, *Conversations with Richard Fidler* accounts for 20 million downloads alone year to date. Another ABC podcast success has been the true crime investigation series *Trace* with more than one million downloads over its four-episode run.

The new fund will be run by ABC Audio Studios which was established in July this year bringing together the corporation's podcast production teams as well as its long-form radio production teams. The funding will provide support for crafting ideas, developing and planning formats, production processes and engaging with audiences.

The ABC will call for submissions in the coming months with new podcast content being available to audiences early in 2018. The fund has been established for one year.

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