



R18+ for games vote July 21/22

The Standing Committee of Attorneys General meets in Adelaide on July 21 and 22. After months of argument, propaganda, and lobbying from all sides, these Ministers will tackle the issue of whether there should be an R18+ classification for games.

The Federal Minister for Home Affairs Brendan O'Connor will be pushing for agreement on his proposed new classification scheme for games, which includes an R18+ classification. He will be presenting the outcome of his latest online poll on his proposals. The Minister has threatened to override the States if he can't get the required unanimous agreement. The ACCM has written to the Minister and to the other Attorneys opposing this proposal as it does not believe it fixes the existing problems with MA15+ (see www.childrenand-media.org.au).

Other Ministers have differing views: the ACT and Tas AGs have said that they will support the O'Connor proposal; the newly elected NSW AG is quoted as saying he'll not vote on the issue; the SA AG is prepared to go it alone on rolling all MA15+ games into a new R18+ classification.

We await the outcome with interest. In the meantime the Aust Law Reform Commission gets on with the job of reviewing the whole classification system. Submissions to that review closed on July 15.

Media use and child sleep

It has been known for some time that media use can negatively effect a child's sleep but little has been known about how content choices and times of watching affect this relationship.

New US research with children aged 3-5 has shown that violent content and evening media use were associated with increased sleep problems. Children with a bedroom television consumed more media and were more likely to have a sleep problem. No such effects were observed with nonviolent daytime media use.

Garrison, M; Liekweg, K; Christakis, D (2011) Media Use and Child Sleep: The Impact of Content, Timing, and Environment. *Pediatrics*, 128, 29-35.

STOP PRESS

Billboard advertising inquiry report released

On Monday 4 July 2011, the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs tabled the report of its inquiry into the regulation of billboard and outdoor advertising entitled *Reclaiming Public Space*.

The report recommends that the advertising industry be given until June 30, 2013 to prove that it is capable of monitoring billboards before the federal government is forced to intervene. Outdoor ads, which include shop windows, bus shelters and murals, make up just two per cent of all advertising, but in 2010 accounted for 20 per cent of all complaints.

The full report can be found at: <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/spla/outdoor%20advertising/report.htm>

Classification Board warns about new Harry Potter film

In a media release dated 4 July 2011 the Australian Government Classification Board warned that it has classified the new film *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hollows – Part 2*, M with consumer advice of 'Fantasy themes and violence'. The acting Director of the Classification Board, Lesley O'Brien, reminded consumers that although there are no legal restrictions on access, films classified M are recommended for mature audiences and may require a mature perspective.

To read the ACCM review of this film go to: http://www.youngmedia.org.au/mediachildren/07_04_choose_films.htm

A discussion of the effects of Harry Potter films on children can be found on the Center on Media and Child Health website at: http://www.youngmedia.org.au/mediachildren/07_04_choose_films.htm

New parliamentary report on cybersafety and the young

On Monday 20 June 2011, the Joint Select Committee on Cyber-Safety tabled its report on the Inquiry into Cyber-Safety, *High-Wire Act: Cyber-Safety and the Young*.

The report takes account of the opinions and internet habits of 33,751 young Australian internet users. According to the committee,

"the results of this consultation highlight the fact that younger generations not only hold the key to their own safety, but also that their knowledge and risk-management strategies are frequently undervalued. Young Australians have a wealth of experience with new technologies and are often more equipped to respond appropriately to online risks than is assumed."

The 32 recommendations cover a range of issues related to cyber-safety and young Australian internet users. Recommendation 1, in particular, shows a new awareness that children are starting their internet explorations at a very young age. It reads:

That the Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth consider the feasibility of assisting preschools and kindergartens to provide cyber-safety educational programs for children as part of their development activities.

The full report can be found at <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jssc/report.htm>

Senate review report on Australia's classification scheme

In late June the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee tabled its report *Review of the National Classification Scheme: achieving the right balance*. The Committee made 30 recommendations which they asked the Federal Attorney General to direct the ALRC to note in their ongoing review of classification in Australia. Government Senators dissented from the recommendations, apart from recs 3, 12 and 30.

Notably, Rec 3 says there has been no

continued on P2



no. 276 June 2011

small screen

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small screen is published at the beginning of each month and reports on the events of the previous month 11 issues per year (Dec/Jan double issue)

Published by

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ACCM is a national, non-profit community organisation. Its mission is to promote a quality media environment for Australian children.

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Contributions are welcome.

ACCM's movie review service is supported by a grant from the
South Australian Government

ACCM's Web Page and Broadband access are supported by its Internet Service Provider

Internode

Publication and printing of *small screen* is supported by a donation from
Nickelodeon



EDITORIAL

US Supreme Court rules on violent video games

On 27th June, the US Supreme Court handed down its decision in the case of the Governor of California vs Entertainment Merchants Association. California was seeking to have its law, restricting the sale or rental of violent video games to minors, declared valid. By a seven to two verdict, the Court ruled that video games qualify for First Amendment protection and therefore the California law was unconstitutional.

Dissenting Judge Breyer wrote in part 'California has substantiated its claim of harm with considerably stronger evidence [than in earlier successful cases before the Court], and California's law imposes no more than a modest restriction on expression'. Thomas, J said [in part] that 'the practice and beliefs of the founding generation establish that "the freedom of speech" as originally understood, does not include a right to speak to minors ... without going through the minor's parents or guardians'. The full decision can be found on the Supreme Court website.

US researchers have argued that the decision does not mean that the research evidence is not valid. Douglas Gentile and Craig Anderson of Iowa State University said "As scientists we felt compelled to help the Court understand the science. That is why we submitted our research and professional opinions in an amicus curiae brief for this case. ...Nonetheless, we understood that many other factors are relevant to this case beyond research,

continued from P1

further consideration by the Senate of the Senate Environment, Communications and the Arts Committee's 2008 report, Sexualisation of children in the contemporary media. The LCA Committee recommended that the Senate should, as a matter of urgency, establish an inquiry to consider the progress made by industry bodies and others in addressing the issues.

Let's hope we don't have to wait too long for a Senator to take up the cause.

Marketing food and drink to UK children

A new report published by the UK based National Heart Foundation in June maps the national and international regulations and voluntary commitments from businesses affecting food and drink marketing to British children in order to identify current gaps and opportunities for action.

With contributions from the National Children's Bureau, the International Association for the Study of Obesity, the International Business Leaders' Forum and the Institute for Social Marketing, the report also presents fresh insights from children, young people and parents about their awareness of food marketing techniques and the reported influence on their food and drink choices.

It also presents views from commercial stakeholders drawn from food companies,

such as legal precedent, constitutional issues and political factors ... we are not surprised that the law was struck down, as we believe our society should be very careful about limiting First Amendment protections". (Op-ed article link below)



Barbara Biggins
OAM
Hon CEO

In a wry commentary on the Court decision, cartoonist Sheneman for the Star Ledger drew a father and mother in their kitchen. In response to the husband's question "where's Johnny?", the wife looking dolefully into her glass of wine, says "He said the US Supreme Court gave him the Constitutional right to play violent video games. I sent him to his room and he called Amnesty International"

A selection of US coverage can be found below.

June 27, 2011 Scientific American

<http://www.psychology.iastate.edu/faculty/caa/Multimedia/VGVSupremeCourtSciAmer.pdf>

June 27, 2011 Wall Street Journal article

<http://www.psychology.iastate.edu/faculty/caa/Multimedia/VGVSupremeCourtWSJ-6-27-11.pdf>

June 28, 2011 ABC News

<http://www.psychology.iastate.edu/faculty/caa/Multimedia/VGVSupremeCourtABC-News.pdf>

2011 Op-Ed article on Supreme Court Case

<http://www.psychology.iastate.edu/faculty/caa/Multimedia/VGV-SC-OpEdDDAGCAA.pdf>

licensing companies, retailers, advertisers and trade associations.

The full report, *An analysis of the regulatory and voluntary landscape concerning the marketing and promotion of foods and drinks to children* can be found at

<http://www.heartforum.org.uk/our-work/policy/nutrition/marketing-food-and-drink-to-children/>

Nine undertakes to strengthen complaint handling procedures

The Nine Network has provided the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) with an enforceable undertaking designed to underpin improved compliance with the complaint-handling provisions of the Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice.

Viewers concerned about code breaches must first complain, in writing, to the station involved.

The broadcaster then has 30 working days to respond to the complaint. Under the new enforceable undertaking Nine will send responses to postal complaints by either registered mail or Express Post and will maintain a register of all code complaints. ACMA will be provided with a monthly report on complaints received and processed and quarterly reports on compliance.

The enforceable undertaking is available on the ACMA website at:

<http://www.acma.gov.au/>

Clips 'n' Cuts

small screen no. 276 June 2011

Disney comes out fighting in toddler battle

AMANDA MEADE
CHILDREN

PRESCHOOL channel Playhouse Disney is directly challenging rival Nick Jr by being rebranded as Disney Junior and creating the first Disney princess character aimed at toddlers.

And the rebranded channel with take on the educational Nick Jr with a strategy that places storytelling at its heart.

The new 24-hour Disney Junior channel launched locally yesterday for its audience of two to seven-year-olds, just one of 25 new channels in 109 countries the 80-year-old Disney company will roll out by September.

The decade-old Playhouse Disney, launched in Australia in 2005, has not been as embraced by its young viewers as much as competitors Nickelodeon and Nick Jr, who are the market leaders both here and in the US.

According to Nickelodeon, *Dora the Explorer* alone has generated more than \$11 billion in toys, books and DVD sales globally since 2002. Playhouse Disney hasn't had a character to rival it, but all that is set to change with the launch of the first Disney princess for the preschool audience, Sofia The First, complete with sparkly dresses and shoes.

After six months researching the attitudes of 2200 parents, Disney Junior positioned itself as a storytelling channel. Senior vice-president of Disney Junior Worldwide, Nancy Kanter, said storytelling was the focus but content would continue to include age-appropriate "lessons and

messages". "Maths, reading and manners will be wrapped in storytelling," Ms Kanter told *Media*. "We're also having the first Disney princess for little girls; she'll look and behave much like they do, she may be having problems with a friend or learning to fit in."

Sofia will include the three good fairies Flora, Fauna and Merryweather from *Sleeping Beauty* as well as appearances by the classic princesses Cinderella, Ariel and Belle.

The general manager of brand-

ed media content in Australia and New Zealand, Leisa Sadler, said Disney had invested heavily in a local marketing campaign including interstitials with local school children, a radio advertising campaign, viewer competitions and local TV productions including a series based on the popular children's book *Guess How Much I Love You*. "We, clearly from the ratings, don't have a direct competitor for *Dora*, but watch out because we've got *Jake and the Never Land Pirates*, which we're very excited about."

The Australian, 30 May 2011

Chapman learns to let the little rascals run free

Sanitising history is not an option for young viewers

AMANDA MEADE
CHILDREN

PRODUCER Penny Chapman discovered early on in the making of the landmark ABC3 series *My Place* that when it comes to making historical stories for children, it's better to scrap the historical detail and focus on naughty kids.

This is the reasoning behind cont...

a Logie for best children's television, started 20 years later to bring it up to date and went back to 1888 in 10-year intervals.

Series two starts in 1878 and goes back to 1798 and beyond to "before time", ending with two additional episodes about indigenous children who lived in the same place before European settlement.

The unifying feature is the place each child lived, which is near a giant tree. The tree is actually located in suburban Concord, but the series was shot on location in Old Sydney Town, Lane Cove

the characters of *My Place* — children with a tendency to get into trouble. These little rascals — the children of convicts, free settlers and Aborigines — are at the heart of series two of *My Place*, a colourful 13-part drama for eight- to 12-year-olds which debuts on Sunday at 5pm.

The centrepiece of the children's channel's programming took up a large chunk of its \$20 million annual budget.

The series was made by Matchbox Pictures, the production firm Chapman co-founded, that global giant NBC

National Park and at Manly Dam.

"We said to the writers, 'Don't worry about your responsibility as historians'," Chapman says. "This is about history and kids don't get dealt this fare very often in this TV format. So we had to be very true to the time and the character and try to deliver up scripts that had a good story."

"We set ourselves a number of rules: that the story from the point of view of kid, that story is more important than anything else, and that we're not here to deliver history lessons."

What emerges is a rare piece of

Universal bought a controlling stake in last month.

"We found that the writers were becoming historians and the stories were too boring, too much like essays," Chapman told *Media*.

"We decided we needed to know only two historical things. For example in the 1888 episode: kids were servants for other kids; and kids died."

My Place is inspired by a children's book written by Nadia Wheatley and illustrated by Donna Rawlins to celebrate the 1888 bicentenary of Australia.

The first TV series, which won

exciting and intelligent television for children which gives them a sense of how Australians of all races and classes lived in the past few hundred years — and beyond.

"It was very interesting to see how dark we were able to go," Chapman says.

Indeed, children are made to work hard, they drown, they are ill-treated by cruel masters, they go hungry and they die of whooping cough, but the treatment of the material makes it bearable for a young audience.

And sanitising history was simply not an option.

The Australian, 20 June 2011

Prize pig

TELEVISION is not bad for kids — it's this mother's best friend.

Olivia is a favourite of my four-year-old daughter. Last week, Olivia the pig ate brussels sprouts. This weekend, my daughter requested brussels sprouts and enthusiastically knocked back a bowlful. Thank you, Olivia and ABC for Kids.

Michelle Loft, Brighton North

The Age Green Guide, 23 June 2011

Good week for...

TEENAGERS with parents who give them a set bedtime, after Australian research showing they get more sleep and function better during the day than kids with less controlling elders. Among 385 South Australian 13 to 18-year-olds, 18 per cent had a bedtime set by their parents on school nights. These kids got more sleep and felt less tired during the day than those whose parents let them go to bed whenever they wanted, the researchers write in the journal *Sleep*.

Sleep
2011;34:797-800
(Short M et al)

Weekend Australian, 11-12 June 2011

Too much screen-time robs children of sleep

VERITY EDWARDS

LOLA Giuffre is a typical teenager — she does her homework on a computer, she Skypes her friends at night, she has an iPhone and also listens to her iPod.

But Lola gets more than an hour less sleep than her great-grandparents would have had at the same age a century ago, according to widespread research showing electrification, technology and caffeine are to blame.

University of South Australia student Lisa Matricciani exam-

ined the sleeping habits of 690,747 children in 20 countries, between 1905 and 2008.

"Children have lost about an hour of sleep over the last century," Ms Matricciani told *The Australian*.

"They're sleeping about 20 minutes less per day than their parents were when they were the same age. We've got things that make children want to go to sleep later, like computers and television, and the means to keep them awake."

She found children were losing 45 seconds of sleep a year, which

coincided with technological improvements over the decades.

Ms Matricciani said while children's bed times were becoming progressively later, they were still waking at the same time.

"Technology use, schoolwork and part-time employment have all been associated with delayed bedtimes and reduced sleep duration," she said.

"Similarly, electrification, caffeine use and parental attitudes have been identified as contexts that allow... later bedtimes."

Year 11 student Lola, 16, spends her evenings doing homework

and video-calling friends from school and overseas on the computer in her room.

"Technology does make it easier," Lola said. "I can keep in touch with my friends overseas."

She admitted that using the computer until 11.30pm meant she did not get enough sleep and was often tired in the morning. "I don't drink energy drinks but I do have a cup of tea in the morning."

Ms Matricciani said the jury was still out on whether children were getting enough sleep, whether they used to sleep more than they needed, or

whether sleep was discretionary.

"Despite concerns that too many children don't get enough sleep, whether children need a specific amount of sleep... has not yet been established," she said.

The results were concerning, she said, because insufficient sleep could lead to health problems including anxiety, poor concentration and mood disorders as well as poor academic performance and a higher risk of injuries.

Ms Matricciani's research is published in *Sleep Medicine Reviews* and she will present her findings at Oxford in August.

The Australian, 3 June 2011

Outdoor sets own code in bid to see off government

The Australian, 27 June 2011

STEPHEN BROOK
REGULATION

Sexually provocative billboards could disappear after the outdoor advertising industry agreed to adopt a self-regulatory plan in an effort to see off government regulation.

The plan, to be announced today, will see the industry's own panel block posters deemed too sexually frank or that feature too much nudity.

But the concessions have come too late for the parliamentary committee that is considering government regulation. It will release its own report next Monday.

Graham Perrett, chairman of

the social policy and legal affairs House of Representatives standing committee, said: "We have to work collaboratively to be super-vigilant about our public spaces. We want to make sure public spaces are suitable and appropriate for all of us."

"We have to be respectful of the needs of the majority of the people — not every single person."

The Outdoor Media Association's own regulation plan has four elements and at its centre-piece contains a content policy that will allow the OMA to review posters in advance and block controversial ones before they are erected. "No member will be entitled to display an advertisement

if advised that it is likely to breach a self-regulatory code," its new code says.

It also includes provisions for education and training, space on billboards to advertise how people can complain about posters and a concept advisory service for creative agencies.

But the association will have no control over groups that are not members.

OMA chief executive Charmaine Moldrich said the outdoor industry ran 30,000 different advertisements over a year, but the Advertising Standards Bureau dealt with only 67 complaints last year, of which seven were upheld.

"We are 99.98 per cent compliant. Where we need to be more

considerate about community standards in the area of sex, sexuality and nudity," Ms Moldrich said.

Media revealed in April that the outdoor advertising industry was considering creating a code of practice to regulate images of sexuality on posters.

The Advanced Medical Institute's controversial "Want longer-lasting sex?" billboards drew the most complaints last year and were eventually banned by the industry's self-regulatory body, the Advertising Standards Board, after 18 months of protests.

"We are trying to respond to the issues that the community is raising with us," Ms Moldrich said. "Self-regulation is working.

No nation other than Saudi Arabia legislates for content."

Seven of the 10 most complained-about ads — which prompted more than 600 complaints — were objected to on the grounds of sex, sexuality and nudity. Four of those were billboards for brands including Calvin Klein, Sexpo, Fernwood Fitness Centres and the dating site for married people, Ashley Madison.

The Advertising Standards Board recently upheld complaints against a poster promoting a band called Holy F..k, a billboard for Aussie Boat Loans with a torso of a woman in a bikini and an Ashley Madison billboard using the line, "Life is short. Have an affair while in Sydney".

TV networks seek content easing

Shows on digital channels should count, they argue

JAMES CHESSELL
MEDIA

THE commercial free-to-air television industry has called for a more flexible approach to local content rules and a permanent cut in licence fees as part of its submission to the Gillard government's "convergence review" of media regulation.

FTA industry body Free TV Australia's submission to the convergence review framing paper, or delivery mechanisms. "The submission is likely to anger rival platforms such as pay-television, which argues that the FTA service providers have received special treatment from successive federal governments.

It is also likely to frustrate the Screen Producers Association of Australia, which has suggested that digital channels should be subject to local content rules.

Producing local content is costly. The FTA channels invest more than \$950 million annually in original Australian programming, including drama, children's shows, sport and news. It is one of the most politically sensitive issues in any debate on broadcast

filed with the Department of Communications on Friday, calls for a rethink of local content rules imposed on the Ten, Nine and Seven networks.

That is likely to concern the local production industry.

The Free TV submission says local programs broadcast on digital multichannels such as Eleven, Go and 7Mate should count towards quota obligations.

At present, a local production such as *Neighbours* broadcast on Eleven does not help the Ten Network meet its obligations under the Australian Content Standard because there are no local content requirements for the multichannels. When *Neighbours* ran regulation. Free TV chief executive Julie Flynn has argued that the networks are not trying to walk away from their local content obligations, but are seeking to apply them to an increasingly digital broadcast environment.

The Free TV submission also takes up the controversial issue of licence fee rebates granted to the FTA networks in 2010 and this year, which have been extended some time next year.

The rebates were originally justified by Communications Minister Stephen Conroy as a means to boost local content — even though there were no conditions attached — and to help the

five nights a week on Ten's primary channel, it made up 115 of the 181 hours of drama the network screened to meet its local content requirements.

"With Australia transitioning to a fully digital environment by the end of 2013, this kind of regulatory distinction becomes irrelevant and there is scope to consider additional flexibility in how broadcasters meet cultural objectives," the Free TV submission argues.

"We need to debate how we can provide more flexibility to enable broadcasters to serve the public interest in a way that does not put us at a competitive disadvantage in comparison to other platforms commercial networks overcome the advertising market slump resulting from the global financial crisis.

However, the Free TV submission argues for "a permanent reduction in licence fees to reflect long-term structural changes in the media market and to bring them into line with international best practice".

Free TV adds: "Licence fees are tied to revenue but revenue growth has flattened while costs continue to rise, particularly since the introduction of multichannels and the need to respond to competition from additional pay-TV channels and new (internet TV) services."

The Australian, 15 June 2011

Fast-food adverts evade child radar

BELINDA TASKER
SYDNEY

CHILDREN are still being exposed to the same number of junk food ads on TV, despite the fast food industry's introduction of new rules about marketing products to children.

A review of TV ads has found the total num-

ber of fast food ads increased after the industry's voluntary marketing code was introduced in August 2009, with no change in those for junk food.

The findings, published online by the *Medical Journal of Australia*, have sparked fresh calls for the Government to play a greater role in

regulating fast food advertising.

The code, which allowed the industry to self-regulate fast food TV ads and set new nutrition standards for foods aimed at under 14s, was signed by seven chains including McDonald's, Pizza Hut and KFC. Researchers from the University of Sydney

and Cancer Council NSW found the mean frequency of total fast food ads rose to 1.5 an hour from 1.1.

Ads for healthier alternative fast foods including fruit or salads rose to 0.3 an hour from zero.

Ads for junk food stayed the same at 1.0 an hour overall and 1.3 at peak children viewing.

The Advertiser, 25 June 2011

Bully battle

ONLINE |
KATELIN NELLIGAN

STUDENT-written plays, brochures and parent workshops are among the ways local primary schools are tackling the scourge of cyber bullying.

Principals contacted by the *Guardian Messenger* last week said they had amped up their coverage of cyber bullying in recent years as the problem hit primary schools.

"Four years ago you could count the number of kids who had a mobile phone on one hand," Paringa Park Primary principal Phil Greaves said.

"Now, most kids have them — and easy access to Facebook and emails too."

Mr Greaves said the school would host workshops for

students, staff and parents this month to teach them about cyber bullying.

Seaview Downs and Sealiff primary schools have similar programs (see separate story).

"It's important to have a whole-of-community approach, because many parents don't know a lot about technology while their kids are up to their eyeballs in it," Mr Greaves said.

Students last term also wrote and performed anti-bullying plays.

Emily, 13, said pretending to be a cyber bully had taught her how hurtful it could be.

"I was only acting but I still felt bad — it showed me how much cyber bullying affects people," she said.

Guardian Messenger, 8 June 2011

SMALL
TALK

MUCH loved ABC preschool program *Play School* is getting two new presenters as it celebrates 45 years on air next month: Rachael Coopes (*McLeod's Daughters*) and Jonny Pasvolksky (*Offspring*). The birthday celebrations will see 20 new episodes air over four weeks on ABC 4 Kids at 9.30am. The program will also refresh its logo, opening titles and the arrangement of its classic theme song.

The Australian, 13 June 2011

Local content key for media review

The Australian, 16 June 2011

JAMES CHESSELL
MEDIA

THE production of local content is proving to be one of the key issues to be debated as part of the federal government's "convergence" review of broadcast media.

Many of the 46 public submissions to the review's framing paper discuss what impact new distribution platforms such as internet television will have on local programming.

Several submissions raise concerns that bigger digital "pipes", such as the National Broadband Network, are capable of producing enough content to swamp Australian production.

The Screen Producers Association of Australia argues the "visibility of Australian content in the new media landscape has already begun to diminish and will continue to do so as the new environment takes shape".

The SPAA submission argues Australia has a high concentration of foreign content "dumped by more powerful English-speaking economies".

"It is clear that the existing free-to-air multi-channels are drawing heavily on cheap foreign English-speaking programming to fill their schedules and build profit from it," the submission claims. "The lack of take up of Australian content within the expanding media environment,

especially on the FTA multi-channels, require immediate policy intervention."

The FTA industry would be likely to resist any attempts to impose stricter rules on digital channels. However, industry lobby group Free TV Australia argues in its submission for a "more flexible" approach to local content rules. For example, it would like to see local programs such as *Neighbours* shown on digital channels counted towards overall local drama quotas.

The pay-television industry body, the Australian Subscription Television and Radio Association, takes up the issue in its submission.

"ASTRA believes that the (review) should take a clean-slate approach when examining measures to encourage Australian content, including an investigation of international approaches to promoting local content production, and should avoid approaches that attempt to extend existing regulatory mechanisms that may no longer be appropriate or feasible in a converging media environment," it argues.

"ASTRA further argues that the public policy objective of encouraging Australian content production should not be used as the basis for legitimising regulatory protection of free-to-air broadcasters or any other part of the media and communications industry."

PARENTING WATCH

Are 3D games bad for kids' eyes?

TRY TEARING A MESMERISED child away from one. Hand-held computer games, in particular the Nintendo 3DS, which lets kids play 3D games without special glasses, have caught on like wildfire – but there may be a price to pay over the long term. In January, Nintendo issued an official warning that the 3D effect should be turned off for children under six, partly fuelled by a fierce debate among paediatric ophthalmologists about the safety or otherwise of 3D images on the growing eye. It's a debate that's bound to ramp up even further as a host of new 3D devices – TVs, laptops, phones – start reaching the masses in the next 12 or 18 months.

"The worst thing about devices like the 3DS is that they're so addictive for kids, and the 3D technology itself creates problems," says Liz Jackson, a fellow of the Australasian College of Behavioural Optometrists. "Because kids don't have an internal off switch, they'll keep playing a game even as their eyes water and get sore – and that's partly because the 3D effect tricks their eyes."

The 3D debate is part of a larger one that's now looking at the effect of our 21st century close-up world – of PCs, handhelds, large-screen TVs – on children's developing eyes. It's now thought that our modern, close-up world is leading to soaring levels of myopia or short-sightedness (blurry

distance vision) across the globe. In some countries such as Singapore, the levels of myopia have reached epidemic proportions, with a recent survey of army recruits revealing more than 80 per cent to be short-sighted (up from around 26 per cent in 1984). In China, it's been estimated that more than 400 million people are myopic, with levels in some city high schools running at 77 per cent. By comparison, Australia, the US and Britain are doing relatively well, with levels ranging between 20 and 25 per cent, but the figures 50 years ago were around 7 per cent.

"This increase in myopia across the world can't be due to genetic factors only," notes Jackson. "It's happened far too quickly." And the earlier a person becomes short-sighted, warns Jackson, the more short-sighted they'll become as an adult. "We're now driving our visual systems to work harder for very focused tasks, when kids also need to develop peripheral and distance vision."

Jackson says she is now witnessing levels of myopia in seven-year-olds that she was seeing in 13-year-olds 15 years ago. The solution? Get kids outdoors playing sport – or tasks that require them to look near and far. "A child under the age of six shouldn't be allowed to use a 3DS for more than 15 minutes," says Jackson. "For those over six, half an hour is more than enough."

Greg Callaghan

Weekend Australian Magazine, 4-5 June 2011

Hackers put Telstra in filter bind

ANDREW COLLEY

THE voluntary internet filter for child abuse is facing a major setback, with Telstra wavering on the commitment it made to the scheme last July.

At the time Telstra public policy director David Quilty said Telstra was happy to implement the filter in response to a call by Communications Minister Stephen Conroy.

However, a Telstra spokeswoman last night confirmed that the telco had yet to make a firm decision on whether to implement the filter.

She said Telstra remained committed to working with the federal government to reduce the availability of child abuse material on the net.

"We continue to work with the Australian Federal Police to disrupt the availability of child sexual abuse content in Australia," the spokeswoman said.

"One option being considered is the blocking of a list of illegal child sexual abuse sites identified as being the worst globally by international policing body Interpol."

The filter focuses exclusively on internet child abuse material from a list maintained by the AFP in co-operation with international law-enforcement agencies.

Optus said last night it remained committed to the filter, but without Telstra the number of internet users within its scope would fall dramatically.

There were signs the federal government was prepared to be flexible on its strategy for dealing with and blocking online child abuse material. A spokesman for Senator Conroy said: "We are still working through the details of the

voluntary arrangements with the ISPs and details have not yet been finalised."

It is understood Telstra was last night still grappling with the decision as to whether to commit to the voluntary filter because of fears of reprisals from the internet vigilantes behind a spate of recent cyber attacks.

It is understood the unstructured collective of hackers that identifies itself as Lulz Security, which has an agenda to wreak havoc on corporate and government cyber assets, claiming this is to expose security flaws, is one of Telstra's main concerns.

LulzSec has claimed responsibility for attacks on the US Central Intelligence Agency, the US PBS and most recently it released a swath of Arizona law-enforcement documents.

On Tuesday, one of the suspected hackers, Ryan Cleary, 19, was arrested in England in a joint Scotland Yard and FBI operation. He has been charged with closing down the website of Britain's Serious Organised Crime Agency.

The other main concern is a group that identifies itself as Anonymous, another unstructured hacker collective that claims to be opposed to any form of internet censorship, and has carried out attacks on Australian government websites because of Canberra's support for an internet filter on child pornography.

Patrick Gray, host of information security podcast Risky Business said the carriers' fears were well-founded.

"If they think there's a laugh in something and it ties in with their politics, they might have a go, sure," he said. "It's all about the lulz (laughs) for them."

Weekend Australian, 25-26 June 2011

3D movie novelty wears off

IT was hailed as a cinematic revolution as important as sound or colour. Already, however, there are fears in Hollywood that 3D is falling flat.

Misgivings were stoked last week by *Kung Fu Panda 2*, the animated 3D sequel to a blockbuster original. It cost \$US130 million (\$121m) to make and was released on the US Memorial Day weekend, one of the busiest of the year for cinemas.

It should have been a guaranteed winner, but there were two problems: few people went to see it, and of those who did, twice as many opted to watch it in 2D rather than pay extra for 3D tickets. Some called it a "3-Disaster".

Hollywood's latest love affair with 3D began in 2009 when *Avatar*, the \$US230m sci-fi spectacular, grossed \$US2.8 billion globally. Director James Cameron suggested today's digital 3D was "so close to a real experience it triggers memory creation in a way that 2D viewing doesn't".

DreamWorks, the company



Kung Fu Panda

behind *Kung Fu Panda 2*, said it would never make a pure 2D movie again. There was even talk of *Casablanca* being re-released in 3D. Since then, however, the number of US cinemagoers willing to pay extra for a stereoscopic experience has plummeted.

About 80 per cent of *Avatar*'s US takings came from 3D. For *Alice in Wonderland* last year, 3D earnings fell to 65 per cent. For

Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides, the total is below 50 per cent. Tickets for the format accounted for 40 per cent of earnings last weekend. Shares in RealD, which licenses 3D equipment to cinemas, lost about a quarter of their value last month.

The stereoscopic era began in the 1890s when William Fries-Greene filed the first 3D patent. In 1953, *Time* magazine trumpeted "third-dementia" and called it a "telling reply to television".

However, young children had found the requisite glasses a hassle, analysts said. Other cinemagoers complained that 3D gave them headaches.

Films in 3D are doing well overseas where the technology is newer than in the US, but Richard Greenfield, an expert on the format, said the novelty was fading.

"When there's a new 3D movie being released most weeks, and most are god-awful, paying that premium over and again gets to be upsetting," he said.

THE TIMES

The Australian, 6 June 2011

PARENTING WATCH

Primp or pimp?

CLUTCHING THEIR TROPHIES and teddy bears, wearing big hairdos, fake tans and glitzy gowns, these children appear on the US reality show *Toddlers & Tiaras*, which airs in Australia on pay TV. But US-style child pageants will soon be seen for real in Australia when the Texas company whose pageants feature in the show, Universal Royalty Beauty Pageant, stages its first local competition in Melbourne on July 29-30 – with plans to hold more events in Sydney, Brisbane and New Zealand.

That's despite a storm of protest from children's rights groups, parents and psychologists around the country who say the pageants exploit children, damage their self-esteem and can even lead to mental illness. Protests held outside state parliament houses last month called on governments to ban the events. Says Catherine Manning from the group Pull the Pin: "We're opposed to the toxic culture beauty pageants perpetuate and the messages they reinforce for girls, encouraging ever younger games of 'compare and despair'. Children should be allowed to be children without being adultified and/or sexu-

Weekend Australian Magazine, 25-26 June 2011



alised and judged by an adult-defined, narrow beauty ideal."

Anti-pageant groups such as Australians Against Child Beauty Pageants, Pull the Pin and The Butterfly Effect ("Babies not Barbies! Sand pits, not glitz!") blitzed the internet. Pageant defenders replied with their own site, Australians Who Love Beauty Pageants, although telling it mainly comprises links to businesses that feed off the industry such as Princess Fluffy Butts pageant wear, Princess for a Day Hairstyles and Baby Bling.

Perhaps the outcry has had an effect. Recently it was announced that US child beauty pageant queen Eden Wood (above, inset), who is scheduled to appear at the Melbourne event, is quitting the pageant circuit at the ripe old age of six. Her next project? A reality show called *Eden Wood Goes Hollywood*. *Lea Butterworth*

Kids who surf net are better readers

JUSTINE FERRARI
NATIONAL EDUCATION
CORRESPONDENT

PARENTS might label it a waste of time but the hours spent surfing the internet, chatting online, and even on the dreaded Facebook appear to improve children's reading skills.

An international online reading test conducted by the organisation for economic co-operation and development (OECD), a group of 17 industrialised nations including Australia, found that moderate computer use at home, either doing schoolwork or socialising, increased children's reading skills, particularly among boys.

As part of the OECD's Program of International Student Assessment in 2009 that tested students' reading skills in print, a smaller group also completed an online assessment of their skills reading digital texts, searching for and evaluating information, and combining information from a number of websites.

The study found that the teenagers scored higher in the digital reading test than the print test, with Australian students scoring almost 22 points more for their online reading skills.

Girls continued to out-

perform boys in reading, but by a smaller margin.

Australian girls scored an average of 24 points more in the digital test compared with 38 points in the print test, which was still higher than the OECD average of 14 points.

Using a computer at home was more influential in improving reading skills than using them at school, but in Australia students from more affluent families were more likely to use computers at school and at home than disadvantaged students.

Students who used a computer at home scored 84 points higher on the digital reading test than students who didn't, and 48 points higher after taking into account the relative disadvantage of students. Using a computer at school increased students' scores by only 42 points, and 31 points after taking student backgrounds into account.

The biggest gains were from using the home computer for schoolwork, with students who browsed the internet every day for their schoolwork scoring 100 points more than students who rarely surfed. The same activity at school only raised test scores by about 50 points.

Sending emails every day also increased the students' digital reading score by 50 points.

The Australian, 29 June 2011

NINTENDO DIMENSIONS

'Child porn' game is pulled

A VIDEO game likened to child pornography is to be pulled from the shelves, after having its classification revoked.

The Classification Board originally gave the Nintendo 3DS fighting game *Dead Or Alive: Dimensions* a PG rating. But the board was forced to reconsider after media reports brought risque

content to its attention – namely the ability to look up the skirts of scantily-clad teenage characters.

The board asked Nintendo to advise it why the classification should not be revoked but was not satisfied with the response.

The game is now officially unclassified, meaning it cannot be sold in Australia.

The Advertiser, 11 June 2011

Sleep, read, play: a rich life for kids

The Australian, 27 June 2011

VERITY EDWARDS

A NATIONAL study on children's eating habits and physical activity has proven that kids from wealthy families spend more time doing homework, reading and playing sport than those from poorer families.

The study of 2200 Australian children aged between nine and 16 asked them to detail how they spent four days, including at least one school day.

Tim Olds from the School of Health Sciences at the University of South Australia said children spent more time sleeping than anything else, followed by time in front of a computer or television screen, spending time with friends or at school.

"There's about 42 minutes a day difference in screen time — the poorer kids spent more time in front of the screen," Professor Olds said. "About two-thirds of that time is in front of the TV and the rest is on video games."

Professor Olds said kids from wealthier families spent almost 20 minutes a day more playing organised sports, and 33 minutes

more on school-related activities such as homework, music lessons and reading.

The extra reading time added up to about 30 hours a year — almost an entire working week.

Daphne McLeod, 14, of West Beach in Adelaide, attends the private Wilderness School at Medindie and plays soccer for three teams and until two years ago was a diver and played the piano. She reads every night.

Her brother, Owen, 16, attends St Peter's College and plays rugby and trains for surf lifesaving all year round.

They have school and club sporting commitments every day — adding up to 11 hours each a week of sport — and costing about \$1000 in memberships.

"I used to find it hard to fit it all in, but I've got used to that with time management," Owen said.

The family does not own any computer gaming consoles.

Students in the study were divided into ABS-defined brackets that counted families with an income above \$104,000 as very rich, \$75,000 to \$104,000 as rich, \$52,000 to \$75,000 as poor and below \$52,000 very poor.

RICH KIDS, POOR KIDS

Time use of adolescents in relation to their socio-economic position*

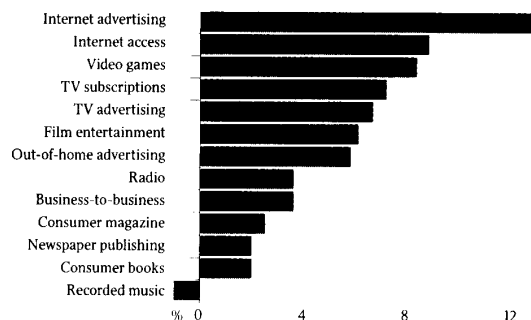
Daily minutes by income band	> \$104,000	\$75,000-\$104,000	\$52,000-\$75,000	< \$52,000
Total screen				
Including television, computer, video games	207	220	235	249
Total social				
Including phone/SMS, grooming and 'chillout'	199	196	194	187
Total physical activity				
Including sports, dance and exercise	145	143	144	136
Total school-related				
Including classroom, study, homework and music	194	163	161	161

*Averaged over whole year

Source: University of South Australia

Media spending to explode

Global segment growth to 2015



The Australian, 15 June 2011

Source: pwc.com

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Preventive Medicine, Vol. 52, No. 2, Pp146-151

Hill, Jennifer A (2011)

Endangered childhoods: how consumerism is impacting child and youth identity.

Media Culture Society, Vol. 33, No. 3, Pp347-362

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"Look, Bob was also able to do it!"

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Movie ratings miss their targets.

The Australian, 6 July 2011, P17

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CONFERENCES

The Mental Health and Wellbeing of Young People

9am-5pm, 22 July 2011

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WORLD NEWS

More Australians embrace online activities in their daily lives

The total number of Australian internet subscribers rose by 17 per cent in 2010 and the average amount of data downloaded increased by a further 29 per cent over the same period, according to research released today by the Australian Communications and Media Authority.

'These increases reflect again the ongoing digital boom in online social and economic activity,' said Chris Chapman, ACMA Chairman. 'More and more Australians are going online to do their shopping, banking and social networking.'

The report, *The internet service market and Australians in the online environment*, found that more than 15 million people aged 14-years and over used the internet during the December quarter of 2010, up from 14.2 million during the same quarter in 2009. In addition, 71 per cent of internet users went online at least once a day in December 2010, compared to 67 per cent in December 2009 - an increase of 1.2 million users.

E-commerce, video content and social networking services are increasingly drawing Australians online, with some 7.4 million persons accessing retail and auction web sites, 8.4 million accessing social networking sites and 5.5 million accessing video streaming sites from home during December 2010.

During December 2010, 3.1 million people accessed the internet via their mobile phone handset, compared to 1.9 million during December 2009.

The report and key statistics are available online at http://www.acma.gov.au/WEB/STANDARD/pc=PC_410069

New Zealanders views on their Classification System

The New Zealand Office of Film and Literature Classification has released a new report: *Understanding the Classification System – New Zealanders' Views*. The aims of the reported research were to find out how New Zealanders' use of entertainment media is changing, to gauge the public's knowledge and perceptions of the Classification Office and the classification system, and to learn how people make use of the classification system in their day-to-day lives.

NZ parents and guardians continue to trust and rely upon their classification office. When selecting suitable films and video games for children, 92% of respondents place a high degree of importance on classifications and 90% on accompanying descriptive notes. 69% think the classification system is 'about right', and 84% of those think the Classification Office is doing a 'good' or 'excellent' job.

Respondents were broadly dissatisfied that unrestricted video games are able to be sold in New Zealand without local classification labels. In the past five years eight games went from an unrestricted Australian classification to a restricted New Zealand classification as a result of complaints or other concerns. However, participants in this survey felt that it important that all classification decisions should be based on New Zealand society's values and law, and made by a group based within New Zealand.

The full report is available at <http://www.censorship.govt.nz/pdfword/Understanding-the-Classification-System-web-version.pdf>

KIDS' TV

A selection of children's programs screened on TV during the period

ABC 1 (Now only afternoon programs)

Play School; Olivia; Grandpa in my Pocket; Gawayn; Mona the Vampire; My Place; Dance Academy.

ABC 2

Waybaloo; Fireman Sam; Little Princess; LazyTown; Pingu; Bookaboo; Florrie's Dragons; Bananas in Pyjamas; Sesame Street; Timmy Time; Bob the Builder; Zoo Mix; Franny's Feet; Fluffy Gardens.

ABC 3

Bugged; Oggy and the Cockroaches; The Legend of Dick and Dom; Monk; Spliced!; Tracey McBean; BTN Extra; Escape from Scorpion Island; The Latest Buzz; Stormworld; Connor Undercover; Summer in Transylvania; Deadly 60.

SEVEN

Toybox; It's Academic; Castaway; Legend of Enyo.

NINE

Hi 5; Kitchen Whiz; Kids' WB; Dennis & Gnasher; The Saddle Club; GASP!

TEN

Totally Wild; Wurrawhy; Me and my Monsters; Scope; K-9.

NICKELODEON

Wayside; SpongeBob SquarePants; The Fairly Odd parents; The Penguins of Madagascar; Shaun the Sheep; Dora the Explorer; Team Umizoomi; Hi 5; The Fresh Beat Band; iCarly; Victorious; Big Time Rush; House of Anubis; True Jackson VP; Drake and Josh; Go Diego Go!; Spectacular Spider-Man.

DISNEY CHANNEL

Phineas and Ferb; The Suite Life of Zack and Cody; Wizards of Waverly Place; Sonny with a Chance; Zeke and Luther; As the Bell Rings; Hannah Montana; Cory in the House.