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*** * * Media Release * * ***

Know Before You Load – a new service to help parents find the best in apps and avoid those that promote gambling.

On April 7, the Australian Council on Children and the Media, with funding from the SA Government, will launch a review service of apps for children.

Project consultant and apps expert Dr Kate Highfield says the onslaught of new media platforms and content raises many challenges for today's parent that were not there a generation ago.

"It's not easy to manage children's media use, get the best of what is on offer and avoid the risks," she says. "Tablet technology is being promoted as a learning tool in schools and there are some great apps available to provide a fun and varied way to learn new skills and knowledge. This project will arm parents with knowledge on which apps are most suitable to children of all ages."

This new initiative from ACCM will also incorporate a Children and Gambling Watch list.

ACCM President Prof Elizabeth Handsley believes there is a high level of concern in society about the normalisation of gambling.

"Although minors cannot legally participate in placing bets and enter casinos there is concern that early exposure to these gambling activities through the games children play and media they watch could lead to problem gambling," says Prof Handsley.

"The government's funding of this project allows some of these concerns to be addressed in a constructive way."

The reviews will include apps with pitfalls such as in-app purchasing; those that contain random advertising that can be unsuitable for children; gender stereo types or sexualised images, coarse language, substance abuse, violence, and product placement. The ability to communicate with others via online profiles will also be included.

From April 7 the website www.childrenandmedia will provide short videos discussing apps and how to get the best out of them. The public will be able to submit reviews, suggest titles for review, and enter a discussion forum.

"Providing this knowledge and assisting parents to identify the risks is one way in which ACCM hopes to address fears of new technologies and the challenges it brings to parents raising children in this information age," says Prof Handsley.

The project will be officially launched at the Col. Light Primary School on April 7 at 11am by Adelaide businesswoman, journalist and mother of twin boys, Lainie Anderson.

Dr Kate Highfield will be the keynote speaker on the topic of “Choosing and using apps with children: finding good games and avoiding the pitfalls” at a seminar for parents and teachers at 7.30pm at the same school.

About ACCM: ACCM is a unique national community organisation, which strives for a media environment that supports the health, safety and wellbeing of Australian children. It is committed to promoting healthy choices and stronger voices in children’s media.

For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact Elizabeth Handsley on 08 8201 5256, 08 82721170 or mobile 0448 898 185 or Dr Kate Highfield on 02 9850 9878 or mobile 0417 698 402.