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STOP AMBUSHING PARENTS WITH PROGRAM PROMOS !

The Australian Council on Children and the Media (ACCM) today launched a campaign to stop commercial TV stations from screening trailers for M and MA15+ programs in programs chosen for child and family viewing.

ACCM President and media law specialist, Professor Elizabeth Handsley said, "This parental complaint is one of the longest running concerns brought to the attention of the ACCM. Responsible parents choose an appropriate program for their children in the early evening, but are faced with promotions for higher classified programs presented in ways which mislead children, and sometimes disturb and scare them.'

She continued, 'Parents have the responsibility to choose appropriate viewing for their children. The existing Free TV Code is set up for undermining their choices, and the proposed new code will make it worse. We think it's time to push back and try to get things changed.'

She gave as recent examples:

- the G classified *Better Homes and Gardens* with several promos for the M rated *Catching Milat* miniseries;
- the PG movie *Kung Fu Panda 2* with a trailer for *Internship* (M)
- *Bucket List* (PG) with promos for *Married at first sight* (M), and final credits interrupted by a very violent trailer for *Man on Fire* (M).

One mother reported that "I sat down with my children to watch *Better Homes and Gardens*, that was classified G, and out of the blue we were confronted with a trailer for the Ivan Milat program (M). I did not welcome having to discuss serial killing with them just because the TV station chose to thrust it under our noses just then."

Developmental psychologist and ACCM Vice-president Dr C Glenn Cupit commented, "The purpose of classifying programs is to allow parents to be confident the material viewed will be appropriate for their children. This purpose is defeated, to the potential detriment of children, when TV stations choose to broadcast trailers which are for programs aimed at older audiences or contain content not aligned with the chosen program.'

Prof Handsley said the television industry has proposed changes to the rules about trailers in the context of a review of the Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice. The Australian Communications and Media Authority has the power under the *Broadcasting Services Act* to decide whether or not to register the Code once finalised, and ACCM will be making this case to it and to the Minister for Communications.

ACCM is a peak national community organisation committed to healthy choices and stronger voices in children's media.

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