

Annual Report

2015 – 2016

Australian Council on Children and the Media

Incorporating

Young Media Australia



Australian Council on Children and the Media

ABN: 16 005 214 531

Mission Statement

The Australian Council on Children and the Media (ACCM) (incorporating Young Media Australia) supports families, industry and decision makers in building and maintaining a media environment that fosters the health, safety and well-being of Australian children.

What we do

The ACCM:

- collects and reviews research and information related to children and the media.
- provides information and advice on the impact of print, electronic and screen based media on children and young people.
- advocates for the needs and interests of children in relation to the media.
- conducts and acts as a catalyst for relevant research.

How we do it

Both directly and via its information and parenting arm, the ACCM:

- provides information including movie reviews to parents and caregivers via the Children and Media website www.childrenandmedia.org.au. Fact Sheets relating to children and media use are also available via the website.
- provides advice and information via a national freecall Children and Media Helpline 1800 700 357. ACCM can provide callers with research based information about the media. They can suggest strategies both for supporting healthy media use and minimising harms.
- conducts community seminars on current issues.
- represents community concerns about the impact of print, electronic and screen based media on children and young people to legislators, regulators and the media.

Who we are

ACCM:

- is a national not-for-profit community organisation, structured as a company limited by guarantee, and incorporated in Victoria (1957).
- is registered for GST, has tax deductible status and is a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR).
- has a national Board representative of all Australian States and Territories and its corporate membership.
- has a comprehensive organisational membership that includes ECA (Early Childhood Australia), ACSSO (Australian Council of State Schools Organisations), APPA (Australian Primary Principals Association), AEU (Australian Education Union), Parenting Research Centre, Council of Mothers'

Union in Australia Inc., SAPPA (South Australian Primary Principals Association), NSW Parents' Council.

- Board members are volunteers and receive no remuneration for their contribution to the organisation.

Organisational Structure

Patrons



Baroness Susan Greenfield



Steve Biddulph

Board of Directors 2015-2016

President	Prof Elizabeth Handsley	
Vice President	Amelia Joyce	
Directors	Michelle Cabena	New South Wales
	Julie Gale	Victoria (resigned April)
	Prof Elizabeth Handsley	South Australia
	Jane Roberts	Western Australia
	Michael Nuttall	Australian Capital Territory
	Assoc Prof Michael Nagel	Queensland
	Dr Donna Odegaard	Northern Territory
Corporate Members	Leah Mertens	Australian Education Union
	Amelia Joyce	Early Childhood Australia

Appointments

Honorary CEO	Barbara Biggins OAM
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Company Secretary **Anne Anastasiou**

Treasurer **Helen Shaw**

Auditor **NKM Accounting**

President's Message

2016 has been an exciting year for ACCM.

We have had some excellent additions to the core team: Clare Phillips has returned as our events organiser, after undertaking a PhD at Flinders University, and Amelia Joyce has taken over as Vice-President and Deputy Chair of the Executive Committee. I personally have been greatly appreciative of their contributions, and our former VP, Glenn Cupit, remains on the Executive and makes a range of valuable contributions to the organisation's work. Sadly, there has been one loss that can never be replaced, as Marion Sullivan died in January after a long illness. She is greatly missed.

We have benefited from secure funding thanks to the South Australian Attorney-General, whose department continues to support our film and app review services. We are also grateful for accommodation support from the Romeo family, whose premises in Glenelg South we inhabit.

Having that little bit more breathing space has enabled us to review our corporate communications. We have in train plans to update our logo and corporate image, and have expanded our face book and twitter presence. Amelia has been instrumental in this. If you haven't 'liked' us yet, please do so! Needless to say, we have also been able to get on with our usual advocacy activities, including 5 submissions to Commonwealth reviews and inquiries and 1 to a NSW inquiry, and numerous media interviews. Our views are still sought on a range of issues, with policy officers and ministerial advisers contacting us to discuss classification and sexualisation.

In addition, we have had some new ventures, for example developing an e-book from our 2014 conference on Quality Play; webinars with Early Childhood Australia; and a novel but highly pleasurable fundraising campaign as we took the reins at an Open Garden event in the Adelaide Hills. Our 2015 conference on The Rights of the Child Consumer, in cooperation with the Australian Human Rights Commission and Flinders University, was a critical success.

However, as usual, there is so much more we would like to do. For example, there is a good deal more to be said about the new code for commercial free-to-air television that has drastically watered down the support for families; yet our Stop the Ambush campaign that sought to draw attention to the presence of inappropriate trailers during shows popular with children, had disappointing results. The search for new funding sources continues to be elusive and I hope that everybody in our community will consider pitching in, in whatever way you can, to enable us to build on our strength and become an even more effective organisation. The challenges we face are great, and getting greater.

Through all of this, the team at the office and the Executive committee have been working hard to deliver our quality services and help us make an impact where it matters. I've already mentioned Clare Phillips and

Amelia Joyce; other notable contributors are Anne Anastasiou, Caroline Donald, Kathy Frith and of course the indomitable Barbara Biggins, our Hon CEO. Thanks to all of them, and also to our film and app reviewers, to the members of our Board, and of course to you, our many members and supporters.

Professor Elizabeth Handsley

ACTIVITY REPORT

Information collection, review, and distribution

Research collection and review

This continues to be a core activity of ACCM with current research findings providing the evidence base for ACCM projects and articles, parent strategies, and advocacy. The latest research is reported in *small screen*, via ACCM's regular *E-Bulletin* and on ACCM's Web site. Growing numbers of studies support ACCM's platform that media use, particularly in early childhood, needs to be managed with considerable care, to promote healthy development and prevent the risk of harm to children's cognitive and social development.

Children and Media Website

The ACCM website has continued to provide child-centred movie and app reviews, the latest news about children and media from around the world, lists of current research, information for parents about managing media, and details of ACCM's latest campaigns and how to take action. Nick Fedorowytch from *go create* continues to provide hosting and support.

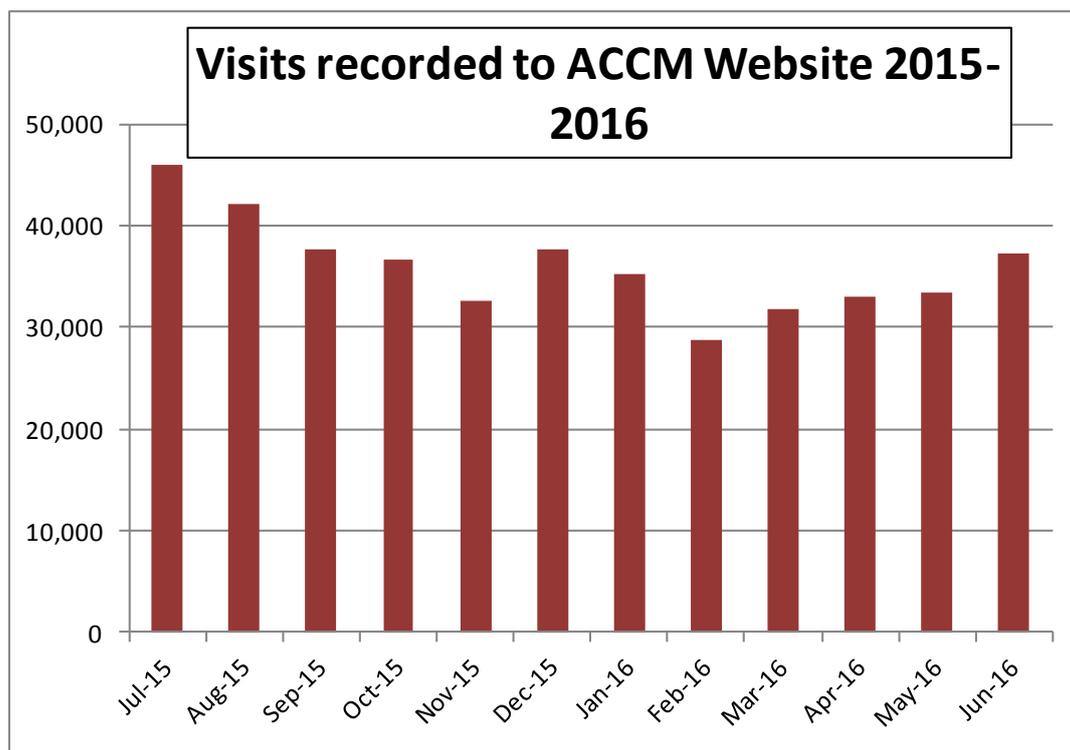


The website continues to receive very favourable feedback from users, including:

- *“As a teacher and a parent of "tweens" I refer to this site so often it's not funny. I also tell EVERYONE about it!”*

- *“I just wanted to drop you a quick thank you as I found your website a good source of information.”*

The website visits have remained fairly steady over the last year with increases at school holiday times.



Facebook and Twitter pages have been used as a method to connect and interact with a wider audience. We have used them to promote our website and our seminars as well as highlighting the latest news in the area of children and media. Our Facebook page has grown to 1300 likes.

small screen

This unique review of developments in children's media in Australia and overseas, plus the latest research citations, has continued to be published monthly. *Small screen* is distributed, mostly by email, to members, subscribers, politicians and media representatives. It is also sent to researchers and libraries overseas. A limited number of print copies are produced.

ACCM E-Bulletin

This free email-based publication is sent fortnightly to over 600 subscribers who have nominated to receive the listing of the latest news articles, research, reviews, events, due dates for submissions and more. ACCM uses the web-based *Mail Chimp* to produce and send out the *E-Bulletin* and other campaign emails. This enables us to produce consistently attractive emails, receive reports on recipient take-up and manage subscriber lists. It also allows recipients to subscribe or unsubscribe themselves easily.

Children and Media Helpline 1800 700 357

The Helpline is maintained at the ACCM office. Most people seeking help now phone direct or use email.

ACCM's Knowledge Base

ACCM's evidence base underpins a number of activities and endeavours including the following:

***Know Before You Go* movie review service (KBYG)**

Know Before You Go is in its 11th year of funding from the South Australian Attorney General. ACCM is very grateful for this ongoing funding, which now also includes the app review service, and continues to provide much-valued security and continuity.

The ACCM website now has over 900 movie reviews. ACCM continues to review all G and PG rated films and an increasing number of M rated films which are likely to appeal, or be promoted, to children. Many M-rated films are released and classified just in time for school holidays and frequently preceded by widespread advertising and associated merchandise. The movie review section of the website continues to be the most frequently visited during the year, with many visitors interested in finding movies for particular age groups, particularly the tween and early teenage groups.

ACCM has continued to add child-friendly reviews of new releases that are suitable for children to the *kidzone* section of the website and there are now 169 reviews in this section.

As well as appearing on ACCM website, abbreviated versions of *KBYG* reviews have been printed weekly in the local South Australian Messenger Newspapers, and in OSHC (Out of School Hours Care) newsletters.

The importance of the *KBYG* service has been reflected in unsolicited emails of thanks. Testimonials received this year include:

- *"Thanks, another helpful review! Great work."*
- *"Continued assessment of movies and their age appropriateness are useful - this is a fantastic resource. Know Before You Go is now something I will be using regularly."*

***Know Before You Load* app review service (KBYL)**

It is now 2 years since the introduction of ACCM's *Know Before You Load* app review service and *Children and Gambling Watchlist*, supported by funding from the Attorney General of South Australia. 133 app titles have been added to the site bringing the total reviews to 450 titles which include the most popular apps in Google Play, Apple App Store and Facebook. There are now 74 apps listed on the *Children and Gambling Watchlist*.

Members of the public identified five previously reviewed apps as now containing simulated gambling content in updated versions or at the achievement of higher levels of game play than initial review.

This year ACCM mostly chose to review apps from the most popular lists, with content that may appeal to young children. Free to download apps with high grossing figures were targeted as these apps have appeal due to low upfront costs. Distributors of these apps achieve high grossing figures from in-app purchases; developers will often use simulated gambling type mechanisms to trigger in-app purchases or use advertising content to monetize their apps.

There is a growing trend for apps to be based on characters from movies. These apps are becoming part of the bundle of merchandising products that movie studios produce in conjunction with the movie.

Classification of apps through the International Age Rating Coalition (IARC) classification tool for online games and apps began its trial on July 1st 2015, but to date only Google Play is using IARC. The Apple App Store still uses its own age based classification system. ACCM records IARC classification assigned to apps, or the Apple Age Classification along with the age recommendation given by our reviewers. Simulated gambling content, in-app purchasing and social media and/or forum interactions are not included within present classification systems.

Below are two examples of feedback ACCM has received about the service:

- *“Hi, I think the movie and app reviews is a great service. However, I’d really like to see this feature include reviews for ALL movies and apps. I know that is an enormous task; however I am finding that with my own children, they are interested in apps which may not be necessarily targeted at children and I want to know if they are suitable.”*
- *“Can you tell me if there is an android version of Targeting Math by Blake eLearning, a math app that my son is using at school as I want to give my son the opportunity to extend his math skills at home?”*

Partnership with Messenger Press

Messenger Press in South Australia is continuing to weekly publish abbreviated *Know Before You Go* movie reviews in their “what’s on” section of their publication, with links to the full reviews on the ACCM website.

Raising Children Network



ACCM has continued to supply movie reviews to the Raising Children Network (RCN). In the 2015 – 2016 financial year, ACCM supplied a total of 72 *Know Before You Go* movie reviews for inclusion on RCN's website.

Brochures

ACCM brochures continue to be in demand from parents and educators. Brochures about *Know Before You Go* movie reviews and *Know Before You Load* app reviews were distributed at ACCM seminars, and at seminars run by Parenting SA. ACCM speakers at other parent evenings and conferences also distributed brochures.

ACCM app Reviews

ACCM worked with John Kamuchau of Multiplier Technologies to develop an app to enable easy access via mobile phones to *Know Before You Go* movie reviews and *Know Before You Load* app reviews. A trial version was tested in December and full Apple and Android versions launched by Dr Kate Highfield in May.

ACCM in the Community

ACCM Seminars and Conferences

Adelaide - Marketing to children: Resisting the pressure – Wed 19th August, 2015

This seminar was held at Highgate Primary School. Presentations were given by Professor Elizabeth Handsley on *Regulating Children's Exposure to Marketing: the Role of Government, Industry and Parents* and by Dr Julie Robinson on *Children's Responses to Advertising: Research and Reaction*. The seminar was chaired by Pam Simmons, South Australian Guardian for Children and Young People

Sydney - Rights of the Child Consumer - Friday November 20, 2015

This conference was a cooperative event presented by ACCM in partnership with the Australian Human Rights Commission and Flinders University.

Megan Mitchell, National Children's Commissioner presented *Experiences of the Child Consumer: Their Rights and Knowledge*. Professor Elizabeth Handsley spoke on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; Business and the Child Consumer. Australian Competition and Consumer Commissioner, Sarah Court spoke on the Scope for Application of Australian Consumer Law to Protect Children's Interest and Australian Children's Television Foundation



CEO, Jenny Buckland spoke on Children's Television; a Model for Taking the Child Consumer's Needs Seriously.

Adelaide - Technology and children: must-knows from the experts – Monday 16th May 2016

This seminar was held at Tyndale Christian School, Salisbury. The two presenters were Dr Kate Highfield, a nationally recognised expert on how technology can be used as a tool in learning and play, and Ben Riley, a cognitive behaviour therapist and researcher on gambling-related digital media.

Thank you: ACCM would like to take this opportunity to again thank the speakers, organisers and volunteers involved in each of these seminars during 2015 and 2016.

Advocacy

Submissions to inquiries

ACCM has researched, prepared and lodged the following submissions during the 2015-2016 period:

- Submission to the Senate Finance and Public Administration Committees on Domestic violence and gender inequality, April 7, 2016
- Submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications: Environment and Communications Reference Committee on 'Harm being done to Australian children through access to pornography on the Internet', March 22, 2016
- Submission to Committee on children and young people, New South Wales Parliament Inquiry into sexualisation of children and young people, February 6, 2016
- Submission to Senate Economics References Committee Inquiry: Personal choice and community impacts, February 2, 2016
- Submission to Senate Economics References Committee Inquiry: Personal choice and community impacts, September 1, 2015
- Submission to the Department of Communications Review of the Australian Communications and Media Authority, August 18, 2015

Consultations

Prof Elizabeth Handsley and Barbara Biggins were consulted on a number of occasions by the Federal government on issues related to classification.

Media Interviews

ACCM President Prof. Elizabeth Handsley, Executive Member Dr C. Glenn Cupit and other spokespeople for ACCM took part in a range of media interviews on diverse topics, throughout the year.

ACCM Corporate communications review

ACCM Executive Committee and staff reviewed its corporate communications strategy in February, and have revised some sections of the website, upgraded its facebook content, and are redesigning the logo and factsheets. This work has been very ably led by ACCM's Vice President Amelia Joyce, whose considerable digital media skills are highly valued.

Administration

Board of Directors

The Australian Council on Children and the Media's ten member Board meets by teleconference.

Executive Committee.



Professor Elizabeth Handsley - President

In addition to representing ACCM in the media, Elizabeth chairs the monthly meetings of the Executive Committee of the Board of the Australian Council on Children and the Media.



Amelia Joyce - Vice-President

Amelia represents Early Childhood Australia. She accepted the position of Vice President this year, when Dr C Glenn Cupit stepped down from this role after many years of valued service.



The Executive Committee of the Board of the Australian Council on Children and the Media meets monthly in Adelaide. This committee includes three representatives of the Board, representatives of the organisational members and other individuals selected for their expertise. It is supported by the staff of ACCM.

Back row: L-R Karl Brettig, Anne Anastasiou, Dr Glenn Cupit, Kathy Frith

Front row: L –R: Judy Bundy AM, Barbara Biggins OAM, Professor Elizabeth Handsley, Caroline Donald, Kate Martin

ACCM Staff

**Barbara Biggins OAM - Honorary Chief Executive Officer**

Barbara has been a volunteer with the organisation since 1973. After periods as President of both the South Australian and Australian Council for Children's Films and Television, she now co-ordinates the day-to-day activities and projects of ACCM, utilising her extensive knowledge and background in Australian broadcasting and regulation. Her dedication to the organisation and leadership of the staff team is invaluable to the running and success of ACCM.

**Anne Anastasiou - Finance Officer and Company Secretary**

Anne manages ACCM's resources with great skill and good humour, and has the ability to utilise the sometimes small funds very effectively. As Company Secretary to the board of ACCM she assists in ensuring all corporate reporting and ASIC requirements are met.

**Caroline Donald - Webmaster and Researcher**

Caroline skilfully delivers one of ACCM's core functions of collecting and disseminating information for both the website, *small screen* and other publications. As well as updating the website, she coordinates the movie review team to ensure all G and PG, as well as some M movies, are appropriately reviewed in a timely manner. Her extensive child development expertise is a valuable resource across the organisation and her commitment to the organisation and good humour are much appreciated.

**Kathy Frith - Project Officer**

Kathy manages *the Know Before You Load* app review service, including the Children and Gambling Watch List. She also maintains efficient operation of the ACCM office.

**Clare Phillips – Development and Events Officer**

Clare took up the position of Development and Events Officer in February. She had previously worked with us, but left in 2012 to undertake her PhD in public health policy at Flinders University. We are delighted to regain her skills, passion and enthusiasm.

**Kimberley Anastasiou**

Kimberley assisted in a range of administrative tasks including the preparation of ACCM's *E-Bulletin*. In February, she left us to pursue her university degree.

**Zoe Brown**

Zoe ably assisted with a range of projects including the preparation and presentation of the Rights of the Child conference in Sydney. While she has now taken up a research assistant position at Flinders University, she continues to review movies and apps for ACCM. We wish her well.

Office Volunteers



Marilyn Coleman

Marilyn has worked for ACCM as a movie reviewer for many years and assists in developing content for the Kidzone section of the website. Her enthusiasm and knowledge are much appreciated by ACCM.



Shirley Frost

Shirley commenced volunteering her skills and time at ACCM this year. She ably and cheerfully takes on a range of tasks from the complex to the commonplace.



Marion Sullivan: pictured with MP Steve Georganas receiving her Volunteer community service award in 2012

Marion Sullivan was an extraordinary woman who served ACCM for over 40 years in many and varied ways. She had been Secretary of the SA Council for Children's Films and TV (a forerunner of ACCM), International Children's Film festival co-organiser, Finance Officer of ACCM, Library officer, and in latter years, volunteer for almost any task. Marion fought a long hard battle with cancer over many years, but never ceased to bounce back with a smile and continue her work. She lost her battle in January and we mourn a great and true friend.

Acknowledgements

Accommodation

Our office is located on the first floor on the corner of Partridge and Bath St Glenelg. We thank the Romeo Family for their continued support.

Support

ACCM thanks the many persons, institutions, and government departments which have provided support over the last year. We could not survive as an organisation without this.

- The Attorney-General of South Australia continues to support ACCM's Know Before You Go movie review service, and the Know Before You Load app reviews. This ensures the continuation of these services and is highly appreciated by all at ACCM.
- Highgate Primary School has hosted, supported and promoted our ACCM seminar.
- The Telstra Customer Insight Centre, Sydney hosted the Rights of the Child Consumer conference.
- Tyndale Christian College hosted, supported and promoted a full day of seminars for children, teachers and parents.
- Lachlan Coles (film editor) created the highly professional and punchy DVD's used to open ACCM seminars.
- Tim Nicholls provided essential IT support.
- Nick Fedorowytch of go create supports the development and maintenance of our website.
- The Romeo Family supports our accommodation.
- John Kamuchau and his team from Multiplier Technologies for their work and ongoing technical support for the ACCM Review App.
- Simon Collinson for his ongoing technical support for *Quality play and media* e-book
- We are grateful to the many individuals who have provided tax-deductable donations to support our work.
- Many more individuals give their expertise, advice and time to assist our organisation to promote healthy choices and stronger voices in children's media.