



What is terrifying our children?

Even the briefest glimpse of a frightening image can linger in a child's mind, our chief executive writes

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SUPPORTING OUR STORIES

Voices mount for better support for local children's programmes as government reviews content

The Australian government has been calling for submissions on ways Australian content (including children's content) can be supported and screened.

[Submissions close on July 3.](#)

ACCM is particularly concerned to see that Australian content for children, especially live action drama, is better supported than it has been in recent years, and that all players in the screen scene make a solid contribution to that.

ACCM notes Greens Senator, **Sarah Hanson Young**, put a supportive motion in Federal Parliament.

ScreenHub reported on June 16 that Senator Hanson-Young on June 15 "put a Greens touch on the fight about screen regulation" with a motion supporting local content. The Senate passed the



motion stating: That the Senate- (a) notes that streaming 'video on demand' services have no Australian content obligations requiring them to produce or show Australian-made TV shows, documentaries or films,

despite having an increasing market share, • research shows two thirds of Australians support laws requiring streaming services to show and fund locally made shows and films, and • Australian stories are vital for

our culture and social fabric and the sustainability of our arts and entertainment industry; and (b) calls on the Federal Government to require tech giants like Netflix, Amazon Prime, Apple TV and Stan to back and fund Australian-made stories.

More funds for the eSafety Commissioner

Federal Communications Minister, **Paul Fletcher**, has announced an [extra \\$10m in funding for the work of the eSafety commissioner](#).

Mr Fletcher said research from eSafety shows Australians have embraced a rapid digitisation of workplaces, schools and households during COVID-19, which underpins the need for a continued focus on online safety. "These last few months have seen many Australian families spending more time online to work, study

and socialise as we've practiced social distancing. The research shows that even as restrictions ease and we return to COVID safe school and work environments, many Australians will maintain their new digital habits and people will continue to rely on the internet more than ever before to stay connected. In recent months, we've seen more people reporting negative experiences online and people turning to eSafety for guidance more often," Minister Fletcher said.

ACMA rules fantasy movie 'OK' as PG

In late September last year ACCM lodged a complaint with the Seven Network about the early evening screening of the film *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* with a PG classification. The film as screened in cinemas had been classified M with the consumer advice "fantasy themes and violence, some scary scenes". Seven argued that it had modified the film sufficiently to reduce the impact of the scary scenes. ACCM forwarded its

complaint to the ACMA, with ACMA supporting this view, in essence arguing that the resourcefulness of the children, happy scenes interwoven with scary or violent ones and a happy ending mitigated the impact of scary scenes. ACMA concluded that it "considers that the 'scary' fantasy themes were mild in impact and had a low sense of threat and menace, and that the film was appropriately classified PG. ACCM takes up this theme in the Editorial. P2.

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CONTACT US

Editor: Barbara Biggins OAM
Compiler: Kurtis Eichler
Editorial Board: Barbara Biggins, Judy Bundy, Elizabeth Handsley.

Address: PO Box 1240
Glennelg South South Australia 5045
Email: info@childrenandmedia.org.au
Website: www.childrenandmedia.org.au
Telephone: +61 8 8376 2111

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editorial

BARBARA BIGGINS
THE AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL
ON CHILDREN AND THE MEDIA
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



One of the glaring deficiencies in the present Australian classification guidelines is their inability to protect children from exposure to harmful scary images. The present guidelines only include attention to themes of threat or menace, and to violence and its consequences. ACCM [argued in its submission](#) to the Classification Review that the well-established impacts of even brief scary images on children (particularly in early childhood) are not reflected in classification criteria and assessments. ACCM finds that similar criticism can be directed at the AANA Code of Ethics for advertising, where almost the only protection for children from scary images in trailers, for horror movies shown on TV, is para 2.3 "Advertising or Marketing Communication shall not present or portray violence unless it is justifiable in the context of the product or service advertised". What's not commonly understood is that the impacts of even brief exposure to scary images are not trivial: they can stay with a child for a long time.

[Young children can suffer continuing nightmares](#), bed-wetting and fatigue due to lack of or interrupted sleep, which can interrupt children's education, social relationships and daily routine. Children are more vulnerable to the phenomenon that 'once you see something, you can't un-see it'; they will continue picturing a distressing image, especially at bed time when they are not distracted by other things, leading to a fear of going to bed, of being alone and nightmares. In its decision on ACCM's complaint about the classification of *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* (see page one), The Australian Communication and Media Authority (ACMA) agreed with the licensee that the determined and resourceful children in the movie gave the audience a sense that the children had some control over their predicament which, when combined with the levity or the unrealistic fight scenes with reanimated skeletons, significantly reduced the sense of threat and menace and the impact of the fantasy themes for younger viewers. ACCM believes that reliable child development research evidence does not support ACMA's

Even brief scary images can stay with a child for a long time

view that switching to and from happy to suspenseful scenes and a happy ending will mitigate the harmful impact of the scary images and scenes on young children. It does not. Other ill-informed opinion seems to underpin some decisions of the Community Panel which reviews complaints received

by the Advertising Standards Board in relation to trailers for movies and programs shown on TV, over recent months. These included [The Invisible Man](#), [The Hunters](#) and [Fantasy Island](#), and an outdoor ad for music album [After Hours](#). Reviewing the several ads for *The Invisible Man* (in an on-demand screening of *Dancing with the Stars* seen by children) the Panel (applying Code para 2.3) concluded: *there is no blood or gore depicted, and there is no depiction of the perpetrator of the violence ..the depiction of the woman being pushed and pulled is confronting but that the absence of a person makes it clear to the consumer that the scene is not real and is part of a horror movie scenario the remaining scenes in all versions of the advertisement are very fleeting and there is no prolonged focus on any particular scene ... all versions contained images of weapons, but they were fleeting and were not pointed at anyone and the guns were not fired. Overall, the Panel considered that the tone of this advertisement was suspenseful and frightening, and contained a low level of violence. ... the level of menace was not excessive in the context of the product advertised and did not breach Section 2.3 of the Code.*

The Panel seems to conclude that brief exposure to scary images is not harmful, and that if an ad is for a scary movie, it's OK to promote it using scary images.

Trailers for MA15+ movies like *The Invisible Man* can be shown in PG programs provided the content of the ad is no more than PG.

A PG classified film or trailer may have content that can confuse or upset children.

"Confusing or upsetting" is not the same as "frightening".

With the former, a parent can usually kiss it better.

Not always so with the latter.

In the case of many scary images, parents find it very difficult or impossible to kiss it better.

It's time our classification system and industry codes protected our children effectively! ■

Remaking the Parental Lock Standard consultation

The Australian Communications and Media Authority is proposing a minor remake of the Parental Lock Standard, which is due to sunset on 1 October 2020.

More broadly, the authority would also like

to find out the public's views on the Standard. "Targeted questions are included in the consultation paper, or you can give your general views on the proposal," the website says. To have your say, visit the website [here](#).

CYBERBULLYING

Bai, QY; Bai, SG; Huang, YY; Hsueh, FH; Wang, PC
Family incivility and cyberbullying in adolescence: A moderated mediation model
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 INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF BEHAVIORAL MEDICINE JUN 2020

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Protecting children from internet pornography? A critical assessment of statutory age verification and its enforcement in the UK
 POLICING-AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF POLICE STRATEGIES & MANAGEMENT 2020 VL 43 (1) 183-197

USA

Physicians group calls for legislation to regulate digital advertising and its effect on kids

Ryan Prior | CNN | June 23, 2020

The American Academy of Pediatrics is calling on US lawmakers to ban all advertising targeted to children under the age of 7.

The group is urging limits to advertising aimed at those under 17. And it's advocating for the end of online tobacco sales because the products can easily be purchased by children

[News story here](#)[Read the AAP statement here](#)

AUS

Nine out of ten parents and educators believe children spend too much time on screens

Various authors | McCrindle Research | June 2020

Social research agency McCrindle has handed down a report on the future of education for 2020.

It found parents are caught in the tension of embracing the integration of technology as a way of life, while wanting to provide healthy boundaries for their child around technology.

Nine in ten parents (90%) and educators (88%), agree children need to be digitally literate to succeed. They are aware that digital literacy involves screen time, and as such, seven in ten parents (70%) and educators (69%) agree that children need to spend time on screens to succeed.

The tension comes into play, however, in that more than nine in ten parents (91%) and educators (95%) believe children spend too much time on screens.

[Read the full report here](#)

AUS

Pokémon Go wants to make 3D scans of the whole world for 'planet-scale augmented reality experiences'. Is that good?

In 2016, the mobile game Pokémon Go sent hundreds of millions of players wandering the streets in search of virtual monsters.

In the process it helped popularise augmented reality (AR) technology, which overlays computer-generated imagery on real-world environments.

Now Pokémon Go is set to take AR to a new level.

A new feature within the game will encourage players to create and upload 3D scans of real-world locations.

[News story here](#)

UK

TikTok makes moves into education market

Osman Iqbal | BBC | June 18, 2020

Social media giant TikTok has announced plans to commission hundreds of experts and institutions to produce educational content for the platform.

Universities and charities are among those who will be paid to create bespoke content for the social media giant.

The new focus could appeal to the trend for micro-learning, said one expert.

[News story here](#)

AUS

Defiance, progress and big ideas celebrated in international kids' TV awards

David Tiley | ScreenHub | June 2020

Australians are used to doing well at prime kids' TV moment the international Prix Jeunesse Awards. But this is the first time producers can accept them in their jarmies.

[News story here](#)

AUS

Research: Toward a better understanding of the reciprocal relations between adolescents' psychological need experiences and sleep

Rachel Campbell, Maarten Vansteenkiste, Bart Soenens, Beatrijs Vandekerckhove, Athanasios Mouratidis | Sage Journals | June 19, 2020

In two diary studies, researchers from the

University of Sydney found "shorter daily sleep quantity was related to higher daily fatigue, which in turn related to more daily need frustration and less need satisfaction. They also studied the daily association between the satisfaction and frustration of adolescents' basic psychological needs and sleep, and the role of stress and fatigue in these associations. ."

[Research abstract here](#)

NL

Research: 13 Reasons Why: can a TV show about suicide be 'dangerous'? What are the moral obligations of a producer

Marco Scalvini | Sage Journals | June 18, 2020

The release of the Netflix show *13 Reasons Why* caused significant public concern about the risk of suicide among teenagers – particularly those who have suicidal thoughts.

Practitioners and researchers expressed apprehension about the show for its apparent praise of suicide and for allegedly increasing suicide risk among vulnerable teenagers.

[Research abstract here](#)

USA

Research: 13 Reasons Why: Perceived Norms, and Reports of Mental Health-Related Behavior Change among Adolescent and Young Adult Viewers in Four Global Regions

Michael C Carter, Drew P Cingel, Alexis R Lauricella, Ellen Wartella | Sage Journals | June 11, 2020

Media programming addressing controversial topics among youth has grown; however, research has yet to consider the correlates of viewing on a global scale. Using the theory of normative social behavior (TNSB), this study examined perceived norms about mental illness among a sample of 3,520 adolescent and young adult viewers and nonviewers of *13 Reasons Why* in Australia/New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Brazil.

[Research abstract here](#)