

Young Media Australia
Annual Report
2005 - 2006



Young Media Australia is the trading name of
Australian Council on Children and the Media
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Mission Statement

Young Media Australia (YMA) exists to promote a quality media environment for Australian children and to raise community awareness of the needs of children and young people in relation to print, electronic and screen based media.

What we do

Young Media Australia:

- 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

Young Media Australia:

- provides information to parents and caregivers via the Young Media Australia website www.youngmedia.org.au with over 60 topics relating to children and media use (including movie reviews). These topics are also available in hard copy format.
- provides advice and information via a 24 hour a day / seven days a week, national freecall Young Media Australia Helpline 1800 700 357. Helpline operators come from a strong child development and parenting perspective and can provide callers with research based information about the media. They can suggest strategies both for creating healthy media use and minimising harms.
- represents community concerns about the impact of print, electronic and screen based media on children and young adults to legislators, regulators and the media.

Who we are

Young Media Australia:

- is a national not-for-profit community organisation, structured as a company limited by guarantee, and incorporated in Victoria (1957).
- is registered for the GST, has tax deductible status and is a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR).
- has a national Board representative of all Australian states and its corporate membership.
- has a comprehensive organisational membership which includes ECA (Early Childhood Australia), ACSSO (Australian Council of State Schools Organisations), AHISA (Association of Heads of Independent Schools of Australia), APC (Australian Parents Council), AEU (Australian Education Union), SAPPA (South Australian Primary Principals Association), and Federation of NSW P&C (Parents & Citizens), Mothers' Union in Australia, Gowrie Child Centres and Australian Confederation of Child Health and Pediatric Nurses (ACCHPN).

Organisational Profile

Patron

Steve Biddulph

Board of Directors 2005 - 2006

President

Jane Roberts

Vice President

Elizabeth Handsley

Directors

Jennifer Barker

New South Wales

Warren Cann

Victoria

Rosemary Crowley

Australian Capital Territory

Leneve Groves

Queensland

Elizabeth Handsley

South Australia

Jane Roberts

Western Australia

Corporate members

Jenny Cassidy

Australian Education Union (AEU)

Elspeth Harley

Early Childhood Australia (ECA)

Appointments

Honorary CEO

Barbara Biggins

Secretary

Anne Anastasiou

President's message



Jane Roberts
President

Throughout 2006 I have had the opportunity to talk with many parents and teachers of children and young people about how they view media and its impact on the lives of their children. All acknowledged the growing world of media and its diversity which at times was developing at such a rapid pace many felt they could barely keep up. All understood that the media was indeed becoming a very influential player in the everyday lives of their children.

Common themes included keeping children safe on the Internet, concern over the level of media violence especially on news and current affairs programs, balancing children's desire to spend long periods of time in front of television or playing on the computer, with other activities. Parents wanted more information about ratings for media product especially the G and PG classifications. They also needed more information about the forms of marketing and advertising now directly aimed at children as young as 3 years.

YMA experiences increasing demand for information and contributions to various Government reviews. It was therefore extremely disappointing to be unsuccessful in obtaining any financial assistance from the Commonwealth Government and some independent funding bodies this year, as the need is increasing for accessible and informative resources for parents and those who work with children. The forthcoming Australian Communications and Media Authority's review of the C and P Standards in television will also require a great deal of work for YMA.

The YMA Board appreciates the financial support for essential projects from the former Minister for Women and Youth Affairs, Stephanie Key (SA), the Attorney General Michael Atkinson (SA), and the Telstra Foundation. In the new financial year however YMA is to receive a National Community Crime Prevention grant.

During the past year YMA continued to work hard at building its capacity to meet the increasing demand for its service. Our thanks to Ernst and Young who late last year convened a workshop in Adelaide in which several board members joined staff and executive members to develop a strong base for the organization and platform for future action.

In November 2005 YMA was awarded a National Child Protection Award for the valuable work the organization provides to children and young people in keeping them safe, through our *Know Before You Go* child friendly movie review service.

The Website continues to have increasing numbers of visitors where there is a wealth of information including the *Mind over Media*, and *Keep your children out of the firing line* resources. These have been distributed nationally.

Once again the requests for information and comment from both newspaper and radio journalists has seen a steady increase. Major issues have included marketing and advertising to children, including food advertising, and the sexualisation of childhood.

On behalf of my fellow Board members we are again very appreciative of the wonderful work that Barbara Biggins continues to provide. Without her tireless enthusiasm and leadership the challenges could be overwhelming. Also special thanks to Elizabeth Handsley who, as the South Australian Director and Vice President of YMA, continues to contribute her time and expertise to the Management meetings and numerous reviews. Thankyou to each of the State's Directors for their participation throughout the year and finally to the wonderful staff who keep the National office and our many projects going - without your commitment and passion this organisation could not continue to grow.

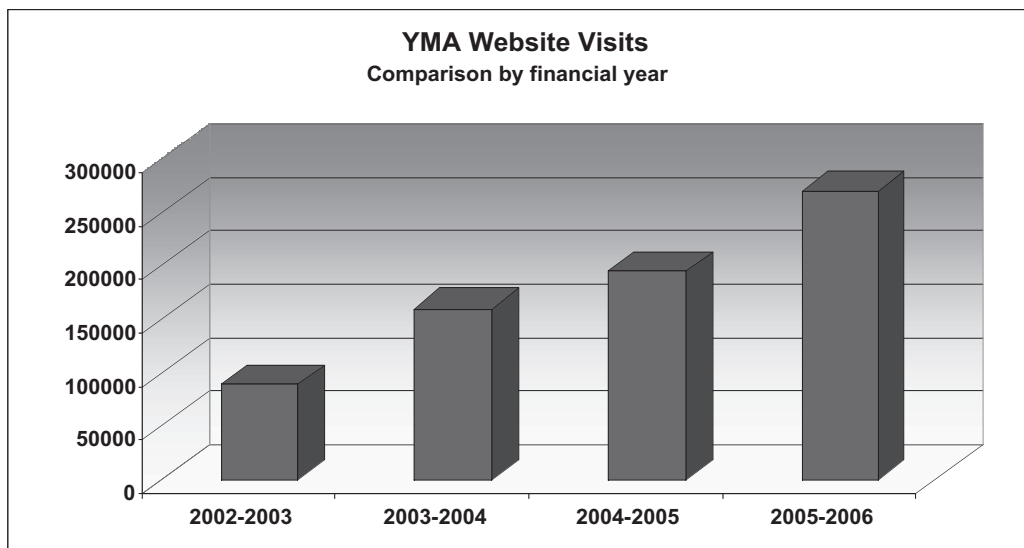
YMA looks forward to the next year where we aim to continue to seek financial support and recognition-from the Commonwealth Government to continue to promote the healthy development of Australian children.

Activity Reports

Information Services

Young Media Australia Website

In the 2005–2006 financial year, the total number of visits to the YMA website was approximately 269,000, over 730 visits per day, continuing its steady trend upwards.



Testimonials continue to come in to the office from grateful users. For example Lyn who writes: "I was searching the web for relevant resources for a new unit that I am teaching my Year Four students. The unit is about advertising, linked to self-image. Your website had a wealth of resources, I spent ages copying websites, books and taking note of the info. related to my topic. Thanks for such an informative and helpful website! Or from Clayton: "Keep up the great work - as a parent and carer/ educator who's only just discovered your site, I find the information invaluable."

The Movie Review Section of the website continued to expand, and by the end of June 2006, there were more than 240 reviews on the site. Regular updates continued in the sections: *In the news, Conferences, About us, Readings & Research* and *Codes, classifications & complaints*. The section *Fight Childhood Obesity* was updated several times during the year as the Telstra Foundation funded project *Through Thick or Thin* progressed.

Young Media Australia (YMA) Helpline 1800 700 357

YMA remains committed to providing the YMA Helpline service for those without computer or internet access, or for those who prefer to discuss issues to do with media and children with trained professionals. Children's, Youth and Women's Health Service (CYWHS) Parent Helpline staff continue to take YMA Helpline calls on behalf of YMA, utilising the YMA database and with utmost care and professionalism. Financial support firstly from the Hon Steph Key, Minister for the Status of Women, and later from the Office for Youth confirmed the YMA Helpline's importance as an access and equity issue and provided some much needed security for the service. It is hoped that another sponsor will be found for this invaluable service in the near future.

Know Before You Go Movie Review Service

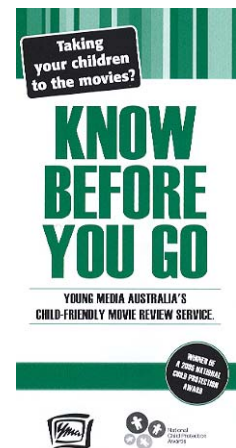
In November 2005, Young Media Australia (YMA), received a National Child Protection Award, for its *"Know before you go: preventing adverse impacts of screen media on young children"* Movie Review Service. The national awards, run by the Australian Council for Children and Parenting (ACCAP), through the Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS), acknowledge and recognise organisations that demonstrate significant contributions to preventing and addressing child abuse and neglect. The Awards also recognise collaborative efforts that help raise and sustain the level of public awareness in the community about issues relating to child abuse and neglect.



Pictured accepting the award are Barbara Biggins (L) and Pamela Wright (R) with Dr Bronwyn Gould (Chair ACCAP) and the Hon Susan Ley (then Parliamentary Secretary, Children and Youth affairs)

In February 2006 the SA Attorney General agreed to fund the *Know Before You Go* Movie Review Service for one year. This enabled us to print an attractive brochure to promote the service and over 15,000 copies of this brochure have now been distributed within the South Australian community.

YMA is about to recruit its sixth movie reviewer. This will bring the total number of child development trained reviewers to six (three teachers, one child care centre Director, one paediatrician and one child psychologist), contributing reviews from four different Australian States. Their work is greatly appreciated and forms the basis for this highly acclaimed and valuable service.



Mind Over Media

In the first half of 2006, the final four Fact Sheets in the *Mind Over Media* series, providing information about the impact of the media on early brain development, were produced and distributed to participating child care centres, kindergartens and community centres. These Fact Sheets and an eighth 'bonus' Fact Sheet consolidating the key messages of the series, remain available on the YMA website.

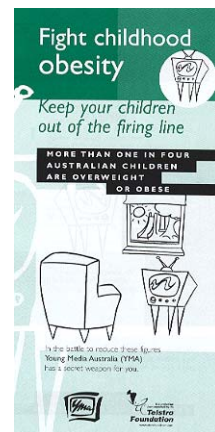
Through Thick or Thin

The *Through Thick or Thin*, or *Keep your children out of the firing line* project, concluded at the end of the 2005–2006 financial year having produced some very pleasing results.

The *Keep your children out of the firing line* brochure continued to be distributed widely across Australia, principally through Health Departments or related organizations in each State. It was well received by parents, with many organisations requesting further bulk copies. The brochure was incidentally commended for its good design and effective communication of its message. Permission was granted for it to be published in a secondary school English textbook with an estimated print run of 40,000.

The infomercial run on Good Health TV during June and July last year was followed by a 60 second commercial featuring ex-Play School presenter Benita Collings, screened during September 2005. Evaluation of the infomercial, commercial and the brochure confirmed that they were effective in getting the message about the impact of television food advertising to parents.

Three Fact Sheets were produced and made available on the YMA website: *Television food advertising and childhood obesity/overweight*, *Body image problems, eating disorders and media messages* and *Strategies for parents to counter television food advertising*.



YMA received over 900 responses to its parent survey. Initial analysis indicates that the results will significantly add to the body of knowledge about children’s viewing habits, television food advertising and childhood obesity, and be very helpful to governments and lobby groups in planning further strategies to combat the influence of television food advertising on the childhood obesity and overweight problem. YMA has been given a further grant by the Telstra Foundation (*Through Thick or Thin 2*) to build on this data with effective and much needed strategies to assist parents and caregivers in this area.

Partnership with the Adelaide Advertiser

YMA’s regular column in the Saturday edition of the Adelaide Advertiser continues to be a popular service to the South Australian community. The look of the column was freshened up in May 2006 when the name of the column was changed to *Know Before You Go* and the YMA logo added. The partnership will celebrate its 2nd anniversary in September 2006.

Young Media Australia Library

The library collection continues to grow and is maintaining its role as a unique long-term repository for many items on the impact of the media on children and young people. The collection includes research findings, the history of regulatory changes and evidence of community concerns. Items collected include articles, research papers, journals, Web sites, books and newspapers.

YMA Display Stand

The YMA Display Stand continues to work for us in metropolitan Adelaide as two more local Councils took the opportunity to make the healthy media message available to local library users.

Publishing - *small screen*

Young Media Australia had published 220 issues of its monthly news review *small screen*, by June 2006. *small screen* continues to focus on regulatory developments in Australian media as they relate to the child and youth audience, and the latest research on the impact of media on the young is also gathered. *small screen* is distributed to members and subscribers, and complimentary copies go to journalists, politicians, regulators and overseas researchers. To reduce costs, YMA now distributes the majority of copies via passworded link to the YMA Website.

Topics covered during the year include:

- Music videos and body image
- Marketing and obesity
- Kids' magazines
- Violence in computer games
- C programs and ACMA review
- Marketing of M movies
- Sexualisation of childhood

Advocacy

Submissions to Inquiries

Formal submissions were made to a range of agencies. These included:

- Fast foods and obesity
(Social Development Committee, Parliament of South Australia)
- Digital challenge including media ownership and diversity
(Department of Communications and Information Technology and the Arts)

Monitoring and Complaints

Complaints were lodged with the commercial networks and the Australian Broadcasting Authority on advertising in children's programs and classification of films. Submissions were also made to the federal Attorney General regarding the number of PG, M and MA films whose classification was lowered on review.

Media interviews and campaigns

Issues canvassed by way of media interviews, articles in *small screen*, and letters to politicians included:

- Marketing campaigns for M (not recommended for those under 15 years) movies which have tie-in merchandise aimed at 3 and 4 year olds
- Sexualisation of childhood
- Internet safety provisions, including in libraries
- Violence in computer games
- Classification of television programs
- Film classification: does G/PG/M help parents?
- TV music videos
- *Big Brother* promotions
- Food ads
- No R rating for computer games

YMA responded to over 230 requests for interviews on radio, in print media and on current affairs television.

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Consultation

YMA continues to be consulted on a range of issues related to media impact on children and young people by a number of children's service agencies, journalists, as well as tertiary and secondary students.

Conferences and seminars

YMA members contributed to a range of seminars and conferences on child development issues, including the *Regulation of food Advertising to Children: Stakeholders Forum* in March



Organisers of the Forum were L to R: Chris Nehmy, Kaye Mehta, Assoc Prof Elizabeth Handsley and Dr John Coveney (all of Flinders University)

Services

Video distribution

The Video Bookshelf, operated by Peter Benn in Melbourne, continues to distribute a range of titles on video, to which YMA has Australian rights.

Administration Report

YMA Executive Committee

The Board of Young Media Australia has established an Executive committee which meets monthly in Adelaide. this committee is comprised of three members of the Board (Jane Roberts, Elizabeth Handsley and Elspeth Harley), plus YMA members co-opted for their expertise and organisational affiliations.

These members are Brian Eckerman (AHISA), Max Rayner (SAPPA), Judy Bundy (ACSSO), Caroline Donald (Gowrie Resource Centre), and Alison Hutton (ACCHPN).



Board and workshop participants L to R: Kate McFarlane (Youth Representative), Caroline Donald (Gowrie SA), Elspeth Harley (ECA), Warren Cann (Vic Director), Anne Anastasiou (Hon Sec & Admin Officer), Elizabeth Handsley (Vice President & SA Director), Judy Bundy (ACSSO), Brian Eckermann (AHISA), Jennifer Barker (NSW Director), Jane Roberts (President & WA Director), Pamela Wright (Development Officer), Barbara Biggins (Hon CEO) & Julie Reynolds (Web Master).

In 2005/06, with the assistance of the South Australian Office for Youth, three youth representatives were added to the Committee. These were Nicole Smith and Melanie Womersley from Concordia College and Kate McFarlane from Flinders University.

Membership

YMA continued to build its national, state and individual membership.

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Staff

Barbara Biggins OAM

Hon CEO

Barbara's role as CEO is an invaluable resource for YMA. Her continuing dedication exemplified by the countless hours spent reading, talking, and phoning, together with networking over a wide range of agencies, ensures up to date knowledge about young people and media.

Her sense of humour and eye for detail are pre-requisites for the preparation of our submissions, whether in an advocacy role or for much needed funding.

Thank you, Barbara for yet another year of your life!



Pamela Wright Development Officer

Pamela is one of the mainstays of YMA. She has a cheerful ability to manage projects, co-ordinate movie reviews, develop funding submissions, write reports and oversee the Helpline operations as well as contribute to everyday office routine.

Thank you, Pamela for your support in the past year.

Anne Anastasiou Administrator & Company Secretary

Anne has managed a very busy year on a minimum number of hours. Her skills as a finance manager have been much appreciated by the Executive. she has also spent considerable hours as a volunteer.

Thank you, Anne for your valuable contribution.



Caroline Donald Researcher

Caroline has served on YMA's Executive committee and has provided much needed research and information support in a part time capacity since April.

Thank you, Caroline for keeping us up to date.

Julie Reynolds Webmaster

Julie has juggled her study, her paid employment as a librarian and assisting YMA during the past year.



Annabel Breeding Web Assistant

Annabel, a multi media student at University of South Australia joined the YMA team in a voluntary capacity in March and has performed her tasks with great efficiency.

YMA is indebted to these two people for their reliable services.

Our volunteers

Craig Shillabeer has filled the role of Library Assistant over the past year. He has catalogued items as well as carried out research functions. We are grateful for his contribution.



Nadia Chicco assisted with Web page services and design as a volunteer DECS IT consultant until January. Her contribution was much valued.

May Wilson has been a great addition to our volunteer staff. She has taken on the role of Administration Support, which makes everyone's job so much easier. Thank you May.



Marion Sullivan has continued to compile *small screen* and maintain our databases. She contributes to many areas of the organisation. Thank you Marion for your time and interest, expertise and wisdom.

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Acknowledgements

Accommodation

Young Media Australia thanks St Peter's Woodlands Grammar School for providing us with rental accommodation within its Administration Building. We are very appreciative of the very pleasant environment of the school, and of our relationship with students and staff.



Support

YMA thanks the many persons and institutions, which have provided support over the past year. We could not survive without this.

- The Attorney-General of South Australia provided a grant for YMA's *Know Before You Go* movie review service ongoing operations at a time. Recognition of the need to ensure the continuation of this service is highly appreciated by us.



Government of South Australia

- The South Australian Film Corporation provided a grant for organisational purposes. This has been used to part-fund our administrative costs.



South Australian Film Corporation

- The Telstra Foundation funded us for two projects, viz *Mind over Media* (continued from 2004/5), and for *Through Thick or thin: moderating the impact of food advertising on young children*.



- Minister for Women & Youth Affairs (SA) Steph Key, provided grants to support the YMA Helpline, and new youth representatives on YMA's Executive committee.



Government of South Australia
Office for Youth

- Nanou Morgan of V-media hosted our Web site for 10 years in a voluntary capacity. We take this opportunity to thank her for her participation and interest



- Internode has provided both practical and financial support for our transition to Broadband earlier this year.



Internode
STRAIGHT-FORWARD

- A donation from Nickelodeon Australia supports the publication and distribution of *small screen*.



- YMA's patron, author and family counsellor Steve Biddulph provides sponsorship of the YMA web page. www.stevebiddulph.com

- Federal and state politicians who have offered significant encouragement and support: Senator Jeannie Ferris (SA), Steve Georganas (Fed Member for Hindmarsh), Trish Draper (Fed Member for Makin), and Gay Thompson (Deputy Speaker of SA House of Assembly).

- Many individuals have provided tax-deductible donations to support our work.

- The Australia Business Arts Foundation in Adelaide (Susan Benham-Page) developed partnerships to assist YMA's programs.

- Ernst and Young worked with YMA to develop a process to review its corporate objectives. Thanks to Susie Young and Kate Maloney for leading our September Board workshop.