



Annual Report
2001/2002

Australian Council for Children's Films and Television
ABN: 16 005 214 531

A company limited by guarantee
and trading as

Young Media Australia

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Web: <http://www.youngmedia.org.au>

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.

Who we are

YMA is Australia's only national advocacy organisation representing the interests of children and young people in relation to print, electronic and screen based media.

What we do

YMA collects and disseminates information, conducts research, and provides advice, education and training on the impact of print, electronic and screen based media on children and young people.

How we do it

YMA represents community concerns about the impact of print, electronic and screen based media on children and young people to legislators, regulators and the media.

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Patron of Young Media Australia

Steve Biddulph

Young Media Australia Board of Directors

State Representatives

South Australia

Barbara Biggins OAM

President

Executive Director YMA

Western Australia

Jane Roberts

Vice President

Tasmania

Jenny Archer

New South Wales

Jenny Barker

Queensland

Leneve Groves

Victoria

Harry Macdonald

Northern Territory

Dr Ron Newbold

Australian

Capital Territory

Stephen Frith

Corporate Representatives

Australian Education Union

Jenny Cassidy

Australian Early Childhood Association

Elsbeth Harley

President's Message

Receipt of a grant from the Federal Government's Stronger Families initiative has enabled Young Media Australia to take a significant step forward this year. Obtaining the two year grant from the Family and Community Services Department, under Senator Amanda Vanstone, was the fruition of a long and intense campaign by YMA. It enables YMA to make more easily and widely accessible to parents, its information, gathered and collated over many years, about the impact of media on children and young people. It provides long awaited recognition of YMA's expertise in this regard.

This parent media information, constantly updated, will be made available Australia-wide via a national free call 24 hour/7 days a week service and will be supported by a newly established Web page. For more details on this service, see under Information Services in our Activity Report. The Helpline is an Australian (and possibly world) first. US researcher on fears and anxieties, Joanne Cantor, sent this message on our launch of the Helpline.

"It's wonderful news that the Australian Government is providing funds to Young Media Australia to support a national Media Helpline. With media offerings becoming so much more disturbing and so much more intrusive in children's lives, parents and caregivers desperately need a place they can turn for reliable, up-to-date information about the content and likely effects of programming on their children."

"It is especially appropriate that the Helpline is starting with information regarding children 8 and under. Parents and caregivers of children of all ages need accurate information about the content of programs, movies, and video games before choosing them. But because children 8 and under see and understand media images so differently than older children and adults, it is often hard for parents and caregivers to predict what kinds of images will turn out to be problematic."

YMA has continued its high participation rate in media debates/ interviews about all aspects of children and media, and has been used as a consultant in a variety of contexts.

YMA's continued activities through the "leaner" parts of the last financial year have only been possible through the dedication and hours of volunteer effort provided by its Directors, Executive Committee and staff. A particular thank you is due to Marion Sullivan who has been a respected colleague in YMA's advocacy activities for nearly 30 years

*Barbara Biggins OAM
President ACCFT
Hon Executive Director YMA*

Young Media Australia Helpline

YMA succeeded in obtaining a federal government grant late in 2001, to develop a parent media helpline. A Community Consultative Committee of educators, child developmental experts and parents was formed to consider ways of providing easy-to-use information to parents and care givers.

Pamela Wright, Development Officer, commenced in March 2002 and worked with members of the Community Consultative Committee to update the Web site, decide on content and negotiate an agreement with Child and Youth Health to take on the call centre aspect of the Helpline.



The Young Media Australia Helpline was launched by Senator Jeannie Ferris at the Museum of Sydney on 2 July. Other speakers were Steve Biddulph, (Patron of YMA), Michael Ooms (father of a child traumatised by a distressing media experience) and Barbara Biggins OAM (Hon Executive Director YMA). Media coverage was wide ranging, with radio, television and print from all states covering the story. Media activity has continued to be strong.

The launch was organised by Pamela, assisted on the day by Barbara, Jenny Barker and Toni Jupe. Representatives from key industry, health and community sectors formed the audience.

Prior to the launch, YMA provided training for helpline operators dealing with the subject area (media and children) and an overview of the Web site. Follow up meetings provided opportunity for feedback from operators on how the Web site was working and ways of dealing with specific issues of a complicated nature. Topics covered in calls to the Helpline include computer games, Internet, television, videos and movies.

By far the most calls related to cinema movies and queries about what the classifications meant. The timing of the launch meant that school holidays were in progress in many states and parents wanted more specific information about content. A person with education and developmental skills has been contracted to view movies and write a detailed report on content. This report is then put on the Web site for easy access. It is planned that these reports will be available prior to school holidays in most states.



To date, calls about violence in the media are the most common - a reflection of community concern about this issue. The Web site has shown an increase in the number of visitors over previous periods and the sections most visited are "advertising" and "codes".

Pamela has commenced work on the next important phase of the project - designing, printing distributing promotional materials through child health organisations, school parent organisations and other educational outlets. These materials will include printed sheets, cards, magnets and posters.

**Children and the media: Let's talk
1800 700 357**

*The Young Media Australia Helpline is funded under a grant from the
Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services*

Other Information Services

Publishing

- YMA has continued to publish *small screen*, Australia's only regular news review of developments in children's media. Some sponsorship has been provided by Nickelodeon.
- YMA's range of parent information brochures has been widely distributed. A thousand copies of the brochure *Does Media Violence Hurt your Children?* were distributed through the South Australian Kindergym network.
- Conference papers given by YMA members have been printed for public distribution.

Library services

The library program of information collection has maintained a flow of information about new developments in children's media both in Australia and world wide. The unique collection of journals, books, articles and newspaper clips on the impact of the media on children and young people supports the Web page and Helpline and continues to be accessed on a regular basis by students and child health, education and welfare professionals. Specific topic-related packages of information materials are prepared on demand.



Brigitte Sloot

Brigitte Sloot continues her enthusiastic and skilled service as our part-time librarian. Since March, Sara Stodart has provided extra librarian skills for one day (and sometimes two) per week and Julie Adair-Cullen volunteered her time prior to the launch of the Helpline.

Web Page

YMA's updated Web Page www.youngmedia.org.au contains many pages of information about YMA, its activities and current issues in children's media. The newly re-designed site has accessible and up-to-date information on research and current issues. There have been approximately 20,000 visitors this year.

A new, easy to use order form is available on the Web page where after ticking items required, GST is added and the total is calculated. The order form can either be E-mailed or printed and posted or faxed.

One-Stop Shop for Broadcasting Codes

Information about the latest codes for all media is available, and the Web page section on Codes, Classification and Complaints expands this service.

Advocacy

Submissions to Inquiries

- Australian Broadcasting Authority's review of the Australian Content Standard
- Office of Film and Literature Classification Review of Film and Computer games Classification Guidelines
- Review of Advertising Provisions for films under the national classification scheme

Media debate

This continues to be a major activity for YMA. Barbara Biggins and Jane Roberts participated in over 200 media interviews and radio debates. The topic most discussed was violence, with Internet sites, video games and advertising also on the debate agenda in print, radio and television interviews.

Campaigns

Compliance with regulations for advertising cinema films in the print media is an ongoing campaign, with YMA still continuing to find high levels of non-compliance.

Monitoring/Complaints

YMA receives a number of complaints from the community each year. Callers are advised on the processes of lodging complaints. YMA also monitors television programs on a sample basis and this year has lodged five complaints to television networks on classification issues.

Research

Stage 3 of the *Good to Eat or Good for You?* project is near completion.

Worldwide published research continues to be scanned by YMA for items relevant to children and media in Australia.

Community Participation, Conferences & Consultation

Members of Young Media Australia contribute their expertise to a range of activities outside the organisation.

New South Wales Director, Jenny Barker, made a presentation at a public forum on Oz Content conducted by the Communications Law Centre in Sydney.



Barbara Biggins OAM attended a seminar in Melbourne in March, to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Australian Children's Television Foundation.

(Pictured [L] with Dr. Patricia Edgar.)

Elizabeth Handsley, Executive Committee member, participated in the first meeting of the Coalition on Food Advertising to Children, held by teleconference, July 2002.



Jane Roberts (Vice President) has also had a busy year with interviews for radio and print media, writing articles for print media and attending conferences in several states.

Consultation

YMA has provided information and consultation to the following projects:

- Advocacy Network on Food Advertising to Children
- Coalition on Food Advertising to Children
- Paediatric Division of the Royal College of Physicians
- Range of print, radio and television journalists

Other Services

Video distribution

The Video Bookshelf, based in Melbourne, continues as our agent to distribute copies of video titles to which we have the Australian rights. Some supertext titles are included in the range. They can be contacted by E-mail <videobookshelf@ozemail.com.au> or by phone 03 9820 3200.



*Peter Benn,
The Video Bookshelf*



*Tony Goodwin, Convenor
Young Film Makers' Festival*

Young Film Makers' Festival

YMA continues its active support of this unique Festival and provides secretarial assistance and a central office base. The Award presentations will be screened in mid-November 2002.

In November 2001 over 80 entries were received from schools in both metropolitan and country areas.

Internet Services

The CyberSafety public Internet access point has continued during the year providing a small but steady income. Our upstairs office offers a quiet friendly workspace for visitors.



Public Internet access point

Equipment

The VHS edit suite, cameras and other ancillary add-ons provide low cost equipment for students, together with technical assistance.

Activity Report

Administration



Marion Sullivan, Admin Officer

Administration of YMA's operations has again been carried out most competently by Marion Sullivan. Over the past year she has been supported by Julian Slade.

Toni Jupe has continued her support of YMA through advice and media interviews over the past year.

Rachel Ronan, Michael Bassell, Heather MacPhail, Sara Stodart and Julie Adair-Cullen have contributed research skills to a range of projects.

Andrew MacPhail was a member of our team for some months. He constructed our updated Web site and assisted with technical information.

Through Andrew's initiative YMA was able to obtain Dreamweaver and Fireworks (two computer programs which enable effective web building) on Macromedia's Philanthropic program.



Andrew MacPhail, Web page



Brigitte and Marion (L) having a chat - usually about equipment, software, library, research, Internet, meetings, phone calls and.....
FUNDING!

Barbara wasn't in this photo - she was probably doing yet another interview. Or writing yet another submission. Thank you Barbara, for your tireless advocacy and debating skills - we could not have continued without your volunteer work.



Since July 2001, YMA has been housed in Admiral House courtesy of St Peter's College.



We highlight the financial support which the South Australian Film Corporation continues to give YMA in the form of organisational funding which enables our office to be staffed on a regular basis. The Corporation is the only organisation to recognise our contribution to film culture in South Australia over many years and we are sincerely grateful.

Thank you to Nickelodeon for their support of *small screen*

