



Australian Council on Children and the Media

trading as

YOUNG MEDIA AUSTRALIA

Annual Report 2007 - 2008



Australian Council on Children and the Media

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Mission Statement

The Australian Council on Children and the Media (ACCM) 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

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, Young Media Australia (YMA), the ACCM:

- 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, and includes 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 supporting healthy media use and minimising harms.
- 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 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), AEU (Australian Education Union), SAPPA (South Australian Primary Principals Association), Primary AHISA, Federation of P & C NSW (Parents & Citizens), and Mothers' Union in Australia (MU).

Organisational Profile

Patron Steve Biddulph

Board of Directors 2007- 2008

President	Jane Roberts	
Vice President	Professor Elizabeth Handsley	
Directors	Jennifer Barker	New South Wales (resigned Feb 08)
	Helen Walton	New South Wales (appointed Feb 08)
	Professor Ann Sanson	Victoria (appointed Aug 08)
	Rosemary Crowley	Australian Capital Territory
	Dr Le Neve Groves	Queensland
	Professor Elizabeth Handsley	South Australia
	Jane Roberts	Western Australia
	Anne Fitzgerald	Tasmania
Corporate Members	Jenny Cassidy	Australian Education Union (AEU)
	Dr C Glenn Cupit	Early Childhood Australia (ECA) (appointed May 08)
	Lynne Rutherford	Early Childhood Australia (ECA) (resigned Oct 07)

Appointments

Honorary CEO	Barbara Biggins OAM
Company Secretary	Anne Anastasiou

Auditor

Greg Basso and Associates

President's message

The year 2007/8 could well be called the year of the submission.

Young Media Australia made 12 submissions on issues related to TV, classification and advertising. Major submissions included those to the Australian Communications and Media Authority on its review of the Children's TV Standards, and to the Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts Inquiry into the Sexualisation of Children in Contemporary Media. Advertising regulation was reviewed with the Australian Association of National Advertisers, and alcohol advertising with the Senate Community Affairs Committee. Other issues included the development of a National Framework for Child Protection, the reduction of violence against women, and the effectiveness of broadcasting codes of practice.



The range and nature of these submissions is a strong indicator of the broad scope and value of Young Media Australia's role in promoting a healthy and quality media environment for children and young people. YMA's long experience, knowledge and active involvement in these diverse issues demonstrates the value of the existence of this organisation.

And yet, YMA has faced another year of dwindling income from grants. In the past 12 months, YMA has made 12 submissions for funding to Federal and State governments and private agencies, with disappointing results. YMA's broad scope means that we don't quite fit neatly into one portfolio or another. In other cases it seems that the recognition of the impact that media experiences can have on children's development, health and wellbeing is still low. YMA thanks Federal member for Hindmarsh, Steve Georganas for his sterling efforts on our behalf.

YMA's partnership with Kf2bK *Kids Free 2B Kids* has resulted in the project *Too Sexy, Too Soon: The sexualisation of children in the media* which is seeking funding to put it on a firm footing. Further, with the aid of a grant from ARACY, YMA developed a new international research collaboration and project on advertising to children, also seeking funding.

YMA put two major grants to good use over the past 18 months, completing an early intervention pack of resources designed to lower young children's exposure to media violence, and a further pack designed to decrease young children's exposure to food advertising. (for more detail see p5) The resources were the result of many months of hard work and persistence by Pamela Wright and we thank her for that.

YMA's movie reviewers have continued their valuable work in providing input to our popular *Know Before You Go* service. Our research and information base has supported a range of articles in journals, newsletters and for the Raising Children Network. YMA's knowledge base is a valuable community resource.

Again on behalf of the Board of Directors I would personally like to acknowledge the amazing efforts throughout the year of Barbara Biggins and all the hard working staff and volunteers of Young Media Australia: Pamela, Anne, Caroline, Marion and May and our *Know Before You Go* reviewers Andi, Corrie, Deepa, Jane, Jordana, Marilyn, Mark and Sarih.

My special thanks also to Elizabeth Handsley who has chaired meetings and contributed her knowledge and expertise to many of YMA's submissions. YMA has provided over 50 years of information and support to parents and the broader community. With the ever changing media world, our work continues to grow. Let us remain positive that we will have the resources we need to continue this work.

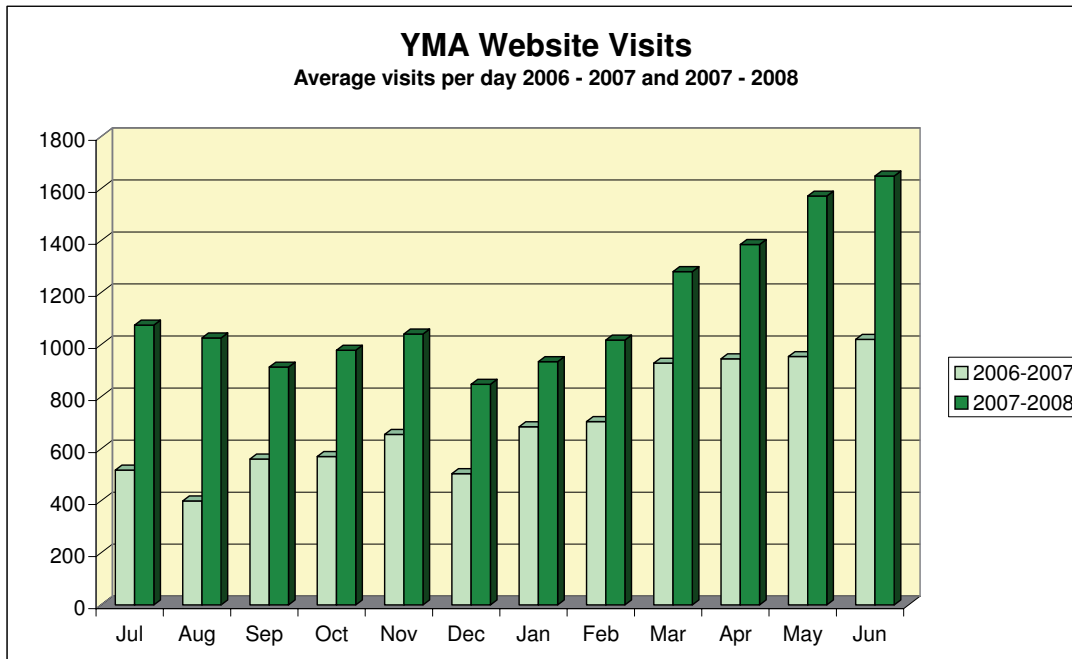
Jane Roberts

ACTIVITY REPORT

Information services

Young Media Australia Website

In the 2007–2008 financial year, visits to the YMA website continued to rise and by June 2008 averaged 1704 visits per day.



Progress on YMA's major projects has been regularly recorded on the YMA website. Home page buttons have been amended to reflect more accurately the primary messages the two major projects as they have evolved, that is *Healthy Viewing for Healthy Eating*, and *Choosing Fright-free Fight-free Viewing*. The graphics for each button clearly link the buttons to the respective project outputs, making it easy for visitors to locate projects in which they are interested and keep track of progress. The *YMA Movie Review Service* and *Too sexy too soon* buttons remain on the Home page and the content of each of these topics is reviewed and updated regularly.

***Know Before You Go* Movie Review Service**

In February 2008 YMA entered its third year of funding from the SA Attorney General for its *Know Before You Go* Movie Review Service. This ongoing funding has provided much valued security and continuity for this highly valued service. At the end of June 2007, there were almost 400 movie reviews on the YMA website.

Testimonials received during the year continue to attest to the regard in which this service is held within the community.

For example:

"I just happened upon your web site and found it very helpful for sussing out kids films...the information about film content and themes was excellent."

"Thanks so much for your service, it is so comprehensive. I was reminded again today how useful it is to be able to check out a movie."

"Thanks for the work you do in providing information for parents, without us having to go and 'preview' all the movies before we dare take our kids."

Thanks again to our team of movie reviewers for another year of excellent work.

Young Media Australia (YMA) Helpline 1800 700 357

The YMA Helpline service has been maintained this financial year, and the service continues to be conducted on our behalf by the Children's, Youth and Women's Health Service (CYWHS) Parent Helpline using YMA information and strategies. Thanks go to them for their ongoing commitment to the service. Financial support is still being sought for this important service to Australian families.

Partnership with the Adelaide Advertiser

YMA has now provided its regular *Know Before You Go* column in the Saturday edition of the Adelaide Advertiser for four years, with more than 200 YMA reviews having been published.

small screen

The publication of this research collection and unique review of developments in children's media in Australia and overseas continued with the support of a donation from Nickelodeon. This news digest is distributed within Australia to members, subscribers, politicians and media; and overseas to researchers and libraries.

Research collection and review

This core activity continued with new research findings supporting YMA projects, forming the basis of parent strategies, and advocacy, and is reported in *small screen* and on YMA's Web page. Growing numbers of studies supports YMA's platform that media use, particularly in early childhood needs to be managed with considerable care, to prevent harm to children's cognitive and social development.

YMA's Knowledge Base

YMA's knowledge base has been well used by the community, with Web content and articles commissioned by Raising Children Network, Kidslife and Out of School Hours Care Network.

Fact Sheet development

YMA has developed and revised a number of Facts sheets during the year, and has been developing, with support from the South Australian Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS), Fact Sheets for education professionals about media issues. These can be used in conjunction with the brochure for parents being developed for Ingle Farm Family Zone

Raising Children Network

YMA is now in the second year of its contract with the Raising Children Network (RCN) and by June 2008 had supplied more than 100 *Know before You Go* Movie Reviews for reproduction on their website.

Projects

Healthy Viewing for Healthy Eating (project: Through Thick or Thin 2)

This Telstra Foundation funded project was completed in April 2008. The project aimed to support parents of under sevens to minimise the impact of television food advertising on their children's eating preferences. To this end, a resource pack was produced consisting of a short DVD (about five minutes), an accompanying booklet and session notes for use with small groups. A number of parents participated in an evaluation of the resource pack, with pleasing results, showing it to be effective in influencing parents' thoughts and practices around television food advertising.

The *Healthy Viewing for Healthy Eating* DVD and booklet are now available from YMA and session notes are available from the YMA website (www.youngmedia.org.au) as a downloadable pdf.



Choosing Fright-free Fight-free Viewing (project: Reducing Reel to Real Violence)

This project was funded by the Federal Government under the National Community Crime Prevention Project, and was guided by a Consultative Committee representing key early childhood care and education providers in metropolitan Adelaide. It was completed in June 2008. The aim of the project was to assist parents to reduce the impact of violent media on their

under seven year olds. To this end, a resource pack was produced, consisting of a short DVD (about five minutes), accompanying booklet and session notes for use with small groups.

A key outcome of the *Choosing Fright-free Fight-free Viewing* project was a list of 200 titles approved as non-violent (movies, TV programs and computer games). This list was printed in the booklet, and also made available on the YMA website. The resources were launched in November 2007, and distributed to metropolitan junior primary schools (state and independent), Children's Centres, child care centres, preschools, early learning centres and OSHC programs in South Australia, with support from the Department of Children's Services (DECS) via their Distribution Centre.



The *Choosing Fright-Free, Fight-free Viewing* DVD and booklet are now available from YMA and session notes can be downloaded from the website www.youngmedia.org.au.

Morialta-Ingle Farm Family Zone

YMA received funding from the Morialta Trust in November 2007 to develop and present resources which would encourage and assist disadvantaged families to take action to minimise harmful impacts from age-inappropriate media use. The project was developed in consultation with staff and families at the Ingle Farm Family Zone, and then delivered to families there. (The Ingle Farm Family Zone is a Communities for Children program which provides activities and courses for families with preschoolers in one of Adelaide's north-eastern suburbs.)

Staff and parent consultation was conducted from March to May 2008. As a result of the consultation, it was decided to engage a speaker to present information (using an interpreter if needed) about media impacts. These sessions were to be conducted at the normal meeting times of some of the groups attending the Centre, and supported by two new resources to be developed: a simple, visually appealing brochure with six main media messages, and a poster.

Research collaboration on children as consumers

YMA attracted a grant from the Australian Research Alliance on Children and Youth (ARACY) to establish a new international research collaboration which developed a funding proposal for a project to research and trial effective strategies for parents to use to mitigate the impact of advertising on young children. Emeritus Prof Joanne Cantor of University of Wisconsin, Prof Amy Nathanson of Ohio State University, Assoc Prof Jan Matthews of the Parenting Research Centre (Vic), Dr C Glenn Cupit of University of SA, and Prof Elizabeth Handsley of Flinders University are part of this collaboration.

Promoting YMA

In June 2008 the Coopers Brewery Foundation provided funding to YMA to promote its services to the wider Adelaide community through a series of paid ads in the Adelaide's Child publication. This campaign is to be conducted in the next financial year.

Advocacy

Sexualisation of children in the media

Young Media Australia established a joint project with Kids Free 2B Kids (Kf2bK) titled *Too Sexy, Too Soon: The Sexualisation of Children in the Media*. The joint project aims to increase public awareness of the incidence of harms from sexualised portrayals of children and young adolescents in the media. The project will provide information to parents, monitor a wide range of media for such depictions, and provide a strong voice for the community for presentations to regulators. YMA and Kf2bK are seeking funding support for this project. YMA also researched and collated a written submission to the Senate Standing Committee on the Environment, Communication and the Arts Inquiry into sexualization of children in contemporary media, and presented oral evidence to the Senate team.

Submissions

YMA has researched, prepared and lodged 10 submissions on a wide range of topics. In addition to these 10, direct representation was made to relevant parliamentarians and ministers opposing the introduction of an R18+ classification for computer games, and the amendments to the federal Classification Act which gave a greater role to the industry to self classify trailers in movie theatres, and DVD box sets of television series.

The full list of submissions is:

Australian Association of National Advertisers	Review of Code for Advertising to Children
Australian Communications and Media Authority	Children's Television Standards
Australian Law Reform Commission	Privacy Act
Senate Committee on Community Affairs	Alcohol Reduction Bill 2007
Federal Government	2020 Summit
Senate Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts	1. Broadcasting Code of Practice
Federal Committee on Health and Aging	2. Sexualisation of Children
Families, Housing, Community Services & Indigenous Affairs	Obesity
	Reduce Violence Against Women & Children; <i>Framework for Child Protection</i>

Complaints

YMA lodged a number of formal complaints to ACMA related to classification issues and program promotions.

YMA in the community

Launch of NCCP program

Around 80 people attended the official launch of YMA's new resource, *Choosing Fright-free Fight-free Viewing: a resource for parents of children under seven* on November 28, 2007 at the Mercury Cinema in Adelaide.

Keynote speaker, Professor Philip Gammage gave an entertaining address, *The changing context of childhood: risks and realities*. He challenged the current trend in many western countries of over-protecting children in terms of physical safety and close adult contact with children, while allowing children to be exposed to much inappropriate and unsafe material via the media.

YMA patron Steve Biddulph contributed an onscreen 'fireside chat' reminding the audience about how damaging the impacts of the media on very young children can be. The resource was then officially launched by the Honourable Steve Georganas, newly re-elected Member for Hindmarsh, and long-time supporter of YMA's work.

Audio visual displays on the big cinema screen included a selection from the ABC's 50th birthday celebrations, an overview of YMA's achievements over the same 50 years, an overview of the development of the DVD and booklet package, a tour of the new *Choosing Fright-free Fight-free Viewing* section of the website and a montage from some current children's programs.

Among the guests were Ms Gay Thompson, Member for Reynella and Deputy Speaker of the SA Parliament, two Australian Democrat representatives, the General Manager and the Publicity Manager of Nickelodeon and several senior staff from the South Australian Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS). Representatives from a wide range of other organisations were also in attendance, including Out of School Hours Care SA (OSHC), Children Youth and Women's Health Service (CYWHS), Parenting SA, Early Childhood Australia (ECA), Community Children's Centres SA (CCCCSA), Playgroups SA, Communities for Children, the Salvation Army, Anglicare and the Lutheran Church.

We were delighted that YMA President Jane Roberts was able to come from Perth to perform the official MC role, providing a warm welcome for guests and thanking those involved in the project.



Philip Gammage



Steve Georganas

Visitors

YMA's centre in Adelaide was visited by the Deputy Director of the Classification Board, Olga Booyar, Telstra Foundation representative, Nancy Lee Robinson and by a representative of THEM and Tony Stacey agencies..

Administration

Board members' resignations

During the year two of our Board members who represented member organisations resigned and have been replaced by new representatives:

Lynne Rutherford

As the representative of Early Childhood Australia, and as a practising director of an early childhood care centre, Lynne provided valuable community and professional input from this perspective. She has been replaced by Dr C Glenn Cupit.

Jennifer Barker

As the long time representative of the Federation of Parents and Citizens of New South Wales, Jennifer's input from the school parent community, (as well as her photographic skills) was much appreciated. She has been replaced by Helen Walton.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee of the Board of the Australian Council on Children and the media, chaired by Vice President Elizabeth Handsley, meets monthly in Adelaide. This committee includes representatives of ACCM organisational members and other individual members and is supported by the staff of YMA.



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

*Front row L to R: Anne Anastasiou (Company Secretary),
Dr C Glenn Cupit (ECA) Professor Elizabeth Handsley (Chair).
Back row L to R: Barbara Biggins OAM (Hon CEO), Max Rayner (SAPPA),
Kevin Richardson (AHISA) Judy Bundy (ACSSO).*

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 YMA, utilising her extensive background in Australian broadcasting and regulation.



Pamela Wright
Development Officer

Since 2002, Pamela has very competently managed each of YMA's media awareness projects, ensuring timelines and quality output. Her well informed and energetic input is pivotal to the organisation's objectives.



Anne Anastasiou
Administrator & Company Secretary

Anne manages YMA's sometimes slim resources with great skill and good humour. As Company Secretary she energetically supports the Board in ensuring the ACCM's compliance with all its company obligations.



Caroline Donald
Webmaster & Researcher

Caroline skillfully supports YMA's core function of information collection and review by searching and sifting many resources, and by compiling *small screen*. She updates our Web resources, and edits all movie reviews with good humour, utilising her extensive child development expertise.



Our volunteers

May Wilson

May continues to make the long trip to YMA every week to volunteer her time to assist with a wide range of administrative tasks.

Thank you May.



Marion Sullivan

Marion has now notched up 35 years with YMA in a range of positions. Her time and experience are invaluable.



Volunteers in the news

This year Barbara Biggins and Marion Sullivan were featured in the SA Government's Office of Volunteers Online newsletter. The article (http://www.ofv.sa.gov.au/2008_volunteer_stories.htm#7) reads as follows:

It's not often you hear stories like Marion Sullivan's and Barbara Biggins's. Two inspirational women who first started volunteering, as young parents, with a fledgling community organisation back in 1973 and 35 years on...are still there lending a helping hand!

Marion (pictured, standing) and Barbara (pictured, seated) have a rich history with not-for-profit community group, Young Media Australia. Over the years, they've seen the organisation through a name change (formerly known as the South Australian Council for Children's Films and Television) and expansion into a national organisation, promoting the healthy development of Australian children, with a particular focus on the role that media experiences play in their development.

Barbara's involvement has been one of true advocacy, with her passion for youth issues relating to TV, video, games and the internet leading her to becoming spokesperson for the organisation, and eventually national President! Through her expertise, she's been appointed to numerous government boards including as the Convenor of the federal Classification Review Board. Along the way, she's also requalified as a librarian, worked part-time, and has been awarded a Churchill fellowship, an OAM and Senior Australian of the Year for SA in 2004...all while volunteering!

Likewise, Marion's interest in film has led to some amazing results, including setting up a children's 16 mm film library, helping to deliver Saturday morning children's film screenings around Adelaide, and donating many hours to groundbreaking biennial international children's film festivals. One of her most vivid memories? Spending one desperate Saturday afternoon and evening searching for a prize winning film spool that dropped out of a car boot, in transit from one cinema to another!

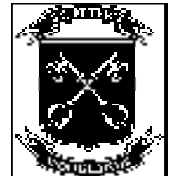
Marion and Barbara, now both aged 70, are still actively involved - Barbara as honorary CEO, and Marion as library assistant, data base manager, and consultant on children's films. You're never too old to make a difference!



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, and government departments, which have provided support over the past year. We could not survive without this.

- The Federal Attorney-General through the National Community Crime Prevention Programme provided a grant for the project *Reducing Reel to Real Violence*.
- The Attorney-General of South Australia continues to support YMA's *Know Before You Go* movie review service. Recognition of the need to ensure the continuation of this service is highly appreciated by us.
- The Telstra Foundation funded us to complete the project *Through Thick or Thin*: moderating the impact of food advertising on young children.
- Coopers Foundation supported us in promoting YMA services.
- Internode has continued to host our Web site this year.
- Foxtel supports our Pay TV service.
- A donation from Nickelodeon Australia supports the publication and distribution of *small screen*.
- *THEM* and Tony Stacey agencies provided organisational advice and assessment.
- Federal and state politicians who have offered significant encouragement and support: Hon Anthony Byrne and Steve Georganas (Fed Member for Hindmarsh).
- Many individuals have provided tax-deductible donations to support our work, including our Patron Steve Biddulph and Jack Hines of Hines and Associates.
- Many more individuals give their expertise, advice and time to assist our organisation to promote healthy choices and stronger voices in children's media.

