



## National Preventative Health Strategy Discussion Paper

In January, YMA used its extensive and ongoing program of review of the impacts of advertising and marketing on children, to strongly support the National Preventative Health Strategy Discussion Paper's targets for prevention, viz. obesity and overweight, alcohol drinking, and smoking.

In summary, YMA finds strong evidence that greater media exposure, and from an early age, is associated with long-term negative health outcomes for children and adolescents, especially in relation to childhood obesity.

YMA therefore supports the NPHS proposals for prevention related to product marketing, but believes that these could be strengthened with the addition of some additional strategies.

YMA is also very supportive of proposals for public education campaigns, but believes that for these to be effective they need to include a strong focus on early intervention in relation to children's media exposure and strong supports for parents to act as media educators in early childhood.

YMA is one of a very few organisations in Australia offering such information, strategies and support. YMA's core business includes reviewing research into the impacts of advertising, marketing and product placement on children and adolescents.

From this ongoing review, YMA finds that

- children under the age of 7 or 8 yrs do not understand the selling intent of advertisements, and are therefore vulnerable to misinformation, puffery and exaggeration used in many ads.
- early exposure to advertising increases children's vulnerability, and is not associated with greater understanding of advertising and selling intent.
- many advertisements undermine the self esteem of children, making them feel anxious about themselves- anxieties only satisfied by purchase
- major studies of advertising on children and adolescents have reported impacts detrimental to health. For example many food advertisements are

misleading to children, in that they lack information about unhealthy aspects of the food and contain misleading imagery.

- Alcohol promotion occurs through paid ads in sporting telecasts, billboards, and product placement in movies, music videos etc.
- Bans on the advertising of cigarettes are circumvented by the exposure of children and adolescents to attractive smoking portrayals in TV programs, and movies. In any review of product marketing, the classification of movies and TV programs that contain glamorised depictions of smoking should be an important consideration.
- Product placement in TV programs, films, and videogames is a growing practice that circumvents some advertising restrictions
- Product marketing extends across magazines and the Internet, and in some cases will not be able to be regulated. This highlights the need for parents to be equipped as media educators.

Regulation of children's media environment is a very important strategy. However, regulation of the marketing of particular products and to particular audiences, while possible and effective in some media, is not the whole answer. Further, achieving change may be slow (cf junk food ads regulation), and in some cases impossible. It is vital therefore that parental awareness is raised about the types,

occurrence and techniques used in product marketing, especially for foods, alcohol and cigarettes.

Many parents lack access to the necessary information, strategies and support to be effective moderators of their children's media experiences. Partnerships between the proposed National Prevention Centre and experienced community organisations, such as Young Media Australia would increase the effectiveness of such strategies.

We provide access to these supports via our website [www.youngmedia.org.au](http://www.youngmedia.org.au), and via a 24/7 national freecall Helpline 1800 700 357, and via targeted distribution of published resources.

## National Media and Industry Code of Conduct on Body Image

According to a Federal government press release, the issue of body image affects the lives of real people in very powerful ways and the Government is taking key steps to tackle this challenge.

In December 2008, Kate Ellis, the Minister for Sport and Youth announced \$125,000 to develop a Voluntary National Media and Industry Code of Conduct on body image.

The Government has allocated \$125,000 to establish the code and will appoint a National Advisory Group consisting of key industry, media, health and sector members.

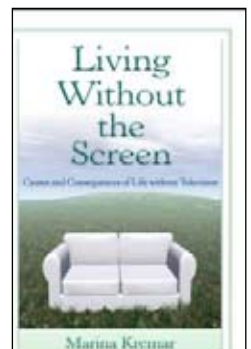
*continued on P2*

### New books



**Consumer Kids: How big business is grooming our children for profit.**  
Ed Mayo & Agnes Nairn  
Constable Robinson 2009

**Living Without the Screen: Causes and Consequences of Life without Television**  
Marina Krcmar  
Routledge 2008





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## small screen

**Editor:** Barbara Biggins OAM  
**Compiler:** Caroline Donald  
**Editorial Board:** Barbara Biggins,  
 Jane Roberts, Judy Bundy,  
 Elizabeth Handsley.

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*Young Media Australia*  
 PO Box 447  
 Glenelg 5045  
 South Australia  
 info@youngmedia.org.au  
 www.youngmedia.org.au  
 Tel: +61 8 8376 2111  
 Fax: +61 8 8376 2122  
 Helpline: 1800 700 357

YMA is a national, non-profit community organisation. Its mission is to promote a quality media environment for Australian children.

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## EDITORIAL

### Why no broadcasting consumer support?

Young Media Australia has on a number of occasions over the past three years, been told by Federal Governments, both Liberal and Labor, that there are no programs under which YMA's broadcasting consumer, and parent media awareness activities could be funded. YMA acts as a conduit for community complaints in relation to TV and children, and its web site provides a unique and comprehensive guide to the many codes that apply to broadcasting, advertising and other media, and to the several complex complaints processes.

The lack of consumer programs in broadcasting is ironic considering the availability of funding for consumer representation in the telecommunications area. Programs provided there include the Consumer Consultative Forum, whose function is to assist the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) to perform its functions in relation to matters affecting consumers [but only relating to telecommunications].

The terms of reference for the CCF include providing a forum to engage demand-side and supply-side interests on communications consumer issues; ensuring that ACMA has access to representative perspectives on issues affecting consumers; and within the context of overall consumer interests, positioning the interests of systematically disadvantaged consumers.

YMA believes that there is, if

*continued from P1*

This group will consider, among other components, the inclusion of the following:

- Notification of digital alterations (in case of physical manipulation)
- 16 year old age limit for adult fashion shows, magazine shoots and TV programs
- Commitment to diversification of body shape and size
- Glamorisation of severely underweight models or celebrities.

<http://mediacentre.dewr.gov.au/mediacentre/ellis/releases/nationalmediaandindustrycodeof-conductonbodyimage.htm>

### Research review finds media links to poor child health outcomes

A review of 173 studies from the past 28 years about the impact of media on children has found a correlation between media exposure and negative health outcomes. Researchers from Yale University School of Medicine, National Institutes of Health and California Pacific Medical Center examined the effects of media exposure on seven health issues: childhood obesity, tobacco use, drug use, alcohol use, low academic achievement, sexual behaviour and attention deficit disorder with hyperactivity.

The report was published by Common Sense

anything, a greater need for funding to support consumer representation in the broadcast media. Such consumers, having no direct commercial relationship with the providers, have an even lower level of bargaining power.



Barbara Biggins  
 OAM  
 Hon CEO

The failure to extend consumer representation grants to broadcast media is just one example of successive Australian governments' failure to address convergence in anything but name. The creation of a single regulator [ACMA to replace the ABA and the ACA] should have been but the first of many steps to respond to the mingling of media and messages in the wake of the digital revolution. Yet we still have two separate Acts, and we are still waiting for innovative regulatory approaches that can fully address the issues this raises.

We recognise that this is not entirely this government's fault, the previous government having failed to grasp the opportunity for some two years before losing office. However YMA suggests that a good place to start would be with consumer representation: extend this funding to broadcasting consumers and see what interesting new ideas and approaches might come from that sector.

Consumers are, after all, the ones with the greatest interest in developing effective responses to convergence.

Media and details can be found at <http://www.common sense media.org/about-us/press-room/press-releases/study-reveals-media-damages-child-health>

### Video games for kids.

The US based *National Institute on Media and the Family* has released its annual list of video games recommended for children and those to avoid. Recommended games include

- *Animal Crossing: City Folk*
- *FIFA Soccer 09*
- *Hasbro Family Game Night*
- *High School Musical 3: Senior Year*
- *LittleBigPlanet*
- *Nancy Drew: The Haunting of Castle Malloy*

Games to avoid for children include

- *Fallout 3*
- *Far Cry 2*
- *Gears of War 2*
- *Legendary*
- *Resistance 2*
- *Saints Row 2*
- *Silent Hill: Homecoming*

More information about the games, including brief descriptions of each game, is available at [http://www.mediafamily.org/research/report\\_vgrc\\_2008\\_rec\\_games.shtml](http://www.mediafamily.org/research/report_vgrc_2008_rec_games.shtml)

# Clips 'n' Cuts

## small screen no. 249 Dec/Jan 2009

### ABC3 plans 100 hours of kids programs

Amanda Meade

A DEDICATED ABC children's channel would commission more than 100 hours of new quality Australian programming every year, creating a boom in the local television industry.

Ahead of intense lobbying of the federal Government, the ABC has revealed that its proposed children's channel, ABC3, would commission 52 hours of children's drama, animation or cartoon 25 per cent Australian content for children and only 5 per cent overall is new Australian content.

The ABC may be famous for children's television, but budget constraints mean it now produces just one children's program in-house — *Play School*.

A highly successful magazine show, *Creature Features*, was axed this year and another children's show, *Fluffy Farmyard*, was commissioned but never went

edy each year. It would also commission 66 hours a year of non-drama programming such as wildlife, music, sport or documentaries.

The acclaimed *Behind the News* series, produced by the ABC in South Australia, would be expanded to produce 125 hours every year of children's news and current affairs.

The channel would broadcast a daily half-hour news program, BTN, designed for children as beyond pilot stage despite the puppets costing \$60,000.

The only new local production on ABC Kids this year is the reality adventure show *Scorpion Island*, a joint production with the BBC. The co-producer of *Scorpion Island* is Nigel Pickard, the director of family entertainment for RDF Media.

He warned an industry conference at the ABC last week that it was essential to make the right policy decisions on media provi-

well as brief news bulletins throughout the day, the director of children's television, Tim Brooke-Hunt, told *Media*.

"I see BTN as one of our great brands," Mr Brooke-Hunt said.

"Kids want to have the news from their perspective and we're so lucky to already have this great news team in Adelaide."

The need for children's news is even more pressing after Ten decided to axe its kids news show TTN — *The Total News* — on sight for children before the onslaught of multi-channelling.

Mr Pickard said that superficially the landscape looked amazing for children in Britain.

"(There are) nigh on 30 children's channels — 113,000 hours of output for children," he said.

"But here are the most telling and worrying statistics — of those 113,000 hours, only 17 per cent are made in the UK. And only — and this is the shocking statistic — only 1 per cent are

Friday after five years on the air.

Mr Brooke-Hunt said a children's channel would also run 120 hours of in-house "hostings" in which an ABC host introduced a series of programs, similar to the *Rollercoaster* slot on ABC1.

The director of ABC Television, Kim Dalton, said the aim was to ensure the channel ran at least 50 per cent Australian content after three years of operation.

The broadcaster now runs less newly made, UK-produced programs. This is only fractionally more programming than was made in the early 1960s, when there were only weekday blocks on BBC and ITV."

In his triennial funding submission, ABC managing director Mark Scott has asked the Government for extra money so the broadcaster can give parents the option of a commercial-free children's channel with high-quality Australian programs.

*The Australian, 8 December 2008*

### Kids muck up ABC ratings as SBS soars

#### THE TRIBAL MIND

David Dale

THE ABC is not being in any way untruthful when it boasts that it has enjoyed its "most successful ratings year ever". It is simply looking at the data in a particular way. The ABC says it averaged 17 per cent of the prime-time audience on free-to-air television this year, which "overtakes the previous record set in 2004 of 16.9 per cent".

You would hardly expect the ABC to trumpet that since 2004 it has lost 5 per cent of its prime-time audience, or 29,000 people, although this would be equally true. The spin doctors are suggesting that the ABC achieved a record slice of the free-to-air cake or pie or whatever culinary metaphor you care to bake. The problem is that someone left the cake out in the rain and it has shrunk over the decade. To

further stir the metaphor, the TV audience is not a magic pudding. A bigger slice of a smaller cake ends up containing fewer raisins.

During the past four years, while the population of the mainland capitals has risen by half a million people, the average prime-time audience for free-to-air television has dropped by 220,000 — and some of that shrinkage squeezed the national broadcaster.

The ABC suffered its biggest loss with a group that used to be its strongest supporters — children under the age of 15. That part of the ABC's audience across the whole day has declined by 25 per cent. The children seem to be saying bye-bye to *Bananas In Pyjamas*, *Bindi The Jungle Girl* and *Bluewater High* and shifting over to pay television for *The Simpsons*, *Family Guy* and *Futurama*.

If you want a success story that works in any statistical language, you have to study SBS. Despite



Switching ... *Bananas in Pyjamas*.

dire predictions that the fans would rebel against mid-show advertising, the average prime-time audience has risen 17 per cent since 2004. Most of the

growth is with viewers aged 16-39 (up 41 per cent) who flocked to *Top Gear*, *Top Gear Australia* and *Mythbusters*. It's up to you to decide if these are appropriate content for a network established to serve minorities.

Meanwhile, pay TV is up 71 per cent with those under 15, and 89 per cent with people over 40. The top single events on pay — a Bledisloe Cup rugby union match and the Australia v Qatar soccer match — got 350,000 and 345,000 viewers, while the top series — *Australia's Next Top Model* and *Project Runway Australia* — averaged 320,000 and 241,000.

By comparison, Channel Seven got 2.5 million for the AFL grand final and 1.9 million for *Packed To The Rafters*. The free-to-air soufflé may not rise again but it is taking a long, long time to sink.

For full details of the years trends in television, go to <http://blogs.sunherald.com.au/whoware>.

*Sydney Morning Herald, 1 December 2008*

### Gabfest ponders local content funding models

*SUMMER Heights High* almost didn't get made, says the director of the equity section of the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance, Simon Whipp, because the ABC didn't have enough money to make it.

Whipp says without Canberra's injection of additional funds to the ABC for drama, documentary and children's programming in 2006-07, Chris Lilley's brilliant satire would not have been produced. The financing of local content will be central to his address to the *Australia: You're Watching It: screen content in the 21st century* two-day conference in Sydney today. Whipp told *Diary* Newspan research conducted nationally for the alliance reveals 64 per cent of Australians think the federal Government should regulate the minimum amount of Australian programs shown on TV. And 69 per cent believe regulation should apply to the ABC as well.

"This is currently not the case (in terms

of applying to the ABC) but was ALP policy going into the 2007 election," Whipp says. "We eagerly await the Government's fulfilment of this promise."

The Government is currently considering the ABC's triennial funding submission.

Whipp says the conference will look at new ways of funding Australian content, including direct and indirect subsidies to producers, tax incentives and additional funding for Screen Australia.

One option the MEAA is looking closely at is a Canadian proposal to impose levies on content providers like internet service providers, pay-TV operators and telcos to create "content funds".

The levy would be like a licence fee imposed on TV stations and would be a percentage of the turnover of the business. "We're saying it may be hard to regulate them, so we could say we're going to provide a way local content can be funded

through a content fund," Whipp says. "They could then opt to produce local material and get their money back or not."

The Newspan also found 64 per cent of Australians think it is important for Australians to be able to access Australian programs through new media platforms.

Young people, the biggest users of new media, were most supportive of the notion that Australian content should be available and accessible on new media platforms.

The keynote address will be by Nigel Pickard, director of family entertainment for RDF Media and an advocate for the Save Kids TV (UK) campaign. The conference will also hear from chair of the Australian Children's Television Foundation Janet Holmes a Court, writer Geoffrey Atherden, producer Penny Chapman, former ABC executive and academic Andy Lloyd-James, Foxtel CEO Kim Williams and ABC MD Mark Scott.

*The Australian, 1 December 2008*

# Let's not pour out pressure on youth

## Banning alcohol ads would lower risky drinking

**I**F 29 countries, including France and Germany, can completely or partially ban the advertising of booze and in the process reduce alcohol consumption, why is Australia dragging the chain?

This is something our health ministers should urgently consider.

According to a recent commonwealth report, the annual cost to Australia of alcohol abuse in terms of policing and health care is \$15 billion.

In NSW, the chief health officer estimates alcohol causes 1220 deaths and 47,000 hospitalisations a year.

Last week, NSW Health Minister John Della Bosca called for a public debate about drinking and restrictions on alcohol advertising.

"I am not interested in a wowsers' approach to this issue, nor do I accept extreme views such as prohibition — people should be free to enjoy a drink — but it is time for a cultural shift on alcohol," Della Bosca said.

As a nation, we are under the influence of alcohol. Many Australians still accept that excessive drinking, unlike the use of other drugs, is socially acceptable.

We have made considerable progress in reducing cigarette smoking but Australia needs a broad alcohol strategy that includes education about the dangers of risky and excessive drinking, a firm stance on liquor licensing, coupled with the provision of proper treatment services and adequate police action to curb alcohol-related violence.

We have not seriously looked at the way alcohol is promoted, especially to the young.

"It is the next generation of drinkers — older children and teenagers — who are being influenced by the sophisticated promotion and advertising of alcohol and the distorted messages about success, popularity, sophistication and attractiveness," Della Bosca rightly says.

Despite restrictions on the timing of ads on television, data shows that in 2005-06 children under 12 were exposed to one in three alcohol advertisements seen by adults. In addition, research by the NSW Centre for Overweight and Obesity found that alcoholic beverages were the single most advertised consumable product on billboards within a 250m radius of primary schools.

International evidence shows that advertising leads to higher alcohol consumption and that restrictions would be likely to reduce harm.

While the issue is contentious, there is evidence of community support for change. According to the 2007 National Drug Strategy House-

**ROSS FITZGERALD**



hold Survey, more than 72 per cent of people aged 14 and older supported a ban on alcohol ads before 9.30pm, and almost 50 per cent supported banning alcohol sponsorship of sporting events.

Such a move has the support of the Royal Australian College of Surgeons trauma committee. Deputy chairman John Crozier said: "We are in strong support of a Minister [Della Bosca] who has the courage to make a statement that alcohol advertising restriction is in the interest of the Australian community."

As the alcohol industry seems unlikely to take a responsible approach, the time is ripe to debate advertising, especially since advertisers are eagerly trying to impress consumers with ever more dazzling and expensive campaigns to increase sales.

An obvious starting point should involve looking at the impact of banning alcohol ads. To be successful with a total or partial ban, we will need a national action plan. A partial advertising ban could significantly reduce alcohol consumption, road fatalities and the social costs of alcohol abuse, while a full ban would be even more effective.

Importantly, as well as traditional advertising mediums it is time to include new media. Corporations are increasingly blurring the lines between advertising and entertainment, developing content-based movie clips with sophisticated storylines that can be downloaded on the internet or through mobile phones.

A ban on ads and restrictions on sponsorship can't be a panacea for all our drinking-related woes. But such actions would be an important part of a broader strategy to reduce the levels of risky drinking. With alcohol-related emergency department admissions among teens to 24-year-olds increasing exponentially, the influence of ads can't be underestimated.

A report from the NSW chief health officer reveals that the level of risky drinking by adults has decreased from 50 per cent to 30 per cent of men and 37 to 27 per cent of women.

If we can achieve these results with adults, why not with teens and young adults? Della Bosca's courageous stance deserves widespread support.

*The Australian, 15 December 2009*

# Disney launches new brand to woo boys

**Peter Sanders**

WALT Disney is making a push to crack a market that few media companies have been able to conquer — boys aged 6 to 14. Next month, the company will launch a boy-focused entertainment brand called Disney XD, consisting of a new cable television channel, a comprehensive website with games, music, videos and social networking.

For Disney, the move marks a new push designed to replicate some of the success it has scored in recent years with its largely girl-targeted entertainment franchises such as *Hannah Montana*, *High School Musical* and the *Jonas Brothers*.

Disney hopes the action adventure show *Aaron Stone* will be the centrepiece of the newly branded Disney XD channel. The company has been able to package those stars into marketing juggernauts that extend across all of the company's platforms, from the film studio to the record label and theme parks. Those franchises have become an increasingly important component of the company's profitability. In the latest fiscal year, the *High School Musical* franchise alone is estimated to have contributed more than \$US100 million (\$142 million) to operating profit.

But it has not hit the same heights with boys of a similar age. "I think boys are just harder, in general, to get galvanised behind any one thing," says Jane Buckingham, president of the Intelligence Group, a market research firm in Los Angeles.

Disney has produced properties that attract boys, including the *Cars* and *Pirates of the Caribbean* franchises. But until now, the company has not tried to package them together in such a way as to consistently target the young boy market.

"We looked at the landscape and feel that girls are being served, if not super-served, and preschoolers are also well served, but boys really have not been," says Rich Ross, president of Disney Channels Worldwide. "If boys have been served, it has been mostly in animation, which is only a narrow portion of what boys are interested in."

Using both television and a new web portal, Disney hopes to

introduce boys to a host of new live-action and animated shows, original films, new music acts and games. And Disney executives also hope to leverage boys' love of sports, using the company's ESPN brand, which is expected to collaborate on original programming and other sports-themed topics for Disney XD.

On February 13, Disney will rebrand its existing animation channel, Toon Disney, as Disney XD and will launch the new action adventure show, *Aaron Stone*, that it hopes will become the channel's centrepiece. The show melds aspects of what the company says boys are interested in: action, adventure and video games. Another new show, *Zeke & Luther*, will be a comedy filmed in quasi-documentary style about two best friends trying to become world famous skateboarders.

But the launch of Disney XD comes amid a major advertising downturn, which could pose a challenge as the company hopes to attract advertisers both online and on television.

Like the Disney Channel, which helped launch the careers of such household names as Britney Spears, Justin Timberlake and Shia LaBeouf, executives want XD to serve as a springboard for fresh faces. Up first is 21-year-old Kelly Blatz, the star of *Aaron Stone*.

Disney's online unit will launch DisneyXD.com, an advertising-supported website that will not only be used to promote XD television properties but will focus on action-driven games and video. The site will also have social networking and online community sections.

In addition, Disney hopes to use XD as a platform to showcase musical talent, much like the Disney Channel has made music and child musicians an integral part of its strategy.

*High School Musical 3: Senior Year*, which opened in late October, brought in more than \$US241 million at the world-wide box office, and Miley Cyrus's *Hannah Montana* concert tour film brought in \$US70.5 million in February last year while being shown at only 687 theatres.

Disney executives are talking to record label executives throughout the industry, searching for new acts to showcase.

*The Weekend Australian, 10-11 January 2009*

# Bloggers cry 'foul' as censor ring tightens

**Caroline Overington**

IT has been dubbed the Great Barrier — a vast ring of censorship that the Government wants to wrap around the internet, ostensibly to protect the young from child pornography.

The idea for it came from the left-wing Australia Institute, headed by academic Clive Hamilton, who says it will filter out child porn, and other "unwanted" content.

The filter has since been adopted by Communications Minister Stephen Conroy, who insists that it will be used only to block child pornography and other "illegal material".

The filter will be tested from next week. You will not be able to opt out of

at least one part of it, and it will slow down internet speeds. Ageing hippies, young firebrands and others who have some experience with governments and censorship believe the filter will grow and tighten from the day it becomes law.

Opponents are gathering in the real world but also, critically, in the blogosphere — an online world of chat and debate — to vehemently protest against the filter, which blocks content that you might want and are quite within your rights to see.

More than 85,000 people have signed a petition organised online by GetUp! The British website, Spiked, has devoted pages to the issue.

*The New York Times* has addressed

the issue, quoting Senator Conroy as saying the filter is part of a \$100 million "cyber-safety plan".

If the Great Barrier is erected, opponents say, internet censorship will be as draconian in Australia as in China, and perhaps worse. What is at stake, they say, is freedom of speech, a pillar of democracy.

The second part of the trial involves an optional filter that people can choose to use, to filter violent content, and pornography. Mark White, the chief operating officer at iiNet, Australia's third-largest service provider, told *The New York Times*: "Our view is there are some serious shortfalls in what is being proposed."

More than 1000 people have used

Senator Conroy's new blog (or website) to protest against the filter. "It is, quite simply, impossible to censor the internet without a China-type clampdown," said one commentator.

Some commentators feared the Government was trying to find a way to censor sexual fantasies, or impose the "correct line" on sex.

The censorship barrier can't become law without support from the Greens, who have said they'll vote against it.

The Opposition will also vote against its current form.

See our in-depth broadband report at [www.theaustralian.com.au/business](http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business)

*The Weekend Australian, 20-21 December 2008*

# Big sales tipped for new Pooh

Jeffrey A. Trachtenberg

EVEN Eeyore might crack a smile about this.

The troubled book industry, in need of titles that will pull readers into the stores, will get a much-needed jolt this year when the first authorised sequel to AA Milne's *Winnie the Pooh* and *The House at Pooh Corner* is published on October 5 under the title *Return to the Hundred Acre Wood*.

Milne died in 1956. The author of the new book is David Benedictus, who produced two successful audiobooks based on Milne's famous children's titles.

Benedictus, who lives in London, said that after an earlier offer to write a sequel was rebuffed, he heard back from the Milne estate about two years ago.

"People will be highly suspicious, but I hope they'll think I didn't do a bad job," Benedictus said.

The work, illustrated by Mark Burgess, is being published in the US by Dutton Children's Books, an imprint of Pearson's Penguin Young Readers Group.

Don Weisberg, president of Penguin Young Readers Group, said he expected the title to be a "huge seller for a long, long time".

The initial print run will be in excess of 100,000.

The biggest challenge will be meeting literary expectations, said New York literary agent Laurence Kirshbaum.

In 1991, as head of Warner Books, Mr Kirshbaum published Alexandra Ripley's *Scarlett: The Sequel to Margaret Mitchell's Gone with the Wind*.

The book was a major best-seller. "What we found was that the customers didn't care at all about the reviews," said Mr Kirshbaum. "They're excited to see the series extended."

Michael Brown, a trustee for the Pooh Properties Trust, noted that sequel rights had been retained by Milne's estate.

"It's been on my mind for a while," Mr Brown said. "We thought David had a wonderful feel for the material. No doubt some will say it's not as good as the original, but it's very good, and we're pleased with it."

*The Australian*, 12 January 2009

## Education cut

STAFF of the education section at News Limited were shocked at the sudden axing by the Ten Network of its educational program, *TTN* or *The Total News*. For five years News Limited has been in partnership with *TTN*. The five News mastheads have carried a review of the *TTN* program every Tuesday and staff say it was very popular with students and teachers. Following the broadcast of the final program for the year on Tuesday, Ten news chief **Jim Carroll** called the News education team and told them the program was ending.

*The Australian*, 15 December 2008

# Parents warned of risks to TV-watching kids

Stephen Lunn  
Social affairs writer

A THIRD of three- to four-year-olds watch more than nine hours of television a week, with more than half those children regularly turning it on themselves.

And 80 per cent of preschoolers watch television while eating meals at least some times during the week, new data from a tracking study of 5000 Australian children shows.

Nearly 70 per cent of parents are happy with the amount of TV their children watch and see no need for change, the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children finds.

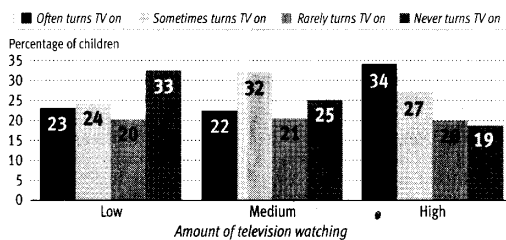
LSAC's 2007-08 annual report, to be tabled in parliament today, more than nine hours a week. For the first two categories, about one in five three to four-year-old children "often" turn the television on themselves, but for the third category it is 34 per cent.

Another 27 per cent of those who watch a lot of TV "sometimes" turn the television on without their parents.

Diana Smart, general manager of research at the Australian Institute of Family Studies, which runs LSAC in conjunction with the federal Government, said: "We know from recent research undertaken with the Smith Family that high levels of television watching among preschool age children is one of the risk factors in children being less ready for school.

## SWITCHING ON

Amount of time spent watching television, by frequency of child turning television on themselves



Source: LSAC Annual report

reveals the amount of television young children watch ranges widely. About one-third of children watch a "low" amount of TV. "Some of the concerns from those other studies have been elevated anxiety, fear, aggression and hyperactivity. Parents are so much busier these days, but they need to try and create opportunities for their children so time in front of the television is balanced with reading to them and playing active games."

Families Minister Jenny Macklin agreed it was difficult for many families to find a balance with increased work pressures.

"If we want to give children the best possible start in life, we know that the early years are absolutely vital for social and physical development," Ms Macklin told *The Australian*.

"While television has its place, it is important that kids have a

TV each week, less than 4½ hours. The middle third watch between 4½ and nine hours a week, with a third at the top end, balanced life including quality time with their family and physical activity."

The LSAC research also examined the use of computers for another group of 5000 children aged seven to eight, finding nine out of 10 had access to a computer at home and 10 per cent had one in their bedroom.

Children with computers in their bedroom were more likely to use the computer to play DVDs for entertainment than children who only had computers elsewhere in the home, the report said.

"(But) children with computers in their bedroom were only slightly more likely to use computers to do work for school than children who only had computers elsewhere in the home," it added.

*The Australian*, 2 December 2008

# Wii-itis It's the newest form of repetitive strain injury

*The Advertiser*, 10 January 2009

CALLIE WATSON

PHYSIOTHERAPISTS are treating people for post-Christmas Nintendo Wii injuries, as terms such as Acute Wii-itis are coined to describe them.

Unlike traditional computer games, the Wii allows players to actively jump around with wireless handheld devices to play games such as golf, tennis and boxing.

Physiotherapist Andrew Clarkson, of Adelaide Sports Physiotherapy, said it was not uncommon to treat Wii users for muscle soreness and strained tendons after the festive season.

"It's a bit like when people take on anything new for the first time and do a lot of it, you use muscles in ways that you don't normally do," he said.

Wakefield Sports Clinic physiotherapist Kate Beerworth said Wii players were more likely to hurt themselves over the Christmas period because the novelty of the consoles had not worn off.

The term Acute Wii-itis, which describes inflamed tendons, has been used in publications such as the

*British Medical Journal* and the *Medical Journal of Australia*. And Wii Shoulder, defined as a painful inflammation caused by excessive Wii playing, is in the running to be named the *Macquarie Dictionary* Word of the Year 2008.

But Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy Australia chairman Darren Rivett said the terms were not common and described existing conditions.

Chiropractors' Association of Australia president Dr Zoe Love said Wii consoles were preferable to games that required users to sit for long periods.

She recommended doing gentle stretches before using game consoles.

Jessica Atterton, 24, regularly plays Wii tennis and said her muscles often ached once she put down the remote.

Nintendo Australia spokeswoman Heather Murphy said the Wii remote was sensitive enough to pick up small movements. "When using the controller properly, game players will enjoy the experience without any concern for strain or tiredness," she said.

## Cyber-safety update

Safer Internet Day: 10 February 2009

<http://www.saferinternet.org>

The main objective of Safer Internet Day 2009 is to bring together relevant public and private stakeholders, in as many countries as possible, to raise awareness about safe and responsible use of new technologies especially among children and young people.

Safer Internet Day in Australia is being coordinated by the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA).

### Government helping you stay smart online

<http://www.staysmartonline.gov.au>

Australian home and small business users are increasingly using the internet in their everyday lives—for shopping, banking or simply exchanging information.

Recognising this, the Australian Government has developed a range of tools to help Australians use the internet in a secure manner. These resources are available through the Stay Smart Online website which is a whole of government one stop shop for easy to understand e-security information.

This website includes:

- Stay Smart Online Alert Service, a free subscription service that provides up-to-date information in simple language on the latest e-security threats and software vulnerabilities and how to address them
- a self-assessment tool developed to help small businesses adopt appropriate e-security measures
- three short videos that demonstrate:
  - how to protect your computer and stop intrusions
  - smart behaviour to protect your personal and financial information
  - wireless internet security
- practical tips on social networking, smart transacting and keeping kids safe online.

*inCite, Vol.29, No. 12, December 2008*

## Sony gets into the networking game with Home site



Simon Canning

PLAYSTATION manufacturer Sony has flicked the switch on Home, its ambitious attempt to bring the world of social networking to the console.

The success of social networks such as MySpace, Facebook, Second Life and Bebo has seen them become part of the fabric of a variety of communities, from schools and universities to workplaces and sporting clubs.

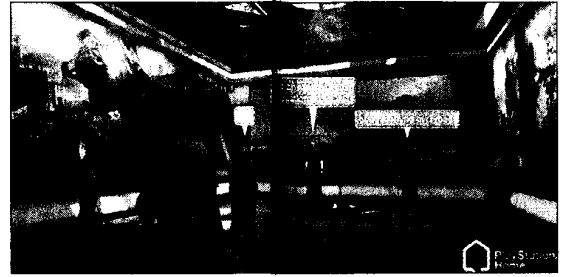
They have become open diaries of the lives of their participants and connection-creators, allowing people to make new friendships and renew old ones.

“What we have been thinking about is satisfying the heartland and bringing social networking within the game space,” he said.

“What it then turns into is up to the consumer. It is such an open-ended thing, and as new applications come in, more people will come.”

Home is the latest entrant in the social networking space, and will take its theme from games available on the PlayStation 3, but other sites such as Bebo and MySpace continue to drive innovation in the applications users can access.

Last week Bebo launched what it called a Social Inbox, which combines email, social networking and media recommendations in a single place.



Out there: An image from Sony's social networking site, Home

Social networks became immediately popular, but it is the added extras that are defining how and when punters are signing in.

Thanks to a variety of applications being created by users, advertisers and the social network sites themselves, the net-

testing mode last week in a bid to meet the promise that it would be operational by the end of the year, will mix elements of user-generated avatars with community creation and games news.

Brands such as Diesel, Red Bull and Paramount pictures are among the first to sign on as partners in Home.

Sony Computer Entertainment marketing director Raoul Bedford says the company has high hopes that Home will become a destination for gamers. He also admits it is impossible to tell just how popular it will become.

Users will be able to create clubs and decorate their spaces, while Sony is relying on advertisers to create the applications that will make Home a compelling offer beyond being a purely social networking initiative.

The application aggregates feeds and updates from Twitter,

works are fast becoming default entertainment destinations in their own right. The sites are augmenting community connection with music (one for the early staples of MySpace and Facebook), video and games.

Home, which launched in beta Flickr, Delicio.us, YouTube and AIM. Games are among the most popular applications being downloaded and shared on social networks.

Users of MySpace appear to have a particular affection for organised crime, with the two most popular applications games being Mobsters and Mafia Wars.

It also boasts other applications such as Friend Factory, which helps build connections.

Facebook has popular applications such as Superwall (where people can write messages to each other) and Causes (which connects people with charitable or other causes). Many applications have also become a form of social currency for social network users, who win credibility in trading or suggesting sought-after applications with friends.

*The Australian, 15 December 2008*

# Food labels to tackle obesity

By **JULIA MEDEW**  
HEALTH REPORTER

RESTAURANTS and fast food chains could be forced to reveal the calorie content of their products to help stem Australia's rising obesity rate.

The chairman of the Federal Government's Preventative Health Taskforce, Professor Rob Moodie, said the group was assessing different approaches to food labelling, including moves in the US to include the calorie content of foods on restaurant menus.

“This is something that would be considered in the mix ... but we need to work out what the best form of labelling is, the clearest form for the consumer,” he said.

The taskforce wants to halve Australia's obesity rate by 2020 by taxing unhealthy foods, regulating sugar and fat content, and restricting junk food advertising, particularly to children.

Professor Moodie said research showed Australians supported food labelling, which also encouraged manufacturers

to make their products healthier. He said the taskforce was consulting widely on the issue and would report to Health Minister Nicola Roxon in June.

Restaurants in the US are increasingly being forced to include the calorie content of food on menus. Last year, New York health authorities made it compulsory for chains with more than 15 national outlets.

The nutrition director of the New York City Health Department, Cathy Nonas, said initial surveys showed that when customers used calorie information in deciding what to order, they consumed on average 109 fewer calories.

She said the practice had been adopted in California, Seattle, Philadelphia and parts of Oregon.

“There are proposals everywhere. They have been introduced in another 20 cities, counties or states,” she said.

Sydney University obesity expert Dr Tim Gill said providing information about the nutritional value of foods at the point of purchase would be

more useful in directing people to better choices than panels on the products after they had been paid for.

Some health and consumer groups, including the Cancer Council Australia, have been pushing for a “traffic light” system that identifies unhealthy foods with red and healthy foods with green.

NSW research has showed that people preferred that system to “daily intake” labelling — which is favoured by manufacturers and already found on some foods.

Under the colour-coded “traffic light” scheme, green, amber and red labels would be used to show low, medium and high levels of fat, saturated fat, sugar and sodium.

Kate Carnell, chief executive of the Australian Food and Grocery Council and a member of the National Preventative Health Taskforce, said that fast food retailers had been working towards more labelling of foods, but members would prefer self-regulation to mandatory labelling.

With **IAN MUNRO**

*The Age, 15 January 2009*

## Ten axes children's news

SADLY, Ten's narrowing profit margins have spelt the end of its children's news service *TTN*, or *The Total News*, after five years. Ten leapt in and claimed the market space when the ABC unwisely axed *BTN*, or *Behind The News*, in 2004.

“The time is now right to focus on other priorities,” Ten said in a statement.

“The majority of *TTN*'s team of five (four in Brisbane, one in Melbourne) will take other roles in the network. Network Ten extends its warm thanks and congratulations to the *TTN* team for their expertise, innovation and considerable achievements in bringing *TTN* to an audience of schoolchildren nationally.”

*The Australian, 8 December 2008*

## Alcohol-free

OUTDOOR advertising companies have agreed to restrict alcohol advertising on fixed signs within 150 metres of schools. The policy will come into effect on March 31.

*The Australian, 15 December 2008*

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**March 2009  
Tampere, Finland**

The purpose of Videotivoli is to give children and youth a chance to show their thoughts and work in public without competition.

<http://www.videotivoli.fi>

