ACCM small screen

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No. 259 November 2009

Sellout for sexualisation seminar!

Adelaide parents, educators, school counsellors, and community leaders came out in droves to the Nov 23 Bratz, Britney and bralettes seminar on the sexualisation of children in and by the media. The seminar, held in the Immanuel College Century Theatre, reached a capacity audience of 300 five days in advance, with another 100 unable to book seats.

Jointly organised by the Australian Council on Children and the Media, and Kids Free 2B Kids, the seminar featured Steve Biddulph, Julie Gale and Elizabeth Handsley, and was chaired by popular ABC Morning Radio presenter Matthew Abraham.

Those attending found the content enlightening and challenging, and by turns, entertaining and fun. As with the earlier seminar held in Melbourne in early August, those attending expressed relief at finding they weren't the only ones concerned about what they saw as harmful pressures on their children.

Julie Gale, founding Director of Kids Free 2B Kids inspired the audience with her direct action in retail situations. Prof Elizabeth Handsley explained how the law had failed children and parents, and where pressure was needed to make regulation work better to protect children. Steve Biddulph (seen Left speaking to the capacity crowd), in his inimitable fashion, discussed the impacts of commercialised and sexualised media on families and children, encouraged parents to review their own attitudes, body image concerns and anxieties that result from exposure to advertising, and offered ways to support children.

Speakers from left: Matthew Abrahams, Julie Gale, Elizabeth Handsley and Steve Biddulph

The audience came away from the seminar well satisfied, and armed with a range of strategies for action, both within their families and within the community.

ACCM and KF2BK are planning to continue these seminars as funding permits. They wish to thank the Lions of Richmond, Immanuel College, and Matthew Abraham (and the ABC Morning Radio program) for their support for the Adelaide seminar.

'Wild things' 500th review

ACCM's movie review service, *Know Before You Go* has just clocked up its 500th review. The service, which is funded by the South Australian Attorney General's Department, reviews all movies rated G, PG and M-rated movies which may appeal to children.

Appropriately, the 500th movie reviewed was *Where the Wild Things Are,* which, although based on the well-known children's book by Maurice Sendak, is rated PG for its violent and scary content and was found by our reviewers to be unsuitable viewing for under 9s with parental guidance recommended between 9 and 11.

ACCM is also pleased to announce that abbreviated versions of its movie reviews are now appearing every week in the Adelaide based *Sunday Mail* newspaper. Know Before You Go reviews are on the ACCM website

www.youngmedia.org.au

Growing up fast and furious: Reviewing the impacts of violent and sexualised media on children

Friday 19 March 2010, 9am - 5pm
NSW Teachers Federation Conference Centre
37 Reservoir Street
Surry Hills NSW 2010

An Australian conference on Children and the Media, with international researchers, **Prof Rowell Huesmann** (long term impacts of violent media) **Prof Ed Donnerstein** (Internet violence and cyber-bullying) , **Distinguished Prof Craig Anderson** (violent video games), and **Prof Louise Newman** (Victoria, sexualisation of children), Dr Wayne Warburton (NSW, violent music videos), **Dr Cordelia Fine** (Victoria, advertising) and **Prof Elizabeth Handsley** (SA, regulation and classification).

Don't miss this unprecedented opportunity to see several of the world's leading researchers on children and the media speaking together in Australia.

http://www.youngmedia.org.au/mediachildren/01_17_sydney_conference.htm

SELLOUT SEMINAR: REPORT

500th MOVIE REVIEW

EDITORIAL: A MIXED BAG FOR CHRISTMAS

TV EXPOSURE ADDS TO AGGRESSION IN 3 YEAR OLDS

WHICH TOY TO BUY?

no. 259 November 2009

small screen

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EDITORIAL

A mixed bag for Christmas.

Just when we thought we could relax for the holiday season and enjoy spending time with our families and friends, the Federal government has called two reviews, one at very short notice.

In addition, there have been two recent announcements relating to media regulation - one a good news story and the other very disappointing.

First the good news!

Family First parliamentarian Dennis Hood had the support of the Government to change the laws related to the display and promotion of R18+ videos and DVDs. This change should be welcomed by all SA parents.

New section 40A of the Act imposes new restrictions on how material for an R18+ film may be displayed.

To comply with new section 40A, the material for an R18+ film must be displayed in a different area from that in which material for other films is displayed. A different area includes, for example, a different aisle, a different shelving case, a different stand or different table.

New section 69A imposes new restrictions on the exhibition of films or parts of films classified R18+, and on the display of promotional material about films classified R18+.

New section 69A prohibits the occupier of premises to which the laws apply:

- exhibiting for promotional purposes at the premises a film or part of a film classified R18+; or
- displaying for promotional purposes at the premises a poster, pamphlet or other printed material in relation to a film classified R18+.

Now for the bad news

Barbara Biggins OAM
Hon CEO

The revised Free TV Code of Practice has been approved by ACMA and is being lauded as containing improvements for viewers. Apart from now being able to lodge complaints by email, there are few gains as far as we can see and some serious question marks hanging over the liberalisation of the promotion of MA15+ programs. Not to mention the fact that the new digital channels will be permitted to screen PG material all day - with of course, a parental education campaign so parents can take appropriate steps to protect their children!

The Federal Government now expects us to comment by 31 December 2009 on which other rules (governing children's content, Australian content and captioning need apply to the new channels).

And then, in a master stroke of timing, the Federal Government has also, after many months of delay, called for comment by February 28 on whether there should be an R18+ category introduced for computer games.

A great time of the year to be asking parents to pay attention to this issue and make serious and well-researched responses!! Already, we understand that gamers are treating the inquiry template (see below) for responses as a petition and are voting YES in large numbers.

A much better question for parents to be discussing is, "Do you wish to see accessible to children, games with more extreme violence and higher impact depictions of sexual and drug activity?" For that is what we'll see if gamers get their way

Have a peaceful Christmas.

Review of multi-channels

On 4 December 2009, the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, Senator Stephen Conroy, announced the release of a discussion paper, 'Content and Access: The future of program standards and captioning requirements on digital television multi-channels'.

The discussion paper seeks comment on the program standards (for children's programs and Australian content) and captioning requirements that should apply to commercial digital multi-channels.

Submissions close on 31 December 2009.

Details, including the discussion paper can be found at

http://www.dbcde.gov.au/consultation_and_submissions/multichannels

R 18+ classification for computer games - Discussion paper released

Minister for Home Affairs Brendan O'Connor has encouraged people to share their views on whether an R 18+ classification category for computer games should be included in the Australian National Classification Scheme.

Mr O'Connor stressed that neither he nor the Government had formed a view on whether the Classification Scheme should include an R18+ Classification for computer games

Submissions close on 28 February 2009.

The discussion paper and inquiry template are available at

http://www.ag.gov.au/gamesclassification.

Clips 'n' Cuts
small screen no. 259 November 2009

Childhood Lost

Photo: Courtesy stock.xchng

Archbishop Jeffrey Driver has spoken out on the vexed issue of premature sexualisation of children.

"What has also been increasingly clear to us is that protecting children from abuse and exploitation is a responsibility we must share as a community. I am alarmed at the growth of what has been called "corporate paedophilia" in Australia. Here I am adopting a term used by the Australia Institute to describe advertising and marketing that "seeks to present children in sexually suggestive ways, or seeks to sell products to children using overt forms of adult sexuality".

I have spoken out about this premature sexualisation of children and continue to express concern about it. At an increasingly early age our children are being caught up in the adult culture of sexuality, body image, drugs and violence. Children's clothing has become highly sexualized, mini versions of adult fashion. There are gossip magazines for five and six year old girls, telling them how to look hot and catch a boy. One in five 12 year old girls in Australia is using vomiting and fasting to keep down weight. About 100,000 of our children are being treated for depression, a fourfold increase in 30 years.

There are strong suggestions that this premature sexualisation of children could play a role in grooming children for paedophiles – preparing children for sexual interaction with older teenagers or adults. Children have a right to their childhood, but it is being taken from them through the hyper-sexualised environment in which they now grow up. This is a matter that needs wide debate in our community and, at minimum, existing codes of practice for advertising, television programming and children's magazines may need to be amended, or legislation strengthened, to recognise the risks to children in their premature sexualisation."

The wider community has recently become more concerned about this matter, with key public figures such as Steve Biddulph, well known author and family psychologist, Julie Gale, Founding Director of Kids Free 2B Kids and Professor Elizabeth Handsley of Flinders University about to add their voices to the debate at a seminar titled, Bratz, Britney and Bralettes: The sexualisation of childhood.

You can attend the seminar on Monday 23rd November from 7:00 pm to 9.30pm.

The event is presented by Australian Council on Children and the Media. For more information phone 8376 2111 or visit their website at http://www.youngmedia.org.au.

The Guardian November 2009 | 5

Humphrey's a broke, homeless bear

Gavin Lower

What a funny old fellow is Humphrey, he gets in all manner of strife.

STRIFE to the tune of $50,000.

These are hard times for the big bear, once a powerful mascot for Australian children's shows but now the subject of business gone badly wrong. Even nice old bears aren't immune to the arcane world of liquidator hearings and debt buyouts, it seems.

Poor Humphrey.

Adelaide-based Banksia Productions, which owned the licence to Humphrey and other children's television shows, was ordered to wind up by the Supreme Court in April over a $50,102 debt to Channel Nine South Australia.

Liquidator Maris Rudaks said he was "getting closer" to being in a position to offer the Humphrey licence for sale, along with the rest of Banksia's assets, possibly before the year was out.

He anticipates a number of interested bidders, but looking elsewhere in the animal world for a metaphor he noted: "I'm not counting my chickens yet."

Among the parties eyeing the "funny old fellow" is Malcolm Harslett, who had a long association with the bear as a presenter on *Here's Humphrey* between 1972 and 1984.

The Adelaide entertainment figure said he and a group of backers were considering formulating a new program for Humphrey and presenting it to television networks.

Mr Harslett, who has also worked with other oversized animal characters such as Fat Cat and the Streets Paddle Pop Lion, said Humphrey had a future in television and could make a comeback.

"You've got to have professional people in the industry working with a character — with Humphrey — because Humphrey is an entertainer," he said. The mute Humphrey appealed to children as the "ultimate fantasy" of a toy teddy bear coming to life, Mr Harslett said.

Another interested party is South Australia's McGuiness McDermott Foundation, a children's charity, which announced in April it had formed a partnership with Channel Seven and multimedia company Imagination Entertainment.

The foundation said it could use the bear to create revenue streams for the charity through merchandising and a possible new television series.

Humphrey was created in 1965 and made his first appearance on *The Channel Niners* children's show in Adelaide.

He replaced a chimpanzee in a sailor's jacket that had bitten a host.

The mute, boater hatted, waistcoat-wearing bear became a children's television star and gained an international following, appearing on television in Spain and the US in 1999.

His last episodes in Australia were filmed in 2007 and repeats of Humphrey last appeared on Channel Nine and WIN in August.

Meanwhile, Humphrey, as usual, declined to comment.

The Australian, 2 November 2009

Kids encouraged to play now or pay later

Natasha Bita

KIDS are "hard-wired" to play and pushy "trophy parents" only risk triggering teenage depression, a prominent child psychologist warned yesterday.

Michael Carr-Gregg, a founder of the National Coalition Against Bullying, said depression had emerged as the "common cold" of adolescent psychology.

But childhood play and rough-and-tumble helped shield teenagers against stress.

Dr Carr-Gregg said children who were given the freedom to play in their infancy were more likely to grow up with the resilience to cope with the trauma of family breakdowns, abuse, or parental alcoholism that often led to teenage depression.

"Play is the psychological innoculation against depression long-term," Dr Carr-Gregg said.

"We're hard-wired to play. In essence, the instinct to play is as instinctive as it is to breathe in mammals. Children will never develop their potential if we stop them from playing."

Dr Carr-Gregg will be a keynote speaker at the Playgroup Australia conference on the Gold Coast on Friday.

Gloria Sherlock brings her son Charlie to a weekly Playgroup meeting in Brisbane to socialise with other toddlers. "Play comes naturally to them and they enjoy it," she said yesterday. "As long as he plays and he's happy I don't really mind what he does."

Dr Carr-Gregg criticised parental obsession with academic performance, saying children needed the freedom of imaginative play.

"At the pre-school level, children engage in dramatic play and learn who is a leader, who is a follower, who is outgoing, who is shy," he said. "They also learn to negotiate their own conflicts."

Dr Carr-Gregg, a former head of the New Zealand Drug Foundation and director of Melbourne University's Centre for Social Health, criticised "trophy parents" who pushed young children into too many organised activities.

"It's as if we adults have become impatient with the concept of play," he said. "You get a lot of kids now whose parents are very time-poor.

"They have a hurried childhood, rushed around between activities like organised sport and French lessons. It's trophy parenting — vicariously living through your child."

Dr Carr-Gregg said over-protective and controlling parents were creating a generation of wusses.

"Adults are now worshipping at the altar of occupational health and safety," he said. "It's risk-averse parents who are going to have children with no imagination, no capacity at all to be creative and innovative."

Dr Carr-Gregg, who is an ambassador for the depression lobby group Beyond Blue, said one in four teenagers was battling a mental illness before turning 18.

"I've seen neglect amid affluence," he said.

"Teenagers are living in these emotional silos of huge houses, and they grow up on MSN and Facebook with not a lot of emotional input from mums and dads. They raise themselves."

The Australian, 4 November 2009

Mickey gets mischievous in Disney makeover

ALEXANDRA FREAN

JUST an outline of his ears is enough.

He is one of the most recognisable characters in the world, but Mickey Mouse is about to get a makeover.

More precisely, he is being "re-imaged" to enhance his appeal to youngsters of the video game generation who have been nurtured on the slick computer-generated graphics of the likes of Pixar and Dreamworks.

For decades, the Walt Disney Company has kept Mickey Mouse's look and character largely unaltered, afraid that even the smallest change might harm a brand that earns the company $US5 billion ($5.4bn) a year in merchandising sales.

However, as US sales of Mickey merchandise have declined, a rethink was in order. So, the squeaky-clean rodent is to be "re-imaged" to acquire a cunning and cantankerous streak when he appears in a new Disney video game, Epic Mickey, next year.

The move is part of an effort, understood to still be in its early stages, to rethink the character's image, from the way he walks and talks to his appearance on the Disney Channel and what his house looks like at Disney World. Epic Mickey, designed for the Nintendo Wii console, is set in a cartoon wasteland inhabited by retired Disney creations. Players can opt to be a co-operative Mickey or a more destructive version.

Warren Spector, of Junction Point, a Disney-owned game developer working on Epic Mickey, said that it would be edgy and unexpected. He said: "By putting the mischievous Mickey in an unfamiliar place and asking him to make choices to help other cartoon characters or choose his own path the game forces players to deal with the consequences of their actions. Ultimately, players must ask themselves, What kind of hero am I? Each player will come up with a different answer."

Graham Hopper, general manager of Disney Interactive Studios, said the game "takes Mickey back to his creative roots". In many ways the new Mickey does appear to be a return to the original character in the 1928 film *Steamboat Willie*, in which he appeared as something of a rabble-rouser.

Disney said that the re-imaging was about connecting Mickey to gamers aged 13 to 34, who would not normally be targets for Mickey merchandising.

THE TIMES

The Australian, 9 November 2009

Parents fed up by food trickery

KATE SIKORA
SYDNEY

A CHILD advocacy group and a leading dietitian have called on food giants to stop using misleading marketing to trick consumers into believing they are eating healthy food.

The Parents Jury – an online network campaigning for better food and physical activities for children – and Westmead Children's Hospital's paediatric dietitian Susie Burrell want manufacturers to market responsibly.

"Arnott's Shapes are marketed as 'baked not fried' but they are cooked in palm oil and that is misleading," Ms Burrell said.

"It's marketed as a healthy option food. It's not offering the kind of things that it should."

Aside from the environmental impacts such as forest devastations, palm oil contains up to 55 per cent saturated fat, which can lead to heart disease – the No.1 killer of Australians.

Ms Burrell said many biscuits and other snack foods contained palm oil but without mandatory labelling it was listed as vegetable oil.

"Another group is McDonald's which has health options meals and it might be low in fat but has a high amount of carbohydrates," she said.

"People believe they are doing the right thing by seeing these labels but they are misleading.

"Companies are aggressively marketing products this way. I believe that some, such as Arnott's, who supply the monopoly of biscuits to families in Australia, have a corporate responsibility to market properly."

The Parents Jury advocates better labelling to help families make informed choices when in supermarkets.

State and federal governments have decided not to make food manufacturers label the trans fat content of their products.

The decision was based on the grounds manufacturers in general were reducing the amount of trans fat that they used.

The Advertiser, 14 November 2009

Kitchen kids to feel the heat

Michael Bodey

AUSTRALIAN children will be given the opportunity to cook up a storm next year when the Ten Network launches *Junior MasterChef*.

The series will screen in the last quarter of 2010 after the most popular TV series of 2009, *MasterChef Australia*, returns in the middle of the year.

"We're very keen to do a junior version because it's a great opportunity to look at the benefits of healthy eating and good food and produce and things like that, and we think that's really important," said Ten chief programming officer David Mott.

MasterChef Australia became a ratings phenomenon this year and its finale became one of the most watched programs of all time, with a peak audience of more than 4.1 million viewers.

"I think there will be enormous interest in a *Junior MasterChef*," Mott said. The MasterChef franchise will be "stripped" in the 7.30pm weeknight slot next year, after a return series of *The Biggest Loser*.

Ten will not return *Celebrity MasterChef* next year despite Mott's saying he was happy with its current ratings. Ten also has the option to introduce the *MasterChef Professionals* series in 2011. It is expected *Junior MasterChef* will use cooks aged between 9 and 12 years old. It will be one of the highlights of Ten's 2010.

The Australian, 2 November 2009

What a shame

IT'S not an award any marketing outfit would be happy to receive, but tomorrow the teams behind McDonald's Happy Meal Box of Play TV ad, Kellogg's cereals and the Little Red Rooster Meal TV ad will compete for the title The Shame Award for Pester Power. **The Parents Jury**, a lobby group that has grown in stature since it was formed five years ago, uses the annual awards to name and shame products and ads that encourage children to eat unhealthy food.

The Australian, 16 November 2009

Turn it off

WITH regard to Chris Johnston asking why he can't control his children's TV viewing (Letters, 5/11), he can: don't allow it. I rarely watched TV growing up in the '90s. The only time was the couple of blissful hours on a Saturday morning watching cartoons until everyone else woke up and it was switched off. I learnt ideals, morals and values from my family, teachers and books. Not from sitting in front of the TV.

Amy Merrick, Dingley

The Age Green Guide, 12 November 2009

Curvy Kate has consumers in sweat, but ad watchdog says she looks just fine

JESSICA LEO
ENTERTAINMENT REPORTER

AN underwear-clad Kate Ceberano, a carnivorous love match and different-sized bills have Australian consumers hot under the collar.

The Advertising Standards Bureau has revealed the advertisements - on TV, in print and on billboards - which have attracted complaints and gone under review. Curvaceous Australian singer Kate Ceberano's billboard advertisement for underwear company Playtex was targeted.

It was claimed it "undermines our social values". The board, however, dismissed the complaint, instead taking the step of applauding the advertisement for depicting a "fuller-figured woman".

Also complained about was a Toyota advertisement featuring an overweight man and a man of smaller stature in an effort to demonstrate "different sized bills" applying to different cars.

The complaint centred on the discrimination of overweight and shorter people. The board dismissed this.

A Target advertisement for a T-shirt sale attracted criticism as a girl declares she is a "hardcore, tofu-loving, vegan cat fancier", to which a male cringes and acts disinterested. Vegans responded, saying "it implies a person is less valuable/less attractive/open to shunning because they are a vegan".

The board chose not to uphold the claim because of the "light-hearted" nature of the advertisement.

There is a serious side to the complaints, however, with the Advertising Standards Bureau upholding a claim over a boat insurance company's advertisement which appeared in an industry magazine. The ad features the smiling faces of the sales team of Nautilus Marine Boat Insurance and at the top of the advertisement an image of an Asian boat loaded with people. Text in the advertisement reads "there's (sic) boat people ... and there's (sic) boat people".

The board upheld the complaint, noting that it was "very poor taste to attempt to use the plight of refugees to market a boat insurance product".

The Advertiser, 31 October 2009

Too wild for kids

Parents warned as monster classic hits big screen

MARK CARO
NATHAN DAVIES

IT'S based on one of the world's most popular children's books, but the movie adaptation of *Where The Wild Things Are* is no kids' flick.

The PG-rated film, which opens in Australia on December 3, has received generally positive reviews but many critics have pointed out that the dark themes and lifelike monsters may prove frightening for youngsters.

Director Spike Jonze, best known for films *Being John Malkovich* and *Adaptation*, admits his film version of Maurice Sendak's classic book may be too much for children.

"I didn't set out to make a children's movie; I set out to make a movie about childhood," Jonze says. "It wasn't like we were making this anti-kids movie.

"We were working from the inside out in terms of what we wanted it to feel like, as opposed to the outside in, in terms of what shelf it was going to go on in the video store."

Where The Wild Things Are tells the story of nine-year-old Max (Max Records) who sails away from home after fighting with his mother (Catherine Keener).

He arrives on a desert island populated by neurotic monsters, who make Max their king in between destroying each others' houses and smashing trees.

Australian Council On Children and the Media honorary CEO Barbara Biggins says parents with young children should probably think twice about allowing them to watch *Where The Wild Things Are* and other PG-rated movies.

"There are many reasons why PG films may not be suitable especially for young children, say under seven or eight," Ms Biggins says.

"The sorts of things that parents need to watch out for with this age group include transformations from something good into something scary, such as the Incredible Hulk.

"Grotesque images, monsters, loud noises, children and animals in danger or children being abandoned are others things to watch for.

"There is content in *Where The Wild Things Are* that we wouldn't recommend, especially for children under eight, such as violence, with children acting out of control and smashing things up, and many sights and sounds that will be scary.

"All the overseas reviews indicate that this should be taken seriously."

Ms Biggins says a PG rating does not necessarily mean a film will be fine for all children as long as an adult is present.

"What it does mean is that there will be material in the film that some children under the age of 15 years may find upsetting or confusing and may require the guidance of a parent or guardian.

"PG films are supposed only to have mild impact, but it's not clear for which age groups under 15 years that applies."

Spike's wild ideas - IE, Page 89

The Australian Council On Children and the Media will be reviewing films from a parents' perspective in IE from December 6

DESERT KING: Max Records, playing Max, with the monster character Carol, voiced by James Gandolfini, in a scene from *Where the Wild Things Are*. **Picture:** Matt Nettheim, AP/Warner Bros

The Sunday Mail, 22 November 2009

Too young and too sexy – left with nowhere to grow

CHILDREN and sex just do not mix. The concerns about the increasingly sexual behaviour of very young children have been peaking in recent months.

Is it a moral panic, or do parents have a seriously devastating phenomenon on their hands?

As new products, television programs or media images of a certain type appear, outrage is sure to follow.

Recent examples include high heels for babies, lewd T-shirts for toddlers, and sex games in the playground.

Child development experts say young girls – and boys – are ageing prematurely. In primary school they want styled hair, they are dieting, they are becoming sexually active and their language is becoming sexually explicit. Girls wear bras and go to make-up parties.

Primary school kids are playing sex games where they "must" provide favours to the person who grabs special bracelets from their wrists.

Pictures in the UK's *Daily Mail* newspaper this week showed Suri, the piggy-tailed daughter of Tom Cruise and Katie Holmes, struggling along in high heels. Suri's wardrobe is worth an estimated $3.6 million. She wears lipstick and nail polish. She is three years old.

Concerned parents' organisations warn children are becoming "mini adults" amid the "pornification of culture" and say this process takes an enormous psychological toll.

Julie Gale is the director of Kids Free 2B Kids, an organisation created to raise community, corporate and political awareness about the sexualisation of children.

She says children are bombarded with sexual images and it is causing them to engage in sexual activities at very young ages and is causing an unprecedented level of anxiety, depression and body image issues.

"Children as young as five and six are being hospitalised with anorexia," she says.

"The impacts are starting very young, then playing out in the teen years once children have access to pornography and underage drinking.

"It's an issue that's increased in the past decade, particularly the past five or six years. It's crept up on us, so we're mopping up after the damage that has already been done to teens."

Is common sense enough to stop the sexualisation of children, or is it time the law was changed? **TORY SHEPHERD** reports.

Talkback callers, letter-writing pundits and the occasional politician call the explosion of worry over the sexualisation an unwarranted "moral panic".

The Australian Sex Party ("Australia's newest political force") says it is a "bizarre" waste of resources that would be better spent on preventing child abuse.

"This constant and rising fear of sexualising children began with a shrill report from the left-leaning, right-sliding, Australia Institute on corporate paedophilia," a story on their website states, in reference to a report that outlined a continuum between using sexualised images of children and full-blown paedophilia.

Ms Gale, however, says the problem is real. "It's about the mental health and wellbeing of kids," she says, pointing out they are being hit with sexual images everywhere.

"Bratz dolls give the message that hot and sexy is great. One Bratz doll will not make a huge difference," she says. "But if they're reading girls' magazines, and watching video clips ... they're being bombarded."

Associate Professor Elizabeth Handsley, from Flinders University's School of Law, says the law could play a part in protecting children.

SHE says advertising standards are ineffectual because the messages come from everywhere at once – not just ads, but programs, shops, books, magazines.

"My ultimate conclusion is that consumer protection law is the best model to go forward," she says. "It's about what's on television, in the music videos, it's about ads that are not even aimed at children.

"It's the actual clothes that are being sold to children. It's the products themselves. It goes beyond the media. There's an argument for using a legal framework to protect consumers."

Associate professor Handsley says the Trade Practices Acts prohibits corporations from engaging in misleading or deceptive conduct, and the word "sexualising" could be incorporated in a similar way.

Ms Gale says not just girls are affected. Boys can be directly affected by "perfect" images of males, but they are also left confused by the behaviour of their female peers.

"It's hard, it's very confusing for them. How do they treat females now?" she asks. All parents can do is be aware of the images and minimise or eliminate them, she says. The rest is up to the powers that be.

The Australian Council on Children and the Media and Kids Free2B Kids will present a seminar: *Bratz, Britney and Bralettes: The S*xualisation of Childhood* on Monday at Immanuel College. Author and psychologist Steve Biddulph also will speak.

For more information visit www.youngmedia.org.au.

The Advertiser, 20 November 2009

The unsavoury side of *Glee*

HOW does Ten get away with showing *Glee* at 7.30pm? It may look like *High School Musical* but the similarity stops there. *Glee* is all about teenage sex and the episode screened on 12/11 left nothing to the imagination during the "Push it real good!" dance scene, where even oral sex was feigned. They sang, "Girls are gonna get pissed" and "What we want is sex"! This is inappropriate for our young people, who you can bet are in their bedrooms watching this stuff unsupervised.

Keryn Wilson, Hamilton

The Age, Green Guide, 19 November 2009

TV setting the wrong ideals

WOULDN'T it be great if we could leave our children in front of the TV without the fear of indecent messages and immoral themes being thrust upon them? Wouldn't it be nice to know the day's programming was censored to exclude themes of war and violence and false ideals such as self-importance, religious pride and survival of the fittest (or most attractive)? I would be happy to fork out the $40-odd per month for a children's channel that was programmed according to real values rather than sensation and shock. I wouldn't even mind if the programming included commercials, as long as they were subjected to the same value-based censorship. I can control the amount of junk food and soft drink my child consumes and I choose what toys and games he gets for Christmas. What I can't control are the themes and ideals being taught to him while he is sitting in front of the TV.

Chris Johnston, Traralgon

The Age Green Guide, 5 November 2009

TV turns tots aggressive

Good week for . . .

TODDLERS who don't watch much television, after research showing they are less aggressive than their goggle-eyed counterparts. The study involved more than 3000 mothers of children aged about three who filled out questionnaires about their kids' lifestyle and behaviour. Toddlers exposed to more TV were at increased risk of aggressive behaviour, the study in *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine* found. The authors said they couldn't be sure that violent TV content caused aggression because they didn't have details of the programs the children watched.

Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med 2009;163:1037-1045 (Manganello J, et al)

Weekend Australian, 7-8 November 2009

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Goldfarb, L (2009)
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McAllister, Matthew (2009)
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Kervin, L & Mantei,J(2009)
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Attitudes of young consumers towards SMS advertising.
African Journal of Business Management, Vol. 3, No. 9, Pp444-452

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Obesity and television watching in preschoolers in Greece: The Genesis study.
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Governing childhood obesity: Framing regulation of fast food advertising in the Australian print media.
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How does exposure to cigarette advertising contribute to smoking in adolescents? The role of the developing self-concept and identification with advertising models.
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Straker, L; et al (2009)
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Ergonomics, Vol. 52, No. 11, Pp1386-1401

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Jennings, Nancy A; et al (2009)
Educational television as mediated literacy environments for preschoolers.
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Summative evaluation of the *Ready to Learn Initiative*.
http://cct.edc.org/ready_to_learn.asp

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Maslen, Geoffrey (2009)
When fat becomes the norm.
About the House, No. 38, Pp32-36

Gubbels, JS; et al (2009)
Clustering of dietary intake and sedentary behavior in 2-year-old children.
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Daley, Amanda J (2009)
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Pediatrics, Vol. 124, No. 2, Pp763-771

Graf, Diana L; et al (2009)
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Influences of mediated violence: A brief research summary.
The International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media, www.nordicom.gu.se/clearinghouse

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Wang, J; et al (2009)
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CONFERENCES

World Summit on Media for Children and Youth

14-18 June 2010
Karlstad, Sweden

http://www.wskarlstad2010.se/

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WORLD NEWS

TV exposure adds to aggression in 3 year-olds.

US researchers have found that three-year-old children exposed to more TV both directly and indirectly, are more likely to exhibit aggressive behaviour..

The study surveyed the mothers of over 3,000 children about the amount of television watched by their children and the amount of TV use in the household.

Children who were smacked, lived in disorderly neighbourhood or had depressed mothers were significantly more likely to exhibit aggressive behaviour, but TV exposure was significant even when these other factors were controlled for.

Manganello, J & Taylor, C (2009) Television exposure as a risk factor for aggressive behaviour among 3-year-old children. *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*, 163, (11), 1037-1045.

Which toys to buy?

TRUCE (Teachers Resisting Unhealthy Children's Entertainment), a US based organization of educators concerned about the impact of media and commercial culture on children has released its 9th Annual Toy Action Guide. The guide provides a list of toys and trends to avoid as well as toys of value. It is available online free on the TRUCE website:

www.truceteachers.org.

TRUCE recommends avoiding toys that bring violence into rescue-related play, link non-nutritious food to play, lure little girls into focusing on teenage behavior, equate money and shopping with fulfillment and fun, use electronics to overstimulate babies, or promote young children's interest in inappropriate content.

TRUCE recommends toys that promote dramatic play and manipulative play with small play objects, encourage respectful, non-stereotyped, nonviolent interactions among children, allow children to determine play, and help children develop skills important for further learning and a sense of mastery.

Available TRUCE Guides Include:

- *Infant & Toddler Play, Toys & Media Action Guide*
- *Toys, Play & Young Children*
- *Action Guide*
- *Media and Young Children Action Guide*
- *TV and Your Child*

Unhealthiest cereals most marketed,

A report from the Yale University's Rudd Center for food policy & obesity has found that the least healthy cereals are the ones most marketed to children and that overall, children are exposed to a vast amount of marketing for highly-sugared cereals.

Among the findings in the report are:

- Compared to cereals marketed to adults, those marketed to children have 85% more sugar, 65% less fibre, and 60% more sodium.
- The average preschooler sees 642 cereal ads per year on television alone.
- Cereals marketed heavily on television are also marketed heavily on the internet.

The full report can be found at:

www.CerealFacts.org.

KIDS' TV

A selection of children's programs screened on TV during the period

ABC1
Word Girl; Sitting Ducks; Ruby Gloom; PoppetsTown; Dorothy The Dinosaur; Fifi And The Flowertots; Elmo's World; The Adventures of Bottle Top Bill And His Best Friend Corky; In The Night Garden; Play School; Count Us In; Behind The News Specials.

ABC2
Finley The Fire Engine; The Secret World Of Benjamin Bear; Zoo Mix; Louie; The Magic Roundabout; Sesame Street; Guess With Jess; Thomas And Friends; Grandpa In My Pocket; Inuk; George And Martha; Franklin; Play School; Olivia.

SEVEN
Larry the Lawnmower; It's Academic; Handy Manny; Sea Princesses; Flipper & Lopaka; Dive Olly Dive!; Time Trackers.

NINE
Pixel Pinkie; Snake Tales; The Shak; Steetsmartz; The Kingdom of Paramithi.

TEN
Toasted TV; Totally Wild; Puzzle Play; Pearlie.

NICKELODEON
Dora the Explorer; Go, diego, Go!; Max and Ruby; Fanboy and Chum Chum; Back at the Barnyard; Zoey 101; Ni Hao Kai-Lan; True Jackson, VP; Fresh beat Band.

DISNEY CHANNEL
Even Stevens; Lizzie McGuire; The Replacements; Kim Possible; Wizards of Waverly Place; Jonas; Sonny with a Chance.