

Children's television producers' forum

Forums on children's television will become a regular event, based on the success of the recent Children's Television Producers' Forum, hosted jointly by the ABA and the Screen Producers Association of Australia (SPAA).

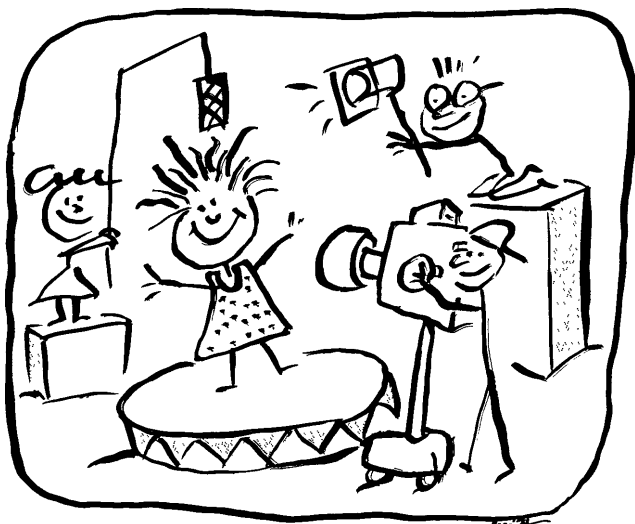
More than ninety participants from the children's television production industry, including producers, writers, directors, animators and commercial and pay TV representatives, attended the forum on 6 May 1998. Academics specialising in



L-R: Richard Lyle (Channel 9); Sally Stockbridge (Channel 10); Kris Noble (Channel 9)

child development and representatives from child advocacy groups also attended.

'The forum brought together key players involved in the production of children's television. We aim to develop a



L-R: Ian Fairweather, XYZ Entertainment; Heather Ogilvie, Total Film and Television; Susan Groundwater-Smith, Child development consultant

shared understanding and common language about quality children's programming with the people who make and show it,' said Mr Michael Gordon-Smith, ABA Member and host of the forum.

Participants at the forum were briefed on the classification process for C and P programs and discussed a variety of children's television issues. These included the ABA's interpretation of the criteria for a 'quality' children's program and the implications of the High Court's ruling that the ABA's



L-R: Pia Di Mattina, Australian Children's Television Foundation; Nick Herd, SPAA; Deborah Sims, ABA

quotas for Australian content on commercial television must include New Zealand programming.

'Guaranteeing both quantity and quality of television for Australian children is one of the important contributions the ABA makes to Australian television' said Michael Gordon-Smith.



L-R: John Thompson, *Wheels Within Wheels*; David Witt, *Yoram Gross Village Roadshow*; Danny Caretti, *Foxtel/Fox Kids*

Dr Sue Howard, Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Education, University of South Australia provided participants with a summary of the developmental stages of childhood and their implications on children's viewing needs.

At the forum the ABA announced that, for the first time, it will make public the register of consultants it uses to assist in assessing children's programs (see right). The register includes peer consultants from the production industry who have a range of different areas of expertise such as scriptwriting, production and animation. The register also includes consultants with expertise in child development. Until now, this register has been confidential.

'The ABA is also committed to making its assessment and decision making process as transparent and accessible as possible.'

Forum proceedings

An audio tape of the forum proceedings is available on request, as are handouts produced by Dr Howard and information sheets about the classification process for C and P children's television programs.

For copies of any of these, or for information about children's television, please contact the Children's Television sub-section at the ABA on (02) 9334 7700.



Dina Browne, Channel 7 (L) and Belinda Mullen, ABA

Assessing children's programs

The assessment procedures for classification of P (preschool) and C (children's) television programs are based on staff assessment and the use of independent specialist consultants. All programs are assessed under the Children's Television Standards (CTS).

All programs submitted for P classification are sent to consultants for assessment before they are assessed by ABA staff. The ABA usually chooses two early childhood or child development experts to assess these programs and, on occasion, either production or script assessment experts.

Proposed C programs are initially assessed by ABA staff to determine their compliance with CTS 2. This standard requires a program to be child specific, entertaining, well-produced, able to enhance a child's understanding and experience, and appropriate for Australian children. If the initial staff assessment raises queries about a program's suitability for classification, the program is given to (usually two) specialist consultants for advice. The choice of consultant will depend on the topic of concern.

The consultant's advice is then incorporated into the decision making process. The final decision for classification is made by an ABA member, or, on occasion, by a delegated senior officer of the ABA.

ABA register of consultants

<i>Consultant</i>	<i>Expertise</i>
Ewan Burnett	Production
Donato (Danny) Caretti	Production/puppetry/hosting
C Glenn Cupit	Curriculum/early childhood/child development
Kim Elliott	Early childhood development/production
Ian Fairweather	Production
Megs Gildea	Animation—technical
Posie Graeme-Evans	Production/scriptwriter/editor
Robert Greenberg	Scriptwriter/editor/assessor/animation
Susan Groundwater-Smith	Curriculum/child development/communication
Alan Hardy	Production
Susan Howard	Curriculum/child development/human learning
Harold Lander	Scriptwriter/editor/assessor
Elly Levis	Early childhood development
Angela McLean	Early childhood/child development/production
Stephen Measday	Scriptwriter/editor/assessor
Fiona Mitchell	Curriculum/early childhood/child development
Steve Moltzen	Animation—technical
Denis O'Connell	Child development
John Reeves	Scriptwriter/assessor
Susan Roberts	Curriculum/early childhood/child development
Wendy Schiller	Early childhood development
Susan Scowcroft	Curriculum/child development
Josie Tomas	Program classifier, children's pay TV channel
John Upton	Scriptwriter/assessor