



New Kids' Media Body

A number of existing organisations have joined forces to form Young Media Australia, an information, research and training service with its major focus on the social impact and influence of mass media on young people.

Young Media is a joint venture of the Australian and South Australian Councils for Children's Film and Television (ACCFT and SACCFT) and the South Australian Association for Media Education.

One of the key people involved is long-time lobbyist on children's film and television and President of the ACCFT, Barbara Biggins. The ACCFT, which involves State and Territory Councils and other national professional organisations, is the sponsoring body. Young Media claims to be a truly national project, drawing on a wide range of skills (including writing and production skills) and experience in areas like policy and education.

Young Media's stated rationale for its existence is that there is a lack of awareness and understanding in Australia of children's and young people's needs in relation to the mass media. It cites as evidence of this 'the relatively low availability of quality relevant materials which offer positive experiences, and the high levels of commercially exploitative materials'. In addition, it says there is community concern about the role played not only by television but by home video and video games in the lives of young Australians.

Young Media plans to involve young people themselves in its operation in a variety of ways, focusing on the establishment of a youth focus group (aged 13-18 years) as a consultative body which would also be involved in production and resource development. It will operate with a national advisory board (two meetings a year), a management committee and a director (when funding is available).

The group will develop a comprehensive library and data base which will be accessible to users all over

Australia through the Interlibrary Loan Network.

Young Media has some funding for 1993, primarily from the AFC and the SA Minister of Education, as well as substantial in-kind support. It aims to be self-funding within three years through sales of publications and packages, delivery of training courses, and royalties. It has applied for tax-deductible status as a charity.

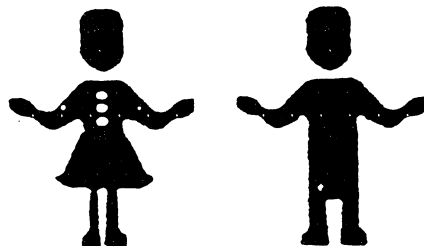
'No Existing Agency'

Young Media says that no one agency exists in Australia, with a properly funded brief, to undertake such tasks as collecting and disseminating information, conducting and commissioning research, publishing materials for appropriate target audiences such as parents, legislators and youth media producers, and monitoring, advocacy and education/training in this area.

It claims that none of the existing agencies, like the ABA, the AFTRS or the Australian Children's Television Foundation (ACTF) has such a brief.

The ACTF, the Melbourne-based production house responsible for some widely praised features and series, such as the recent success *Round the Twist*, has in the last decade established a virtual monopoly on production in the children's film and television area.

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Porn Crosses Borders

From somewhere in Denmark, Red Hot Television, a hard core pornographic satellite-delivered television service was launched in mid-1992 and is beamed to countries throughout Europe, including the United Kingdom.

Colin Shaw, director of the British Broadcasting Standards Council, describes the service as 'it is normally lacking in any plot other than what may be necessary to justify a variety of sexual encounters, normally heterosexual in character but sometimes depicting acts of female homosexuality'.

British authorities were stymied by the fact that the service was being provided from another country and thus not subject to British law, and that the UK is signatory to the EC directive on Transfrontier Broadcasting which prohibits the banning in one EC country of a program legally broadcast in another. Red Hot Television operates legally in Denmark.

Although the service in encrypted and broadcast late at night, the UK authorities decided to take action under an article of the Directive which provides for the protection of minors. The action became bogged down in legal interpretations and is now before the European Court of Justice, where it is expected to be delayed for at least a year. Meanwhile, while existing subscribers can continue to receive it, it is unlawful in Britain to supply receiving equipment to any would-be new subscribers. □

(The Bulletin, European Institute of the Media, 10#2 June 1993).