



Children choose to watch television for entertainment, education, escape, company and 'something to do' according to a new report, *Kids talk TV: 'super wickid' or 'dum'* released by the ABA.

Kids talk TV: is it 'super wickid' or just 'dum'?

Children choose to watch television for entertainment, education, escape, company and 'something to do' according to a new report released by the ABA.

The report, *Kids Talk TV 'super wickid' or 'dum'*, looks at what children like to watch on television and why.

It provides a voice for children to talk about their viewing habits as well as their attitudes to what appealed to them about certain programs. The children in the study were television literate and enthusiastic communicators on the subject of television and what they liked or disliked.

Comedy, drama, action-adventure and variety programs were favorite program types.

The children's favorite programs ranged from 'Bananas in Pyjamas' and 'A*mazing' for the youngest age group, to 'The Simpsons' and soaps such as 'Neighbours' which were popular for the oldest of the groups.

The ABA began its research in 1995, and conducted group discussions with more than one hundred children aged five to twelve. As this is qualitative research the findings cannot be generalised to the whole population but are intended as a descriptive account of the children's views.

The participants were from Sydney, Perth and Hobart and represented diverse backgrounds.

The study also showed that children's preferred viewing times moved towards the early evening timeslot as they got older, away from the afterschool timeslot, although some preschool programs were still popular with younger children.

Children liked watching characters who were their own age or a bit older, or teenagers and young adults who seemed to be doing more interesting things. Acting ability and attitude were considered much more important than the presence of good looking characters.

The children defined boring programs as those without humour, action and adventure, those they had outgrown, news programs, programs with 'grown up' humour that children did not understand, and some documentaries.

Research methods

This study researched the views of 117 children, aged five to twelve years. It was a qualitative study based on 11 focus groups and five affinity groups (based on friendship groupings) and was conducted between April and August 1995. The children came from

different school systems as well as different cultural, social and religious backgrounds.

During the group discussions children were shown clips from selected programs and asked for their views. The clips were selected from high rating programs, soaps and issue based programs, comedy and variety programs, animated programs, magazine

and quiz/game shows and sport. When asked to write down descriptions of television content and programs they liked, the children displayed their own lexicon which included words such as 'cool', 'excellent', 'radical', 'super wickid' and 'dum'.

As the research design for this project was based on a qualitative methodology, it





must be noted that the results are not representative of all children aged five to twelve years in Australia and cannot be generalised to a wider population. That is, the results cannot be generalised beyond the children who participated in this research but instead, can be seen to provide a descriptive account of the views of 117 children from various parts of Australia. This work establishes patterns and themes in how children think and talk about television.

A comprehensive literature review and a consultation stage were included in the study. The consultation stage comprised interviews with 23 stakeholders including children's script writers, producers, directors, network representatives, children's book authors and child development experts.

ABA research

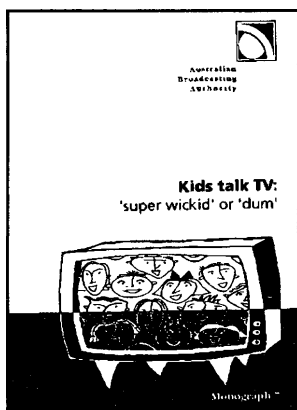
This monograph presents the second stage of the ABA's research project relating to children and television. It provides a counterpart to the initial stage conducted in 1993 which involved a comprehensive study of the views of 1602 primary school children aged eight to twelve years in NSW on the subject of what concerns them on television. The first study was presented in *'Cool' or 'gross' Children's attitudes to violence, kissing and swearing on television*, released in 1994.

One of the purposes of broadcasting regulation, as stated in the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* is 'to ensure that providers of broadcasting services place a high priority on the protection of children from exposure to program material which may be harmful to them'.

Research into community at-

titudes to program issues provides information about the way broadcasters are meeting this obligation. The ABA believes that research must also include the child's perspective about their broadcasting needs. Hence the priority the ABA has placed on research into children's attitudes towards television.

This research also informs the ABA in developing policy in relation to television for children. This includes determining standards for children's programs on commercial television to ensure that there is programming made especially for them and assessing compliance with those standards, and monitoring whether the commercial television code of practice is working to protect children from potentially harmful programming material. The research results are widely disseminated to assist program makers and broadcasters to understand and serve the interests of children.



Kids Talk TV: 'super wickid' or 'dum' completes the ABA's two stage study into children's attitudes to television and is available from the ABA, RRP \$20.

The ABA released the first stage, *'Cool' or 'gross' Children's attitudes to violence, kissing and swearing on television*, in 1994, RRP \$9.95. Both studies available: \$25.

The ABA allocates new commercial radio licence for Riverland region of South Australia.

New commercial radio licence for Riverland

The ABA has allocated a second commercial radio licence to 5AU Broadcasters Pty Ltd, licensee of commercial radio service 5RM Renmark.

The ABA has also decided to make channels available for a new community radio service and two new open narrowcasting radio services in the Riverland region of South Australia. In addition, the ABA has reserved spectrum for SBS, ABC and national/community television channels and two new national radio services in the Riverland.

Although sufficient vacant channels exist to provide one or more extra commercial television services in the Riverland, the ABA has not made channels available as there is insufficient interest from entrepreneurs in providing such services.

Radio

The new commercial radio service, 5RIV, will broadcast on FM 93.1 MHz from Loxton with a translator on FM 97.1 MHz at Morgan.

This new FM licence should

result in a distinctly different service in the Riverland market,' said Mr Peter Webb, ABA Chairman. 'The service will cover most of the populated areas in the Riverland and will increase the choice of radio services available to local listeners.'

The ABA will also make two new medium coverage open narrowcasting radio licences and one medium coverage community radio licence available in the Riverland.

'We haven't made any other radio licences available for the Riverland as there was little demand and the market has a limited ability to generate advertising revenue,' Mr Webb said.

Television

The ABA has reserved channels for the existing ABC television service, a high power SBS television service, the existing commercial television service and a national/community television service in the Riverland, including channels at Waikerie, Pinnaroo and Lameroo for all these services.

The ABA has also reserved high power UHF channels for the national (ABC) and com-