

I currently work within the Children's Television department at Network 10 in Brisbane. I have been working for the company for 4 years and am very proud of both myself and our entire unit for creating informative and engaging local content every single week.

I'm sure I can speak for a lot of people when I say Australian children's programming played a huge role in shaping me into the person I am today. I can remember how excited I would get turning the TV on after school and watching my favourite Aussie kids shows alongside my brothers and sisters. The shows that stuck out to me the most? The ones that would tell important local stories and give a voice to those people right around the country that ordinarily wouldn't have one. It was those shows that encouraged me to pursue a career in TV. Now, I am extremely fortunate to be able to continue to tell those stories every single day.

I can understand that the Australian media landscape is changing daily, and the need for us to be flexible and change with it is crucial. This is a time where we need to work together and identify the real problems currently facing the television industry.

Firstly, I can't accept the point that there is a lack of interest and viewership in children's content within Australia. All you need to do is look at the ABC's kids programming and ratings to realise just how popular it can be. Or even Nickelodeon, their content has got kids excited right around the world. We can be the same here in Australia, what we need is a little bit of support from the people running the commercial broadcasters. Programming fun, informative and engaging children's shows at a time where kids are either at school, heading to school or still in bed has been a tactic used for a long time by the major networks to say, "nobody's watching" and we should "abolish the quotas". But I'm sure if we put some of the biggest reality shows on the box in these sorts of timeslots, they too would find that "nobody's watching". In fact, the 3 kids shows currently being produced at Network 10 in Brisbane have a proven audience reach of well over 100,000. That was, of course when the shows were on the main channel in a timeslot where kids were available to watch.

I think that one of the main reasons why the 'big execs' of the major networks think kids tv is a lost cause, is because they believe it can't create revenue for their businesses. While I don't agree with that statement (time and time again we have proved that there are ways of creating revenue such as integrations with big companies on our shows), I can understand where they're coming from. There are certain things that we can't advertise during our children's TV block, yet our audience are exposed to all forms of advertising and content on online platforms such as YouTube who are held to a different standard. Why the double-standards? On that note, I think it's crazy that there is one law for kids tv in Australia and another for multi-million-dollar platforms such as Netflix and Stan. Yet somehow, we are supposed to compete? It's not a level playing field and has never been a level playing field. All platforms creating content for kids in Australia should be made to do so in an equal and fair way, which will then encourage competition and better-quality programming. Plus, if the major networks had as much freedom as platforms like YouTube for things like advertising, there wouldn't be an issue with revenue.

Moving on, the year 2020 has brought a lot of challenges with it, most notably the issue of cultural, gender and social equality, which has been dominating the headlines right around the world. The need to tell a diverse range of stories and share many different points of view has never been greater. So, while the ABC produces many hours of incredible children's television every single year, it is vital that there are more voices out there than just theirs. The more ideas and concepts we can offer to children right around Australia, the better! That is *just* one of the benefits of having quotas, each network and more people get to have a voice. Isn't that a good thing? Don't we want children right around Australia to grow up with a better understanding about the big issues currently facing us. I for one, certainly think so.

Having the opportunity to go out and meet so many different people from all walks of life daily is one of the most remarkable things about my job. But this isn't just about me or the many who work within the kids tv industry, this is about the thousands and thousands of children out there who need to hear these local stories. This is about the people out there who want to have a voice, who want to be heard. Local children's content is an absolute necessity to building a culture of respect, care and understanding. It's time for everyone to realise how important this content is, and work with us instead of against us. There is a way, and that way is collaboration. Now if you'll excuse me, I'm off to tell some more incredible stories to the future of Australia.