

June 9, 2020

23 Jackie Close
Rowville, VIC 3178

Dear Sir/ Madam,

As the State Director, I am writing to you on behalf of the Australian Literacy Educators' Association for Victoria. Our association is a non-for profit group, run by a volunteer committee. We are a national body, with representation in each state. Our group reaches over 6000 educators across Australia. The issue of Australian content in screen time for children is important to myself, the members of our association and the committee.

We feel that it is crucial that Australian children have a strong sense of belonging and cultural identity. As a group of educators, we are vitally aware of how important this is to a child's growth and development. Children develop a sense of who they are based on experiences with their family, their school environment and the texts they encounter. Their screen time (whether through television or digital means) plays a vital role in helping them develop their personal identity and of course, literacy skills. Many researchers have found that a child's cognitive experiences and schema have a huge influence on their potential to learn to read and write. Children draw on this as they make meaning in the texts they read and the writing they create. Therefore, it becomes critical that Australian children are exposed to mainly Australian content that relates to their local environment and experiences.

The Australian Children's Television Foundation plays a crucial role in supporting and promoting local Australian television. The range of exceptional, quality shows produced, developed and screened is testimony of this. Many teachers access shows such as My Place, Round the Twist and Little Lunch as part of their Literacy programs, even years after they have finished screening. The Education support section is also an excellent support for teachers. We would strongly urge the government to continue to support and protect the valuable work carried out by this organisation. We have developed a strong working rapport with this group and recognise that their contribution to students' literacy skills are significant and need to be continued.

Our children are our future, and while this is an often used phrase, it really does highlight the importance of nurturing and caring for this group in our community. This is a huge responsibility entrusted to parents, educators, the government and our society. We trust that you will make decisions with children's best interests at the core.

Yours sincerely,


Julie Shepherd

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