

# Changes to local drama content quota for subscription television

Australian drama script writing could be boosted by new requirements applying to subscription television channels predominantly showing drama.

Broadcasting licensees and program providers in this arena are currently required to devote at least 10 per cent of their annual program expenditure to new local Australian and New Zealand drama content.

The Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, Senator Helen Coonan, has announced a series of measures in response to the March 2005

review of Australian and New Zealand drama content on subscription television.

Amendments will be made to the Broadcasting Services Act to:

- provide for limited pre-production spending on script development to count towards the 10 per cent quota, and
- allow qualifying spending over the 10 per cent requirement in any one year to be carried forward to the following year.

The government has also decided to amend the definition

of a 'drama program' for subscription television under Division 2A of Part 7 of the Broadcasting Services Act so that it is consistent with the definition of 'Australian drama program' within the Australian Content Standard.

Senator Coonan said that: 'In order to provide the subscription television industry with certainty in relation to proposed investment in Australian drama content under the quota requirements, the government intends that these changes will have effect from 1 January 2006'.

The government intends to introduce legislation in the autumn 2006 sittings of parliament to implement these measures.

**The Minister's media release is on the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts website, [www.dcita.gov.au](http://www.dcita.gov.au). Go to Newsroom > Media Releases to locate the 29 December 2005 release, 'Australian and New Zealand Drama Content on Subscription Television'.**

## Keeping kids safe on the net

ACMA has relaunched its internet safety web site, [www.cybersmartkids.com.au](http://www.cybersmartkids.com.au), with the aim of reminding parents and children about some simple yet practical tips for staying safe online.

'Cybersmartkids Online features a range of material, including advice for parents, tips and activities for kids, and links to other fun sites,' said Lyn Maddock. 'The overarching message is – remember to always be cybersmart.'

Research conducted by the

former Australian Broadcasting Authority and the community body NetAlert and released in 2005 showed that while parents are aware of the risks and general strategies for keeping their children safe online, they are less aware of developments in technology, and the wide variety of options available to them to keep their children safe.

ACMA has responded to this challenge by reviewing the safety tips and background information on Cybersmartkids, and including new sections

on mobile phones, instant messaging (including those providing voice communication facilities), webcams and weblogs. The look and feel of the site has also been refreshed.

Research also shows that children are discovering the internet at an earlier age, and so the content has been recast to ensure that the messages are delivered in the most appropriate and memorable way.

While Australian parents and children are very positive about the benefits of the internet, there are concerns about exposure to unsuitable and offensive content, as well as contact being made with children by strangers.

**The research report, [kidsonline@home](mailto:kidsonline@home), is on the ACMA website, [www.acma.gov.au](http://www.acma.gov.au). (Go to ACMA > Publications > Radio and Television > Broadcasting > Research.)**

### Children need to remember

- Make sure you know who you are talking to.
- Check with your parents before giving out any personal information.
- Don't meet someone on your own.
- Stay aware of what's going on around you and guard your privacy.
- Tell an adult if you receive nasty or bullying messages.

### Key messages for parents

- Keep an eye on your children's use of the internet, particularly chat rooms, and their use of IM.
- Stay up to date with the new technology, and how it works.
- Children should be reminded to never give out personal information when they're chatting online.
- Talk to your kids about the internet experiences, the good and the bad. Let them know it's OK to tell you if they come across something that worries them.
- If children want to meet face-to-face someone that they've chatted with, they should always take a parent with them.



Two Cybersmart kids