

18 April 2008

Committee Secretary  
Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts  
Department of the Senate  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600  
By email: [eca.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:eca.sen@aph.gov.au)

Dear Secretary

## **INQUIRY INTO THE SEXUALISATION OF CHILDREN IN THE CONTEMPORARY MEDIA ENVIRONMENT**

ASTRA appreciates the opportunity to provide a brief submission as part of the Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications & the Arts' (the **Committee**) inquiry into the Sexualisation of Children in the Contemporary Media Environment.

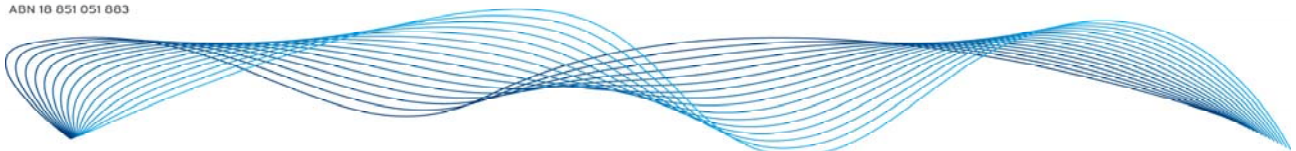
ASTRA represents the interests of subscription television operators and channels. A complete list of ASTRA's members is available at [www.astra.org.au/members.asp](http://www.astra.org.au/members.asp).

ASTRA's members create and distribute hundreds of thousands of hours of original audio-visual content via the broadcasting of distinct channels of programming, including children's channels, on cable and satellite platforms.

By way of background, the key elements of regulation for all audio-visual services, including television, are that adults should be able to watch what they choose and children should be protected from material that may be harmful to them. The protection of children is an object of the Broadcasting Services Act 1992 (the **Act**) under which subscription television operates. It is this object that underpins the codes of practice of the various television and radio sectors in Australia. This principle is also the basis of Australia's classification system for film, computer games and publications.

ASTRA's members offer television broadcasting and narrowcasting services all of which offer as a feature disabling devices (usually achieved through a pin coded access) to protect children from harmful content.

As with other broadcast sectors, ASTRA's codes of practice, are developed through public consultation and approved and registered by the Australian Communications and Media Authority. These codes cover subscription television broadcast services, subscription television narrowcast services, open television narrowcast services and subscription radio. Matters covered in these codes



include general program rules, classification of programming, provision of disabling devices, complaints handling, captioning, subscriber management (in the case of subscription services) and advertising. ASTRA's codes incorporate relevant codes of the Australian Association of National Advertisers (AANA) relating to, among other things, children and advertising and marketing.

ASTRA would be pleased to provide any clarification or further information regarding the services of ASTRA's members, if required by the Committee.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Debra Richards". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Debra Richards  
Chief Executive Officer