

## **SUBMISSION No. 45**



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The Secretary  
Joint Select Committee on Cyber-Safety  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

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### **INQUIRY INTO THE SAFETY OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ON THE INTERNET**

#### **Submission by the Australian Toy Association (ATA)**

The Australian Toy Association (ATA) is the national association representing the toy, hobby and nursery industries. Membership covers manufacturers, distributors, retailers and suppliers. ATA is a member of the International Council of Toy Industries (ICTI) which adopted in 2009 the following Guiding Principle for Advertising and Marketing Communication to Children:

"The object of the guiding principles is to encourage industry advertisers and marketers to develop and maintain a high sense of social responsibility in advertising and marketing to children around the world."

Currently in Australia the main channels and media used to communicate with children are television and catalogues. However use of online channels such as websites are becoming increasingly common both stand-alone media and in conjunction with other media. If overseas trends are replicated here the online environment will become the most common channel of communication for children and young people for all forms of social and commercial interaction.

Like others who communicate with children, the toy industry has long recognised its responsibility for appropriate marketing and advertising to children. It is now addressing the need to extend this to all communication to children, hence safety and privacy of online communications must be taken into account.

There are two reasons for the toy industry to take online safety seriously. First, there is the sense of social responsibility and, second, there is self-interest. In relation to the latter, as the online environment becomes more important it is in the interests of the toy industry that children can go online in complete safety and that their parents can be confident their children will be safe in that environment.

Toy companies are not experts in cyber-safety but they have expertise in communicating with children. In any communication it is important to be simple and direct but that did not appear to be the case with information to children and parents on cyber-safety during the recent Cyber Safety Week. A range of government and non-government online material was released and promoted. These were seemingly unrelated to one another. There needs to be more co-ordination.

ATA believes that the Joint Select Committee on Cyber-Safety would advance the cause of online safety for children and young people by recommending that there be an appropriate co-ordinating body to ensure what websites, warnings and advice are cyber-safe and in which circumstances.

ATA will take seriously its role in educating members on appropriate cyber-safe online communications. In the course of normal activities particularly in the lead up to Christmas, members of ATA communicate with children and young people via a range of channels and media. In the interests of promoting cyber-safety, ATA would be willing to co-operate with government agencies or non-government organisations to provide members with information, warnings or referrals to cyber-safe website and other material.

### **Privacy**

The Committee terms of reference specifically include breaches of privacy.

The Privacy Act has recently been reviewed following an extensive review by the Australian Law Reform Commission. In the course of the Review and subsequent government consideration issues relating to children were addressed. ATA is awaiting the introduction of the amendments to the legislation.

### **Conclusion**

ATA stands willing to assist in communicating information about cyber-safety via its membership to children and young people as well as assisting the Committee further if required.

Yours faithfully

Beverly Jenkin  
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