



Australian Government

Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development, Communications and the Arts

MEDIA REFORM BRANCH / ONLINE SERVICES REFORM SECTION

Research Note for ACMA – Children’s Television Viewing in Australia, and General Awareness of Codes of Practice

The department has prepared advice to support the ACMA’s code review process.

The department has included high-level findings from datasets procured from OzTAM covering metropolitan television ratings data for children in calendar year 2023, which are for internal consideration and not for further sharing or publication.

The department has also included relevant survey findings from the Television & Media Survey series, a survey series commissioned by the department, including as of yet unpublished 2024 data. This includes data on children’s engagement with gambling and alcohol advertising, and age-inappropriate material, as well as new questions asked in 2024 that cover Codes of Practice awareness and familiarity amongst survey respondents. This data can be used and shared further with the note it is currently unpublished.

Children's Television Viewing across Dayparts

What times of day do children watch live free to air television?

How many children are watching free to air TV in these time slots:

- 10:00 to 12:00
- 12:00 to 15:00

The department has used OzTAM ratings data to provide analysis of the average audience of children across different dayparts for both Australian commercial and publicly-funded free-to-air television.¹ Only metropolitan data is represented in this analysis as no Regional TAM data for regional ratings has been included (the department does not currently have this data).

Peak Viewing Periods

In 2023, the peak viewing periods for children watching metropolitan commercial free-to-air broadcast television **Section 47 of the FOI Act**

Section 47 of the FOI Act These peaks hold true across both weekday and weekend viewing.

These peaks for children's viewing across the day remain largely the same as those reported in ACMA's analysis of OzTAM data in 2017, where the peak for children aged 0-14 was 8am to 9am and 7pm to 8pm.²

While behavioural patterns surrounding children's viewing of broadcast television look to have remained relatively similar from the period of ACMA's 2017 analysis to 2023, the overall frequency of the viewing of commercial and national broadcaster free-to-air broadcast television by children has declined, alongside the broader decline in broadcast television viewing.

Children's Viewing of Commercial Free-to-air Television

As show in Figure 1, **Section 47 of the FOI Act**

¹ This data is based on OzTAM 'Audience Measures for 0600-2400 by hour' reports for 2023. These are Consolidated (Live + As Live + Time Shift to 7) Audience Measures for 0600-2400 byhour, weekday and weekend 5 City Metro audience ratings. These reports includes both primary and multichannel figures across the following channels: ABC TV; ABC Kids/ABC TV Plus; ABC ME; ABC NEWS; Seven; 7TWO; 7mate; 7flix; 7Bravo; Nine; 9GO!; 9Gem; 9Life; 9Rush; 10; 10 Bold; 10 Peach; Nickelodeon; SBS; SBS VICELAND; SBS Food; SBS World Movies; SBS WorldWatch; NITV.

The department has not procured Regional TAM children's viewing patterns by daypart, which could augment OzTAM data with regional information. The average audience referred to throughout represents OzTAM's metric for viewership which sums all peoples across the minutes of the relevant period, and divides this by the total number of minutes. This figure differs to 'reach' which measures the total peoples who had watched at least one minute of the content.

² ACMA. 2017. [Childrens-television-viewing-and-multi-screen behaviour.pdf](#), page 10.

Figure 1 - Average Child Audience (0-14 years old) for Commercial Free-to-air Television, Weekday and Weekend, 2023.

Section 47 of the FOI Act

Source: Departmental analysis of OzTAM ratings data. Not for further publication or sharing. This includes primary and multichannels.

Children's Viewing of Commercial Free-to-air Television from 10am to 12pm and 12pm to 3pm

As shown in Figure 1, the average metropolitan child audience³ for commercial free-to-air broadcast television between 10am and 11am on a weekend was

After lunch, the same audience

These figures compare to the between 7-8pm on weekends on commercial free-to-air broadcast.

³ The reports provide figures for 0-4 years old, 5-12 years old, 13-17 years old, and 0-14 years old. The department has

Section 47 of the FOI Act

Children's Viewing of National Broadcasters

As seen in Figure 2, The child audience for the national broadcasters on free-to-air television shows

Section 47 of the FOI Act

Figure 2 - Average Child Audience (0-14 years old) for National Broadcaster Free-to-air Television, Weekday and Weekend, 2023.

Section 47 of the FOI Act

Source: Departmental analysis of OzTAM ratings data. Not for further publication or sharing. This includes primary and multichannels.

Children's Viewing across the Day, by Age Range

As shown in Figure 3, all age groups reported by OzTAM (0-4 years old, 5-12 years old, and 13-17 years old)

Section 47 of the FOI Act

Figure 3 – Children's Weekend Viewing of Commercial Free-to-Air Television, by daypart, 2023.

Section 47 of the FOI Act

Source: Departmental analysis of OzTAM ratings data. Not for further publication or sharing. This includes primary and multichannels.

Adjusting for the relative size of each group in Figure 4 demonstrates a similar viewership pattern.⁵ This shows that

Section 47 of the FOI Act

Figure 4 - Children's Weekend Viewing of Commercial Free-to-Air Television, by daypart, standardised for age range, 2023.

Section 47 of the FOI Act

Source: Departmental analysis of OzTAM ratings data. Not for further publication or sharing. This includes primary and multichannels.

⁵ Data for each age group was standardised to the [0,1] interval to adjust for differences in sample sizes. The highest reported viewing period for each age group is equal to 1 while the lowest is 0

Children's Interaction with Gambling and Alcohol advertising, and other Inappropriate Screen Content

How many children are exposed to advertising for gambling or alcohol?

The department's commissioned Television & Media Surveys ask questions of children, and parents of children, regarding inappropriate content, including gambling advertising, that children had seen on commercial free-to-air television, and of age-inappropriate content seen by child audiences.⁶

The department's most recent survey was in the field in October-November 2024 with preliminary results delivered in late November. These results have not yet been published, however can be used with attribution as noted in tables and graphs below.

Children Seeing Gambling Advertising on Commercial Free-to-air Television

Across 2023 and 2024, a relatively steady portion of children reported seeing gambling advertising on commercial free-to-air broadcast television. As seen in Table 1, 11-12% of 8-17 year olds in 2024 reported they saw a gambling advertisement on commercial free-to-air television, with just over 5% of 0-7 year olds, as reported by their parents.

Table 1: Proportion of child age groups that saw a gambling advertisement on commercial free-to-air television.

	0-7 year olds (reported by parents)	8-10 year olds	11-15 year olds	16-17 year olds
2024	5.35%	11.91%	11.27%	10.87%
2023	7.99%	11.53%	11.13%	13.61%

Source: DITRDCA, Television & Media Survey 2024. Unpublished. K6 & K7.⁷

While there appeared to be a decrease in particular for the percentage of 16-17 year olds seeing gambling advertising on commercial free-to-air television from 2023 to 2024, this is likely reflective of the overall drop in viewership of commercial free-to-air television, with older age groups seeing most gambling advertising on advertising video-on-demand services (e.g. YouTube).

Children Seeing Content Meant for Older Audiences

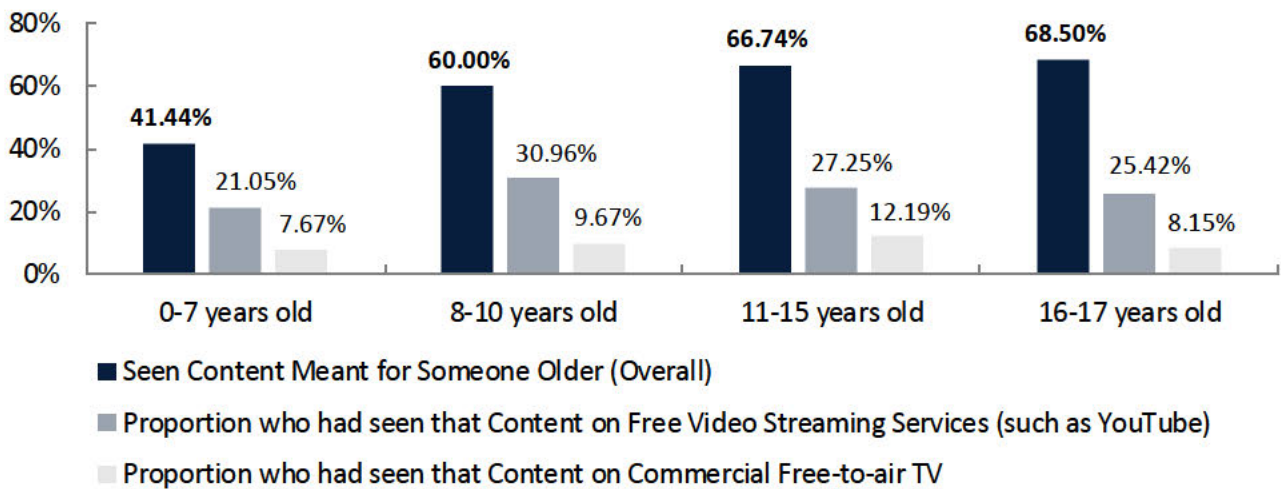
As seen in Figure 5, a high number of children reported seeing screen content meant for older audiences, with around 41% of parents reporting this for their 0-7 year olds, and between ~60-70% of children aged 8-17 years old reporting this themselves.

⁶ The 2024 survey had a sample size of 4,485 adults and 873 children and was in the field between 28 Oct 2024 – 21 Nov 2024. The 2023 survey had a sample size of 4,892 and 884 children and was in the field 25 September – 16 October 2023. Children's data for 0-7 year olds was reported by parents on behalf of children, and by children themselves for 8-17 year olds.

⁷ K6. For 0-7, "has your child seen any advertisements for gambling or betting in the past 7 days?" For all other respondents, "have you seen any advertisements for gambling or betting in the past 7 days?" K7. For 0-7, "where has your child seen or heard advertisements for gambling or betting on any of the following in the past 7 days?" For all other respondents, "where have you seen or heard advertisements for gambling or betting on any of the following in the past 7 days?" Calculated as the proportion of the age groups that saw a gambling ad, multiplied by the proportion of those that saw them on commercial free-to-air television. n = 60 (0-7 year olds), 70 (8-10 year olds), 86 (11-15 year olds), 76 (16-17 year olds).

Across all age groups, the greatest source of age-inappropriate content was free video streaming services, such as YouTube. Between 8-12% of all age groups reported commercial free-to-air television as having age inappropriate content.⁸

Figure 5: Children who reported seeing content meant for older audiences.



Source: DITRDCA, Television & Media Survey 2024. Unpublished. KA8, KB8, KC8, KD8 & KA9, KB9, KC9, KD9.⁹ Multiple selections were permitted for where age-inappropriate content had been seen.

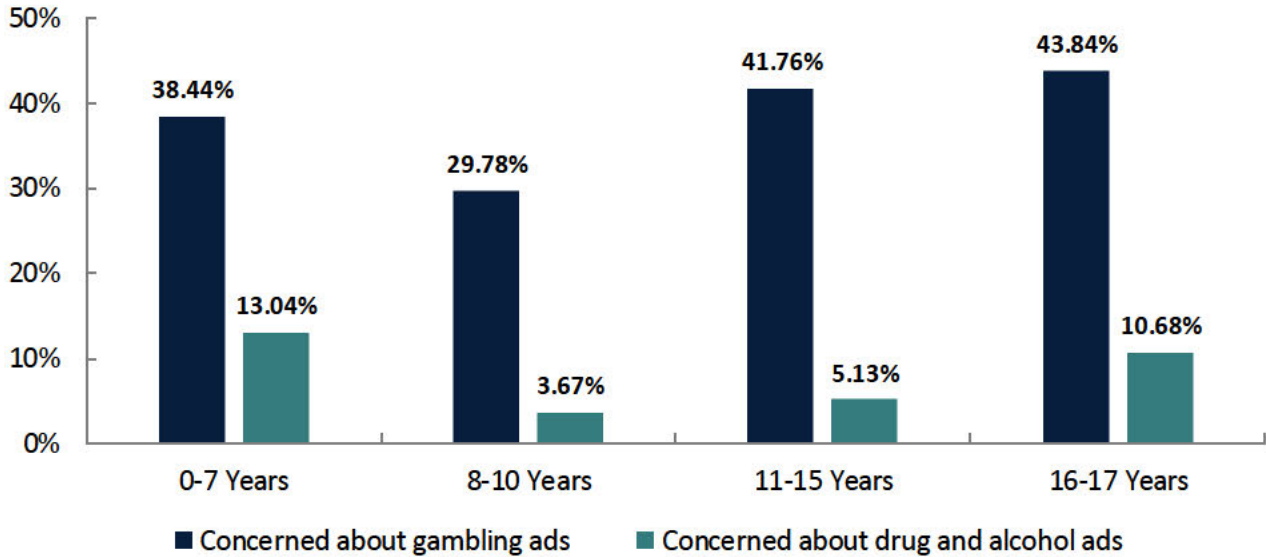
⁸ This was calculated by multiplying the percentage of children who selected they had seen this content on commercial free-to-air television by the overall percentage of children in that age group who had consumed age-inappropriate content.

⁹ KA8 "Has your child ever watched any TV shows or content online that was meant for or rated for someone older than they are?", and KB8, KC8, KD8, "Have you ever watched any TV shows or content online that was meant for or rated for someone older than you were?". KA9, "KA9. And where did they see this show or content that was meant for someone older than them?" and KB9, KC9, KD9, "where did you see this show or content that was meant for someone older than you?". Responses for 0-7 year olds were provided by parents on behalf of children.

How many parents are concerned about advertising for gambling or alcohol targeted to children?

Figure 6 shows that between 30-44% of parents reported being concerned with gambling advertising on commercial Free-to-air TV in 2024, with this highest in parents of older children. Comparatively fewer parents of children reported being concerned with drug and alcohol advertising on commercial free-to-air television, with this figure between 4-13%, and highest amongst parents of 0-7 year olds.

Figure 6: Parents' concerns with advertising content on commercial free-to-air television



Source: DITRDCA, Television & Media Survey 2024. Unpublished. Question: BROAD2_1. What were your concerns for content on Commercial free-to-air TV by BANNER – Adult. n = 77 (0-7), 75 (8-10), 80 (11-15), 72 (16-17).

As seen in Table 2, parents of children largely reported regarding advertisements as inappropriate on online platforms compared to broadcast television.

Table 2: Proportion of parents of children who considered certain advertising inappropriate on different platforms, 2024 (Top two boxes, Strongly Disagree and Disagree combined)

	Parents of 0-7 year olds	Parents of 8-10 year olds	Parents of 11-15 year olds	Parents of 16-17 year olds
AVOD	23.81%	21.36%	22.41%	19.40%
Sports website/app	22.56%	9.50%	22.87%	19.29%
SVOD	17.29%	22.13%	15.79%	14.67%
Public FTA TV	9.69%	5.90%	16.56%	21.59%
Public BVOD	4.79%	5.75%	9.88%	17.90%
Pay TV	17.92%	10.62%	16.52%	4.74%
Commercial FTA TV	16.84%	8.06%	5.98%	13.97%
Commercial BVOD	10.65%	7.00%	15.31%	11.26%

Source: DITRDCA, Television & Media Survey 2024. Unpublished. Question NEW23: "To what extent do you agree or disagree that [the advertisements seen] were appropriate? - by BANNER – Adult"

General Awareness and Familiarity with Codes of Practice and Ad Standards

In 2024, the department added a range of questions to the Television & Media Survey asking respondents for their prompted awareness, and their familiarity with, a range of Codes of Practice.

Prompted Awareness of Codes of Practice

Prompted awareness of the codes of practice ranged from just near a majority of Australian adults (49.99%) for the Free TV Code of Practice to a small number of Australian adults (6.6%) for the Open Narrowcast Radio Codes of Practice.¹⁰

Table 2: Australian adults who had heard of Codes of Practice, 2024

Code of Practice	Yes	No
Open Narrowcast Radio Codes of Practice	6.60%	93.07%
Open Narrowcast Television Codes of Practice	6.71%	92.90%
Subscription Narrowcast Television Code of Practice	7.49%	92.18%
Subscription Broadcast Television Codes of Practice	15.36%	84.29%
Community Radio Broadcasting Codes of Practice	26.89%	72.76%
Community Television Codes of Practice	28.47%	71.02%
Commercial Radio Code of Practice	41.54%	58.02%
Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice	49.99%	49.70%

Source: DITRDCA, Television & Media Survey 2024. Unpublished. Question BROAD3: "Before today, had you heard of the following types of Codes of Practice?"

Familiarity with Codes of Practice

Most Australian adults who had heard of codes had 'heard of it, but only in passing'. Deeper familiarity with the codes was highest for the Subscription Narrowcast Television Code of Practice.

Table 3: Familiarity with Codes of Practice amongst Respondents who had heard of Codes, 2024

Code of Practice	I've heard of it, but only in passing	I've heard of it and have some familiarity	I'm very familiar with the code	Refused	Don't know
Subscription Narrowcast Television Code of Practice	62.85%	25.29%	10.55%	0.21%	1.10%
Open Narrowcast Radio Codes of Practice	63.16%	29.01%	6.89%	0.00%	0.95%
Open Narrowcast Television Codes of Practice	65.28%	24.29%	9.14%	0.00%	1.29%
Subscription Broadcast Television Codes of Practice	66.32%	26.19%	7.10%	0.00%	0.39%

¹⁰ The fieldwork for this survey occurred across October and November in 2024, where there may have been more advertising and media related to certain codes given ongoing code reviews.

Code of Practice	I've heard of it, but only in passing	I've heard of it and have some familiarity	I'm very familiar with the code	Refused	Don't know
Community Television Codes of Practice	68.69%	27.88%	3.28%	0.00%	0.15%
Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice	70.32%	26.39%	3.07%	0.05%	0.16%
Community Radio Broadcasting Codes of Practice	71.14%	24.87%	3.95%	0.00%	0.04%
Commercial Radio Code of Practice	72.01%	24.47%	3.24%	0.00%	0.29%

Source: DITRDCA, Television & Media Survey 2024. Unpublished. Question BROAD4: "You said you'd heard of the following Codes, how familiar are you with the codes?"

Prompted Awareness of the ability to complain to Ad Standards, 2024

The department also asked a general prompted awareness question regarding awareness of the ability to complain to Ad Standards about advertising.¹¹

- 46.25% of Australian adults answered they were aware they could complain about advertising to Ad Standards, while 53.2% of Australian adults were not.
- 0.16% of respondents refused to answer and 0.36% answered they were unsure / didn't know.

¹¹ DITRDCA, Television & Media Survey 2024. Unpublished. Question ADVERT1: "Before today, were you aware that you could complain about advertising to Ad Standards?"