

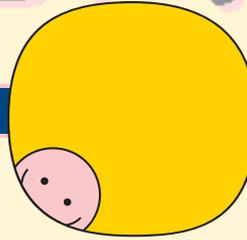
Care for Kids

T E L E V I S I O N

N E W S

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN'S TELEVISION FOUNDATION

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A small 'dot' on the big screen

The call is out to all children aged 15 years and under – get cracking on your Trop Jr entries!

Trop Jr – the world's largest short film festival for kids, by kids – is presented by the Australian Children's Television Foundation in partnership with Tropfest and this year's new media partner, ABC3.

Entry into Trop Jr is free and **entries close on Thursday 7 January 2010**. It's a perfect Term 4 activity. Each film submitted, whether it is live action, drama, animation or documentary, must include the Trop Jr signature item (TSI). This year the TSI is **DOT**. Entrants may interpret this anyway they like.

Young filmmakers may enter as individuals, as a group of friends, or as a school group or activity. For more information on competition guidelines visit www.tropjr.com.

Trop Jr will take place during the afternoon before the main Tropfest festival at Sydney's Domain on Sunday 21 February 2010. If your film is selected as a finalist both you and your film will be there! Furthermore, your film will be broadcast to a national audience on the new ABC 3 children's channel in 2010.

Tropfest Founder and Director, John Polson said, "Trop Jr plays an important role in nurturing the next generation of filmmakers and it's great to see more and more kids getting involved. We started Trop Jr in 2008 and with more than 110 films entered last year, Trop Jr has quickly established itself as one of the major film initiatives for children in Australia."

John Polson also said, "Trop Jr was created to encourage kids to get out there and make films about things important to them. The passion these

kids show for their filmmaking is really exciting, whether they go solo or do it as a group at school or with a bunch of friends. The quality of entries gets better each year and I can't wait to see this year's batch of films."



Tropfest Founder and Director,
John Polson



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THE AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN'S
TELEVISION FOUNDATION

THE WORLD'S LARGEST SHORT FILM FESTIVAL FOR KIDS BY KIDS

Two New Aussie Dramas...

Dance Academy is a new 26 part drama series for ABC children's television which invites the audience into an exciting world of dance and music.

The teen drama is set in the prestigious (and fictitious) National Academy of Dance. It follows the life of Tara Webster, a country girl who enters the world of Dance Academy where the finest in the country train to become dancers. The best will be selected to join the National Ballet Company, but the students must master all forms of dancing, whether it's Contemporary, Hip Hop, Jazz or Acrobatics.

show. Having begun dancing at the age of nine, Xenia is a multi-talented dancer.

Playing Tara's carefree friend Kat Karamakov is actress Alicia Banit. Alicia made her film debut as a young Miranda Otto in *The Dead Letter Office* and is known for her roles in TV shows including *Neighbours*, *Summer Heights High* and *Halifax F.P.*

Kat's older brother Ethan, will be played by talented actor and singer Tim Pocock. Starting out in the Australian Children's Choir, Tim grew into a successful Principal in the 1995 Australian Opera

The nerdy Sammy Lieberman will be played by Tom Green, who began working professionally as an actor in 2007. Tom has been nominated for 'Best Young Actor' at the AFI Awards for his work in *The Ground Beneath* and was awarded 'Best Actor' at the St Kilda Film Festival for his performance. Tom has just finished work on *Home and Away* in the role of Dexter.

The ambitious Abigail Armstrong, the best in the year and not afraid to show it, will be played by Dena Kaplan. A dancer since the age of three, at 16 she joined the adult ensemble for the Sydney and Melbourne seasons of *The Lion King*, touring to China. In 2005 and 2006 Dena won Australian Dance Idol before moving to New York to train at the renowned Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre.

She has recently made her feature film debut in the forthcoming *How to Change in Nine Weeks* opposite Guy Pearce and Miranda Otto. The *Dance Academy* main cast will also feature well known Australian actress Tara Morice (*Strictly Ballroom*, *Candy*, *Razzle Dazzle*), experienced stage and television performer Robert Alexander (*All Saints*, *Home and Away*, *Muriel's Wedding*) and Sydney Dance Company and Australian Ballet soloist Josef Brown.

Dance Academy will screen in 2010 on ABC 1 and the ABC's new digital children's channel ABC 3, as well as in Germany on ZDF.

DANCE ACADEMY

Production began on *Dance Academy* in Sydney in July, and will continue shooting until January 2010. The episodes are being filmed in blocks by directors Jeffrey Walker, Cherie Nowlan, Shirley Barrett, Ian Watson and Ben Chessell. The producer is Joanna Werner.

More than 1,000 talented actors and dancers, both new and familiar faces, auditioned for the production's six lead roles.

The lead role of Tara Webster is played by Xenia Goodwin, who is excited to be starring in what will be her very first TV

Company's 'Magic Flute', before spending five years with Opera Australia. He then turned his focus to acting, studying at the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA) before appearing as Scott Summers (aka Cyclops) in the 2009 feature film *X-Men Origins: Wolverine*.

Actor Jordan Rodrigues' role as 'Jai Fernandez' in the popular television series *Home and Away* had him nominated for a Best New Talent award at the 2009 Logies. Jordan will join the academy as rebellious character, Christian Reed.



Lockie Leonard 2



Gracie Gilbert (Vicki), along with Rhys Muldoon (Sarge, Dad) and Briony Williams (Mum) from NSW.

WA filmmakers James Bogle (*Closed for Winter, The Circuit*) and Peter Templeman (*Bogan Pride*) each directed seven episodes.

Culture and Arts Minister John Day, Education Minister Liz Constable and the ACTF's chair Janet Holmes à Court AC visited the set in June to meet with the cast and crew.

Minister Day thanked producer Kylie du Fresne of Goalpost Pictures for bringing Lockie, his family and his friends back to Albany.

"The setting of Albany had once again provided the perfect place for Lockie's adventures" he said. "The weather has

been kind and the community has got right behind the production with many locals working in small guest roles and as extras."

With the production spending more than \$4.5 million in WA, *Lockie Leonard 2* has provided an economic boom. ScreenWest's investment of \$475,000 in the series has benefited the local film and television industry, as well as local businesses.

The first *Lockie Leonard* series won the AFI, Logie and ATOM Awards for 'Best Children's Series' in 2007, as well as being nominated for a BAFTA.

Lockie Leonard 2 will screen in Australia on the Nine Network. It has also been presold to Nickelodeon Australia and the BBC.

The much anticipated second series of *Lockie Leonard* has now finished shooting and is in post production, preparing to hit television screens in 2010.

The 26 episodes bring more drama, tears, mayhem and laughter. Just when Lockie thinks he's got it all sussed out, everything changes. That's the thing about the future – it just happens. But as long as Angelus has the best waves Lockie has ever seen, why would he want to be anywhere else?

Once again, the lead cast includes Busselton actor Sean Keenan (Lockie), Australind's Corey McKernan (Phillip), Perth actors Clarence Ryan (Egg) and



ACMA's Children's Television Standards 2009 released

The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) has released the new Children's Television Standards (CTS) 2009, following a lengthy review period.

Predictably, the ACMA's refusal to introduce a ban on advertising unhealthy food to children as part of the Standards has received considerable media attention.

By way of contrast, the response of Free TV Australia, representing the commercial networks, almost snuck under the radar.

Whilst the commercial broadcasters were obviously pleased that the regulator chose not to implement a ban on the advertising of junk food, they came out highly critical of the regulator for maintaining existing quota levels for children's and pre-school programming on commercial television. They argued that no other media platform is subject to the same level of regulation regarding children's content as they are. And **it is clear that just as health advocates saw this review as an opportunity to ban the advertising of unhealthy food to children, the commercial broadcasters had seen it as an opportunity to be relieved of their obligations to the child audience altogether.**

At the very least the ACMA can be congratulated for not allowing locally produced children's programs to become a casualty of any of these arguments. The ACMA has maintained existing quotas and sub-quotas for children's programs, to ensure that there is a minimum amount of children's programming on commercial free-to-air television. In an attempt to build audiences for the children's programs on commercial television the ACMA has provided broadcasters with the option

of broadcasting C programs in blocks of a minimum of 60 minutes duration and on a minimum of two days per week, rather than require broadcasters to schedule a half hour of C programs each week day. The half an hour a day rule was resulting in children's programs being squeezed into the schedule between two unrelated adult programs and often meant that children had no idea that these programs were there. It is hoped that the flexibility to schedule children's drama and other C programs in "blocks" will make it easier for children to find the programs that are made for them. The ACTF supports these amendments to the CTS.

The CTS deliver on the clear Government policy of providing Australian children with local content. These are not onerous obligations, and during the review it was revealed that the commercial broadcasters commit less than 2% of their overall programming expenditure a year to local children's content. Nevertheless, this expenditure on children's programs is extremely significant, as it has underpinned a world class children's television production industry. This industry is a fragile one, and if these funds were withdrawn, it would inevitably lead to a significant reduction in the level of Australian content on both free-to-air commercial television and pay television children's channels.

This is because the pay television children's channels typically acquire Australian C drama content that has also been commissioned from a commercial broadcaster, with the pay television channel contributing very low licence fees towards the cost of production.

There is no doubt that children's audiences are migrating to destinations where they can find content at times when they want it, and that with the launch of ABC 3 later in the year and eventual digital switch off by 2013, children's viewing patterns on all platforms may change dramatically. It will therefore be necessary to continue to monitor the success of the CTS, and particularly the impact of the changes in block scheduling, the impact of ABC 3 and the audience for pay television. **It is a rapidly transforming environment and it is clearly going to be harder to look at each sector and its impact on the creation of content in isolation in future, as they are all interconnected.** Government policy and ACMA regulation will need to take a holistic approach to children's television regulation and support. But it is premature to make predictions about all these influences now, and the ACMA has taken a sensible approach for the time being. Any more sweeping changes could have had dramatic and unintended consequences.

September 2009 – Script development funding

The Diary of Jimmy Porter	Lisa McCune (VIC)	\$20,000
Gnomes	Beyond Television Group P/L (NSW)	\$15,000
Dirk Breaka	Suren Perera (VIC)	\$5,000
Robottom	Keyframe Cops P/L (NSW)	\$5,000
Megs	Megs Projects P/L (VIC)	\$12,000
The List Operators	Circe Films (VIC)	\$5,500
The Last Andy	Scott Alexander (VIC)	\$5,000
Camp Kilmore	ISH Media (VIC)	\$9,500

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