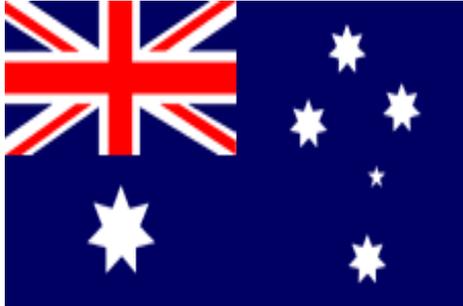


# Children's Television Worldwide: Gender Representation

in



## Australia

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# **Children's Television Worldwide:**

## **Gender Representation in Australian Children's Television**

### **General Information about the Children's Television in Australia**

Free-to-air television in Australia has three main commercial networks (Channels 7, 9 and 10) and two public channels - Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS). The commercial networks broadcast to all major cities and regional areas, with news services and some changes in schedule according particular to each state capital and some regional centres. They each enjoy about 20-30% of the national audience. The ABC is broadcast throughout Australia, with state-based news services. SBS broadcasts to major metropolitan and regional centres. These networks also have digital channels; these are relatively new and hitherto under-utilised, although this promises to change rapidly. Cable television is predominantly provided by the Fox Network and is available in metropolitan and regional areas, and is subscribed to by about 24% of Australian households, although this is increasing. This service includes children's channels Disney and Nickelodeon. For this study, we analysed the content of the programs on the free-to-air channels as broadcast into Sydney.

The ABC is the main provider of children's television. The commercial networks are required, as a condition of their licence, to provide children's content in accordance with the Children's Television Standards (CTS) – federal legislation that is currently under review. The CTS requires commercial networks to broadcast 130 hours of 'P' programming (for pre-school children) and 260 hours of 'C' programming (for children) each year. Advertising is not permitted during 'P' programs; in 'C' programs advertising is limited to 5 minutes per 30 minutes (or 13 minutes per hour for drama) and the advertising shown must meet content requirements. A result of this, and requirements that Australian content quotas have to be met, is that a number of Australian children's television shows are produced in Australia and shown on commercial television. However, they are seen as not important in the programming schedule and are usually relegated to time slots outside of prime time – often shown about 4-5pm, when many children are involved in other activities after school such as sports and clubs, or just getting home.

The children's television audience is rapidly shifting away from free-to-air television, to cable television, DVDs and video games. Among Australian children, favourite Australian programs include The Wiggles and High-5; favourite international programs include High School Musical and Dora the Explorer. Young teenagers are particularly fond of soaps (which are not classified as CTV) such as *Home and Away* and *Neighbours*. The 10 plus age group also have collective

## **Children's Television Worldwide: Gender Representation in Australian Children's Television**

fads such as the satire *Summer Heights High*, set in a mixed income and ethnically diverse public high school.

It is true to claim that children's television in Australia has a rich and encouraging history, but one which needs further development if the opportunities provided by this large and dynamic audience sector are to be fully explored. Broadcasting policy in Australia CTV has had a long relationship with public concerns about television for children. In 1978, for example, public licence renewal hearings were held by the then Australian Broadcasting Tribunal, and the debate was genuinely inflected by the concerns of CTV lobbyists and the notion of a public interest vested in children's programming. There was always concern that too much US and UK programming obscured the voices of Australian children and prevented the creation of viable Australian stories. Arguably, the greatest danger for a small population with English as its major language is the loss of televisual identity in an international market dominated by UK and US product. Since the mid-1990s regulations around content for television on free-to-air channels has been considered the strictest in any international mediasphere. The quotas which are imposed on commercial and public broadcasters have sometimes been seen as an imposition too far by those broadcasters, and there is a worrying sense that advertisement on free-to-air commercial channels is deleterious to the value of the content itself, whether it is part of the 'Australian CTV drama content' quota or in the larger 'CTV quota'. The argument rages around the issue of whether children actually watch the shows in the quota (the plea of a commercial lobby group) against the inestimable value of locally produced content for a diverse national population (the position long upheld by the Australian Children's Television Foundation). Currently, much of the debate concerns the low level of Australian activity in digital media, the effect of cable television in more affluent urban areas, and the continuing challenge of capturing a sense of Australia's huge differences in class, region, ethnicity and experience. 25% roughly of Australians are born overseas, many come from migrant families which privilege content for educational purposes, linguistic particularity or nostalgia. If one imagines a first generation family from the UK, or China, or Lebanon, one must also imagine the diverse ways in which they will use media in order to settle. The larger proportion of the population is already settled, and there the issues are around how to adequately represent difference, without privileging sheer numbers (raw percentages are in way unhelpful in this respect), and without forgetting that the smallest communities (for instance Indigenous children – rural or urban, and rural children – whether white Caucasian, Indigenous or of another ethnicity) are not well understood in mainstream urban Australia, but are nonetheless crucial components of the country's selfhood

# Children's Television Worldwide:

## Gender Representation in Australian Children's Television

and narrative. For instance, the study reports a high incidence of 'nature' in the shows, but if that 'nature' is not Australian, or cannot be read against human experiences, it has little purchase for growing mutual understanding across states, and regions in the country.

### Sample selection:

The sample is based on the following Australia television networks: ABC, Channel 7, Channel 9 and Channel 10. For these channels the children's programme of the country was recorded in the agreed upon time frame and subsequently categorized and measured.

Dates of recording: 15.02.2007 – 13.06.2007

The sample analysed here consists of 111 hours of explicit children's television, 77 hours of fictional shows, 475 programmes (282 fictional shows), 875 characters (fiction) and 516 human characters.

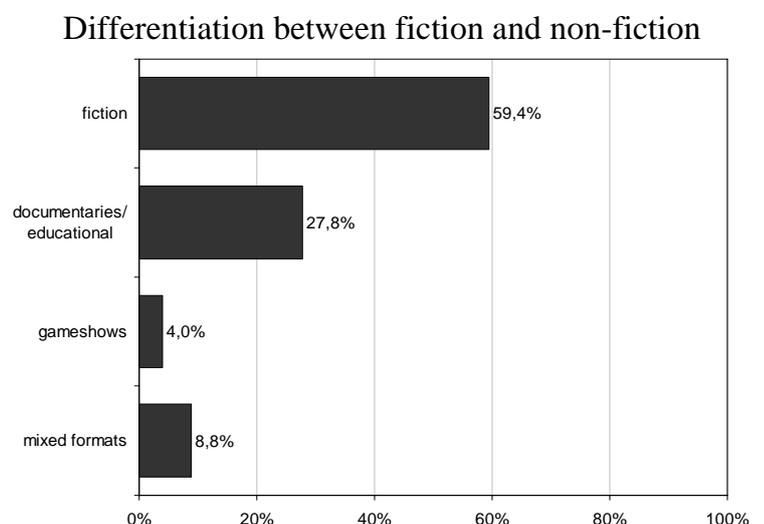
### What is offered to children - Results at show level:

#### More fictional or a more non-fictional programs?

We coded every show/piece of programme of our sample. Advertisements and trailers are coded in blocks (e.g. when there are 6 different commercials between two shows they are coded as one block). A show begins with the opening and normally ends with the credits (it can be that one show consists of 2 episodes like in SpongeBob but they are still one show.)

The sample comprises altogether 475 shows that can be categorised into different programme types. 282 shows or 59.4% can be referred to as fiction, 132 shows (27.8%) were documentaries, 19 were game shows (4.0%) and 42 mixed formats (8.8%).

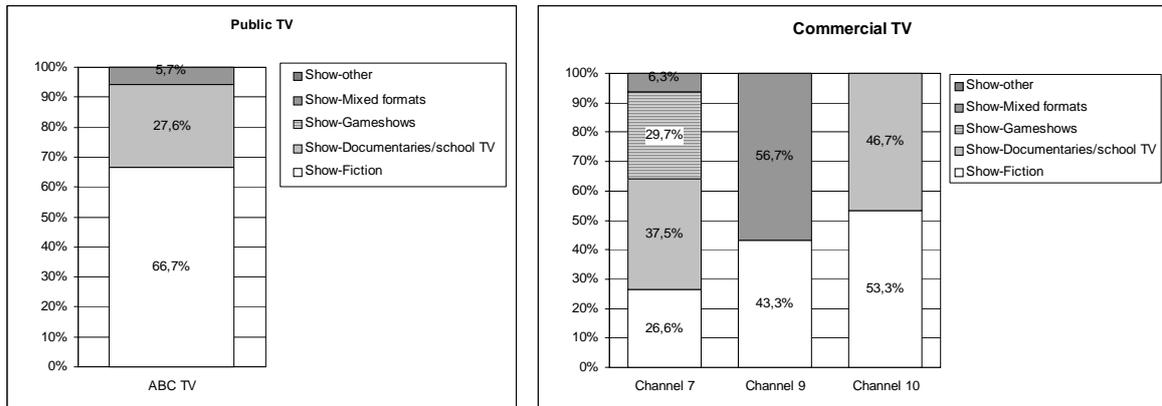
Of interest for our further analysis of the children's programmes are the 282 fictional shows that were coded. Those are in 80.4% of the cases animation shows and in 11.0% of the cases shows with real people (n=31). There others include a puppet show 1.1% and mixed format programs 2.8%.



IZI – Children's Television Worldwide 2007; basis: Australia, n = 111 h children's programme

# Children's Television Worldwide:

## Gender Representation in Australian Children's Television

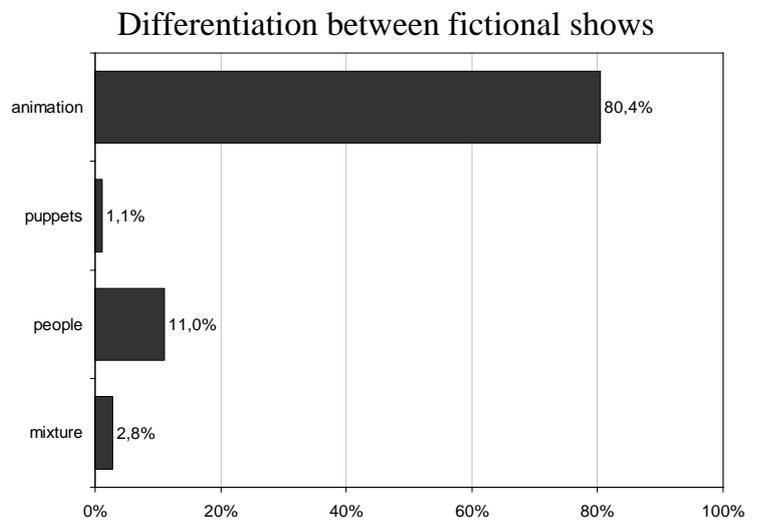


Fictional programs made up 66.7 % of those broadcast on the public channel ABC TV, while two commercial channels had less than 50% fictional programs (Channel 7: 26.6% and Channel 9: 43.3%). Shows on Channel 10, however, were 53.3% fictional. So the public TV has a higher share of fictional shows than the commercial TV.

### What type of fictional programme could be found? A lot of animation!

We coded the general type/genre of the shows. Is it an animation or a puppet show? Or mixed?

Among the recorded fiction shows were 226 (80.4%) animation shows; 31 shows (11.0%) used live action/real people and 3 (1.1%) were puppet shows. 8 shows (2.8%) were a mix of several of these categories.

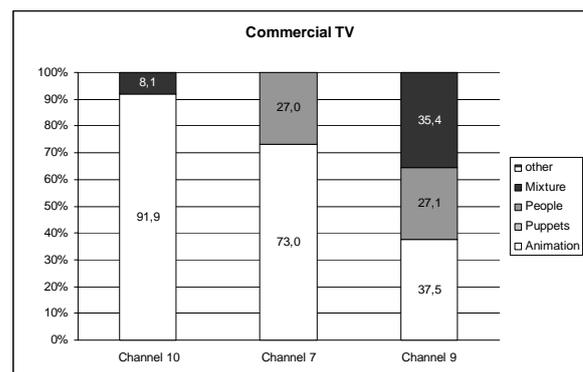
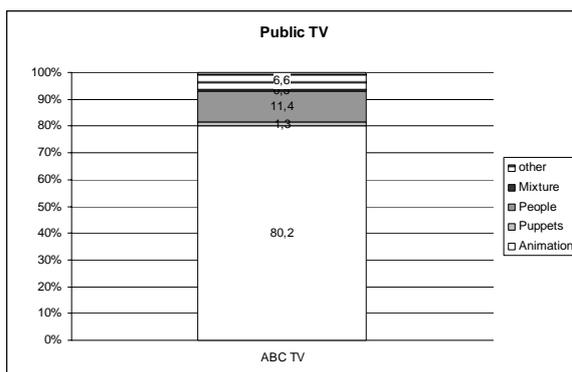


IZI – Children's Television Worldwide 2007; basis: Austria, n = 111 h fict. children's programme

## Children's Television Worldwide: Gender Representation in Australian Children's Television

	Animation	Puppets	People	Mixture	other
Slovenia	96,5%	0,9%	1,9%	0,7%	0,0%
China	96,4%	0,7%	2,9%	0,0%	0,0%
Canada	95,9%	0,7%	0,7%	2,0%	0,7%
Egypt	95,3%	0,0%	2,6%	2,1%	0,0%
Cuba	94,5%	0,3%	2,8%	2,4%	0,0%
Syria	93,5%	0,0%	3,2%	0,0%	3,2%
Kenya	90,6%	0,7%	8,1%	0,7%	0,0%
Netherlands	90,0%	0,8%	9,2%	0,0%	0,0%
Germany	88,8%	1,8%	7,0%	2,4%	0,0%
Austria	88,3%	2,6%	6,4%	2,6%	0,0%
Hong Kong	85,8%	3,6%	8,9%	1,8%	0,0%
Hungary	85,8%	12,1%	0,7%	1,4%	0,0%
South Africa	85,3%	3,9%	8,3%	2,5%	0,0%
USA	84,8%	1,3%	8,5%	5,5%	0,0%
Norway	84,6%	2,6%	10,3%	2,6%	0,0%
Brazil	84,2%	1,1%	12,6%	2,1%	0,0%
India	81,0%	0,0%	19,0%	0,0%	0,0%
New Zealand	80,6%	0,0%	13,9%	5,5%	0,0%
<b>Australia</b>	<b>80,4%</b>	1,1%	11,0%	2,8%	4,6%
Israel	74,7%	0,8%	21,4%	3,1%	0,0%
Malaysia	72,4%	0,0%	13,8%	13,8%	0,0%
Argentina	58,8%	17,6%	17,6%	5,9%	0,0%
UK	55,0%	10,8%	12,3%	20,8%	1,2%
Belgium	54,8%	4,3%	18,7%	21,8%	0,4%
<b>total</b>	<b>83,9%</b>	<b>2,4%</b>	<b>8,9%</b>	<b>4,5%</b>	<b>0,3%</b>

80.4% of Australia's children's television consists of animated programming, which is lower than the international average. With 11% of real life fictional shows Australia is in the upper middle of the international comparison.



The programming of the public TV channel ABC TV consists of 80.2% animated programs. The commercial station Channel 10 consists of 91.9% animation, while Channel 7 shows 73.0% animated programs and Channel 9 shows include 37.5% animated programs. In order to understand this breakdown more fully it will be necessary in future research to include program length in the analyses.

# Children's Television Worldwide:

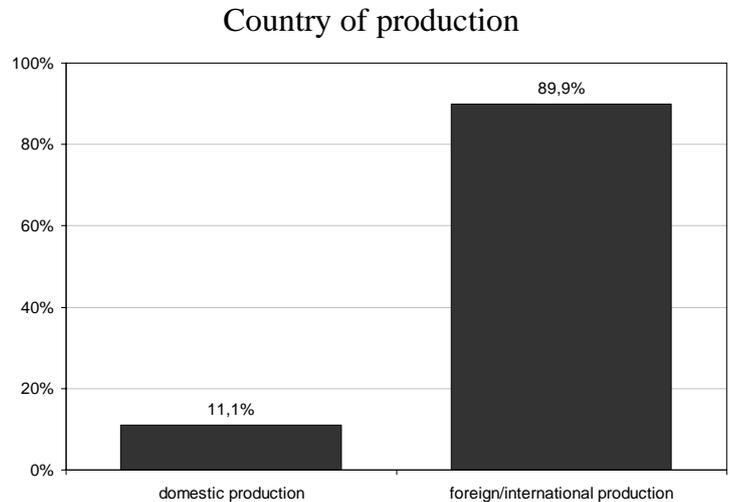
## Gender Representation in Australian Children's Television

### Where are the shows produced?

We coded where/by which company the show is produced (as far as can be seen from credits, program magazines or other sources).

Is it a company or broadcaster from one's own country or from a foreign country or an international co-production?

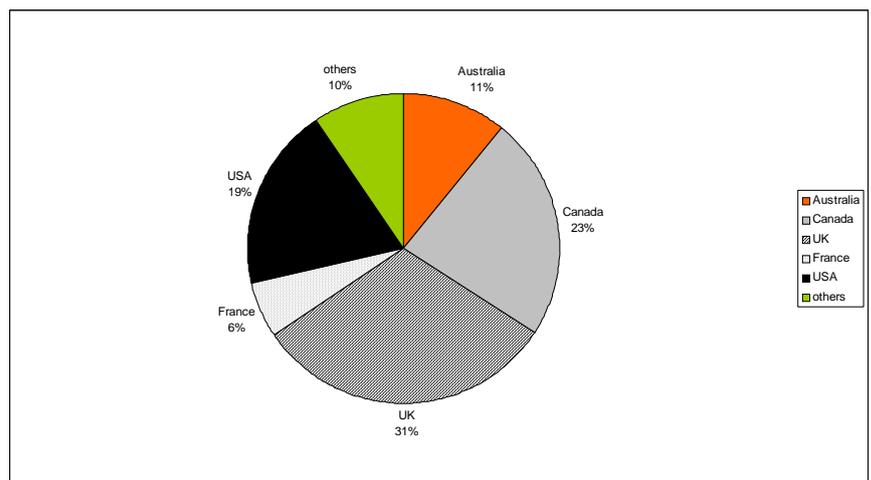
The fiction shows are in 89.9% of the cases productions of another country (n=74) and in 11.1% produced in their own country (n=26).



IZI – Children's Television Worldwide 2007; basis: Austria, n = 111 h fict. children's programme

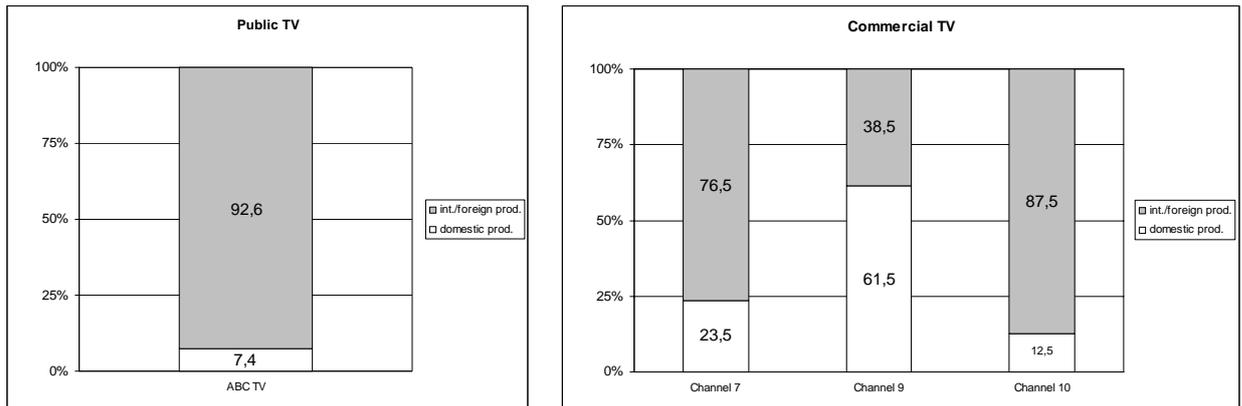
domestic prod.	
Malaysia	82,8%
USA	82,7%
UK	67,7%
China	53,4%
Canada	44,2%
Belgium	39,8%
Germany	17,3%
India	15,8%
Hungary	13,2%
Israel	13,1%
<b>Australia</b>	<b>11,1%</b>
Norway	9,0%
Egypt	8,9%
Netherlands	7,3%
South Africa	6,4%
Brazil	6,3%
Argentina	5,9%
Cuba	5,5%
Syria	3,2%
Slovenia	2,3%
Austria	0,8%
Hong Kong	0,6%
New Zealand	0,5%
Kenya	0,0%
<b>total</b>	<b>22,6%</b>

With 11.1% domestically produced programs, Australia is in the middle of the international scale. It is notable that the two main sources of Australia's imports come from no 2 and 3 on the list: USA and UK.



## Children's Television Worldwide: Gender Representation in Australian Children's Television

Almost a third of the children's programs are produced in the UK, while 19% are made in the USA and 24% are made in Canada. Only 11% are domestically produced. This is an important note for the analyses below – wherein codes for type and ethnicity are rather skewed by the very different ethnic mix and political structures in which children consume these images – as opposed to where they were produced.



92.6% of the programming of the public channel ABC TV is internationally produced, whilst the commercial Channel 9 has more than half of its program domestically produced (61.5%). Channel 7 has about 23.5% of domestic productions. It looks like the public channel ABC TV offers children many more foreign programs than the private ones – an interesting result, which deserves discussion in an international context. The long-standing relationship between the ABC and the BBC in the UK explains some of the tolerance for foreign content on the public channel.

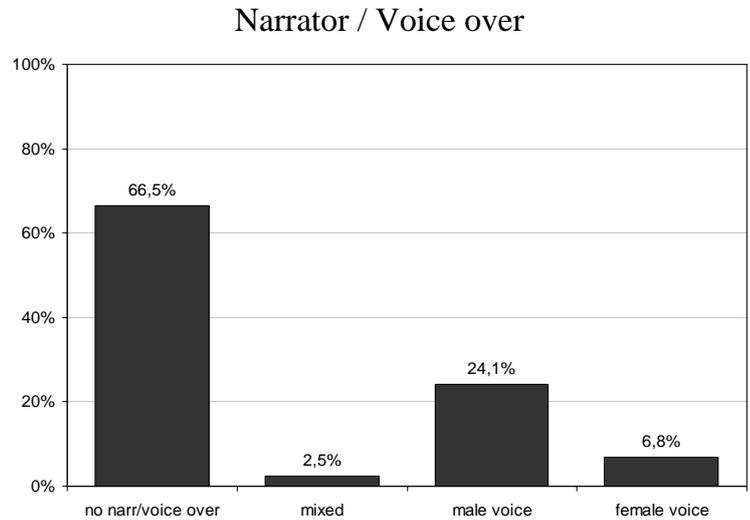
This aspect of Australian Television production again deserves some further scrutiny – it is not demonstrated here whether the international programs were of the same length as those domestically produced, and therefore it is not clear how much time is spent consuming domestic or international shows.

# Children's Television Worldwide:

## Gender Representation in Australian Children's Television

### Who speaks? Narrator / Voice over

We coded where there is a narrator or voice over - is it a male or a female voice? In 185 (66.5%) fiction shows there was no narrator, in 19 shows (6.8%) there was a female narrator, in 67 shows (24.1%) a male narrator, and in 7 shows a mixed narrator was used (2.5%), so a clear dominance of male voice over the female could be found.



IZI – Children's Television Worldwide 2007; basis: Australia, n = 77 h fict. children's programme

### **Who are the main characters? Results at character level<sup>1</sup>**

In this study we focused on the main characters of the show, which we defined as the characters that can be seen on screen at least 50% of the time of the duration of the episode. In the first step we analysed which gender the character could be defined as, based on grammatical terms, name of character, voice, easily identifiable sexual characteristics.

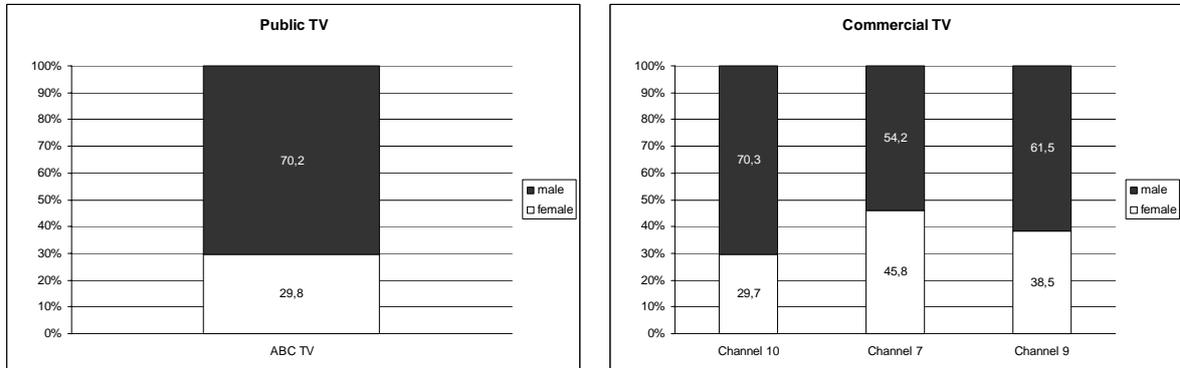
In terms of characters, in the 282 fiction shows in Australian children's television 875 were identified as main characters.

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<sup>1</sup> Please note: The quantity of cases varies because of a different number of the missing. In the glossary the maximum number of cases is accounted.

# Children's Television Worldwide:

## Gender Representation in Australian Children's Television

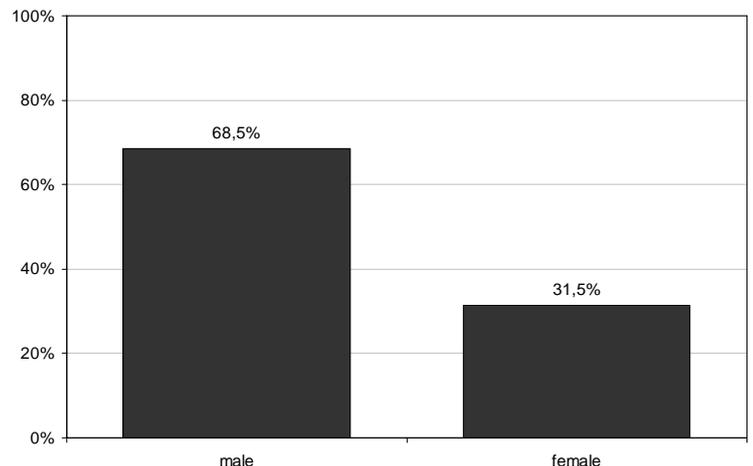


In public TV, the proportion of females (29.8%) is lower than in commercial TV, where it ranges from 29.7% (Channel 10) to 45.8% (Channel 7). This is an interesting result. It is unusual for a public TV station to have a less balanced gender-representation (at least numerically) than the private channels. However, the forms of gender representation and the quality of those representations warrant further investigation.

### Gender perspective: Men and boys are the heroes of the programme

The characters of the fictional shows in Australian children's television were in 31.5% of the cases female and in 68.5% male. So, female characters are clearly underrepresented.

Sex of the Characters



IZI – Children's Television Worldwide 2007; basis: Australia, n = 77 h fict. children's programme; n = 873 fict. characters

## Children's Television Worldwide: Gender Representation in Australian Children's Television

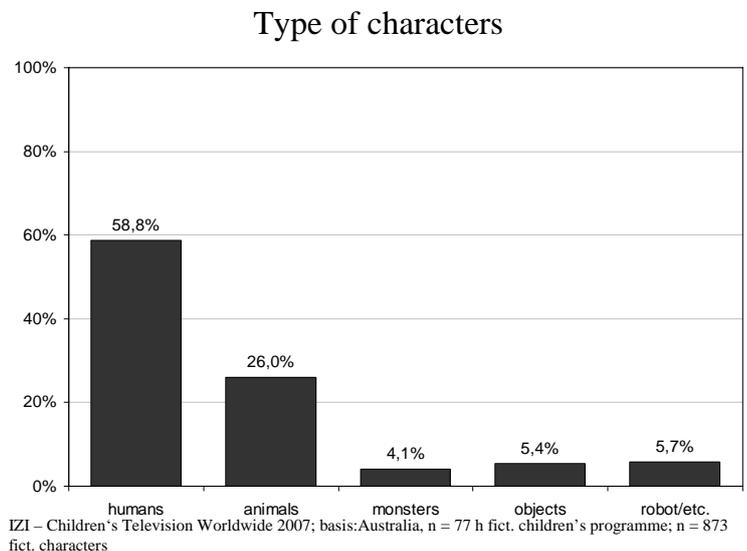
female		male	
Norway	41,6%	Argentina	81,5%
Syria	38,9%	Cuba	79,9%
Israel	37,4%	Malaysia	77,2%
UK	37,3%	Egypt	71,4%
India	36,1%	Slovenia	71,2%
New Zealand	35,2%	South Africa	70,3%
Canada	35,1%	Austria	69,4%
Hong Kong	34,9%	China	69,1%
Belgium	34,5%	Germany	69,0%
Kenya	33,2%	<b>Australia</b>	<b>68,5%</b>
USA	33,1%	Brazil	68,5%
Hungary	32,6%	Netherlands	68,4%
Netherlands	31,6%	Hungary	67,4%
Brazil	31,5%	USA	66,9%
<b>Australia</b>	<b>31,5%</b>	Kenya	66,8%
Germany	31,0%	Belgium	65,5%
China	30,9%	Hong Kong	65,1%
Austria	30,6%	Canada	64,9%
South Africa	29,7%	New Zealand	64,8%
Slovenia	28,8%	India	63,9%
Egypt	28,6%	UK	62,7%
Malaysia	22,8%	Israel	62,6%
Cuba	20,1%	Syria	61,1%
Argentina	18,5%	Norway	58,4%
<b>total</b>	<b>32,1%</b>	<b>total</b>	<b>67,9%</b>

With a proportion of 31.5% of female characters, Australia is a little bit below the international average.

### Is the main character a human - animal – monster – object – machine etc.?

We coded generally what the nature of the character is. Is it a human, an animal, an object, a machine etc.?

227 characters of the recorded characters were animals, which accords to a percentage of 26.0%. Part of this group is, for example, Mavis the Pony of *Fluffy Gardens*. 516 of the characters (58.8%) are humans. 36 characters (4.1%) can be assigned to the group of monsters and mythical creatures, i.e. Beans of *Staines Down Drains*. Furthermore, 47 plants (5.4%), 50 robots or machines (5.7%), and no other characters were recorded.



## Children's Television Worldwide:

### Gender Representation in Australian Children's Television

Of the animals 65 (28.8%) were female and 148 (65.5%) male. For 13 (5.8%) characters the gender was not identifiable. Of the humans 184 (35.5%) were female and 331 (64.3%) were male. 1 (0.2%) character could not be identified. Among the plants, 43 were male (91.5%) and 4 female (8.5%). Of the machines and robots which were counted, 41 (83.7%) were male and 8 (16.3%) were female. Among the monsters and mythical creatures, one was neutral (2.8%), 25 male (69.4%), and 10 were female (27.8%).

	Animal	Human	Monster/ etc.	Plant/ Object	Robot/ etc.	other
Kenya	12,8%	77,0%	9,2%	0,3%	0,6%	0,1%
South Africa	12,6%	74,3%	1,5%	0,1%	11,1%	0,5%
Malaysia	6,4%	72,8%	4,6%	16,2%	0,0%	0,0%
Slovenia	17,9%	70,9%	4,9%	0,5%	4,4%	1,4%
Egypt	21,7%	70,0%	3,2%	0,3%	4,3%	0,4%
Israel	26,8%	66,9%	3,1%	1,6%	1,5%	0,1%
Netherlands	19,7%	65,2%	10,4%	3,7%	1,0%	0,0%
New Zealand	23,5%	64,5%	4,1%	4,1%	2,8%	1,1%
Syria	23,1%	62,7%	11,9%	0,0%	0,0%	2,2%
Hong Kong	22,8%	62,0%	8,5%	0,4%	2,0%	4,3%
Canada	26,7%	60,5%	5,8%	0,8%	2,4%	3,8%
Norway	25,8%	60,1%	2,8%	5,5%	2,8%	3,0%
China	32,7%	59,2%	0,4%	1,6%	4,5%	1,6%
Brazil	22,8%	59,0%	6,2%	6,1%	1,0%	4,9%
<b>Australia</b>	26,0%	<b>58,8%</b>	4,1%	5,4%	5,7%	0,0%
Belgium	20,2%	57,8%	8,9%	2,3%	4,8%	6,0%
Hungary	35,2%	54,9%	3,8%	2,2%	2,7%	1,1%
Germany	30,7%	54,8%	4,2%	8,0%	1,2%	1,1%
UK	27,8%	54,3%	0,8%	0,0%	6,0%	11,2%
Austria	31,7%	53,6%	4,7%	7,7%	1,2%	1,1%
India	22,2%	50,6%	1,5%	8,9%	2,5%	14,3%
USA	34,2%	47,3%	6,0%	3,7%	2,2%	6,6%
Argentina	30,0%	45,5%	10,0%	13,6%	0,9%	0,0%
Cuba	55,5%	29,4%	7,3%	2,1%	2,3%	3,5%
<b>total</b>	<b>26,3%</b>	<b>59,1%</b>	<b>5,0%</b>	<b>3,5%</b>	<b>3,1%</b>	<b>3,1%</b>

Australia has about the same percentage of humans in its children's TV (58.8%) as the international average.

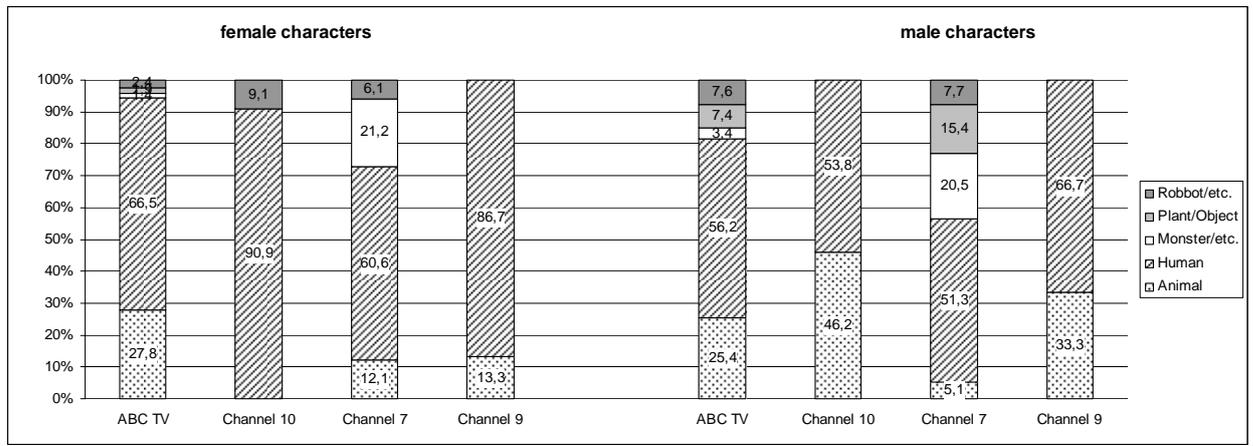
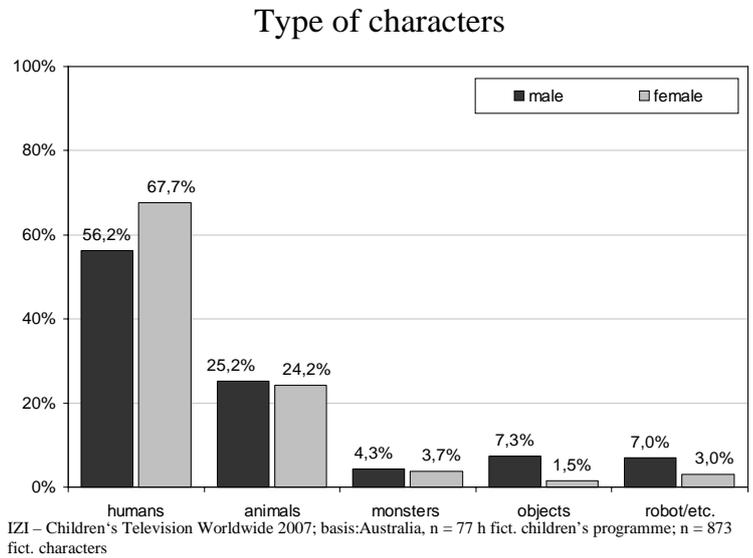
# Children's Television Worldwide:

## Gender Representation in Australian Children's Television

### Gender Perspective: Female characters are often human, Animals, objects and monsters are more often males

Of the female characters 184 (67.7%) were humans and 10 (3.7%) were monsters or mythical creatures and 65 female characters (24.2%) were animals.

The male characters were represented in 331 cases (56.2%) as humans and in 148 (25.2%) cases as animals. Monsters and mythical creatures with male gender were found in 25 characters (4.3%), 41 (7.0%) were part of the plot as robots, and 43 male plants (7.3%) could be counted.



Channel 10 shows only female humans and 9.1% female robots, while Channel 9 tells stories with 86.7% female humans and with 13.3% female animals.

The males on Channel 9 and Channel 10 are either humans or animals, but Channel 9 has the highest share of humans (66.7%) and Channel 10 the highest share of animals (46.2%).

# Children's Television Worldwide:

## Gender Representation in Australian Children's Television

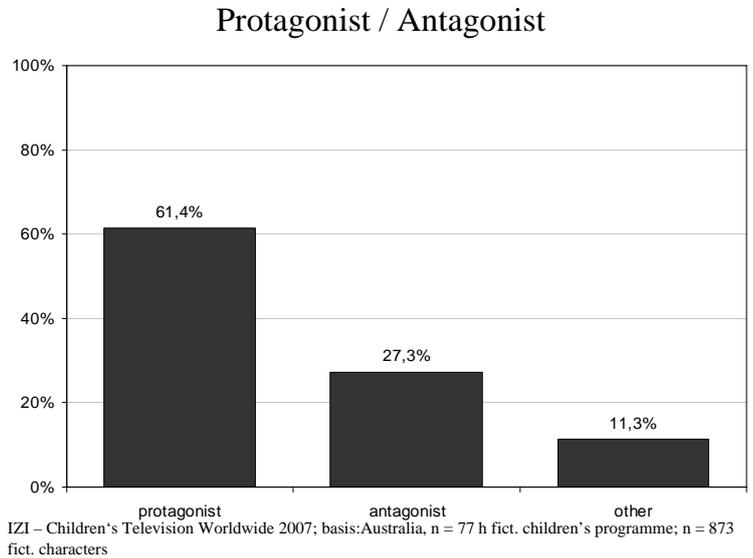
### What is the general role in the story: Protagonist or Antagonist?

We coded the “general part” of the character in the narration of the story – is it the good main character or the bad and evil guy/girl?

536 of the characters in Australian children's television were identified as protagonists. This corresponds to a relative part of 61.4%. On the other hand, there are 238 antagonists that constitute 27.3% of the characters. 99 characters could be ascribed to neither type (11.3%).

Of the protagonists counted, 158 (29.5%) are female and 376 (70.1%) male. 2 characters (0.4%) could not be identified.

Among the antagonists there are 75 (31.8%) female characters and 148 (62.7%) male characters. 13 characters (5.5%) are not identifiable.



## Children's Television Worldwide:

### Gender Representation in Australian Children's Television

	Protagonist	Antagonist
UK	38,6%	28,8%
Australia	61,5%	27,3%
South Africa	74,5%	23,5%
Cuba	77,8%	21,4%
China	81,1%	18,8%
Malaysia	82,1%	17,9%
Brazil	34,3%	15,9%
Norway	78,6%	15,7%
Argentina	83,6%	15,5%
Netherlands	83,1%	15,4%
India	80,6%	15,3%
Egypt	83,7%	15,0%
Kenya	82,5%	15,0%
Syria	85,1%	14,9%
Hungary	85,7%	13,6%
Slovenia	64,6%	12,8%
Canada	35,1%	11,9%
New Zealand	88,1%	11,7%
USA	78,6%	10,3%
Austria	87,1%	9,5%
Germany	87,9%	8,8%
Hong Kong	93,5%	6,5%
Belgium	93,6%	6,4%
Israel	95,5%	4,5%
<b>total</b>	<b>77,0%</b>	<b>13,7%</b>

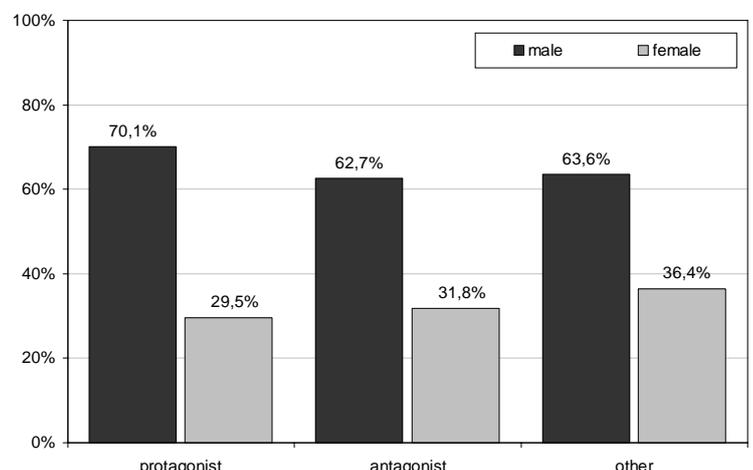
Considering the percentage of Antagonists, Australia is in second place and has with its 27.3% almost twice as many antagonists as the international average. It seems that Australian TV likes to tell its stories with antagonists. Given the close correlation with UK television and given too the overlap in some UK/Australian programming, this would need to be further investigated before drawing culturally specific conclusions.

#### Gender Perspective: Men and boys are the bad guys

536 of the characters in Australian children's television are identified as protagonists. That corresponds to a relative part of 61.4%. On the other hand there are 238 antagonists, making up 27.3% of the characters. 99 characters could not be classified as either of the two types (11.3%).

Of the protagonists counted, 158 (29.5%) are female and 376 (70.1%) male. 2 characters (0.4%) could not be identified as either. Among the antagonists there are 75 (31.8%) female characters and 148 (62.7%) male characters.

Protagonist / Antagonist



IZI – Children's Television Worldwide 2007; basis: Australia, n = 77 h fict. children's programme; n = 873 fict. characters

## Children's Television Worldwide: Gender Representation in Australian Children's Television

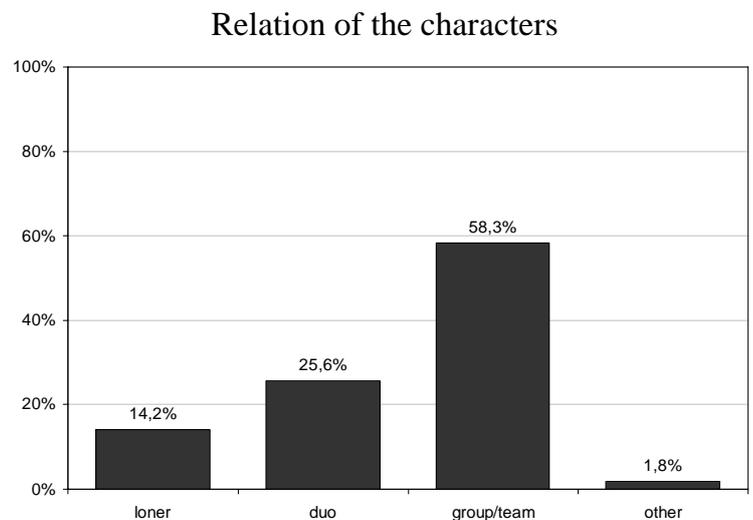
Among the female characters, 158 (58.7%) appear as protagonists. 75 (27.9%) of the female characters are antagonists. 36 (13.4%) were not identifiable.

With regard to boys' or men's characters, there are 376 (64.1%) protagonists. 148 (25.2%) men characters appear as antagonists, while 63 (10.7%) of the total cannot be identified.

### **In what kind of relation is the character?**

We coded in what kind of constellation the main character is acting. Does he/she work alone, in a group or a duo?

123 of the characters (14.2%) are integrated into the plot as loners. 225 of the coded characters in this category are part of a duo (25.6%). 509 (58.3%) and thus the majority of the characters are part of a group or a team, respectively. 1.8% could not be grouped into any of the categories.



IZI – Children's Television Worldwide 2007; basis: Australia, n = 77 h fict. children's programme; n = 873 fict. characters

## Children's Television Worldwide: Gender Representation in Australian Children's Television

	loner	duo	group / team
China	14,3%	10,1%	75,7%
USA	9,4%	14,1%	74,5%
Belgium	7,6%	7,2%	72,8%
Syria	15,7%	14,2%	70,1%
Canada	9,1%	24,8%	65,3%
Malaysia	9,2%	25,4%	64,7%
South Africa	17,5%	20,3%	59,5%
<b>Australia</b>	14,2%	25,6%	<b>58,3%</b>
Egypt	16,8%	24,6%	57,6%
New Zealand	19,0%	20,9%	56,5%
UK	17,9%	22,7%	56,4%
Slovenia	27,5%	16,2%	55,6%
India	31,3%	14,4%	54,2%
Germany	18,7%	26,4%	54,0%
Austria	19,3%	26,4%	53,3%
Kenya	20,8%	26,1%	51,9%
Norway	20,6%	24,2%	50,1%
Cuba	24,8%	26,7%	48,6%
Hong Kong	25,1%	27,1%	46,8%
Hungary	22,4%	32,3%	45,2%
Israel	23,9%	31,4%	44,0%
Argentina	30,0%	29,1%	40,9%
Netherlands	34,8%	27,2%	37,8%
Brazil	67,9%	6,5%	25,0%
<b>total</b>	<b>20,3%</b>	<b>21,1%</b>	<b>56,5%</b>

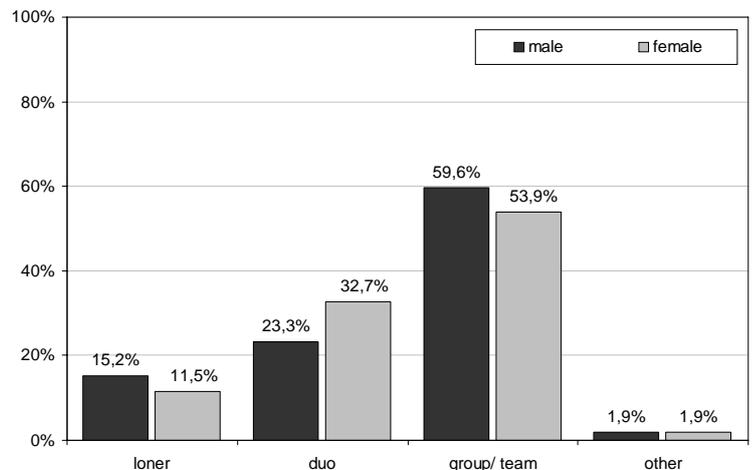
Australian television tells stories in which the main character is part of a group in 58.3% of the cases, which is a bit higher than the international average.

### Gender Perspective: Males as loners and in groups, females in duos and groups

Of the female characters 31 (11.5%) are loners, 88 (32.7%) are in duos and 145 (53.9%) are a part of a group.

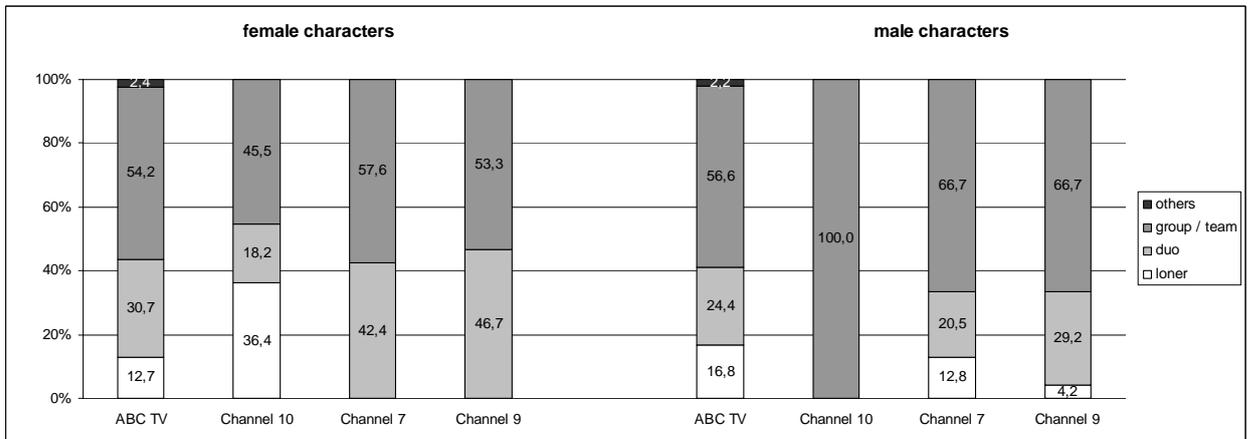
The male characters are with 89 (15.2%) loners, 137 (23.3%) duos and with 350 (59.6%) a part of a group.

Relation of the characters



IZI – Children's Television Worldwide 2007; basis: Australia, 77 h fict. children's prog.; 388 fict. shows; 980 human characters

## Children's Television Worldwide: Gender Representation in Australian Children's Television



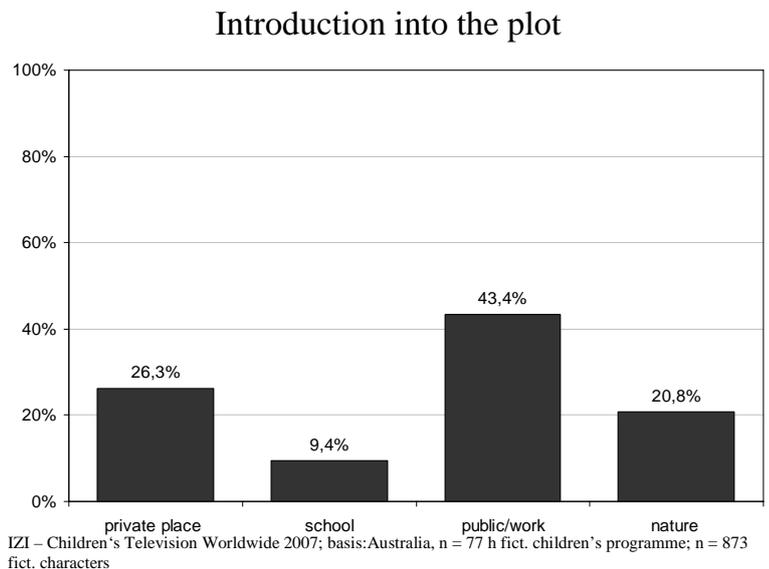
Channel 7 shows most females in groups and duos, but not as loners. Channel 10 has the most female loners (36.4%). Channel 10 tells stories with male groups exclusively (100%), while ABC TV has the highest share of male loners (16.8%). We have not attempted to analyse this further at this stage although it clearly offers promising scope for discussion and debate.

### At which location is the character introduced into the plot?

We coded where the character is located in its first appearance in the show (not the opening song).

The most common location at which the character is introduced into the plot is the public/work. 379 (43.4%) of the recorded characters of this category appear here for the first time. Private spaces, respectively, rank second. Here, 230 characters (26.3%) of the characters are introduced for the first time.

182 characters are in nature in their introduction scene (20.8%), 82 characters (9.4%) are in school, and none at other locations.

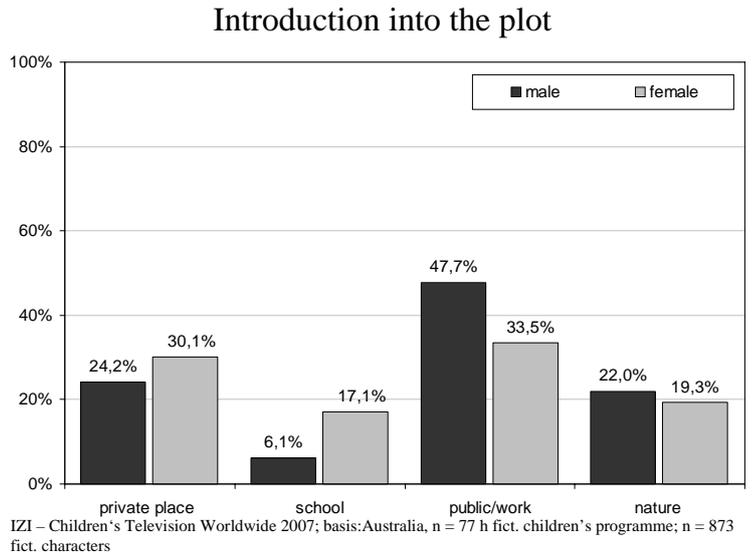


# Children's Television Worldwide:

## Gender Representation in Australian Children's Television

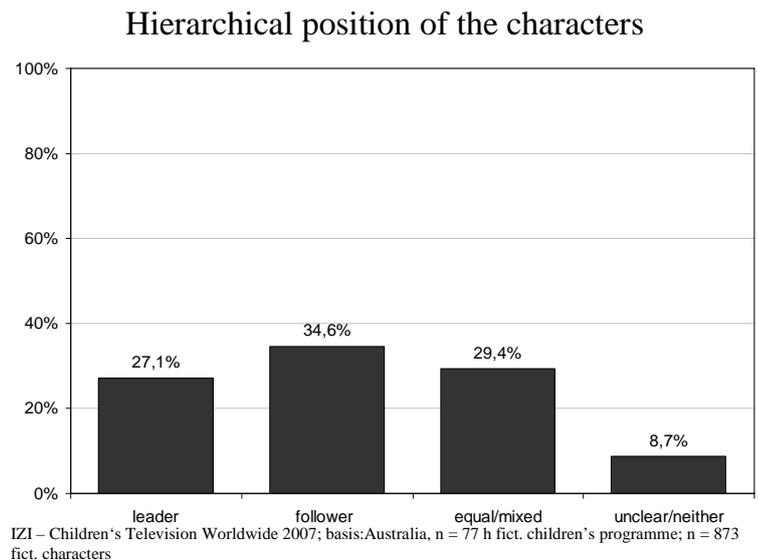
### Gender Perspective: Females appear more often in private space and school, males in public or work context or in nature

81 (30.1%) of the female characters in the sample are introduced into the plot in private settings. 90 (33.5%) of the characters are introduced in public spaces or at work. 52 (19.3%) characters appear for the first time in nature. 46 (17.1%) are introduced to the viewer in school and no character at locations other than these categories. 142 (24.2%) of the male characters are first introduced in private settings. 280 (47.7%) are presented in public or at work. At third position are nature locations with 129 characters (22.0%) and finally school where 36 characters (6.1%) are introduced.



### Which hierarchical position does the character assume in the show?

257 (29.4%) of the characters appear as equals regarding hierarchical positions. 237 (27.1%) are leaders. 303 (34.6%) are part of a following, and for 76 (8.7%) characters the position was not clearly identifiable.



## Children's Television Worldwide: Gender Representation in Australian Children's Television

	Leader		Follower		equal or mixed
Argentina	47,3%	Australia	34,6%	Malaysia	67,1%
Cuba	42,1%	New Zealand	32,7%	Belgium	65,9%
India	40,2%	UK	30,1%	Brazil	62,9%
China	30,8%	India	26,9%	Hungary	61,4%
Norway	28,4%	Egypt	20,7%	USA	61,2%
Syria	28,2%	Norway	19,8%	Kenya	56,7%
South Africa	28,2%	South Africa	19,5%	Slovenia	54,8%
Slovenia	27,3%	Syria	16,8%	Hong Kong	53,5%
Australia	27,1%	Hungary	16,6%	Syria	53,4%
Kenya	26,7%	Canada	15,0%	Germany	47,9%
UK	26,1%	Malaysia	14,1%	Austria	47,7%
Germany	24,0%	Germany	14,0%	Cuba	46,1%
Austria	23,8%	Argentina	13,6%	Netherlands	45,9%
Egypt	23,3%	Austria	13,6%	Israel	45,5%
Hungary	18,5%	Kenya	12,1%	China	45,0%
Brazil	13,8%	Israel	10,3%	South Africa	42,9%
Israel	13,5%	Cuba	10,3%	Egypt	40,2%
USA	13,0%	USA	10,2%	Argentina	39,1%
Belgium	11,4%	Netherlands	10,1%	Norway	36,5%
New Zealand	11,0%	Slovenia	9,0%	New Zealand	33,5%
Canada	9,9%	Brazil	8,8%	India	30,7%
Malaysia	8,2%	China	8,6%	Australia	29,4%
Hong Kong	6,7%	Belgium	8,6%	UK	28,3%
Netherlands	6,4%	Hong Kong	6,9%	Canada	26,3%
<b>total</b>	<b>20,5%</b>	<b>total</b>	<b>15,5%</b>	<b>total</b>	<b>47,7%</b>

Australian children's television shows the most followers (34.6%), while the proportion of equals (29.4%) lies far below the international average. It seems that Australian CTV likes to tell stories based upon a leader and follower model, while much of the rest of the world focuses on equals. Again more close work is required to analyse how the relative relationship between a leader and a group of followers is played out a) in Australian home-produced drama and b) in imports. Again note the typical relationship to UK CTV in this respect.

# Children's Television Worldwide:

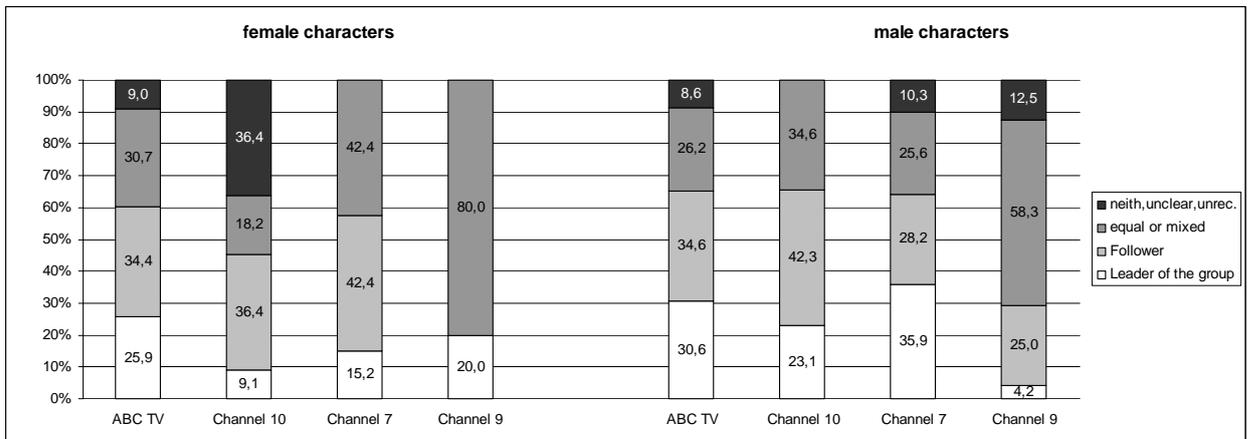
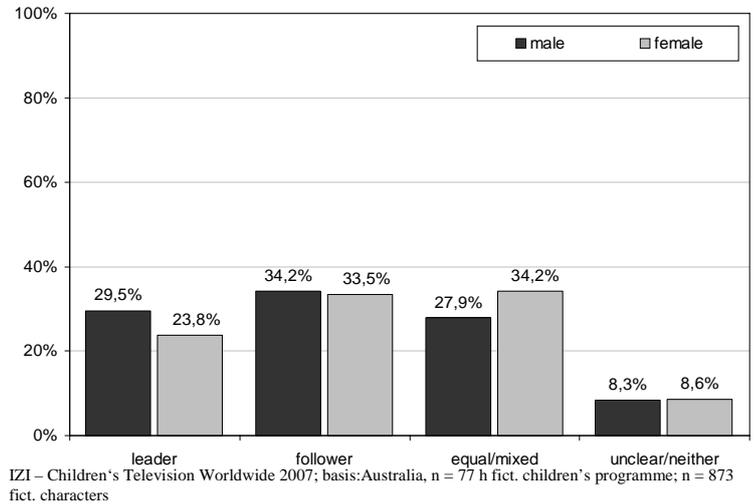
## Gender Representation in Australian Children's Television

### Gender Perspective: Females are more often equal

The female characters are in 92 (34.2%) of the cases equal or mixed. 64 female characters (23.8%) appear as leaders and 90 (33.5%) as followers. For 23 characters (8.6%) the constellation was not identifiable.

Among the boy and man characters 164 (27.9%) are equal or mixed and in 173 (29.5%) cases leader of a group. 201 (34.2%) are part of the following and for 49 characters (8.3%) the classification was not possible.

Hierarchical position of the characters



The highest percentage of female equals appears with a share of 80% on Channel 9, while the highest percentage of female leaders was shown on ABC TV (25.9%). The highest share of male equals appears on Channel 9 (58.3%), while the highest percentage of male leaders was found on Channel 7 (35.9%). Regarding the position in the story ABC TV seems to show the most balanced programs.

# Children's Television Worldwide:

## Gender Representation in Australian Children's Television

### The analysis of the human Characters

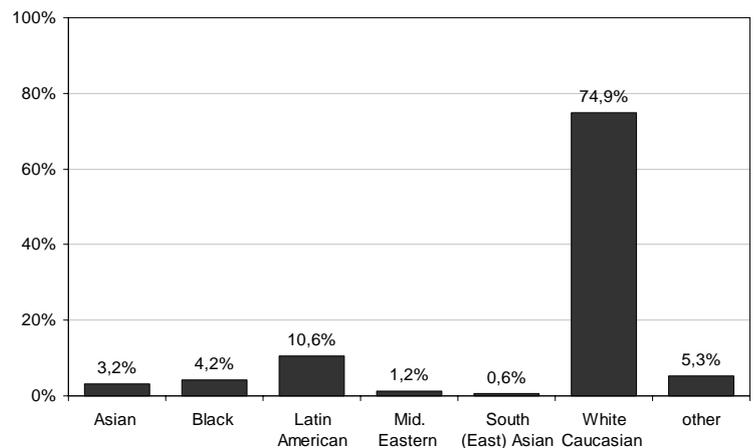
The characters which were coded as humans were furthermore coded according to their skin colour, hair colour, their age, and their physique as well as possibly existing disabilities.

### What skin colour or general ethnic affiliation can we see?

We coded as far as possible the apparent ethnicity of the main human characters and distinguished by shape of eyes, by light, dark or tanned skin etc. This is of course a highly problematic coding although it was determined in light of international comparisons required for the overall project. Although the results below are of some interest we note the lack of fit with a multi-ethnic and dispersed ethnicisation in Australian life, and that determinations based on racialised stereotypes are not really useful for contemporary programming decisions in a society that is moving beyond such bases for claiming difference or normative status.

16 (3.2%) of the human characters have shown Asian physical traits. Black characters were found in 21 (4.2%) characters of the sample. 52 (10.6%) were classified as Latin-American, 6 (1.2%) as Arab and 3 (0.6%) as South (East) Asian. The majority, with 371 characters (74.9%), were Caucasian. All in all, 26 (5.3%) characters were classified as Other or were not identifiable.

Skin colour of the characters



IZI – Children's Television Worldwide 2007; basis: Australia, n = 77 h fict. children's programme; n = 513 fict. human characters

## Children's Television Worldwide: Gender Representation in Australian Children's Television

Asian		Black		Latin-American		White Caucasian	
Hong Kong	65,0%	UK	15,1%	Australia	10,6%	Cuba	91,5%
China	64,4%	USA	12,2%	USA	7,1%	Argentina	90,0%
Egypt	41,5%	New Zealand	10,6%	Israel	4,6%	Belgium	86,7%
Syria	26,2%	Germany	9,0%	Brazil	4,4%	Slovenia	86,5%
Hungary	18,6%	Austria	8,8%	Hong Kong	4,0%	South Africa	80,8%
Kenya	11,0%	South Africa	8,7%	Syria	3,6%	Canada	80,0%
USA	10,2%	Syria	8,3%	Kenya	3,5%	Netherlands	78,5%
Germany	9,2%	Brazil	7,9%	Canada	3,4%	Brazil	78,3%
Austria	9,0%	Kenya	7,0%	Netherlands	3,1%	Hungary	78,2%
Israel	7,5%	Belgium	6,6%	New Zealand	2,9%	Germany	77,5%
Netherlands	6,4%	Canada	6,6%	South Africa	2,7%	Austria	77,5%
New Zealand	6,3%	Argentina	6,0%	UK	1,9%	Norway	76,7%
India	6,3%	Israel	5,1%	Cuba	1,7%	Israel	76,4%
Brazil	5,9%	Australia	4,2%	Egypt	1,4%	Australia	74,9%
South Africa	5,7%	Netherlands	4,2%	Austria	1,4%	UK	72,8%
Canada	4,8%	Norway	3,7%	India	1,4%	New Zealand	72,6%
Belgium	4,3%	Slovenia	3,0%	Germany	1,4%	Kenya	68,9%
Slovenia	4,2%	Egypt	2,6%	Norway	0,9%	USA	67,8%
Norway	4,2%	China	2,0%	Belgium	0,9%	India	60,3%
Australia	3,2%	Cuba	1,7%	Hungary	0,9%	Syria	52,4%
UK	1,9%	India	1,6%	China	0,2%	Egypt	45,4%
Cuba	0,9%	Hungary	1,5%	Slovenia	0,1%	Hong Kong	30,3%
Argentina	0,0%	Hong Kong	0,4%	Argentina	0,0%	China	14,8%
Malaysia	0,0%	Malaysia	0,0%	Malaysia	0,0%	Malaysia	12,7%
<b>total</b>	<b>11,7%</b>	<b>total</b>	<b>6,4%</b>	<b>total</b>	<b>2,6%</b>	<b>total</b>	<b>72,2%</b>

The percentage of Asian (3.2%) and black characters (4.2%) in Australian TV is way below average, and the share of white Caucasians is slightly below average. When it comes to Latin-American characters, however, Australia takes the very first place (10.6%). Latin-American is however not a dominant Australian concept, although Latino and Hispanic populations are reasonably robust, so this category is an example of a US categorisation being fitted across an Australian population– and of course the results emanate mainly from the proportion of US shows in the sample. With a share of 74.9% of so-called ‘Whites’ in the programs the country ranks amongst the international middle field. However, given the many origins of ‘Whites’ in Australian settler groups, the determination elides differences in class, time of settlement and cultural differences. All of these factors may well be more pertinent in excavating issues in the narration of difference in Australian society. These nuances and migratory subtleties are not likely to be handled well in imports where different demographic, historical and political situations are in play. The low percentage of Asian characters in children's TV is striking,

## Children's Television Worldwide: Gender Representation in Australian Children's Television

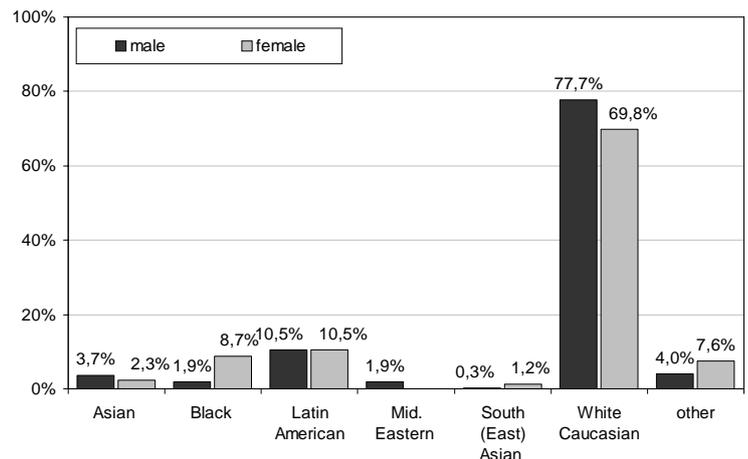
because particularly since the 1990s a large part of Australian migration has originated in Asia. However, the imports issue may be one answer to why Australian migration patterns are not well represented. Perhaps more importantly, there are Australian-Asian populations which are not new migrants and which are mainstream members of the settled community. Their relatively low visibility is as concerning as that of visible 'Asian-ness'. Likewise, where 'Black' may indicate established African-American populations in the US context, this may be of only recent and emerging relevance in a country with a quite small population of people of various African ethnicities (although this situation is changing rapidly with heightened migration from Africa over recent years). Nonetheless in Australia the category 'Black' is at risk of not so much including, but actually eliding the Indigenous populations, as well as emphasising US or UK experience at the expense of the experiences and stories of Australian-African groups. This categorical breakdown and the shows themselves require more detailed breakdown in future studies.

### Gender Perspective: Black characters are 4 times as often males

In the following data the Australian team again express disquiet at the version of racial difference used, suggesting that it divides populations inexactly and with reference to a Euro-American model of difference. Out of the female characters 120 (69.8%) are white Caucasians, 4 (2.3%) Asians, 15 (8.7%) Blacks and 18 (10.5%) Latin-Americans and 2 (1.2%) with typical traits of the South (East) Asian are a part of a group.

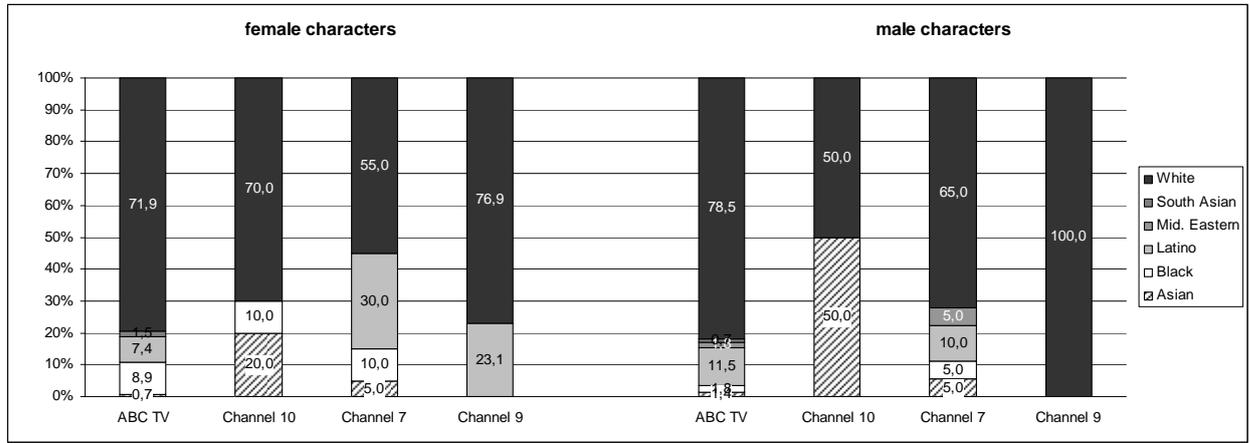
The male characters are with 251 (77.7%) white Caucasians, with 12 (3.7%) Asians, with 6 (1.9%) Blacks, with 34 (10.5%) Latin-Americans and with 6 (1.9%) from Middle East.

Skin colour of the characters



IZI – Children's Television Worldwide 2007; basis: Australia, n = 77 h. fict. children's programme; n = 513 fict. human characters

## Children's Television Worldwide: Gender Representation in Australian Children's Television



The highest percentage of Caucasian females was shown on Channel 9 (76.9%), while the highest shares of black females were found on Channel 10 and Channel 7 (both 10%).

The highest share of male Caucasian characters was shown on Channel 9 (100%), while on Channel 10 the characters are half white Caucasian and half Asian (equally 50.0%). It could be asked if particularly the public channel ABC TV ought to represent more of the cultural diversity, because here females are white Caucasian for 71.9% and males for 78.5%. However, non-Australian readers of this report might not be aware of the many cultural, class and ethnic differences across 'White' populations, and of the need not to assume that difference is factored in the same ways as in Europe or the United States. Likewise, whilst there is still a majority 'White' population in Australia, and the largest migration source is still the United Kingdom, it could be argued that CTV's greatest challenge is to address Indigenous, and Pacific Islander under-representation, especially given the spread and multiplicity of those experiences across states, urban, rural and regional settings. Therefore, although representation may need to be skewed towards minority groups in recognition of their importance to the narratives of Australia's history and present that have been historically neglected in media for children.

# Children's Television Worldwide:

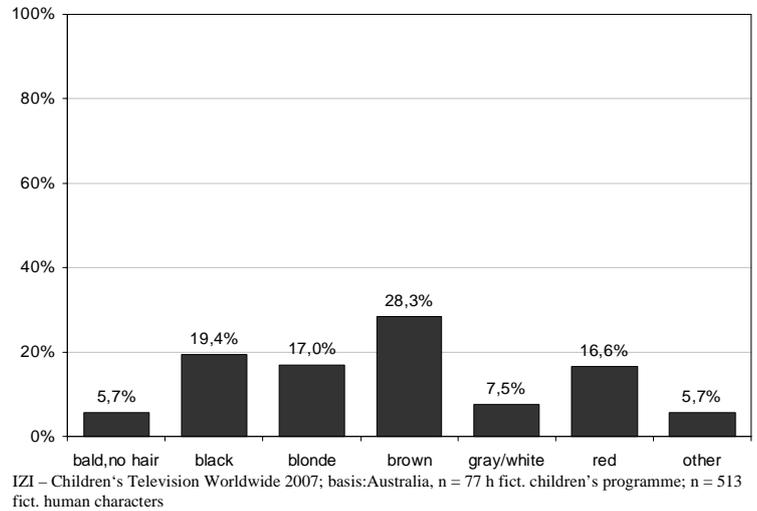
## Gender Representation in Australian Children's Television

### Hair colour of protagonists

We coded what the hair mostly looked like.

28 (5.7%) characters did not have any hair, 96 (19.4%) characters had black hair and 140 (28.3%) characters had brown hair. 84 characters were blond (17.0%), the hair of 37 people was grey or white (7.5%), and that of 82 red (16.6%). 28 people were categorized in the category Other (5.7%).

Hair colour of the characters

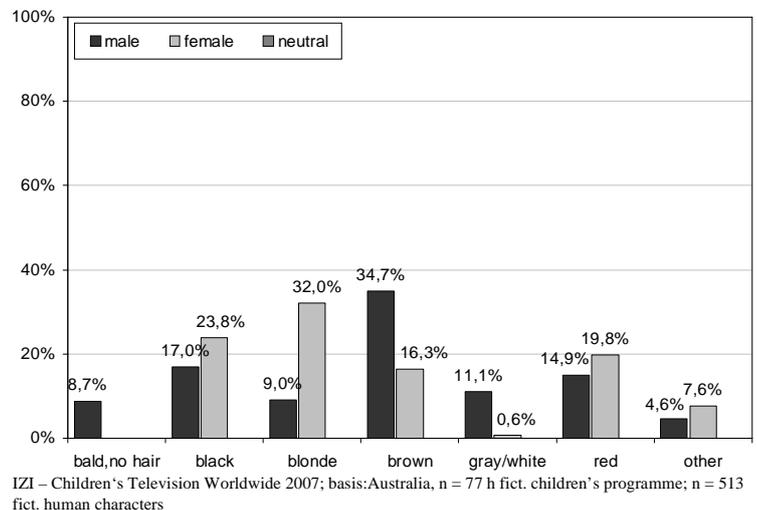


### **Gender Perspective: Females are often blonde, males often brown-haired**

Out of the female characters 41 (23.8%) have black hair, 55 (32.0%) blonde hair, 28 (16.3%) have brown hair, 1 (0.6%) has gray or white hair and 34 (19.8%) have red hair.

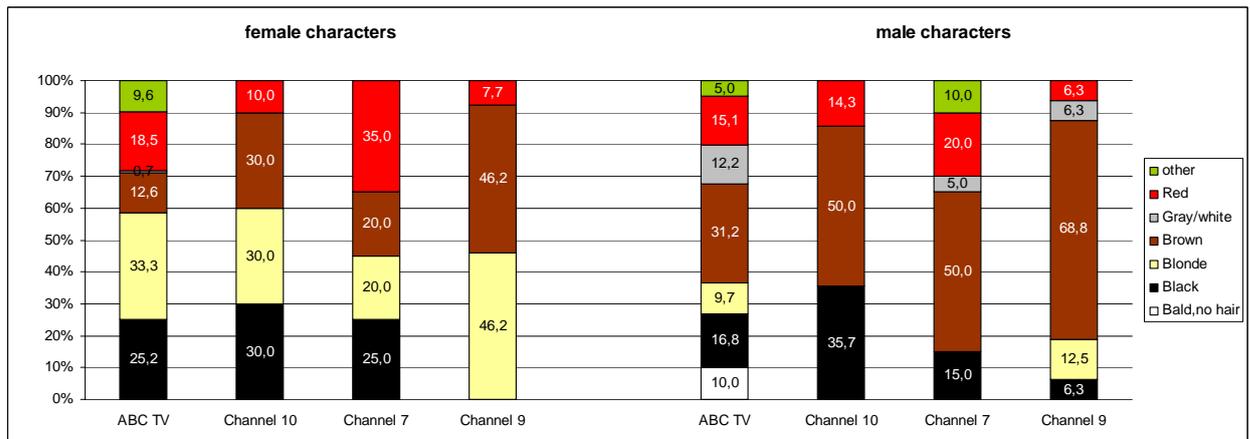
The male characters are with 28 (8.7%) without hair, with 55 (17.0%) black-haired, with 29 (9.0%) blonde, 112 (34.7%) have brown hair, 36 (11.1%) have gray or white hair and 48 (14.9%) have red hair. It seems

Hair colour of the characters



that Australian children's TV has a penchant for blonde girls! (It is actually the case that there are numerous blonde girls out there on Australian streets and beaches – especially in Perth and Sydney, some more natural than others, so again cultural and place-specific looks and behaviours make it difficult to draw conclusions about representation from this data). It is however fair to conclude that beauty and blondness are linked in the Australian imagination.

## Children's Television Worldwide: Gender Representation in Australian Children's Television

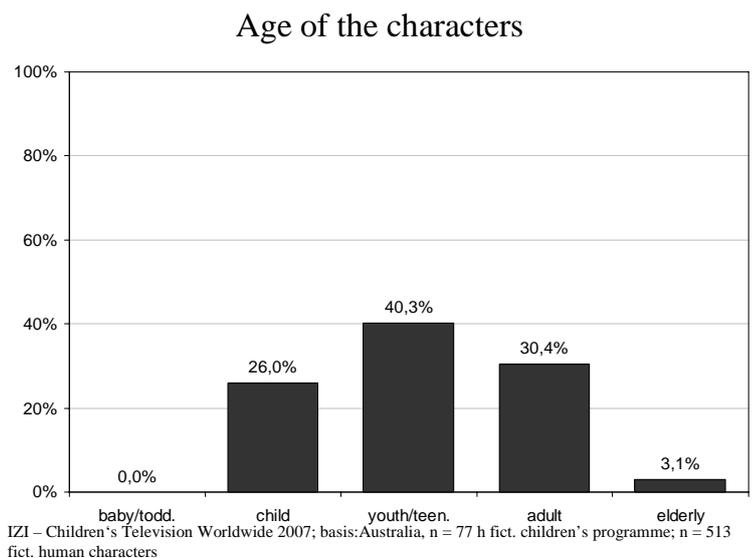


The highest percentage of black-haired females showed Channel 10 (30.0%). The highest shares of female blondes (46.2%) and brown-haired (46.2%) had Channel 9. The highest percentage of red-haired females was found on Channel 7 (35.0%). Among the male characters, the highest share of brown-haired had Channel 9 (68.8%). The latter had also the highest share of red-haired males (20.0%). The highest percentage of males with black hair showed Channel 10 (35.7%), and Public Channel ABC TV had the highest percentage of bald males (10.0%).

### What age are the protagonists?

We coded the age as far as visible or clear from the content. Adult if they have the recognisable characteristics such as acquisition of earnings, role of mother/father etc., or elderly if there are recognisable traits such as role of grandma/grandpa, walks with cane etc.

In terms of age, three larger groups could be found in the sample: 206 (40.3%) are teenagers, 157 (30.4%) are adults and 133 (26.0%) are children. Only 16 (3.1%) are seniors.



## Children's Television Worldwide: Gender Representation in Australian Children's Television

Baby/ Toddler		Child		Youth/ Teenager		Adult		Elderly	
Egypt	8,7%	Malaysia	64,3%	Hungary	58,1%	Argentina	62,0%	Argentina	12,0%
Kenya	6,7%	China	52,5%	Netherlands	42,9%	Brazil	54,9%	Norway	9,3%
Netherlands	6,1%	New Zealand	49,2%	Israel	41,6%	Cuba	48,6%	Brazil	8,8%
Cuba	4,1%	Germany	44,5%	Australia	40,3%	Egypt	47,7%	Canada	7,1%
UK	3,0%	Austria	44,1%	USA	37,8%	UK	46,7%	Syria	6,0%
China	1,8%	Hong Kong	43,7%	South Africa	36,7%	Belgium	42,9%	Kenya	5,7%
Israel	1,6%	Kenya	40,4%	India	36,4%	Canada	42,8%	Slovenia	5,4%
Germany	1,1%	Syria	36,1%	Slovenia	35,1%	India	37,1%	Egypt	5,0%
Austria	1,1%	Slovenia	34,1%	Hong Kong	31,8%	Norway	34,0%	Germany	4,9%
Canada	1,0%	Netherlands	32,2%	Norway	27,9%	Kenya	32,2%	Austria	4,9%
New Zealand	0,5%	USA	31,2%	Syria	26,5%	Syria	31,3%	South Africa	4,5%
South Africa	0,5%	Canada	29,8%	Belgium	24,9%	Australia	30,4%	China	4,2%
Norway	0,5%	UK	29,5%	Germany	24,7%	Malaysia	30,2%	Belgium	4,2%
USA	0,3%	South Africa	29,5%	Austria	24,6%	South Africa	28,7%	Cuba	3,7%
Brazil	0,2%	Norway	27,0%	New Zealand	24,0%	USA	28,4%	Hungary	3,4%
Belgium	0,1%	Israel	26,8%	China	22,1%	Israel	25,9%	Malaysia	3,2%
Slovenia	0,1%	Belgium	26,6%	Brazil	19,6%	New Zealand	25,9%	Australia	3,1%
Argentina	0,0%	Australia	26,0%	Canada	19,2%	Slovenia	25,3%	Netherlands	3,1%
Australia	0,0%	Egypt	25,5%	Cuba	18,9%	Austria	24,6%	Israel	2,8%
Hong Kong	0,0%	Cuba	24,7%	UK	18,5%	Germany	24,1%	India	2,5%
Hungary	0,0%	India	23,9%	Argentina	18,0%	Hungary	23,1%	UK	2,3%
India	0,0%	Brazil	15,9%	Kenya	15,0%	Hong Kong	22,7%	Hong Kong	1,8%
Malaysia	0,0%	Hungary	15,2%	Egypt	13,2%	China	19,3%	USA	1,8%
Syria	0,0%	Argentina	8,0%	Malaysia	2,4%	Netherlands	15,6%	New Zealand	0,4%
<b>total</b>	<b>1,6%</b>	<b>total</b>	<b>33,9%</b>	<b>total</b>	<b>29,3%</b>	<b>total</b>	<b>30,6%</b>	<b>total</b>	<b>4,1%</b>

Australia does not show toddlers and babies in its children's programs in this sample. It does show far more teenagers (40.3%) than the international average, but fewer younger children (26.0%) and fewer elderly (3.1%) and about the average percentage of adults. It seems that Australian children's TV likes to tell stories around teenagers rather than younger children. However, to mitigate against this trend there is the special 'P' quota of programming for pre-school children. A wider sample would have shown that key 'P' shows on the ABC (*Bananas in Pyjamas*, *The Wiggles* etc are— identified through friendly animated or 'dressed up' characters, or young presenters).

## Children's Television Worldwide:

### Gender Representation in Australian Children's Television

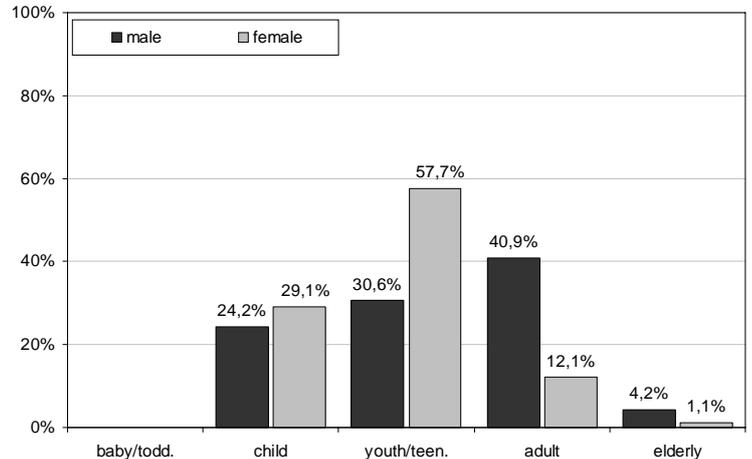
#### Gender Perspective: Girls are often teenagers, adults are more often males

Out of the female characters 53 (29.1%) are children, 105 (57.7%) teens, 22 (12.1%) adults and 2 (1.1%) seniors.

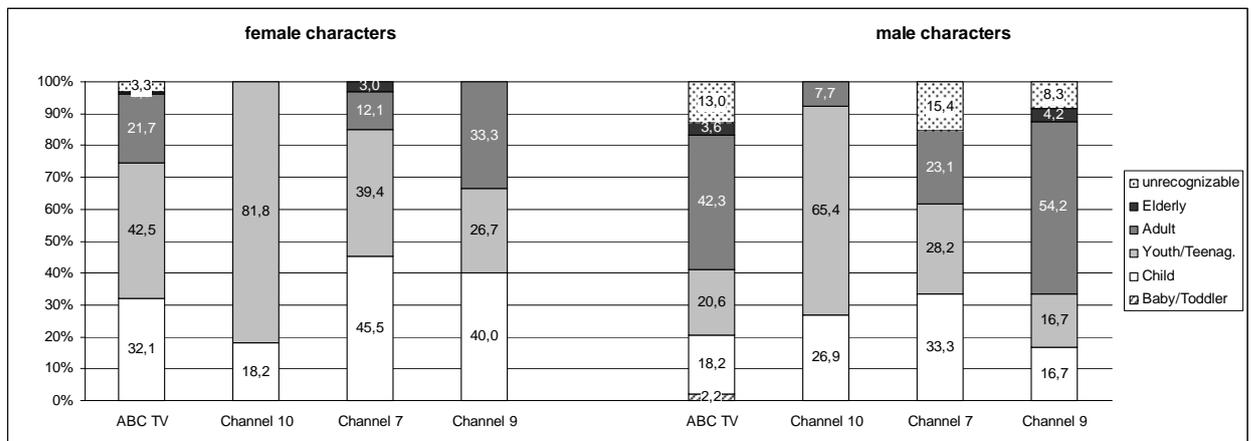
80 male characters (24.2%) are children, 101 (30.6%) teens, 135 (40.9%) adults and 14 (4.2%) seniors.

It looks like teenage girls (with blonde hair) are represented in Australian TV while adults and elders are mainly male.

Age of the characters



IZI – Children's Television Worldwide 2007; basis: Australia, n = 77 h fict. children's programme; n = 513 fict. human characters



The highest percentages of female Children (45.5%) and Elderly (3.0%) had Channel 7. The highest percentage of female Youths (81.8%) had Channel 10, and of Adults Channel 9 (33.3%). Among the male characters, the highest share of Children was found on Channel 7 (33.3%), and the highest share of Teens on Channel 10 (65.4%). The highest percentage of male Adults (54.2%) and of Elderly (4.2%) presented Channel 9.

## Children's Television Worldwide:

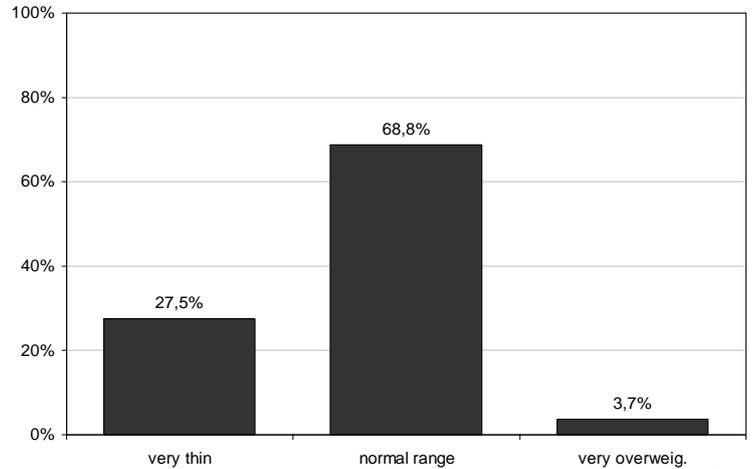
### Gender Representation in Australian Children's Television

#### Physique of characters: What weight or shape does the main character have?

We coded if the body of the main character is in the normal range or the authors want to make clear that here is an overweight or very thin body.

68.8% of the sample is of average weight. 27.5% of the characters were very thin and 3.7% very overweight.

Physique of the characters



IZI – Children's Television Worldwide 2007; basis: Australia, n = 77 h fict. children's programme; n = 513 fict. human characters

very thin		normal range		very overweight	
Australia	27,5%	Israel	97,7%	Argentina	14,0%
UK	27,4%	Hong Kong	97,1%	Kenya	12,7%
Norway	18,6%	Hungary	94,2%	Germany	11,1%
New Zealand	18,1%	South Africa	92,7%	Belgium	10,9%
Syria	17,9%	Netherlands	92,6%	Austria	10,9%
Germany	14,0%	Brazil	91,2%	Canada	10,7%
Austria	13,9%	USA	91,1%	UK	8,9%
Egypt	11,7%	Malaysia	90,5%	China	7,9%
Slovenia	11,3%	Cuba	88,9%	Norway	7,4%
Kenya	10,2%	India	88,8%	Malaysia	7,1%
China	8,1%	Slovenia	88,2%	USA	7,1%
India	6,1%	Canada	86,5%	Egypt	7,1%
Cuba	4,9%	Belgium	86,3%	New Zealand	6,5%
Brazil	4,2%	China	84,1%	Cuba	6,2%
Argentina	4,0%	Argentina	82,0%	Netherlands	5,9%
Canada	2,8%	Egypt	81,2%	South Africa	5,4%
Belgium	2,7%	Syria	78,6%	India	5,1%
Malaysia	2,4%	Kenya	77,1%	Brazil	4,7%
Hungary	2,4%	New Zealand	75,4%	Australia	3,7%
South Africa	2,0%	Austria	75,2%	Syria	3,6%
USA	1,9%	Germany	75,0%	Hungary	3,4%
Netherlands	1,5%	Norway	74,0%	Hong Kong	2,5%
Israel	0,6%	Australia	68,8%	Israel	1,7%
Hong Kong	0,4%	UK	63,7%	Slovenia	0,5%
<b>total</b>	<b>9,1%</b>	<b>total</b>	<b>84,1%</b>	<b>total</b>	<b>6,8%</b>

Australia is on first place with three times the number of very thin characters (27.5%) than the international average (9.1%). It has less normal size characters (68.8%) and overweight people (3.7%) than the international average. Sadly, this is not a true representation of a rather overweight society, and the question of desirable levels of average weight are perhaps being modelled whether consciously or not in

these shows. Alternatively, this figure could be a little misleading. The large proportion of international programming, including numerous programs shared with other audiences (therefore

# Children's Television Worldwide:

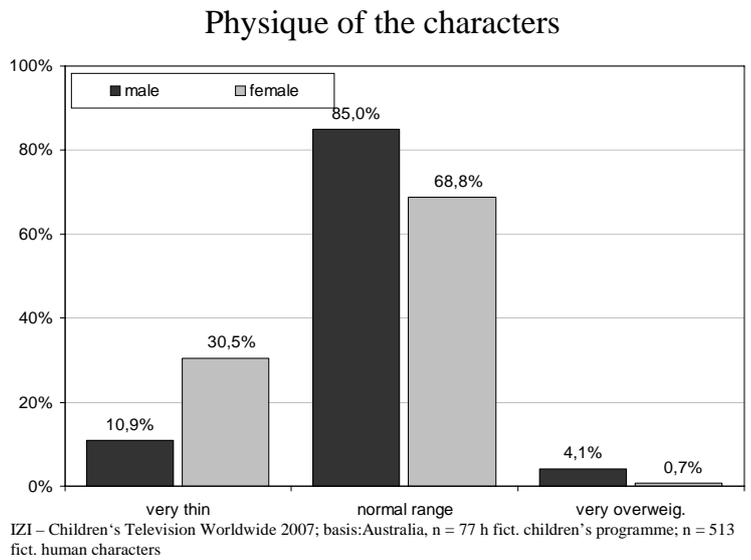
## Gender Representation in Australian Children's Television

containing the same characters) lead us to expect a similar range of body shapes as other countries. It may be that what Australians (and, for that matter British) considered 'very thin' was in fact considered 'normal' elsewhere.

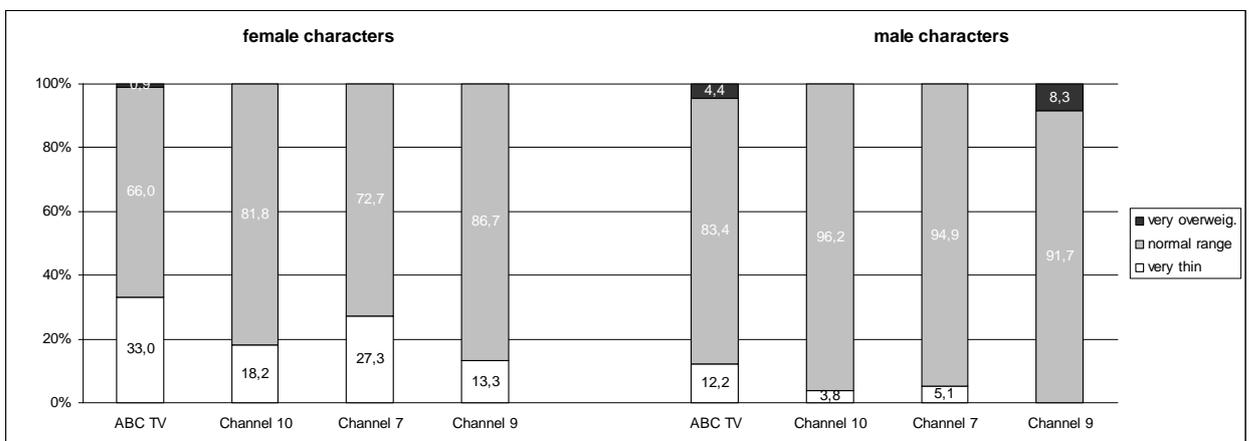
### Gender Perspective: Thin girls and overweight boys

Out of the female characters 185 (68.8%) are in the normal range, 82 (30.5%) are very thin and 2 (0.7%) are very overweight.

498 male characters (85%) are in the normal range, 64 (10.9%) are very thin and 24 (4.1%) are very overweight. It looks like Australian children's TV tells its stories with a lot of very skinny (blonde) Caucasian teenage girls. Again, whilst there are indeed quite a few 'skinny blonde girls' in Australia, there are also some average weight and some seriously



overweight girls of many hair colours, and the question of television's role in providing either visual models (appropriate or otherwise) or critiques of current health trends is worth debating further.



## **Children's Television Worldwide: Gender Representation in Australian Children's Television**

The highest percentage of thin females appears on channel ABC TV (33%), while the least are shown on Channel 9 (13.3%). There are only 0.9% overweight females, who appear on channel ABC TV.

The highest percentage of very thin males could be found on channel ABC TV (12.2%), while the highest share of overweight males appeared on channel 9 (8.3%). In the public broadcast 2 out of 3 girls are very skinny while nearly none is clearly overweight. This clearly does not represent reality. The question remains, how far should a problematic reality be emulated in television? The current lobby against the advertisement of junk foods on children's television could be paired with a demand to show overweight individuals consuming the junk food – in a kind of anti-product placement scenario.

### **Disabilities of main characters: Nearly not there!**

We coded if the character has a clearly identifiable disability or serious chronicle illness (HIV/AIDS, cancer, diabetes etc.) which can be seen obviously or is an important part of the character construction.

No disabled character is among the recorded and coded characters of the Australian sample. Therefore, 100% of all characters are without any recognizable disability. This is a serious omission in storytelling for children.

# **Children's Television Worldwide:**

## **Gender Representation in Australian Children's Television**

### **Summary of the results**

#### **High percentage of animation**

80.4% of Australia's children's television is animated programs, which is lower than the international average. With 11% of real life fictional shows the country is in the upper middle of the international comparison.

#### **Relatively little domestic productions**

With only 11.1% domestically produced programs, Australia still ranks amongst the middle field of the international comparison. Almost a third of CTV (31%) is produced in the UK, while 24% is from Canada and 19% from the USA. The Canadian link is partly reinforced through similar past relationships with the UK and the Commonwealth.

#### **Under-representation of female characters, especially on public TV**

When it comes to gender, one cannot fail to notice that only 30% of the characters in Australian children's television were female and 67.4% male in our sample. So, female characters are clearly underrepresented. And surprisingly, in public TV the share of females (29.8%) is lower than in commercial TV, where it ranges from 29.7% (Channel 10) to 45.8% (Channel 7). One could question whether public TV ought to model a more balanced gender-representation than the commercial channels, which have different constraints such as advertising and the marketing of associated commercial products to consider.

#### **Antagonists**

Australian CTV shows have the second highest share of antagonists (27.3%) within the shows' narratives. That is almost twice as many antagonists as the international average.

#### **A lot of followers and leaders**

In terms of inter-group relationships and particularly where main characters are part of a group: this is the case in 58.3% of the cases, a little higher than the international average.

When it comes to hierarchy, Australian children's television is very interesting: the shows have the most followers (34.6%), while the share of equals (29.4%) lies far below the international average. It seems that Australian children's TV likes to tell stories about leaders and followers, whilst much of the rest of the world focuses on equals.

## **Children's Television Worldwide: Gender Representation in Australian Children's Television**

### **Too many too skinny characters?**

Next to that, there is a quite typical proportional misrepresentation of more thin girls than boys, and of more overweight boys than girls. And on Public TV, even 2 out of 3 girls are coded as 'very skinny', while nearly none is clearly overweight. We note however that this coding does not match more general observations of Australian television and wonder about the relative views on 'thin' and 'overweight' amongst different coding teams across the international project.

Also, given that the 'very thin' (if they are indeed so) might be UK or US originated characters – there would be little control on this factor by Australian broadcasters. However, we note that the Australian youth population is currently in an obesity crisis, so a long term and appropriate response to this situation has to be carefully researched before recommendations are suggested.

### **Not enough culture diversity?**

There is cultural diversity in Australian television but it is not necessarily that most appropriate to Australian populations. Whilst most characters are White (a broad category), they are often not the White that exists on the streets and in the various regional areas of Australia. Yet, a 'White' character in an Australian drama could be an Indigenous person or a new arrival from Europe or elsewhere or a fifth generation Australian, whilst an 'Asian' character may be a fourth generation Australian, or a second generation migrant, or a new arrival. It is this level of difference rather than bald 'ethnicity' which tells more about Australian diversity and experience.

### **Recommendations**

The findings which are most obvious and disturbing and which should be handled both through purchasing decisions in imports and through programming development are: first the under-representation of female characters overall in Australian children's television; and second, the absence of differently abled, special needs or physically disabled protagonists.

Further recommendations on narratives which take into account migratory patterns, Indigenous and Pacific Islander stories, and the issues of settlement cannot be made from the current research, but we would be delighted to work further on analysing contemporary shows in order to glean what is missing or what might be added to media for young Australians.