

SEXUALISATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

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Submission

on the

Sexualisation of Children and Young People

to the

NSW Parliament Committee on Children & Young People

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1. Introduction

Warning: This submission contains explicit sexual content and profane language.

On 20 October 2015, the NSW Parliament's Children and Young People Committee established an inquiry into the sexualisation of children and young people.

FamilyVoice Australia is a national Christian voice – promoting true family values for the benefit of all Australians. Our vision is to see strong families at the heart of a healthy society: where marriage is honoured, human life is respected, families can flourish, Australia's Christian heritage is valued, and fundamental freedoms are enjoyed.

We work with people from all mainstream Christian denominations. We engage with parliamentarians of all political persuasions and are independent of all political parties. We have full-time FamilyVoice representatives in all states.

FamilyVoice has had a longstanding interest in advocating policies which protect children from sexualisation.

The closing date for submissions is Friday, 5 February 2016.

2. Terms of Reference

The inquiry's terms of reference are as follows:

- i. The sexualisation of children and young people in electronic, print and social media and marketing;*
- ii. The exposure of children and young people in NSW to sexualised images and content in public places, electronic, print and social media and marketing;*
- iii. The impact on children and young people of growing up in a sexualised culture;*
- iv. Adequacy of current measures at state and federal level to regulate sexualised imagery in electronic, print and social media and marketing, and effectiveness of self-regulation measures;*
- v. Measures to assist parents in fulfilling their responsibility to protect and educate children;*
- vi. Measures to educate children and young people and assist them in navigating the contemporary cultural environment;*
- vii. Possible measures that the Children's Advocate can take to assist children and young people to navigate the cultural environment successfully.*
- viii. Any other related matter.*

3. The sexualisation of children and young people in electronic, print and social media and marketing

The sexualisation of children and young people is prevalent across electronic, print and social media. This section details a number of examples from these areas.

3.1. Electronic

Television

A report from the Parents Television Council (PTC) in the US found that underage female characters feature in almost double the amount of dramatised sexual activity compared with adult characters in television shows popular with 12 – 17 year olds.¹ Many US television shows are screened in Australia.

PTC president Tim Winter stated:

The results from this report show Tinseltown's eagerness to not only objectify and fetishise young girls, but to sexualise them in such a way that real teens are led to believe their sole value comes from their sexuality...

*Storylines on the most popular shows among teens are sending the message to our daughters that being sexualised isn't just acceptable, it should be sought after.*²

One episode of TV show *Glee*, which was broadcast on Channel Ten, featured a homosexual couple and a heterosexual couple – both of high school age in the series – losing their virginity.³

PTC also criticised *Glee* actresses Lea Michele and Dianna Agron's "quasi-pornographic poses" for a *GQ* magazine shoot which had high school-like clothing and sets.⁴

Child beauty pageant reality TV show *Toddlers & Tiaras*, which is broadcast on Foxtel, featured a 3-year-old girl dressed in attire strikingly similar to that worn by Julia Robert's prostitute character in the film *Pretty Woman*.⁵

In a most disturbing example of child sexualisation on television, *Angry Boys*, a joint production between the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and HBO, featured a young girl drinking from a penis-shaped water bottle.^{6,7}

Music Clips

The music clip for the recent Sia song *Elastic Heart* has been slammed for sexualising a 12-year-old girl. The clip features the young girl dancing in a leotard with then 28-year-old actor Shia LaBeouf, who is topless. It involves contact between the two and is suggestive of intimacy.^{8,9,10} The same girl also features in a leotard in Sia's earlier clip for the song *Chandelier*.¹¹

Email brochure

Witchery has been criticised for sexualising children in an image featured in an email brochure and on its Facebook page. The image showed "three girls, aged between 10 and 14, with professional hair and make up posing and looking directly at the camera."¹² The email version featured the text "Meet our 2012 It Girls."¹³ Witchery has also been criticised for portraying children as adults in an advertising campaign.¹⁴

Film

The Hangover, the tenth highest grossing film of 2009, features an egregious example of the sexualisation of a child.^{15,16} In one scene the character Alan, who is seated at a table along with a baby, takes the baby's hand and starts to simulate the baby masturbating itself.¹⁷

Smartphone applications

Smartphone app *Star Girl*, which was rated for four year olds, has been criticised for “promoting “gold digging”, bondage-inspired lingerie and flirting for rewards at nightclubs.”¹⁸

4. The exposure of children and young people in NSW to sexualised images and content in public places, electronic, print and social media and marketing

Children are increasingly being bombarded with sexual content across a range of media. The following section details a number of examples and covers public places and electronic, print and social media.

4.1. Public places

Advertising

National cosmetics company LUSH featured a poster in its stores showing a rear view of four naked women. One complainant stated:

It was placed at a child's eye level in a shopping centre. It shows naked women touching other naked women and it is shown in a public place...

I was unable to shield my children from exposure to this advert as it was on a poster in the centre aisle of the shopping centre. When I contacted Lush, they said that the women in the photo consented so it was OK — I'm sorry but I never consented for myself or my children to be exposed to nudity on our weekly shopping trip!”¹⁹

The Advertising Standards Board found against the advertisement and it was subsequently pulled down, but it should never have been permitted to go up in the first place.²⁰

Lingerie store Honey Birdette has featured racy poster images in its stores. The company, which is based in Sydney, has also sold adult products in family shopping centres.²¹

The Bavarian Bier Café, based in Sydney, was slammed for an advertisement that featured the slogan “We’ve got the best racks” and a man sitting between two women with cleavage revealed. The ad was for a rack of meat, which was also featured in the image.²²

In 2015 a mother complained about a Body Shop advertisement at a shopping centre featuring a naked man with soap covering his genitalia because it triggered memories in her foster daughter of her past sexual abuse.²³

In 2013, a Wollongong psychologist complained about a poster at a ModelKids booth in a Westfield shopping centre which he said sexualised children. The poster featured a topless boy with low riding shorts and a girl with a bare midriff.²⁴ The psychologist said:

These are children that are adopting an adult posture that is normally seen or understood as being sexual...

Why is there a need for an organisation to select this type of image? They could have picked another image with kids who are normally dressed, happy-go-lucky, and that would have been perfectly acceptable.”²⁵

Retail company General Pants undertook an advertising campaign which featured racy images in its stores and young staff wearing badges which read: "I love sex."²⁶

Wicked Campers has featured sexual advertising on its vans. One of the worst examples is the slogan: "...In every princess there is a little slut who wants to try it just once..."²⁷

Sydney mother Paula Orbea, who started a petition against the advertisement, said:

*I just feel like it's wallpapering our lives, this idea, this obsession with sex, and creating a sex-obsessed male and a victim female, a hyper-sexualised 'asking for it' female.*²⁸

Other slogans which have appeared on Wicked Campers include: "she can't wrestle, but you should see her box [vagina]", "a wife: an attachment you screw on the bed to get the housework done", "save a tree, eat a beaver [vagina]" and "can your pussy do the dog."^{29,30}

Musical performances

Children are often exposed to sexual content at their idols' music concerts. A Miley Cyrus performance in Western Australia was reported as follows:

Cyrus – famous for the sweet schoolgirl persona of Hannah Montana – cut a totally different figure on stage at Burswood on Saturday night, dressed in tiny leather hot pants, a sparkling bra and boot-suspenders attached to her shorts.

*Cyrus's dance moves, complete with crotch-grabbing and sexy hair-flicking, surprised some, given the age of many of the 18-year-old's singer's fans.*³¹

Her performance in Sydney was similarly obscene.³² In another performance overseas, Miley Cyrus simulated oral sex on a dancer dressed as Bill Clinton.³³

Lady Gaga, lamenting her last show in Sydney, stated that her vagina was weeping and at another point in the performance dancers exited a blow-up vagina with the singer's face on it.³⁴ A previous Lady Gaga performance was so inappropriate that there were calls for a classification system for concerts.³⁵

British singer Rita Orr performed in the USA in a see through top with only stars covering her nipples.³⁶

4.2. Electronic

Film

Films such as *Fifty Shades of Grey* are contributing to a highly sexualised culture. The film has been slammed as it "[p]romotes torture as sexually gratifying, graphic nudity, encourages stalking and abuse of power, promotes female inequality, glamorises and legitimises violence against women."³⁷

While the film may not be rated for children, with the ease of internet access, they can readily download such a film. Extensive publicity about its raunchy nature encourages this. Further, file transferring of large numbers of movies from one hard drive to another, which is quite common, means that children are likely to be exposed to inappropriate movies such as *Fifty Shades of Grey*.

The film was screened outdoors in the Adelaide suburb of Glenelg in a public area. The screen could be seen by children walking by.^{38,39}

Speaking about the film's impact and sexually explicit material more generally, comedian Russell Brand said:

... Soft cultural smog like 'Fifty Shades of Grey' is making it impossible for us to relate to our own sexuality, our own psychology and our own spirituality, because this powerful primal resource, whenever it's plugged in, it's jarring and distracting...

Living in the culture now where there's just icebergs of filth floating through every house on Wi-Fi, it's inconceivable what it must be like to be a young adolescent boy now with this kind of access to porn.

*It must be dizzying and exciting but corrupting in a way that we can't even think about...*⁴⁰

Sadly, it is not just adult movies that expose children to sexual content; children's movies do so, too. The 2007 children's film *Ratatouille* contains sexual innuendo.⁴¹ In a scene in the film, one character says to another in relation to food: "If I don't love it, I don't swallow"⁴², clearly a reference to oral sex.

The 2015 film *Minions* features a minion in a G-string. Another scene features a minion getting smitten in a pool with two fire hydrants which look like minions and have pointy breast-like valves.^{43,44} A promotional poster even features a view of three minions naked from behind, looking at their overalls hanging on a clothes line.⁴⁵

Television

Channel Ten's show *Studio 10* recently featured naked breasts at 10am.⁴⁶ That it took place in the context of a segment on breast self-examination is no defence. At this time of day many children are likely to be viewing and parents should not have to guard against them being exposed to nudity.

Radio

Robin Thicke's 2013 song *Blurred Lines* was criticised for condoning rape.^{47,48,49} The song includes the lyrics "I know you want it" repeated numerous times and the words:

*I'll give you something big enough to tear your ass in two.*⁵⁰

Music Clips

It is almost pointless singling out a number of music clips for condemnation given the high number that are sexual in nature. Nevertheless, some are worse than others and serve to highlight the need for action to be taken to address the situation.

The clip for the 2015 song *Booty* by Jennifer Lopez, featuring Australia's Iggy Azalea, has the two stars dancing scantily-clad and rubbing their backsides against one another.⁵¹ It has been described as "a puerile, porn-inspired dance."⁵²

Miley Cyrus, a former Disney star, swings naked on a wrecking ball in her music clip for the song of the same name (*Wrecking Ball*).⁵³

Nicky Minaj's clip for the song *Anaconda*, a penis metaphor, features women twerking and gyrating and has close-up backside shots. The clip also features a coconut oozing milk, a metaphor for semen.⁵⁴

Lady Gaga's film clip for *Alejandro*:

*depicts her being roughly handled by men in a group sex simulation. In another scene, she is riding a soldier she has tied to a bedpost.*⁵⁵

While Katy Perry wears a bra which shoots whipped cream in the clip for her *California Gurls* [sic] song.⁵⁶

Speaking on the culture of the music industry, singer Charlotte Church has stated that:

*What this industry seems to want of its women increasingly is sex objects that appear childlike. Take your clothes off, show you're an adult.*⁵⁷

...Whilst I can't defer all the blame away from myself, I was barely out of my teenage years, and the consequence of this portrayal of me is that now I am frequently abused on social media...

*Now I find it difficult to promote my music where it would be best suited.*⁵⁸

Sexting

The ready availability of technologies such as mobile phones which function as cameras, and the internet, have created a situation in which sexual images and messages can be more rapidly and widely disseminated.

A Canadian study found that:

Almost one in ten... students said they had sent a sext of themselves, while about one in four said they had received a sext. Boys were twice as likely to be sent a sext than girls.

*The numbers were higher among the oldest Grade 11 students in the study, with almost one in five saying they had sent a sext and one in three saying they had been sent one.*⁵⁹

As one blogger writes:

*Online pornography is more graphic, extreme and explicit than the adult magazines of decades ago. Fetishes like violence or domination toward women are also prevalent among online pornography sources, and experts fear boys may be learning unhealthy and extreme attitudes toward sexual behavior and toward girls that they can carry for a lifetime. Many teens report being bullied or pressured into participating in sexting, or being asked at very young ages to perform sexual behaviors related to sexted messages.*⁶⁰

Adolescents may give little thought to the consequences of creating and sharing a naked picture of themselves with another person. The consequences include the ease with which such an image may be widely distributed to others and the permanence of the image which once available widely cannot be recalled and deleted.

Internet

A 2003 study by the Australia Institute reported:

*Eighty-four per cent of boys and 60 per cent of girls say they have been exposed accidentally to sex sites on the Internet.*⁶¹

The situation is much worse now with widespread smartphone use. As research by Telstra has revealed, 68 per cent of children aged three to 17 have a smartphone and they spend an average time of 21 hours and 48 minutes on them a week.⁶²

Smartphones provide children with the opportunity to access pornography 24/7 and highlight the need for ISP (Internet Service Provider) filtering, discussed in section 7.1 of this submission.

A more recent 2014 study by the Institute for Public Policy Research, a UK-based think tank, surveyed 500 18-year-olds and found that:

- *Eight out of 10 say it is too easy for young people to accidentally see pornography online.*
- *Seven out of 10 say 'accessing pornography was seen as typical' while they were at school; the consensus view is that this is typical between the ages of 13 and 15.*
- *Almost half (46 per cent) say 'sending sexual or naked photos or videos is part of everyday life for teenagers nowadays'.⁶³*

Another study found that fourteen per cent of boys use porn daily and 20 per cent of boys in their late teens are dependent on it.^{64,65}

4.3. Print

Magazines

Girls' magazines sexualise young girls and profit from their curiosity through the provision of sex advice. For example, *Dolly* magazine, which has a target audience of 14 – 17 year olds⁶⁶, has an "Everything you need to know about sex" guide on its website. Under "The Basics" subheading, it provides the following advice:

"Sex means different things to everyone," says Dr Ginni Mansberg. "One person might count having sex as kissing or finger penetration, while for someone else it will be full vagina penetration. This could be down to cultural or religious values or just whatever someone is comfortable with." Only you can decide when or what is right for you. This is the same for same-sex intercourse. "There are lots of stereotypes about lesbian sex but it's just as diverse and varied as hetero intercourse," Dr Ginni explains. "Don't get bogged down with other people's rules or the whole 'bases' thing. The most important thing is that whatever you're doing makes you feel good and you're being safe by using a condom." Once you decide to take things further, ask your GP for advice on contraception.⁶⁷

In what other circumstances would children ever be advised that the "most important thing is that whatever you're doing makes you feel good?" Such advice is irresponsible and encourages children to engage in risky sexual practices – at ages when this might be illegal.

Also disturbing is the distinct lack of any reference to any parental involvement. The statement "[o]nce you decide to take things further, ask your GP for advice on contraception" encourages young girls to give their parents a wide berth in any discussion of the matter and whether they think it is appropriate. In fact, the only reference to parents in the "How sex works" guide to is in response to a question:

Sometimes I feel sad after my boyfriend and I have sex. What does this mean? Ella, 18 "It depends on the context, but you might be feeling sad because you weren't treated as you would have liked," says Gemma. "Maybe you're having some unhelpful thoughts (like you weren't good at it, or your partner doesn't like you or will leave you, or that your body isn't good enough). Start to think about how you'd like it to have gone in order for you to have felt happy afterwards." If you're still confused, talk with a trusted friend, parent or counsellor.⁶⁸

The only reference to consulting a parent is after sex, not before, and in a limited circumstance.

Advice provided on the emergency contraceptive pill (ECP) can also be seen as reinforcing the idea that there is no need to involve parents. The guide states that the "ECP is available without a prescription from your local pharmacy so you can buy it over the counter at the chemist."⁶⁹ In other words, you can buy it without mum or dad.

Newspapers

In 2012, a complaint was made to the Advertising Standards Board about a sex shop advertisement in a Western Australian community newspaper. The advertisement “featured images of sex toys and showed women dressed in leather underwear and red lingerie. It also carried phrases such as “sex in the shower” and described the brand as “your one-stop adult shop.””⁷⁰ The complainant was a mother of a six year old boy who had been exposed to the picture because he was told to look out for his picture in the paper.⁷¹

4.4. Social media

Many children follow celebrities on social media who post racy images of themselves.

The *International Business Times* has reported that Kim Kardashian:

The reality star, who is famed for posting sexy selfies on social media, is potentially putting children at risk of abuse as they imitate her explicit images, making them vulnerable to online predators, according to experts at an NSPCC [National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children] debate yesterday.

*Nazir Afzal, the chief prosecutor for the North West of England, who played a pivotal role in bringing the Rochdale grooming gang to justice in 2012 for abusing up to 47 girls, said Kardashian was tempting young girls into sexualising themselves, and making them easy targets for predators.*⁷²

The popularity of social media and the amount of time spent daily on such sites significantly increases the exposure of children to sexual content.

5. The impact on children and young people of growing up in a sexualised culture

5.1. Warped sexual expectations and practices

The exposure of boys to pornography has resulted in warped sexual expectations. As anti-sexualisation campaigner Melinda Tankard Reist has stated:

Our boys are looking at porn not only before they've had sex, before they've even had their first kiss and they think what they're seeing is normal. ...

*... Girls tell us that boys expect them to provide what's known as PSE, the porn star experience. Boys expect that girls will provide for them everything they've seen in pornography and that the girls want that.*⁷³

One 18 year old boy speaking of the impact of pornography on him put it bluntly:

*I'd watched so much porn, I thought, "All chicks dig this, all chicks want this done to them, all chicks want it up here, all chicks love it there." So I tried all this stuff and, yeah, it turned out bad.*⁷⁴

Allison Pearson, a columnist for *The Telegraph* in London, has written in her column that:

A GP, let's call her Sue, said: "I'm afraid things are much worse than people suspect." In recent years, Sue had treated growing numbers of teenage girls with internal injuries caused by frequent anal sex; not, as Sue found out, because she wanted to, or because she enjoyed it – on the contrary – but because a boy expected her to. "I'll spare you the gruesome details," said

Sue, "but these girls are very young and slight and their bodies are simply not designed for that."

Her patients were deeply ashamed at presenting with such injuries. They had lied to their mums about it and felt they couldn't confide in anyone else, which only added to their distress. When Sue questioned them further, they said they were humiliated by the experience, but they had simply not felt they could say no. Anal sex was standard among teenagers now, even though the girls knew that it hurt.⁷⁵

Psychologist Russell Pratt has highlighted the pressure faced by girls to comply with porn-inspired sexual demands:

Anal sex is requested routinely by young men. Young women feel that they have to oblige.⁷⁶

One study found that porn use by either partner made teen girls five times more likely to engage in group sex.⁷⁷

The *Daily Mail* reported on a former "softcore" pornography editor Martin Daubney's interviews with youths about porn:

A group of 13- to 14-year-olds told him they had all seen anal porn – and virtually all had witnessed bestiality.

"Letting our children consume [porn] freely via the internet is like leaving heroin lying around the house," Daubney told the Daily Mail.

Daubney recoiled when a 19-year-old told him, "I can't hold down a relationship for longer than three weeks. I want porn sex with real girls, but sex with them just isn't as good as the porn."⁷⁸

Professor Gail Dines – author of *Pornland: how porn has hijacked our sexuality* – found that:

When you interview young women about their experiences of sex, you see an increased level of violence: rough, violent sex.

That is directly because of porn, as young boys are getting their sexual cues from men in porn who are acting as if they're sexual psychopaths.

Pornography is sexually traumatising an entire generation of boys.⁷⁹

RMIT University research fellow Dr Meagan Tyler has stated:

We also know that porn from the mid-to-late 1990s has become a lot more hardcore. We're seeing the mainstreaming of choking, which a lot of young women complain about.⁸⁰

A news article reported that "Dr Tyler said research shows women are suffering from faecal incontinence as a result of anal sex and that they're "uncomfortable" with the assumption that it's become "the norm."⁸¹

Disturbingly, one study found that more than four in ten girls between the ages of 13 and 17 had been coerced into sex.⁸²

5.2. Sexual abuse

Boys at a Sydney school suffered sexual abuse at the hands of a number of other year 1 students.^{83,84} Year 1 students at the school had previously viewed inappropriate material on their tablets during class.⁸⁵

The *Daily Telegraph* reported that:

The scandal only came to light when a tearful six-year-old victim went home and told his mum what was happening.

He said a Year 1 boy had recruited at least three friends and they had sexually abused another four six-year-olds in their year. The abuse allegedly included boys who stripped naked to fondle, suck, lick and digitally penetrate one another.

Shockingly this was all happening in the toilets and out-of-bounds parts of the school's outdoor play area at its Summer Hill campus.⁸⁶

Clearly the boys had taken their lead from pornography.

5.3. Body image

Our increasingly sexualised culture is causing body image issues in young girls. A study found that there had been a 7 per cent increase in emotional issues in five years among girls aged 11 to 13.⁸⁷

Another study found that almost “eight out of 10 young women (77 per cent) say ‘pornography has led to pressure on girls or young women to **look** a certain way.’”⁸⁸

6. Adequacy of current measures at state and federal level to regulate sexualised imagery in electronic, print and social media and marketing, and effectiveness of self-regulation measures

6.1. Television

The new Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice, introduced in 2015, watered down already inadequate protections against sexual content.⁸⁹ The following table highlights the changes:

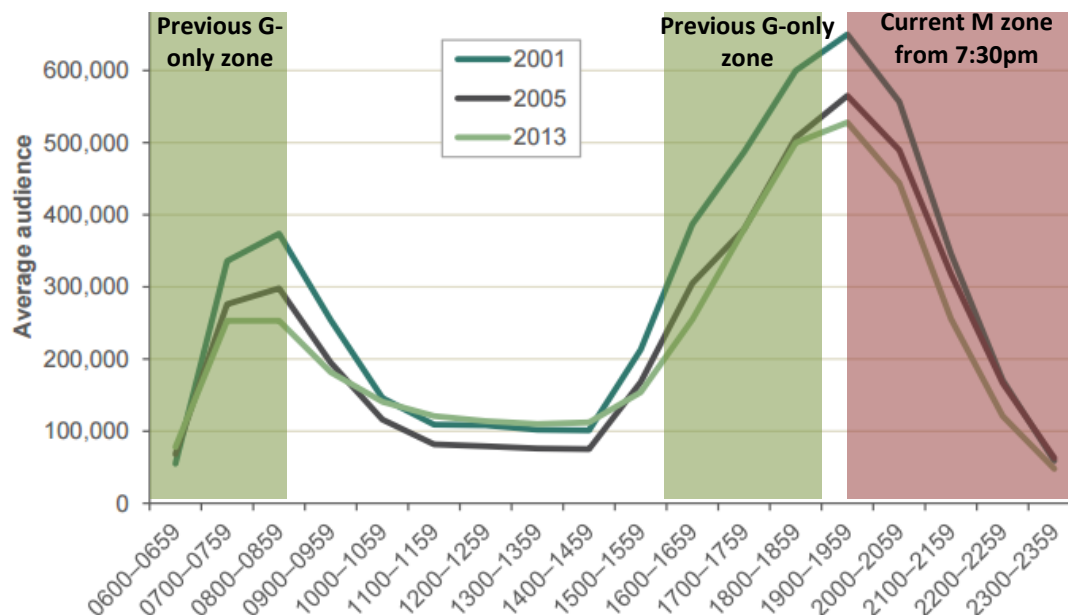
Table 1: Comparison of Current and Previous Television Code of Practice

Classification	Previous Code (section 2.8-2.12) ⁹⁰	Current Code (section 2.2) ⁹¹
G	Exclusive G zones: 6am–8:30am, and 4pm–7pm on weekdays. On weekends, 6am – 10am.	No exclusive G zones. Programs classified PG (and G, C, or P) can be shown at any time including weekends.
PG	PG zone 5am–8:30pm, apart from G zones (6-8.30am, 4-7pm) and M zones (12 noon-3pm school days).	Programs classified PG, G, C, or P can be shown any time, but PG zone would effectively begin later (at 6am instead of 5am) and end earlier (at 7.30pm instead of 8.30am) – the times when M and MA programs may be shown has significantly expanded.
M	Restricted to 8:30pm–5am, and 12 noon–3pm on school days.	Restricted to 7:30pm–6am, and 12 noon–3pm on school days.
MA	Restricted to 9:00pm–5am	Restricted to 8:30pm–5am
AV	Restricted to 9:30pm–5am	Combine with MA; can start at 8.30pm

Children's Viewing Habits

In March 2015, ACMA released research on children's viewing habits. They found that children's peak viewing times were between 7-9am and 5-9pm, as shown in full in the figure below.⁹²

Figure 1: Weekday viewing by children aged 0-14 on Free-to-air television, 2001-13, with time zones superimposed



Data provided by OzTAM Pty Limited. Average daily audience, five metro cities, 1 January – 31 December, includes FTA main and digital multi-channels, 2013 data is consolidated.

This data is consistent with 2013 research by Screen Australia,⁹³ and highlights the inappropriate nature of the current time zones. The broadcasting of M-classified material from 7.30pm exposes a significant number of children to unsuitable content.

In fact, the evidence suggests that the best interests of children would be served by *extending* the end of the previous Code's evening PG zone from 8.30pm to 9pm – reflecting children's current viewing habits.

The General (G) Classification

Even the most family friendly G classification is not immune from sexual content. The Code states:

Sex: Depictions of, and verbal references to, sexual activity must be brief, infrequent, and contain little or no detail.

*Nudity: Restrained, brief and infrequent visual depiction of nudity only when absolutely necessary to the story line or program context.*⁹⁴

Under the previous Code, there were exclusive time zones for G rated content (6am – 8.30am & 4pm – 7pm during week days and 6am – 10am on weekends). These have been abolished under the current code.

The Parental Guidance Recommended (PG) Classification

For the PG classification the Code provides:

Sex: Depictions of and verbal reference to sexual activity must be restrained.

*Nudity: Restrained depictions of nudity are permitted.*⁹⁵

It is concerning that PG rated programs can be shown at any time when the rating permits non-brief and frequent nudity.

The Mature (M) Classification

Detailed depictions of nudity are permitted under the M classification from 7.30pm, which is a peak viewing time for children:

Sex: Depictions of sexual activity may be implied or simulated in a restrained way. Verbal references to sexual activity may be more detailed than depictions if this does not increase the impact.

Nudity: Depictions of nudity are permitted but must not be detailed if in a sexual context. ⁹⁶

MA Rated Content

The MA rating provides:

Sex: Depictions of implied sexual activity may contain detail. Non-consenting sexual relations must not be depicted as desirable. Verbal sexual references may be detailed.

Nudity: Depictions of nudity must be justified by the narrative context. ⁹⁷

Such explicit content can be shown from 8.30pm – a time when many children are still likely to be up.

Advertisements

Advertisements for intimate products and services (unless they contain a public health or safety message) can be shown during any program except those rated G or lower.⁹⁸ As PG rated programs can be shown at all times, advertisements for such products and services can be shown at all times of the day.

Recommendation 1:

The NSW Government should ask the Federal Government to provide greater protection for children from harmful broadcast material by requiring a tighter Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice, which should:

- (a) provide a G time zone when many children are watching television;***
- (b) restore previous definitions of G and PG content, particularly relating to violence, sexual activity, drug use and suicide; and***
- (c) require commercials to have a classification no higher than the program in which they are shown.***

6.2. Film

The Australian has highlighted the inadequacy of the ratings system when it comes to films:

A MAN is bound and beaten to a bloody pulp in a northern Adelaide home in one striking instance of realistic sadism in Snowtown.

A woman is drugged knowingly and molested unknowingly in the clinical and polarising film Sleeping Beauty. And transsexuals are seen in full-frontal glory in the orgiastic The Hangover Part II.

All three films are rated MA15+ meaning a teenager aged 15 can see them unaccompanied by an adult.

Given the lax ticketing procedures at big commercial cinemas - where one person can buy multiple tickets or where one ticket can be used to access any number of screens within a multiplex - many teens younger than 15 will have seen The Hangover Part II, the most popular film of this year.⁹⁹

Recommendation 2:

The NSW Government should ask the Federal Government to enact legislation:

- (a) to prohibit the sale of X18+ films throughout Australia and**
- (b) to restrict the R18+ film classification in relation to sexual content so that there can be no explicit depictions, including animated depictions, of actual sexual intercourse, of other sexual activity or of genital contact in a sexual context.**

6.3. Billboards and other outdoor advertising

The Australian Association of National Advertisers Code of Ethics is too lenient when it comes to sexual content. Section 2.2 states:

- *Sex, sexuality or nudity*
 - *This section applies equally to images of men as well as images of women and children.*
 - *Images which are not permitted are those which are highly sexually suggestive and inappropriate for the relevant audience. Explicit sexual depictions in marcomms, particularly where the depiction is not relevant to the product or service being advertised, are generally objectionable to the community and will offend Prevailing Community Standards.*
 - *Full frontal nudity and explicit pornographic language is not permitted. Images of genitalia are not acceptable. Images of nipples may be acceptable in advertisements for plastic surgery or art exhibits for example.*
 - *Discreet portrayal of nudity and sexuality in an appropriate context (eg advertisements for toiletries and fashion) is generally permitted but note the applications of the relevant audience. More care should be taken in outdoor media than magazines, for example.*
 - *Advertisements which depict women or men scantily clad, are generally acceptable, if relevant to the product.*
 - *Images of women in bikinis are permitted, however, unacceptable images could include those where a woman (or man) is in a suggestively sexual pose, where underwear is being pulled up or down (by the model or another person), or where there is clear sexual innuendo from the ad (e.g. depicting women as sexual objects).*
 - *Advertisements with appeal to young people (under 14 years) which contain sexualised images or poses are to be used with caution. Models which appear to be young should not be used in sexualised poses. An advertisement in which the female looks very young and is lying in bed with a man included no direct reference to the product being advertised and was found in breach by the Board as it used a highly sexualised image regardless of the audience to which the advertisement was directed.*
 - *The use of the word “sex” does not, of itself, make an advertisement unacceptable. However, such advertisements must not contain images that are highly sexualised.¹⁰⁰*

A problem with the current regime for regulating billboards and other outdoor advertising is that insufficient regard or inconsistent weight is given to the reality that advertisements on billboards cannot be avoided by any member of the community going about their daily business. In particular, this applies to families with young children, but also to adults who find more or less explicit

advertisements for sexual services offensive. Unlike other media there is no option to “turn it off” or “not open it”.

Recommendation 3:

The NSW Government should legislate to require advertisements on billboards and other outdoor advertising to exclude any advertising of adult products and services and to be at least as strict as the GENERAL “G” classification as defined by FreeTV Commercials Advice.

7. Measures to assist parents in fulfilling their responsibility to protect and educate children

7.1. Internet Service Provider (ISP) filtering

Australia

In June 2008, the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) handed down its report on the trial of ISP filtering technologies.

ACMA then reported it considered that:

under the conditions created for the trial, the state of ISP-level filtering technology has significantly advanced, and stands in contrast with the state of this technology evidenced in the previous trial of filter products commissioned by NetAlert Ltd in 2005.¹⁰¹

The report went on to note that one of the indicators of the increasing maturity of ISP-level filtering technology was the “availability of a number of filter products that produce moderate to nearly nil performance degradation.”¹⁰² Indeed, one filter product produced performance degradation of just 2 per cent.¹⁰³

United Kingdom

In order to address the exposure of children to pornography, UK Prime Minister David Cameron has announced that his Government will introduce ISP filtering legislation. The ISP filtering scheme, which included the four biggest internet service providers,¹⁰⁴ was operating voluntarily until the EU passed legislation blocking it. In response to this Prime Minister Cameron has said that:

It is vital that we enable parents to have that protection for their children from this material on the internet.

...I can tell the House that we will legislate to put our agreement with internet companies on this issue into the law of the land so that our children will be protected.¹⁰⁵

Recommendation 4:

The NSW Government should ask the Federal Government to legislate to require ISPs (Internet Service Providers) to provide:

- (a) a default family-friendly service, by filtering all R18+ and X18+ material;*
- (b) R18+ material available only on an opt-in basis with appropriate age verification and*
- (c) X18+ material prohibited.*

8. Measures to educate children and young people and assist them in navigating the contemporary cultural environment

An important role of government is to honour the principle that parents (or, when applicable, guardians) have the primary responsibility for the religious and moral education of their children, as enunciated in the ICCPR Article 18(4):

*The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.*¹⁰⁶

Consequently, measures to help children and young people navigate the contemporary cultural environment should be directed towards empowering parents (and guardians) as they guide the development of their children.

Recommendation 5:

The NSW Government should require all schools to restrict internet content to age-appropriate material.

9. Possible measures that the Children's Advocate can take to assist children and young people to navigate the cultural environment successfully

9.1. Provide appropriate resources and guidance to children

The Children's Advocate needs to provide appropriate resources and guidance to children. Presently, the website for the NSW Children's Advocate promotes homosexuality and transsexuality by advertising a number of websites including Minus18.¹⁰⁷

Advertising websites such as Minus18, which are directed at underage children, puts the welfare of the young at risk. For example, Minus18 promotes chest binding for girls¹⁰⁸ and penis "tucking" for boys.¹⁰⁹ It also encourages sexual activity:

*There are a lot of positives to having sex. It's good exercise, reduces stress, improves your mood and it feels good. Obviously it's not for everyone, but for those that like to dabble in some good old hanky panky from time to time, there are a lot of upsides!*¹¹⁰

And another:

If you're worried about it hurting there are some things you can do:

- *Make sure you're both turned on and in the mood before you start.*
- *If there's any kind of fingering, cut those nails and remove any nail polish first!*
- *Use plenty of lube when there's penetration.*¹¹¹

The website covers the topic of gonorrhoea in explicit and profane detail (emphasis added):

So I done fucked up. Literally. One Grindr hook-up gone wrong, and that's how I got myself some gonorrhoea. But let's backtrack here so I can fill out some holes (pun intended) in my little life drama.

Long and short of it is that I had **penetrative anal sex**, in which I was the recipient where no condom was involved in the sexual activity. Do not do this. Ever. Never ever. The stress, time, and in my particular case, pain in the butt (literally) is NOT worth the twenty minutes of sort of **decent missionary**. Really. It isn't.

... **So it's not as terrible as you may have expected, in fact it's not terrible at all. Most STIs can be detected from non-invasive urine and saliva samples, and if found early are easily cured.**¹¹²

It is irresponsible for the Children's Advocate to be advertising such a website. The Children's Advocate should protect children from harm, not introduce them to it. Such conduct is at odds with the legislated principles of the Office (emphasis added):

The safety, welfare and well-being of children and young people are the paramount considerations

The views of children and young people are to be given serious consideration and taken into account

*A cooperative relationship between children and young people and their families and communities are important for the safety, welfare and well-being of children and young people.*¹¹³

Recommendation 6:

Since the office of the Children's Advocate is required to give paramount consideration to the "safety, welfare and well-being of children and young people", the Children's Advocate should be instructed not to promote material that sexualises children.

10. Any other matter

10.1. Government-funded programs

The Safe Schools Coalition Australia (SSCA) program, funded by the Federal Government to the sum of \$8 million and which operates in various schools in Australia, encourages sexual experimentation. For example, in Victoria, where the program was first developed, some high school students were told that they can find out if they are "gay" by "trying it".¹¹⁴

Government-funded programs should not encourage children to sexual activity, especially risky and harmful sexual practices.

10.2. Children's toys

The racy nature of Bratz dolls contributes to the sexualisation of young girls.¹¹⁵ One parent described the experience of her daughter receiving such a doll as a present at a birthday party:

When it came to the present-opening, the little girl wriggled excitedly in her seat as my daughter unwrapped her gift. For a moment, I stared at it and wondered if there was a new doll on the block called 'Hooker Barbie'.

The doe-eyed, midriff-baring doll was dressed in cheap pink-and-black lingerie and looked as if she should be dancing round a pole.

*"It's one of the BratzBabyz!" the little girl burst out. "She's called Sugar and I want to be just like her!"*¹¹⁶

10.3. Pole dancing

Classes on pole dancing, euphemistically referred to as “pole fitness”, are available in Australia for children as young as the age of six.¹¹⁷ Such an erotic adult activity, associated with the sex industry, is completely inappropriate for children and reduces women to mere objects of men’s sexual desires.

10.4. Clothing

Criticism has been directed at Target for selling high-cut shorts and see-through tops for girls under 10.¹¹⁸

Bonds has sold bra-like products for girls as young as six,¹¹⁹ while Best & Less has sold bras for girls as young as two.¹²⁰

A number of celebrities have been slammed for clothing which sexualises children. In 2013, Gwyneth Paltrow was criticised for a bikini line for girls as young as four. *The Mirror* reported:

*The controversial \$45 bikini is “covered in ruffles on the top and bottom” and is described as being “super cute” for daughters who want to match their mothers.*¹²¹

In 2014, Liz Hurley launched a range of leopard print bikinis for girls under 8. The actress posed at the launch alongside children modelling the range wearing a leopard print top herself with cleavage exposed.¹²²

Cotton On has featured baby clothes featuring sexual phrases, including:

- The condom broke
- Pardon my nipple breath
- I'm living proof my mum is easy
- I'm a tits man
- Mummy likes it on top
- Wipe my butt sucker
- I like big boobs and I cannot lie
- So hot right now
- I'm bringing sexy back
- Practice safe sucks¹²³

Apparently unfazed, Cotton On Group marketing manager Emily Checinski said:

*The slogan products aren't for everyone, but there's definitely a place in our society for provocative humour that pushes the boundaries...*¹²⁴

Online store Café Press has featured baby clothes and accessories with even worse slogans. A recent search of the website revealed jump suits with the following slogans and imagery:

- iHorny (with a picture of a rhinoceros)
- Deviant
- Nice Beaver (i.e. vagina and accompanied by a picture of a beaver creature)
- I'm the guy you have to blow to get a drink around here

- Vagitarian
- (an image of a naked woman)
- (an image of colourful sperm)
- Life is a sexually transmitted disease
- Please tell your boobs to stop staring at me
- Boobs: the proof that men can focus on two things at once
- Eat, sleep, coitus (which includes an image of a couple engaging in sex)
- I want your DILF (i.e. Dad I'd like to Fuck)
- Need Head (i.e. oral sex – featuring an image of a man without a head)
- This is what happens when it doesn't get licked (featuring an image of ice cream in a cone melting)
- I've got wood (featuring a picture of a beaver with timber)
- Ask me about our blowjobs for drinks program¹²⁵

Baby clothing with slogans such as “No gag reflex”, “I love being a GANG BANG SLUT”, “No my mummy doesn't like it in the a**, I'm here aren't I” and “F!*& me like a Pornstar” has also been advertised.^{126,127}

10.5. Makeup

Boy band One Direction has been accused of sexualising young girls with its make up brand. Educational psychologist Teresa Bliss said:

This is a far cry from young girls diving into the dressing-up box and trying on their mother's lipstick.

*Many, many young girls dream of being Harry's girlfriend so to use that as a marketing tool is frankly upsetting. It is a shameless and cynical marketing plug which will encourage girls as young as eight to wear make-up, which is outrageous.*¹²⁸

The wearing of make-up, coupled with the image that the band is trying to portray, is another example of a blatant attempt to sexualise young girls.

10.6. Child sex dolls

A sign of the increasing sexualisation of the young, child sex dolls are available.

The *Mirror Online* reported:

Outraged parents have slammed 'sick and disgusting' child sex dolls that have been invented to stop paedophiles offending.

Shin Takagi, founded the Japanese firm Trottla, which makes the controversial rubber creations.

*He claims the lifelike dolls are a tool for those who, like him, struggle with an ongoing sexual attraction towards children.*¹²⁹

As the article notes, such dolls normalise sexual attraction to children. The dolls may be available to buy online, and thus available to Australians for purchase.

11. Conclusion

Children continue to be bombarded with sexual content. Since the Commonwealth Parliamentary sexualisation inquiry in 2008, the situation has become worse, not better. This is particularly due to widespread access to smartphones, which allow children access to pornography 24/7 and have enabled the practice of sexting.

Companies keep pushing the boundaries with marketing because sex sells; the raunchier the campaign, the more free publicity.

It is not just the private sector which is to blame for the current crisis. Government is contributing to the problem by the provision of education programs which encourage risky sexual experimentation.

The NSW Government, in conjunction with the federal and other state governments where possible, needs to take urgent action to address the avalanche of sexual material which is engulfing children.

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