



TOP BLOKES
FOUNDATION



SUBMISSION TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL ISSUES INQUIRY INTO THE IMPACTS OF HARMFUL PORNOGRAPHY ON MENTAL, EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Top Blokes Foundation (Top Blokes) is a youth mental health charity supporting young males aged 10-24 years old. Top Blokes welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Standing Committee on Social Issues on the impacts of harmful pornography on mental, emotional, and physical health.

Our submission is informed by our experience working with young males in schools and communities since 2006, the lived experience of our Youth Ambassador Council members (10 young males who have participated in Top Blokes programs and provide advice on Top Blokes strategy and operations). To develop this submission, we ran a focus group with Youth Ambassador Council members and Top Blokes Youth Workers.

The results of this focus group, as they relate to the terms of reference for this inquiry, can be summarised as follows:

- Young males are using pornography and want to talk about pornography. Many have a 'gut feel' that their pornography use is harming them, but do not have a trusted adult they can talk to about this.
- Young males feel shame and stigma around their use of pornography.
- Young males are changing their behaviours, including reducing pornography use and/or avoiding harmful pornography, once they understand the mental, emotional and physical health impacts.
- Pornography is impacting the sexual practices of young males and adversely influencing their perception of what it means to be a man and their body image.
- Parents and carers have a critical role to play in supporting young males to learn about the risks of pornography use and form healthier behaviours and perceptions on sex.

OUR SUBMISSION MAKES THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Development of, and investment in, educational programs for young males in primary school that include age - and stage - appropriate content on how to avoid harmful content like pornography on the internet and the risks of pornography use on physical and mental health.
2. Invest in domestic research into impacts of pornographic material on young males in New South Wales, particularly with regards to mental and physical health, as well as impacts on relationships.
3. Consider appropriate regulations to prevent advertising of potentially harmful content to young people, including through digital channels such as social media and video games.
4. Educational initiatives designed to minimise the harm associated with pornography use among young males should include a focus on respect and consent and support young males to explore their sense of identity outside of socially dominant forms and patterns of masculinity.

5. Invest in programs delivered by qualified and trained professionals to educate young males on the harmful impacts of pornographic content.
6. Establish a body that engages with and represents the voices and experiences of young people, including pathways for co-design solutions to address the impacts of pornography.
7. Initiatives aimed at educating young males about pornography and the risks associated with pornography use include engagement with parents, guardians and supporters to share information and support ongoing discussions about pornography.

ABOUT TOP BLOKES FOUNDATION

Top Blokes supports 2,500 young males across NSW through programs delivered in 65 schools. We provide safe and supportive spaces where young males can meaningfully connect, explore their identities beyond traditional masculinity, develop critical thinking skills, and build resilience.

Our programs are grounded in frameworks that promote healthy masculinities, improve mental health, and minimise harm. Qualified Youth Workers deliver these programs in schools and communities across NSW and Queensland.



Our mission is to challenge and nurture young males to be their best selves.

Our vision is for more young males to lead healthy, safe, and fulfilling lives.

**I DIDN'T REALISE BEFORE THAT THE CHOICES I WAS MAKING
MADE ME LOOK LIKE A BAD KID NOW I KNOW HOW TO BE A
GOOD PERSON AND SHOW OTHER PEOPLE HOW GOOD I CAN BE.**

Top Blokes participant, aged 12

WE OFFER THREE KEY PROGRAMS:

- **10-13 program:** Delivered over one school term in primary schools.
- **14-17 program:** Delivered over two school terms in high schools.
- **18-24 program:** Run over 10-20 weeks in partnership with community organisations.

Graduates join our **Grad Club** for ongoing support, leadership opportunities, and connections with peers.

Our **Youth Ambassador Council** — 10 program graduates — provides lived experience advice, guides programming, and engages in advocacy.

Top Blokes runs a **supporters program** for parents and caregivers, sending text updates after each workshop with key content and conversation prompts to help continue discussions at home.



MEET THE YOUTH AMBASSADOR COUNCIL



BEN, 15

I want to help make an impact and help young men improve their lives.



NICK, 18

I want to share my ideas within Top Blokes and help others with mental health issues.

DANIEL, 15

I want to support young men and help prevent youth crime.



AUSTIN, 17

I want to change the stigma around men's mental health.



SALIM, 17

I want to help my friends and other boys understand positive men's mental health.



LUIS, 17

I want to help the Top Blokes program grow and impact more young men.

ALEKS, 16

I want to reduce the stigma around addiction and help young men overcome them.



LOCHLAN, 16

I want to be a voice for reason for young men to succeed in their life dreams.



RAFAY, 16

I want to be a voice for young people who are on the Top Blokes program.



REUVEN, 15

I want to help young men understand they're not alone in this journey.

THE TOP BLOKES MENTORING PROGRAM TOPICS

1 CULTIVATE RESPONSIBLE DECISION MAKING

- Meet and Greet
- Leadership and Teamwork
- Influence of Alcohol
- Effects of Drugs
- Mental Health
- Resilience
- Anger Management
- Redefining Masculinities
- Peer Pressure and Risk-Taking

2 FOSTER HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

- Online Behaviours
- Communication and Connection
- Healthy Relationships
- Realities of Pornography
- Sexual Health

3 EMBRACE DIVERSITY & ACCEPTANCE




- Diversity and Inclusion
- Racism and Stereotyping
- Graduation

I LEARNT A LOT ABOUT MENTAL, EMOTIONAL, PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL HEALTH. I LEARNT HOW TO BE A GOOD LEADER, A TEAMMATE AND HOW TO HAVE HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS, MANAGE EMOTIONS AND HOW TO BE ENCOURAGING AND SUPPORTIVE OF ALL THE PEOPLE THAT I CARE ABOUT.

Top Blokes participant, aged 16



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WWW.TOPBLOKES.ORG.AU

CONTACT US

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