



Open letter to the Morrison Government & Department of Education about the harmful content still live on its 'Good Society' schools resource

Fair Agenda and End Rape on Campus Australia are extremely concerned that the Morrison Government's Good Society website is still littered with harmful and inaccurate content.

We are deeply worried about the distress and harm this content is likely causing to rape survivors; and that it may be promoting confusion and misconceptions in young people who have been calling out for proper consent education.

Specific content that we are concerned about, and urge the Department to remove from the website immediately, includes:

- Materials that list 'eye contact', 'smiling with the eyes' or 'laughing' as 'cues that can convey a yes'
- Conflicting materials about non-verbal communication that state 'looking away' or 'going still' indicates a 'hard no' and mean 'don't ask again', and then later stating that 'stillness' or 'looking away' are body language that is 'unsure' (This is particularly concerning when freezing is a common response to rape),
- Information about the age of consent for anal sex in Queensland which is incorrect
- Materials that create a concerning lack of clarity around consent, with statements like: "we need to avoid pressure and coercion, though respectful persuasion can be okay" and "If a yes is not enthusiastic then it's a maybe, even a no". "We also have a responsibility to stop whenever the other person says no or isn't an enthusiastic yes." "To leave the Maybe Zone, you either need to both agree yes, or someone needs to finally decide no."
- Yet another bizarre and problematic video metaphor about a boy not wanting to watch a movie because "I just really hate seeing little children get murdered by clowns" [Movie section of the playlist], and then apologising for not speaking up about wanting to stop.
- Concerning content about relationship break ups, that introduce qualifiers around a person's ability to end a relationship, like: "strictly speaking, if one person wants to leave a relationship, the other person can't stop them" and "strictly speaking, as soon as Abby says no to the relationship, that's the end of it—she can walk away, and Euan has to respect her decision."
- Includes concerning messages like 'sexual desire... can really distort our thinking'
- Provides incorrect and inadequate information about abuse:
 - A page that directs young people to contact the police if they're being stalked, but doesn't provide that direction for any other criminal act described, including sexual assault.
- Confusing metaphors about sexual consent including about eating a taco.

The suggestion that stillness and looking away should be seen as anything other than a no; or that smiling or laughing should be seen as a yes are horrifying. The suggestion that these actions could be seen or justified as amounting to consent is incredibly distressing and traumatising. Think of how many young women laugh and smile to try and navigate unsafe situations or inappropriate behaviour.

The safety and trauma of survivors should be a central consideration at the centre of every program. Right now this website is actively harmful. Every single piece of content the government is putting in front of young people on this issue should be signed off by experts who actually understand the drivers of sexual violence, and the need for a trauma-informed approach for the students in these classrooms who have already been sexually assaulted.

We are extremely concerned that promoting the current website does more harm than good.

We urge the Government to take down the website while it is reviewed by experts in violence prevention and comprehensive sexuality and relationships education. And to resource experts to build the capacity of educators to deliver effective content and prevention initiatives in schools.
