

I write as a concerned mother to two young girls, aged 5 and nearly 7(and aunt to a 10 year old niece and several young nephews).

By choice and effort our children have limited, generally carefully considered exposure to free to air tv and other mainstream media. However, it is very difficult to 'protect' children from the overly sexualised aspects of modern day living.

Some examples of ways our efforts have been foiled are:

- it is very difficult to buy swimwear for girls that doesn't have a skimpy bra-type top. In these days of sun awareness protection I wonder why in order to buy a "rashie" and some pants one frequently has to choose a "rashie and a bikini."

- their school peers are already frequently dressed in a sexualised style

- the dancing styles that appear at school fetes and dances, even junior school ones

- some of the comments repeated at home from class members indicate that they have been exposed to too much already, before age 6!

- the only billboard that we pass on a trip to and from school has, for only a short period a month or two ago, displayed an ad with several bare bottoms. Even though it has been since replaced by subsequent advertisements my children still make comments to each other (not even aware if I'm hearing while driving) about the former advertisement. I can't even tell you the ad's details or product as it disappeared soon after they first commented - yet its effect remains.

- receiving gifts, from 'new' school friends, from the Bratz range of merchandising (when we'd prefer they didn't even receive the Barbie stereotype)

- the lewd and suggestive, double-meaning conversations between characters in such movies as "Cars" and "Shrek" and many more. The rampant merchandising logos on all sorts of products makes it very hard to avoid having to explain the movies/characters etc (eg. a recent trip to buy skates gave us a choice between Cars branded skates on special and one other set).

- covers of magazines frequently favour apparent sexiness, and get noticed by children, even if they only visit newsagencies infrequently

Unfortunately I only became aware of this senate enquiry late last night and school pick-up is imminent so my comments are limited to the above at this stage. Should there be more opportunity to comment further, I would be happy to do so.

Regards, Louise Nott