

SUBMISSION TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, COMMUNICATIONS, AND THE ARTS:
INQUIRY INTO THE SEXUALISATION OF CHILDREN IN THE MEDIA.

As the mother of three young children I am very concerned at the inverse relationship that is developing between adult behaviour and maturity. Our children are behaving like adults at an increasingly younger age, but actually maturing (particularly in relation to their understanding of adult behaviour) at a much later age, if at all.

One of the most obvious manifestations of this is the indirect and direct sexualisation of our society. This has significant and serious effects on our children, although largely unacknowledged by society, and it is increasingly difficult – I would go so far as to say nearly impossible – to shield my children from that, even at the tender ages of 2 and 3 months old.

This difficulty is largely as a result of sexualised content in media and merchandise being readily accessible to, and even promoted to, young children and teens. Society as a whole is over sexualised, which severely limits the extent to which we can protect our children. Further, the continued sexualisation of our society is slowly dulling our sense of what actually constitutes sexualisation. Finally, even if we were able to make society as a whole aware of the levels of sexualisation in media and marketing, there is a general lack of education as to the effect this has on people, and children in particular, and therefore individuals do not see the need to be accountable in respect of their own children and those around them.

I therefore believe that immediate action should be taken by addressing the following suggestions:

- A ban on all children's clothing with sexualised slogans (such as "I'm a tits man" on baby t-shirts!)
- A ban on general clothing with sexualised slogans
- Screening of billboards before they enter the public domain by an independent panel including appropriately qualified childhood experts
- Independent regulation of merchandise marketed and sold to children and young teens - including dolls, toys, magazines, etc – by an independent panel including appropriately qualified childhood experts. This panel to consider a product's likely effects in terms of sexualisation, and make recommendations based on those considerations
- All Music Video clips should only be shown outside children's viewing hours (with children's viewing hours including Saturday/Sunday mornings)
- Pornographic magazines to be kept covered or out of the eye level of children and young teens in newsagents, supermarkets and convenience stores
- Stricter control on radio and TV advertising and programming at times when children and young teens are likely to be viewing
- Commencement of an education campaign informing adults of the effects of sexualisation on children and how they can limit its impact on their children
- Establish an independent regulatory system to oversee all media exposure and advertising to children and young teens
- Establish a single entry public complaints system for all areas of media and merchandising