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ARTS & SOCIAL SCIENCES

Submission of

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to the

**The Senate Standing Committee on Environment,
Communication and the Arts**

**Inquiry into the sexualisation of children in the
contemporary media environment**

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Executive Summary

1) Contemporary Australian ideas about childhood, which include a strong belief in the importance of educating all children and protecting them from participating in the adult worlds of work and sexuality, as well as ensuring that girls have equal opportunities, represent important human rights advances. It is, however, important to bear in mind that these social and economic advances have only been extended to many Australian children and teenagers relatively recently and that we still live in a society in which the most vulnerable young people remain at risk of child sexual abuse, domestic violence, poverty and inadequate access to education and health care.

2) It is true that children and teenagers are more likely to come into contact with media material designed for adults, via the internet as well as numerous popular media products. It is also true that there is a growing volume of popular media material designed with children as well as teenagers in mind. There is a real need for broad, evidence based research, which examines how children and young people understand this material.

3) It is important to acknowledge that many teenage girls are not 'children' in the sense of what they know, what they want to know and how they interact with the world around them. By the age of sixteen, teenage girls are legally able to consent to sex and many of them are sexually active earlier than this. Their media representation and consumption needs to be understood in this context.

4) Recent British research indicates that parents can 'model' or reinforce particular responses to sexual material, and hence particular sexual identities for their children. The media do not have an autonomous ability to either sexually corrupt children or to sexually 'liberate' them.

5) Like other aspects of contemporary culture, sexuality is rightly the subject of vigorous inquiry and debate. It is important that children and young people's rights to age-

appropriate sexual expression and learning are not undermined by the over-regulation of media content. It is equally important that mechanisms are in place to assist parents, educators, children and young people in understanding and discussing representations of sex, love and relationships in media and popular culture.

6) Our key concern with contemporary media is that sexually suggestive imagery should not be produced, broadcast or consumed in situations that promote or condone sexual abuse or sexual coercion; and should always be age appropriate. We suggest both educational resources and popular or academic commentary on young people's sexuality should take care not to condemn or insult young people's emerging expressions of sexuality. While concern for the safety and wellbeing of children and young people should be paramount, educators and policy makers should take care not to imply or infer that older teenagers need to be 'protected' from consensual sexual feelings and interactions, regardless of whether they occur in media imagery or everyday life.

Our recommendations are:

a) That government and industry work together to create an online site and forum that allows parents and other concerned about young people to register their concerns about media content and technology and its impact on young people.

b) That methodologically and empirically sound Australian research be conducted with children under the age of 12 into their experience of media targeted to them.

c) That methodologically and empirically sound Australian research is conducted into the range of media and advertising materials targeted to children under the age of 12, as well as at broader representations of children in media and advertising materials targeted at adults. This research should consider the social and cultural context in which this material is distributed, provide evidence of how it meshes with current community standards, and make recommendations about any relevant changes to current regulatory codes, laws and

public policy in relation to media and advertising production, regulation and consumption.

d) That the Federal and State governments commit to a strong focus on age-appropriate education in schools, for children and teenagers, to support them to understand and make choices about media material dealing with love, sexuality, gender and relationships.

e) That sex education in Australia should include a uniform curriculum that deals, in an age-appropriate way, with popular media targeted at or accessed by children and teenagers.

f) That Federal Government resources be directed to funding research into and identifying filtering systems and other initiatives that promote cyber-safety for children and teenagers.

g) That Federal and State funding for parenting skills courses are increased and include training in how to manage young people's emerging sexuality, how to ensure they are accessing age-appropriate media, and how to create an ongoing dialogue with them about the information and values they're taking from the media they consume.

h) That funding for all support and intervention services that deal with women and children experiencing, or at risk of, violence and sexual violence be evaluated. We note that the levels of these forms of violence remain high and that many community and public sector services dealing with these issues are chronically under-funded.

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1. Introduction

On the 12 March 2008, the Senate referred the following matter to the Committee for inquiry and report by the 23 June 2008:

The sexualisation of children in the contemporary media environment, including radio and television, children's magazines, other print and advertising material and the Internet.

In undertaking the inquiry, the committee, in particular, has been asked to:

- a. Examine the sources and beneficiaries of premature sexualisation of children in the media;
- b. Review the evidence on the short- and long-term effects of viewing or buying sexualising and objectifying images and products and their influence on cognitive functioning, physical and mental health, sexuality, attitudes and beliefs; and
- c. Examine strategies to prevent and/or reduce the sexualisation of children in the media and the effectiveness of different approaches in ameliorating its effects, including the role of school-based sexuality and reproductive health education and change in media and advertising regulation such as the Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice and the Commercial Radio Codes of Practice.

We welcome this opportunity to make this submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts. The Journalism and Media Research Centre is a research centre in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of NSW. The JMRC houses a team of expert researchers working across the fields of journalism and media. One of our core areas of expertise is the social, cultural and health impacts of media representations and media consumption.

This submission will identify research and make recommendations relevant to all three areas identified in the terms of reference.

This inquiry provides a welcome opportunity to take an analytical and evidence-based look at concerns that have been animating public debate about children and media representation and consumption for some time. A prominent example of such concerns is contained in the 2006 Australia Institute report, *Corporate Paedophilia*, which states that: ‘Images of sexualised children are becoming increasingly common in advertising and marketing material’ⁱ. This alarming claim understandably garnered widespread media coverage and heightened public concernⁱⁱ. Protecting, educating and nurturing children are rightly seen as one of our most important and primary social tasks. If the authors of the Australia Institute report are correct in their assertion, then we are failing our children in the most basic way and urgent intervention is required.

While the purpose of this submission is to identify evidence-based approaches to protecting children and young teenagers from sexual abuse and age-inappropriate material, we begin by analysing material on the public record that has fuelled the concerns that have led to this Senate Inquiry. In particular, we look closely at the Australia Institute’s claims because they are commonly cited as evidence that sexualisation of children is rife in the popular media and is increasing. We will examine the evidence for the report’s claims using a combination of textual analysis of the media they document, a literature review of key research in relevant fields, and an analysis of the shape and scope of public debate on the subject.

The authors of this submission have substantial research track records in the fields of gender, youth and media studies and have both published widely on these issues. We also have a longstanding involvement in public advocacy and education work aimed at preventing violence and sexual violence against women, teenagers and children. We believe that far more public resources need to be devoted to preventing such violence and our interest in this inquiry is motivated by a strong desire to see public and private resources allocated in an evidence-based way to ensure that all children and teenagers at risk are identified, protected and supported.

2. Definitions

Sexualisation: The term ‘sexualisation’ is often used in such a broad way that it loses any analytical precision. In public debate the term collapses a number of distinct concerns: that children are being depicted in ways that suggest they have an adult understanding of self and sexuality; that children are being encouraged to behave in an adult sexual manner; that popular images of children are fuelling child sexual abuse; and that children are being exposed to adult sexual material. For reasons of space and focus, this report deals mainly with the first two concerns.

Children: While the terms of reference for this inquiry specifically refer to children, it is important to note that many public debates about ‘premature sexualisation’ include adolescents aged 13 to 17 within the category of those who are consuming sexual and sexualising materialⁱⁱⁱ. Current debates about the sexualisation of children tend to use the term ‘children’ to refer a broad range of ages. In some instances, the term is used exclusively to refer preschool and primary school age children but, in others, teenagers up to the age of 18 are included, particularly in discussions about the effects of ‘raunch culture’ on young women. For this reason, we look at both children and teenagers in this submission. We are concerned, however, to distinguish these categories since they are clearly two distinct groups with distinct needs, interests and vulnerabilities. Our working definition of children encompasses persons aged up to 12. We will also be arguing that within this category, far more attention needs to be paid to distinguishing different age groups, their needs, interests and vulnerabilities and that it is unhelpful to treat them as a continuous category. We use the term ‘teenagers’ or ‘young people’ refers to people aged 13-18, an age when the great majority are post-pubescent.

3. Sexualisation of children: an historical context

There is significant public concern today that children and teenagers are being forced into contact with the adult world at an accelerated rate. It is certainly true that children and teenagers are more likely to come into contact with media material designed for adults, via the internet as well as numerous popular media products. It is also true that there is a growing volume of popular media material designed with children as well as teenagers in mind. We will address these issues below.

It is important, however, to begin by putting claims that the majority of Australian children today are being forced to 'grow up' younger and younger into an historical context. In contemporary Australian society, childhood is now frequently understood to extend to anyone under the age of 18. This represents an important historical shift in Western ideas of childhood.

Until the 18th century, even very young children were portrayed and treated as young adults and, in Christian terms, as persons born into sin and in need of strict discipline and corporal punishment. In the 19th and even early 20th century, the experience of childhood was strongly divided along class lines^{iv}. Upper and, increasingly, middle class children had access to education and leisure, while their working class counterparts frequently had little or no education and were sent out to work from the age of eight on farms, in mines, in domestic labour and in factories. The late 19th century saw a major political movement that raised and aimed to address the human rights abuses of children, which included child labour and child prostitution. In Australia, the age of consent was ten in the 19th century, and twelve in the early part of the 20th century. Furthermore, it was common for much of the 20th century for girls to marry as young as sixteen. The teenage fertility rate has significantly decreased over the last three decades from 55.5 births per 1 000 women in 1971 compared to 16 births per 1 000 women in 2005^v.

There is also considerable evidence to suggest that the representation of young people, particularly young women and even girls, as 'sexual' has not changed as radically as some critics would suggest. Historically, images within media and popular culture have tended to represent the accepted ideas of the culture in which they circulate. Both men and women are represented as 'ideal types' within the media, but these ideals often reflect norms that are agreed upon within broader cultural and social settings, such as families, churches and workplaces and educational institutions. As the authors of the recent American Psychological Association Report on the Sexualisation of Girls observe, media texts are often a delivery system for pre-existing cultural values (APA 2007: 4). They also acknowledge, that previous generations created media and popular culture that represented young women and girls mainly in terms of their current and future sexuality and reproductive capacity.

Until the 1970s, women's primary social value was linked to their roles as wives and mothers. Sexual expression was only legitimate within monogamous heterosexual marriage, but unmarried women were encouraged to cultivate their sexuality as a means to securing a husband. In her book *Think Pink*, feminist cultural historian Lynne Peril documents numerous examples of popular media articles, games and toys from the 1950s and 60s that encouraged girls and young women to cultivate physical beauty and flirtatiousness. According to Peril, toys, books and games marketed to pre-adolescent girls in the 1960s mimicked 'adult' activities such as applying makeup, shopping for clothes and dating. As Peril puts it, the popular media of the 1950s and 1960s promoted the idea that 'being feminine was the cornerstone of female success and happiness (that is, marriage and mating), and the sooner girls learned the rules, the better'^{vi}.

While marriage was viewed as women's ideal career, those who had sex outside of marriage could expect to be shamed and stigmatised as 'sluts'. It was essential, then, that women made themselves sexually attractive to men, but did not overtly demonstrate a willingness to undertake sexual activity outside of marriage. Since the 1970s, this stigma has diminished, however, physical beauty and sexual desirability are still seen as key aspects of femininity. It is not surprising, given this history, that media images are more

likely to celebrate female sexual attractiveness for its own sake. While it is true that sexual references in contemporary media and popular culture are more overt, there is no evidence to suggest that sexualised images of young women and images designed to prepare girls for their roles as mothers, wives and girlfriends are radically new^{vii}. Indeed, many of the examples Peril describes meet the APA's definition of sexualization, by suggesting that girls' and women's 'value comes only from [their] sexual appearance or behaviour, to the exclusion of other characteristics'^{viii}.

Contemporary Australian ideas about childhood, which include a strong belief in the importance of educating all children and protecting them from participating in the adult worlds of work and sexuality, as well as ensuring that girls have equal opportunities, represent important human rights advances. It is, however, important to bear in mind that these social and economic advances have only been extended to many Australian children and teenagers relatively recently and that we still live in a society in which the most vulnerable young people remain at risk of child sexual abuse, domestic violence, poverty and inadequate access to education and health care. The impact of the social, economic, racial and gender inequalities which continue to structure Australian society are likely to be most pronounced for children in vulnerable groups. Improving the social and economic well being of all Australian children, we believe, should begin with an evidenced-based recognition of which children are most at risk and what social, economic and cultural factors are at play in that risk.

This historical perspective is important when it comes to assessing claims that contemporary popular culture is impinging on a once universal and ideal experience of childhood. Historical evidence of how differently various groups of children in our past lived reminds us that when we make decisions about how resources are spent we should pay careful attention to the constraints of socio-economic background, family environment and community. If we focus the majority of our resources on children who already have willing advocates – what happens to the children whose parents are not advocating for them? The question that necessarily arises in this submission is how new forms of popular culture are changing the experience of childhood and what role media

representations of children and media consumption by children play in influencing their well being. These are important questions and ones that must be answered in evidence-based ways to ensure that our public policy and our resources are used in the most efficient manner.

4. Are children being prematurely sexualised in contemporary Australia media?

The authors of this submission recognise that individuals and community groups are concerned that children are indeed being sexualised in media aimed at them and the media that surrounds them. These views deserve to be given a forum. This Senate Inquiry is important for this very reason. As researchers in the field of youth media consumption, we believe it is important to pay attention to the experiences and views, not only of young people, but of those who have their interests at heart. In our recommendations we take the question of developing a stronger forum for these concerns seriously. It is clear that many advocates for children do not believe they are being heard when it comes to concerns about the impact of popular media and new technologies on young people. We believe that a coalition of government and industry sectors could do more to promote an interactive forum in which these views could be heard and acted on where appropriate. This forum could also provide advice about how our media is regulated and monitored, information on where to lodge relevant complaints and appeal decisions and serve an educational function for media consumers, including young people and their parents.

Turning to research, The Australia Institute's report titled *Corporate Paedophilia* has been influential in public debate, according to our analysis of mainstream media coverage of the sexualisation of children, over the past two years. It is also the only significant recent Australian report on this issue. We will evaluate the evidence offered by the report

that children are being sexualised before considering the status of any other available evidence.

The *Corporate Paedophilia* report defines three sources of the ‘sexualisation’ of children (defined as persons aged 12 and younger). They are: advertising images of children dressed and posed in inappropriately adult clothing, which may or not be aimed at children; popular media targeted at children which advertises products and promotes behaviour of an adult sexual nature; and exposure to material designed to be consumed by adults but accessible to children (music video clips, for example). It is the first two areas that concern us in this section of the submission.

The authors of the *Corporate Paedophilia* report base their evidence on a set of general observations about a extremely small sample of advertisements and marketing material (fourteen advertising images in total) and what they dub a ‘content analysis’ of three single issues of three different tween magazines. It is worth noting, from a research perspective, that neither sample is in any sense large enough to ground the claims made in the report. A far more systematic analysis would be required to have any validity in the fields of media and communications studies, the academic fields that specialise in media representation and consumption^{ix}. In these fields, content analysis entails a systematic and objective analysis of texts in which explicit rules for coding the texts are employed^x. The Australia institute report employs coding categories – beauty, fashion, celebrity, crush – which are so broad as to be virtually meaningless. ‘Fashion’, for instance, could denote anything from a T-shirt to stiletto shoes (not that the latter appear in the sample they consider). ‘Beauty’, could refer to lip-gloss or plastic surgery.

In mounting their case that children are being routinely sexualised the Australia Institute’s report sweeps together a range of broad indices the authors have decided in advance define sexualisation – including long hair on young girls and the fact that tween magazines run interview with popular female singers and actresses. Using and cross-referencing these indices, they then search for them in a small and apparently randomly selected group of texts.

In their analysis of advertising images, the majority of which show children modelling clothing, the authors of the *Corporate Paedophilia* report base their claims of sexualising content on the types of clothing shown, the physical poses of the child and teen models, the use of cosmetics and the settings. On close examination, however, their analysis of these images is highly subjective because of their failure to consider such images in the context of longstanding practices for dressing, grooming and photographing in family contexts children in Australia.

Clothing and personal grooming identified as ‘sexualising’ on young girls by the Australia Institute report include long hair, dresses with thin straps, low necklines, crop tops, jewellery, ‘very short skirts’, lip-gloss, and the use of handbags. It is commonplace to see young Australian girls with long hair, wearing short denim skirts, plastic beads and bangles, sun-frocks with spaghetti straps, necklines that would draw attention to a cleavage on an adult woman (but on a child draw no attention from reasonable adults at all), and toting various kinds of colourful bags bearing stuffed toys, snack, books they’re reading and, in late primary years, even lip-gloss. Female children frolic on our beaches in bikinis and, at preschool ages, sometimes romp topless or entirely unclad. Young Australian girls have been dressed in apparel that acknowledges adult fashion trends for at least three decades. For example, the late 1960s and early 1970s saw young Australian girls dressed in ‘hotpants’, flared jeans, ‘boob’ tubes, ponchos, maxi and mini skirts and bikinis.

Current community standards clearly dictate that this mode of dressing and grooming is not a sign that the children’s parents are knowingly ‘sexualising’ them but that they are following a dress code considered acceptable for female children since the mid-20th century, a period which marked a gradual convergence between the types of casual clothing adults and children wear. It’s a convergence that is part of our culture’s growing acceptance of a more casual approach to dressing, outside of formal and professional contexts. It is also true that children are dressed to highlight their gender. Young boys

and their fathers are often dressed in jeans and t-shirts while young girls are dressed in frocks and skirts as well as jeans and t-shirts^{xi}.

It is a large logical leap, and one which ignores the deep concern that the vast majority of parents and others have for Australian children, to suggest that dressing young girls in crop tops or bikinis carries the same cultural messages as dressing a mature adult woman in identical clothing. Indeed, this is one of the key problems we have identified with much of the analysis of media texts in the report – the assumption that the same meaning can be directly read onto a child wearing a piece of clothing or posing in a certain way as would be appropriate when looking at an adult woman wearing the same clothing or posing in a similar manner.

The *Corporate Paedophilia* report also makes reference to the use of make-up on children and the marketing of the same products to children. Current Australian community standards certainly dictate that it is not appropriate for primary school age girls to wear adult make-up (exempting contexts in which children wear make-up for acting performances or in related activities). But the cosmetics referred to in the *Corporate Paedophilia* Report are minimal types that have been of interest to and used by late primary and early high school aged girls for a number of decades: lip-gloss (as opposed to lipstick), eau de toilette, bubble bath and nail polish. We could find no evidence in the advertising and marketing images selected by the Australia Institute that children are made up to look like adult models. Certainly a number of the advertisers and magazines identified already had strict codes concerning the use of make-up on children, as well as on the way they are posed^{xii}. On the basis of our analysis of the magazine images targeted by the report and our own larger analysis of tween magazines, there is no evidence that any cosmetics apart from lip-gloss, eau de toilette, bubble bath or nail polish are currently promoted or being marketed to children^{xiii}. It is worth noting that the relevant audience for the latter magazines are concentrated in the late primary and early high school ages.

The concern about the poses in which children are photographed in the small sample of advertisements identified in the *Corporate Paedophilia* report deserves careful scrutiny. There is a vast academic literature that is devoted to analysing media and other images in a way that is designed to avoid subjective and ideologically motivated readings. This literature ranges across art history, linguistics (semiotics), media and communications studies and cultural studies. The analyses of images presented in the Australia Institute's report are not grounded in any of these research traditions. The terms used to describe the poses of the models are extremely general and have no analytic precision. For example: children are described as carrying 'adult-looking handbags', while other models are described as 'looking like fairly natural children'.

Throughout the report, the terms used to differentiate adults and children are ones that ignore the very different social contexts in which we see and understand children, teenagers and adults. When a child carries a handbag it generally signifies a parody of adulthood, one that is often viewed, affectionately, as slightly comic. When a teenage girl carries a handbag, it signifies her growing independence and (perhaps) a desire to keep some aspects of her life private. When an adult woman carries a handbag we see it as a symbol of her need to carry professional and personal items.

The question of what a 'fairly natural' child looks like is open to public debate. Protocols for family photographs vary from family to family. Some family photo albums are festooned with images of children whose faces are smeared with vegemite or hummus, playing in a disorganised manner in the family backyard or lounge-room. Others feature orderly children smiling for the camera in organised groups. The 'natural' child is always the socialised child – the child viewed from particular social and cultural ideals of how children should behave or look in a given family or setting.

There is a substantial body of work in the field of media and communications studies demonstrating that the meaning of a given pose in a photograph is not fixed, rather the meaning we assign to image varies according to the age, gender and cultural background of the person photographed and the context in which they are photographed. The

Corporate Paedophilia report attempts, we think reductively, to read adult connotations into poses that would have a very different meaning in a lingerie ad than they do in a magazine aimed at 10 year olds. They claim, for instance, that a ‘demure pose’ in which the child’s eyes are downcast is intended to draw attention to the child’s body. Yet, it could equally be read as a sign of shyness, self-consciousness in front of a camera, or thoughtfulness. Indeed, many loving parents would have images of their children posed in exactly this way.

The report deals briefly with the sexualising tendencies of children ‘posed in setting normally used by adults’. The two examples given are of a young girl leaning on the arm of a couch and a girl at the beach. We do not understand why these settings are unnatural for children or how they ‘sexualise’ them.

The *Corporate Paedophilia* report also uses an analysis of three magazines aimed at the tween market. They are *Total Girl*, *Disney Girl* and *Barbie Magazine*. The latter is no longer available at the time of this submission. The most popular tween magazine on the Australian market at the time of writing is *Total Girl* with 44 per cent of that market purchasing it. Its demographic ranges from 6 to 13 but the majority of readers (58 %) are aged 10 -13. The authors of this submission conducted a textual analysis of this magazine, examining the six most recent issues^{xiv}.

Our findings can be summarised in the following way: Every cover features images of smiling female celebrities popular with this age group, particularly its key demographic. They include singers Delta Goodrem and Avril Lavigne, actors Hilary Duff, Indiana Evans and Charlotte Best. Cover lines announce the focus of features inside the magazine commonly including pets, slumber parties, new G and PG rated movies, music, dance and fashion. In the sample we analysed, there are two small picture of a male face on the covers, a young actor named Zac Efron who stars in the movie *Hairspray* and who is a favourite with readers of the magazine. The magazine is dominated by pictures of female celebrities and young female readers. A cover line makes this explicit, stating: ‘No boys allowed’.

Regular features of the magazine include stories about pen pals, personality quizzes, an advice column in which readers offer advice on how to manage friendships and school, and interviews with female pop stars and actors. The magazine is strongly focused on encouraging readers to be confident and to be tolerant of difference in their peer group. There are numerous positive references to ‘brainy gals’ and to successful female role models – a recent feature, for instance, was titled ‘Revenge of the Nerds’ and listed female celebrities who were praiseworthy for studying and working hard.

The only beauty products featured or advertised in *Total Girl* are lip-gloss, nail polish and bubble bath. Each *Total Girl* magazine features a fashion spread modelled by girls who are, or are dressed and posed to appear, in the same age group as the readers. The models wear minimal make-up and their attire ranges across jeans, shorts, t-shirts and sun frocks. There is no evidence at all of models dressing to emulate adults. Many of the spreads feature two models who are posed as friends having fun together, playing music, sport and ‘hanging out’. There are no visual references to underwear or even swimwear.

Putting the demonstrated lack of sample size and the problematic methodology of the *Corporate Paedophilia* report to one side, one of the most serious problems with this report is the failure to put images of children wearing clothes or posing for a camera into a broader social context.

Children shown pouting, or smiling, or lying back with their arms behind their head looking up at a camera, or fixing the viewer with an interested gaze may be thinking many things. They may be photographed in this manner for family photo albums or in professional photo shoots. To assume that they are offering themselves up for an adult sexual gaze, or that their pose or clothing suggests that they understand and have internalised this gaze, is a claim for which we have been able to find no substantiation. A ten year old girl pictured lying on her back looking into the distance in a shoot for a retail catalogue is not attempting to attract the gaze of a paedophile. Child sexual abusers may, of course, read sexual invitations into images of children. They may read sexual

invitations into the wearing of school uniforms or Speedo swimsuits, for that matter. Adults who sexually abuse children are criminals who look for excuses to rationalise their abhorrent behaviour. We would argue, however, that the gaze of the paedophile is not the gaze reasonable adults bring to images of children.

An important part of respecting the physical, emotional and social development of children is avoiding the projection of unduly adult interpretations onto behaviours that may mimic but in no conscious way anticipate fully adult understandings of the world.

It is equally important, however, to recognise the diversity of issues that are often grouped under the broader banner of the concern that children are being sexualised. From reading submissions to this Inquiry, we believe it is critical to separate concerns that children are being directly sexualised in media representations and by media consumption from a host of other issues which are sometimes conflated. These secondary concerns include: concern that children are the target of too much marketing and advertising (a concern that certainly animates much of the Australia Institute's report); the concern that female children are interested in fashion and popular culture; and the concern that, in the era of the internet and mass media, it is increasingly difficult to screen out material aimed at an adult rather than youth audience. These are all valid issues and deserve their own analysis and solutions. They are not, however, we submit the same thing as the claim that children are being shown as adult sexual beings or being encouraged to act in adult sexual ways.

One test of the level of broader community concern is the number and content of complaints received by the Advertising Standards Board^{xv}. The Board provides a free public service of complaint resolution. It provides determinations on complaints about most forms of advertising in relation to issues including the use of language, the discriminatory portrayal of people, concern for children, portrayals of violence, sex, sexuality and nudity, and health and safety. Determinations are made under appropriate sections of the Advertiser Code of Ethics. There is also a separate code regarding advertising to children that the Board can apply. Prior to this latter code being put in

place, the Board adjudicated complaints about the sexualizing of children under section 2.3 which states that: ‘Advertisements shall treat sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience and, where appropriate, the relevant program time zone’. Prior to 2008, when a new section of the code was announced specifically dealing with sexualising images of children (as opposed to adults), no data was recorded on which complaints, falling under Section 2.3, specifically referred to children. The Australia Institute’s *Corporate Paedophilia* report, however, contains an analysis which identifies 23 ads in a five year period whose content they judge to be complaints about the sexualisation of children. In 2007, complaints about advertising to children made up less than 3 % of all complaints received by the Board. It is worth noting that complaints of sexualisation received by the Board include complaints about nappy ads and images of very young children posed in singlets in retail catalogues. The small number and content of these complaints confirms the appropriately high community sensitivity to the portrayal of children. The data, however, does not support the claim that there has been an explosion of community concern about sexualising images of children in Australian popular media.

The final evidence worth considering that has often been cited in the Australia media is a report written by the American Psychological Association (APA). In 2007, the APA formed a Task Force on the Sexualisation of Girls. According to the APA, sexualisation occurs when:

- a) a person’s value comes only from his or her sexual appeal or behaviour, to the exclusion of other characteristics;
- b) a person is held to a standard that equates physical attractiveness (narrowly defined) with being sexy;
- c) a person is sexually objectified—that is, made into a thing for others’ sexual use, rather than seen as a person with the capacity for independent action and decision making; and/or
- d) sexuality is inappropriately imposed upon a person^{xvi}.

In their report, the APA taskforce notes that ‘self-motivated sexual exploration...is not sexualisation...nor is age-appropriate exposure to information about sexuality’^{xvii}.

The great majority of the research reviewed in their report concerns post-adolescent women – of university age or older – certainly not children. While we agree with the APA’s assertion that pre-adolescent girls learn about the expectations of the adult world by observing and imitating the behaviours and attitudes of adults around them, we are not convinced that findings from research conducted on adult subjects should be juxtaposed directly onto younger people^{xviii}. In addition, we suggest that the APA’s definition of sexualisation leaves a great deal of room for subjective interpretation. Who decides, for instance, the appropriate boundaries of a definition of physical attractiveness? Who decides whether a person is demonstrating a genuine capacity for independent action, and when such an action is the result of others’ expectations? For this reason, we propose that any future research conducted with children and young people takes care not to pre-determine the meanings that young people place on their own experiences of interacting with media imagery.

5. What do we know about harm caused to children and teenagers by sexualised media representations and media consumption of sexualised material?

The authors of this report acknowledge that there are many categories of media that children under the age of 12 should not be exposed to, including explicitly sexual material. The current film, literature and television classification system in Australia acknowledges this need to protect children from age inappropriate material. There is no question that exposure to adult material may be harmful to children. The internet has opened up a very real risk that children may be accidentally exposed to adult material, for instance, and we strongly support moves to improve current filtering technologies for

home and school computer use and moves to educate parents about the risks posed to children online^{xix}.

When it comes to media material marketed to children, which is necessarily classified as suitable for them under the current regimes, we believe that any consideration of potential harm to them must be based on a consideration of what children themselves tell us about their media consumption habits and the influence popular media has on them.

At present, much Australian public debate about children's media consumption has been influenced by the media effects research tradition. This tradition focuses on what the media does to children, rather than on what children do with media. There is also a strong bias in such research towards focusing on the potentially negative impact of media imagery on children and young people with scant attention paid to the potentially positive aspects of media consumption^{xx}. Contemporary media studies research has been strongly critical of this approach because it ignores the now extensive research that has been done with children that seeks to explore what meanings they make of the media around them. As British media studies expert Professor David Gauntlett observes: 'Such projects have shown that children can talk intelligently and indeed cynically about the mass media, and that children as young as seven can make thoughtful, critical and 'media literate' video productions themselves'^{xxi}.

The largest recent study into children and media relevant to this Inquiry was conducted by the UK's leading researcher in the field, Professor David Buckingham. Professor Buckingham is the founding Director for the Study of Children, Youth and Media at the University of London and has acted as an adviser to UNESCO on this subject. In 2004, David Buckingham and his colleague Sara Bragg published a book on the role representations of sex and sexuality in popular media play in young people's lives^{xxii}. Their analysis drew on the results of their extensive UK-based research project that involved 800 young people (aged 9-17) using in-depth interviews with young people and parents and diaries completed by the subjects. Their study considered how young people interpret sexual material in popular media, how they use such material to understand their

experiences and build their identities and how they respond to public and parental concerns about these issues.

Because of the similarities between Australian and UK-based media their findings are worth summarising here. It is important to bear in mind that they refer to a wide range of age groups (9-17) and therefore the type of material encountered. The findings included the following:

- a) **Whether or not they choose to do so, children frequently encounter sexual material in the media.** However, in younger age groups, relatively little of this material contained ‘explicit’ representations of sexual activity.
- b) **The material children do encounter is quite diverse in terms of the ‘messages’ it is seen to contain.** In some instances, sex was clearly perceived as an enjoyable and desirable activity for young people [a reference to teenagers]; but the children identified many instances where the media appeared to be informing them about the dangers and problems it represented, particularly at a young age. They certainly did not perceive the media to be encouraging them to have sex prematurely, or to be promoting a purely ‘recreational’ approach to sex; and, in many instances, the predominant tone appeared to be one of moral warning.
- c) **Children value the media as a source of information relative to other sources, such as parents or the school.** The children were generally very critical of the sex education they received in school...Many also found it embarrassing to be taught about such matters by their parents. By contrast, they preferred media such as teen magazines and soap operas on the grounds that they were often more informative, less embarrassing to use and more attuned to their needs and concerns....[They] used the media as a pretext for discussion with peers or parents.
- d) **Nevertheless, children do not necessarily trust what they find in the media: they are ‘literate’, and often highly critical consumers.** Children are not the naïve or incompetent consumers they are frequently assumed to be. ...The

- children's responses to sexual imagery in advertising or music videos displayed a well-developed understanding of how such images are constructed and manipulated...In a range of media genres, the children were making sophisticated, multi-faceted judgements about the relationships between fiction and reality.
- e) **Children do learn about sex and relationships from the media, but this is not a straightforward or reliable process.** The children often rejected overt attempts on the part of the media to teach them about sexual matters, and they were sceptical about some of the advice they were offered (for example, in problem pages or talk shows)...They seemed to engage more effectively with texts where they were encouraged to debate issues and make-up their own minds.
- f) **Younger children do not necessarily always understand sexual references or connotations.** Despite the children's claims, they did not necessarily know 'everything' about sex: they were far from being the precocious sexual sophisticates imagined by some conservative critics. Younger children's partial knowledge means that they often ignore or misinterpret many references to sexual matters, particularly where they are in the form of comic innuendo or 'suggestion' (as in the case of music videos)...To this extent, the media have only a limited power to impose sexual meanings: in order to be meaningful in the first place, they must fit into a framework of existing knowledge.
- g) **The influence of the media depends heavily on the contexts of use, particularly in the family.** Parents can 'model' or reinforce particular responses to sexual material, and hence particular sexual identities for their children. The media do not have an autonomous ability to either sexually corrupt children or to sexually 'liberate' them.

The authors of this submission believe that far more research of this kind needs to be conducted into how children make sense of both media aimed at them and media designed for adults or teenagers that they encounter. Research of this kind would allow us to identify, in an empirical way, the real world effects of media on children's lives. Furthermore, we believe it is important that such research pays more attention than the Buckingham and Bragg study was able to do, to the differences between age groups. At

present, 6 year olds are often spoken about in the same breath as 13 year olds, yet they are clearly at very different development stages.

One of the criticisms of tween magazines is that they seek to create a consumer market out of 6-12 year olds and this amounts to a ‘seduction’ of innocents, as the term ‘corporate paedophilia’ suggests. We understand and respect the strong objections many parents have to children being bombarded with marketing messages and products. At the same time, it is worth recognising that the creation of the tween magazine market gives younger female children a potentially safer and more age-appropriate space for media consumption. Until the emergence of these publications, it was common for late primary school age girls to read magazines, such as *Dolly*, that contain information, images and ads targeted at high school age girls. More research needs to be done into what primary school age girls enjoy about these magazines, as well as other media they consume and what messages they take from them.

Teenage girls represent a very different group of media consumers to girls of primary school age and it’s important that we acknowledge their difference when we think about what media is appropriate and at what age. The majority of teenage girls media consumers are post-pubescent and, depending on their social and cultural background, personal and moral/religious values, and their age they will bring a diverse range of experiences and interests to their media consumption. It is important to acknowledge that many teenage girls are not ‘children’ in the sense of what they know, what they want to know and how they interact with the world around them. By the age of sixteen, teenage girls are legally able to consent to sex and many of them are sexually active earlier than this. Their media representation and consumption needs to be understood in this context.

According to the World Health Organisation, healthy sexuality ‘is expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviours, practices, roles and relationships’^{xxiii}. The WHO further emphasises that ‘fundamental to this concept are the right to sexual information and the right to pleasure’^{xxiv}.

It is not the case that all images depicting adolescent girls and young women in sexual situations are necessarily harmful or ‘objectifying’. The APA report acknowledges that even texts that show sexuality in a humorous or entertaining fashion need not depict women ‘a thing for another person’s use, rather than...a person with the capacity for independent action and decision-making’^{xxv}. Although some forms of sexually suggestive or sexually explicit media might be condemned by some commentators as ‘tacky’ or ‘tasteless’ (Paris Hilton is a favourite target of this criticism), it does not necessarily follow that they will have damaging effects on consumers or that teenage girls will automatically ‘copy’ celebrities. A recent Australian Research Council funded study of the media consumption habits of teenage girls aged 12-18 found, for instance, that while girls in this age range avidly watched the *Big Brother* program in Australia, they were also highly critical of the behaviour of many of the contestants. They recognised that fame was a desirable commodity and that participating in *Big Brother* gave participants an opportunity to gain a public persona. Yet, they held strong moral views about what constituted acceptable and unacceptable behaviour^{xxvi}.

For some commentators on the media consumption habits of girls and female teenagers, the issue seems to be a condemnation of female sexual expression more generally, rather than a criticism of a particular media image. Indeed, many of those who oppose ‘objectifying’ depictions of sexuality in the media use derogatory language that suggests they themselves hold negative views of female sexuality per se (for example, referring to toys like Bratz dolls and celebrities such as Paris Hilton as ‘sluts’ and ‘whores’). A negative or stigmatising attitude towards girls or young people’s sexual development is likely to cause harm, particularly when it originates from parents, teachers and other trusted figures^{xxvii}.

When it comes to teenage girls, media representations of sexuality emerges as a particularly important issue.

An issue that has been insufficiently highlighted is the potential impact of constant negative media coverage of these young women’s desire to explore their emerging

sexuality with their peers, including through media consumption. Mainstream quality media coverage routinely portrays young women as ‘at risk’ of sex and of much of the popular media they may enjoy. There is very little focus on what pleasures they take from popular media. Yet, here is good evidence that young women in their teenage years use the popular media to learn and think about sex, love and relationships and that they share and critique this material with peers. Recent Australasian research, for example, suggests that while young people (like older people) often seek out sex-related media as entertainment, they use popular culture as an educational resource to fill gaps in formal sex education and learn practical strategies for negotiating sex, love and relationships in safe and ethical ways^{xxviii}.

While we agree it is problematic that teenage girls are sometimes represented as purely passive or receptive to male sexuality, we argue that representations of them as sexual subjects who are actively involved in decision-making regarding their sexual relationships should be commended. These media images, however, should be complemented and reinforced by formal sex education that supports sexual health, and safe, ethical sexual interactions. As the authors of the Australian Study of Sex, Health and Relationships (ASHR) note, the average age at which most Australian’s first sexual intercourse is declining, and often other forms of sexual activity precede intercourse. We concur with the ASHR authors’ recommendation that sexuality education curriculum for primary school students (that is, pre-puberty) should be reviewed as a matter of urgency^{xxix}. Such a review should be evidence-based, and acknowledge international research, such as the findings of the 2003 British Independent Advisory Group on Teenage Pregnancy that called for ‘personal, social and health education to become part of the statutory curriculum for students aged between 5 and 16’^{xxx}.

Sexual coercion and sexual assault are also very real concerns in contemporary Australia, particularly for young women, with the ASHR study finding that one in five young women and almost one in twenty young men had been forced or frightened into unwanted sexual activity^{xxxi}. As Deborah Tolman (a member of the APA Taskforce) has observed, teenage girls currently receive too few positive messages regarding their sexuality.

Tolman argues that when young women are encouraged suppress or ignore their own feelings, including experiences of sexual curiosity and sexual desire they are more vulnerable to predation and abuse. We agree with Tolman that:

Teenage girls' sexual desire is important and life sustaining; that girls' desire provides crucial information about the relational world in which they live; that the societal obstacles to girls' and women's ability to feel and act on their own desire should come under scrutiny rather than be feared; [and] that girls and women are entitled to have sexual subjectivity, rather simply be objects^{xxxii}.

Rather than calling for the suppression or restriction of media imagery depicting teen female sexuality, we argue that as parents, educators and regulators, we need to consider more closely our *own* attitudes regarding teen sexuality, and examine the possibility that we are reinforcing negative or abusive attitudes towards female sexuality in our responses to media images. To quote Tolman again:

When society is ambivalent, there is a tendency to focus on those with the least power; we are able to constrain, blame and punish them for the anxiety they provoke in us...In the case of adolescent girls, we distort and justify this displacement because of society's sense of entitlement, even sense of obligation, to regulate and control their sexuality^{xxxiii}.

As the WHO definitions indicate, pleasure gained from fantasy, daydreams, and looking and being looked at in a sexual context are part of healthy human sexual development. It is only when teenage girls' (and boys') value is derived *solely* from their visual appearance, and willingness to conform to social ideals that this form of sexual pleasure becomes problematic.

Like other aspects of contemporary culture, sexuality is rightly the subject of vigorous inquiry and debate. It is important that, for teenagers, the right to age-appropriate sexual expression and learning are not undermined by the over-regulation of media content. It

should not be assumed that media texts have singular or transparent meanings, and that all consumers will interpret the same piece of media content in the same way. As Australian sociologist Jo Lindsay observes, young people are highly media literate, and often ‘challenge the status quo’ via popular culture^{xxxiv}.

The problem, as we see it, is not so much that sexuality is either suggested or explicitly mentioned in media aimed at young people (provided such depictions are age-appropriate). Sexual development is a normal aspect of puberty, and indeed, of everyday life. Contemporary Australian society accepts many viewpoints regarding young people’s sexuality. In some communities sex outside of marriage (and same-sex interaction) is entirely unacceptable. In others, sex outside of marriage is acceptable providing there is no force, manipulation or coercion. In most Australian states, young people are legally able to consent to sexual activity (with another young person) from the age of sixteen. It is not surprising, then that young people approaching the age of sexual maturity are interested in obtaining information regarding sexual relationships. Nor is it surprising that they, like others in the community, are attracted to visual media that depicts sexuality in a pleasurable and entertaining way.

Our key concern with sexual imagery is that such imagery should not be produced, broadcast or consumed in situations that promote or condone sexual abuse or sexual coercion or is age inappropriate. We suggest both educational resources and popular or academic commentary on young people’s sexuality should take care not to condemn or insult young people’s emerging expressions of sexuality, but rather seek to understand them. In addition, teenage women should be encouraged to develop healthy self-regard as sexual subjects. This means questioning restrictive definitions of female sexual expression which seek to represent teenage girls as *either* out-of-control ‘sluts’ *or* inherently passive and free from ‘unruly’ sexual desires. While concern for young people’s safety should be paramount, educators and policy makers should take care not to imply or infer that older teenagers need to be ‘protected’ from consensual sexual feelings and interactions, regardless of whether they occur in media imagery or everyday life.

6. Recommendations

1) We recommend that government and industry work together to create a central online forum that allows parents and others concerned about young people to discuss their views about media content and technology and its impact on young people. Such a site would help alert government and industry to growing areas of concern. It would also provide a one-stop shop for parents and young media consumers to access information about how to make complaints and appeal decisions. Such a site would also educate parents and young people about managing media use and content and give them tools to make informed choices. Critically, it would be incumbent on the media industry and government representatives to reply to concerns aired in the public forum and take responsibility for that feedback to be channeled into decision-making processes

2) We recommend that methodologically and empirically sound Australian research be conducted with children under the age of 12 into their experience of media targeted to them. This research should be grounded in relevant interdisciplinary academic fields and differentiate age groups in this cohort. It should take particular account of children's real life experiences of the media they encounter, the meanings they take from it and how they make sense of this media in relation to other values they gain from their families, schools and communities. We note that children's voices are a notable absence in the current debate.

3) We recommend that methodologically and empirically sound Australian research is conducted into the range of media and advertising materials targeted to children under the age of 12, as well as at broader representations of children in media and advertising materials targeted at adults. This research should consider the social and cultural context in which this material is distributed, provide evidence of how it

meshes with current community standards, and make recommendations about any relevant changes to current regulatory codes, laws and public policy in relation to media and advertising production, regulation and consumption.

4) We recommend a strong focus on age-appropriate education in schools, for children and teenagers, to support them to understand and make choices about media material dealing with love, sexuality, gender and relationships.

5) We recommend that sex education in Australia include a uniform curriculum that deals, in an age-appropriate way, with popular media targeted at or accessed by children and teenagers. We note that not all children have parents or guardians who are monitoring their media consumption and that Australian schools have a very important role to play in supporting these children and young people to deal with popular media representations of love, sexuality, gender and relationships.

6) We recommend that Federal Government resources be directed to funding research into and identifying filtering systems and other initiatives that promote cyber-safety for children and teenagers. We also note the importance of government in educating parents and other responsible for children about the risks of exposure to inappropriate material online.

7) We recommend that Federal and State funding for parenting skills courses are increased and include training in how to manage young people's emerging sexuality, how to ensure they are accessing age-appropriate media, and how to create an ongoing dialogue with them about the information and values they're taking from the media they consume.

8) We recommend that funding for all support and intervention services that deal with women and children experiencing, or at risk of, violence and sexual violence be evaluated. We note that the levels of these forms of violence remain high and that many community and public sector services dealing with these issues are chronically

under-funded. We note that the evidence shows that children most at risk of real life sexual abuse are often living in situations where there is already domestic violence and family dysfunction.

ⁱ Emma Rush and Andrea La Nauze (2006), *Corporate Paedophilia: Sexualisation of Children in Australia*, Discussion Paper Number 90, The Australia Institute.

ⁱⁱ October 9 and 10, 2006 (the day the *Corporate Paedophilia* report was published) saw a major news spike with prominent coverage of the report on the Channel 9's *Today Show*, 2UE, ABC 666 and 702, *The Australian*, and the *Sydney Morning Herald*.

ⁱⁱⁱ Kevin Airs (2007) 'Sass to sleaze: new girl power', *Sydney Morning Herald Online*, accessed 15/4/08; Miranda Devine (2006) 'It's a culture guaranteed to cause a clash', *Sydney Morning Herald* 7 September p.13 ; Emma Rush (2006) 'Adult world must let girls be girls', *Sydney Morning Herald Online*, accessed 15/4/08.

^{iv} Philippe Airies (1962) *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, trans. Robert Baldick, New York, Knopf; Anne Higonnet (1998) *Pictures of Innocence: The History and Crisis of Ideal Childhood*, London, Thames and Hudson.

^v Australian Bureau of Statistics (2005) *Births Australia*, Canberra: ABS 2005, p. 15

^{vi} Lynne Peril (2002) *Pink Think: Becoming a Woman in Many Uneasy Lessons*, New York, London, W. H. Norton, p. 45.

^{vii} Patricia Edgar and Hilary McPhee (1974) *Media She*, Melbourne, Heinemann.

^{viii} American Psychological Association, Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls (2007) *Report of the APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls*, Washington DC., American Psychological Association, p. 2.

^{ix} The co-authors of this report currently have a peer-reviewed application for an Australian Research Council Discovery Project in consideration for funding which is designed to generate this data.

^x Maire Messenger Davies and Nick Mosdell (2006) *Practical Research Methods for Media and Cultural Studies*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press.

^{xi} The co-authors of this report would agree that Australian society is still strongly gendered in many aspects, and that there is much to be done to ensure greater gender equity, but that is not the primary focus of our current submission.

^{xii} Pacific Magazines, which publishes, *Total Girl*, for instance, has a policy that any models appearing in the magazine should only have 'bare and natural looking make-up' and that 'no lipstick or heavy eye-make is to be used'. David Jones, which the Australia Institute singled out in a press release as an example of corporate paedophilia, have had a longstanding and strict policy banning the use of adult make-up on child models in their catalogues.

^{xiii} For the purposes of this submission we made a close analysis of six issues of *Total Girl* magazine.

^{xiv} In keeping with our criticisms of the Australia Institute's reports failure to adhere to scholarly standards of content analysis, we are not claiming to present findings that justify inferential claims about content. Our sample of the best-selling tween magazine in Australia is, however, larger by a factor of six than that contained in the relevant

Australia Institute report. We note that much more in-depth research is needed into this important new category of media and its consumers.

^{xv} Professor Catharine Lumby has been a member of the Advertising Standards Board since 1999. Members of the Board receive an honorarium for their work. Many members of the Board have substantial records in public and community service. Current and former members include Wendy McCarthy, Mary Kostakidis, Carmel Travers, Geoff Lawson, Tom Keneally and John Brown.

^{xvi} American Psychological Association, Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls (2007) *Report of the APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls*, Washington DC., American Psychological Association, p. 3.

^{xvii} American Psychological Association, Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls (2007) *Report of the APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls*, Washington DC., American Psychological Association, p. 2.

^{xviii} American Psychological Association, Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls (2007) *Report of the APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls*, Washington DC., American Psychological Association, p. 4.

^{xix} For further research into dealing with the risks posed to children of sexually explicit material online, including research into evidence-based strategies for preventing the production and distribution of child pornography, see: Alan Mckee, Kath Albury and Catharine Lumby (2008) *The Porn Report*, Melbourne, Melbourne University Publishing.

^{xx} David Buckingham and Sarah Bragg, (2004) *Young People, Sex and the Media: The facts of life?*, Hampshire, Palgrave Macmillan.

^{xxi} David Gauntlett (1998) ‘Ten things wrong with the “effects model”’, in R. Dickinson et al (eds.), *Approaches to Audiences*, London, Arnold.

^{xxii} David Buckingham and Sarah Bragg, (2004) *Young People, Sex and the Media: The facts of life?*, Hampshire, Palgrave Macmillan.

^{xxiii} World Health Organisation (2006) *Defining Sexual Health: report of a technical consultation on sexual health, 28-31 January 2002, Geneva*, accessed 5/4/2008, http://www.who.int/topics/sexual_health/en/

^{xxiv} World Health Organisation (2006) *Defining Sexual Health: report of a technical consultation on sexual health, 28-31 January 2002, Geneva*, accessed 5/4/2008, http://www.who.int/topics/sexual_health/en/

^{xxv} American Psychological Association, Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls (2007) *Report of the APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls*, Washington DC., American Psychological Association, p. 2.

^{xxvi} See Catharine Lumby and Elspeth Probyn (2003) *Remote Control: New Media, New Ethics*, Melbourne, Cambridge University Press.

^{xxvii} Deborah Tolman (2005) *Dilemmas of Desire: Teenage Girls Talk about Sexuality* Cambridge, London, Harvard University Press.

^{xxviii} Moira Carmody and Karen Willis (2006) *Developing ethical sexual lives: young people, sex and sexual assault prevention*, University of Western Sydney; Alan McKee, Kath Albury and Catharine Lumby (2008) *The Porn Report*, Melbourne University Publishing, Carlton; Joan Sauers (2007) *Sex Lives of Australian Teenagers*, Sydney, Random House.

^{xxix} A. Smith, C. Rissel, J. Richters, A. Grulich, R. de Visser (2003) 'Sex in Australia: Reflections and recommendations for future research', *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, 27(2), p. 254.

^{xxx} Carvel J (2003) 'Sex lessons for five year olds "should be compulsory"' *The Guardian*, July 11, accessed 15/4/2008.

^{xxxi} R. De Visser, A. Smith, C. Rissel, J. Richters and A. Grulich (2003) 'Sex in Australia: Heterosexual experience and recent heterosexual encounters among a representative sample of adults', *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, 27(2), pp. 146-54.

^{xxxii} Deborah Tolman (2005) *Dilemmas of Desire: Teenage Girls Talk about Sexuality* Cambridge, London, Harvard University Press, p. 19.

^{xxxiii} Deborah Tolman (2005) *Dilemmas of Desire: Teenage Girls Talk about Sexuality* Cambridge, London, Harvard University Press, p. 16.

^{xxxiv} Jo Lindsay (2005) 'Don't Panic: Young People and the Social Organization of Sex' in G. Hawkes and J. Scott (eds.) *Perspectives in Human Sexuality*, Melbourne, Oxford University Press, p. 89.