

Dear Senators

I wish to submit my views on this important matter.

I have read all the submissions posted on the Senate site to date.

While I agree with many of the comments made concerning the crass advertising for commercial goods, to all of us, and would be more than happy to see all billboards pulled down across the nation, and see an end to the more obviously obtuse, foolish and banal advertising, I suspect the Senators are too engaged in the world of capitalism, and their parties too beholden to the elites who run our economy, to ever dare to do much more than hurrumph and bluster through this latest effort at 'being moral'.

I also detect a very limited perspective in these submissions when it comes to considering what constitutes 'damaging the kiddies', or as so many politicians like to say 'damaging our vulnerable youth' when it comes to an all-out assault on the innocence of our children.

In contributing to this enquiry I wish to extend the boundaries of what I have read so far, just a little beyond billboards for condoms and womens 'bumcracks' (what do these people do when confronted by a building site worker or singlet-and-stubbie-wearing truckie, I wonder?).

In recent days I have been observing the assault on intelligence going on in Queensland schools under the guise of school chaplains.

Under John Howard's regime school chaplains were funded to enter our schools; this continues under the Rudd neo-Christian regime.

In Queensland (Qld), and this varies from state-to-state so I restrict my comments to Qld, the employment of school chaplains is run by Scripture Union, a Christian evangelical group whose sole purpose is to evangelise and recruit for Jesus, among the youngest and most vulnerable of our community, our children.

See their web page 'purpose' here:

<http://www.scriptureunion.org.au/about.htm>

***Working with the churches, Scripture Union aims***

- a. to make God's Good News known to children, young people and families and***
- b. to encourage people of all ages to meet God daily through the Bible and prayer so that they may come to personal faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, grow in Christian maturity and become both committed church members and servants of a world in need.***

***Scripture Union pursues these aims through a variety of specialist ministries around the world in obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ and in reliance on the Holy Spirit.***

***In Australia, SU operates in every state and territory and mobilises around thousands of volunteers each year to engage young people and families in holiday programs at beaches and in urban or rural townships, camps, secondary and primary schools, through sports, recreation, outdoor education and school chaplaincy.***

***SU's ministry brings us into contact with hundreds of thousands of children, young people and families per year making SU one of the largest mission movements to children and youth in the world. But what drives us is a desire to see lives transformed. We are serious about making a difference.***

Our SU school chaplains require absolutely no qualifications beyond a Qld 'blue card', allowing them to work with children, unlike, say, Victoria where chaplains are required by the SU equivalent, if not the State itself, to be at least tertiary trained to an equal status to the school teachers they work alongside.

So, we have, potentially, totally unqualified people, posing as 'men of God' (women included in that phrase) in just the manner Howard meant when he said, "Yes I am calling them chaplains because that has a particular connotation in our language... Chaplain has a particular connotation, people understand it, they know exactly what I'm talking about" (<http://www.abc.net.au/newsitems/200610/s1776009.htm> , 29 Oct. 2006).

Of course, Howard had read the underwhelming mind of the Australian electorate very well for many years, and he probably knew very well that most of his 'ordinary Australians' were too busy being 'battlers' to have time to think that a school chaplain might have no qualifications whatsoever, besides, he also knew they were too uninterested to enquire beyond his 'connotation'.

A bare female backside will provoke anger at 100 paces whenever 'the kiddies' are under threat, but to spend five minutes thinking about a chaplain... that's far too much to expect.

If you're wondering whether this is relevant, bare with me (no pun intended).

Our untrained chaplains, all employees of SU, a group with strong links to the AOG church group, are now deploying programs from Hillsong into our state schools, that well known AOG church that frequently crops up in news at the same time as 'the kiddies' are watching.

In recent months I have noticed Hillsong being accused of robbing Commonwealth funds, by Senators, no less. A story here, Feb. 13 2006, from [news.com.au](http://news.com.au) , 'Church spent indigenous grants on staff', with Senators Abetz and Evans named in the story.

More recently we all read of the power of 'faith' in ending the particularly horrible mental-physical disease anorexia.

Or does it?

Mercy Mission, (<http://cms.hillsong.com/church/default.asp?pid=170>) as I recall, is another offshoot of this hard-working Hillsong church and was responsible for taking money from young 'vulnerable youth', or 'the poor kiddies' as others prefer, and leaving them, well, less than happy and certainly not 'cured' in the normal sense of the phrase.

The details of what is offered, and just how, as with so many Hillsong programmes, are scant on their webpage, but the commentary, right or wrong, as a result of the anorexia 'newsburst' the other day, would indicate this church is preying on, as well maybe as praying with, many of the young women of Australia in a manner that I am sure, well I would hope anyway, that all the other authors of submissions to this enquiry would be appalled at.

*Through The Hillsong Foundation, we partner with Mercy Ministries, which exists to see young women aged 16 to 28 years reach their full potential through participation in a residential based program. Their goal is to see each young woman emerge confident and full of hope for her future.*

#### **RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM**

*Each young woman participates in class time, life-skills training, recreation and counseling based on Christian principles. Young women facing life-controlling issues can experience unconditional love that brings hope, restoration and healing to the spirit, soul and body.*

#### **COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL EDUCATION PROGRAM**

*Mercy Ministries is committed to providing information and education to the community, to improve awareness and understanding of issues that affect young women.*

*The Mercy Ministries program is provided free of charge. A willing heart and a sincere desire to change are the only requirements for entering the program.*

I had hoped to outline the SHINE programme Hillsong are peddling around Qld via our unqualified school chaplains. This program used to appear on the Hillsong website, now 'taken down', and it promised to fill vulnerable young women with 'skills', similar to the wording above, through building their 'self esteem', through what looks suspiciously like teaching them how to 'paint-up' and make themselves 'beautiful'.

The SHINE site has undergone some 'downgrading' in recent weeks but the full beauty of it was still on display on their Kiev site, now also 'taken down' within the last week.

There, in Kiev, we could read of how young women were to be made into 'princesses' fit for 'the King' with dozens of pictures of young girls on full display, almost as if the page were part of a Russian mafia 'pick-a-young-wife' Internet offer.

No guessing who 'the King' is, is there?

The SHINE site, when it was up, did offer some insights into the truthfulness of Hillsong.

In the FAQs it posed a question along the lines of 'Do we have to tell the school or parents what SHINE contains?'

The response was along the lines of 'Only if they ask'.

So, primary and secondary schools, all over Qld, are now having Hillsong programmes foisted onto our children, with no explanation to or discussion about what the programmes contain, or what they hope to achieve.

But worse, the Hillsong site did say that a school chaplain could not deliver SHINE alone, and help was needed, depending on the size of the 'class'.

Here at my high school the assistance is to come from Toowoomba City Church, from volunteers we parents know nothing about, even whether they have 'blue cards' or not.

The only 'explanation' I have so far, of a programme Ed Qld has allowed into our schools, with no discussion or warning is this:

*SHINE Program- This is a girls' program aimed to boost self esteem and confidence. It is run by volunteers, mostly from Toowoomba City Church. This is run during lunchtime.*

Remember that this is being run in primary schools too.

A similar program is to be run for boys.

This sort of weasling-into-our-schools, to exploit young students, many of whom may indeed need some support, is more outrageous than anything the other submissions have made comment on.

Particularly so when the hard working taxpayer is funding these charlatan chaplains, who then send more ATO funds back to Hillsong, a well known and seemingly habitual 'bad corporate citizen'.

If the SHINE programme continues, as it was previously described in both Australia and Kiev, I believe it should be of serious concern to all Senators engaged in this enquiry, Christian or not, and I believe Hillsong, through SHINE, was attempting to corrupt young and impressionable females, who should be able to feel very safe in a Qld state school even if they cannot at home.

The 'sexualisation' of children does not have to be only in advertising, and it most certainly should not be ignored, or worse lauded, when it is run by a church... with all the 'connotations' that phrase brings with it.

The 'teaching' of 'self esteem' through low grade beauty courses, to turn a 'ragdoll into a princess' is sexualising children in a most disgusting manner indeed, under cover of God, for God's sake!

Each of the three points below apply to the under-cover-of-darkness attempts of Hillsong and the SU to take advantage of children in the care of the Qld state needs examining and halting immediately.

It would also be good if the Senate could send Mr Rod Welford, Qld Education minister, a very clear message to clean up his act, and our schools, and start policing those unqualified school chaplains he allows into our schools, rather than continuing to ignore what is going on under his nose simply because he is too scared of Fiona Simpson and REAC to tell them all to go to Hell.

Thank you,  
Hugh Wilson

In undertaking the inquiry, the committee, in particular:

- 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.