

The Sexualisation of Children
by the
Contemporary Media
in our
Australian Society

Submission to
The Australian Senate Inquiry
by
Graham and Carol Phillips

Mr G. Phillips and Mrs C.V. Phillips

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Introduction

There are several points that we wish to make to this Federal Government Inquiry:

- Our society, as a whole, is highly sexualised, and children are being sexualised far too early, leading to a disturbing loss of innocence.
- The situation in Australia, especially in relation to the Media, is at a crisis point. The problem is now so huge, that anyone with any concerns is hard-pressed to work out where to start.
- In presenting this submission, we will only be able to scrape the surface of the numberless examples of sexualising media material that pervades our society, even if we were to be aware of them all.
- The Federal and State governments, sadly, are largely to blame for allowing the situation to reach this point. Parents and other concerned citizens have been agitating for many years, with only paternalistic lip-service being paid to the concerns that they raise.
- There are no effective channels of complaint and no effective regulatory body. Concerned citizens have actually been hobbled in their efforts to address the situation.
- The vested interests of those who profit from production and marketing are put ahead of the good of society in general, and of children in particular.
- The long-term ramifications of the sexualisation of children are yet to be fully appreciated, but they are not likely to be positive.

Definition of Terms

In this submission,

- By “Sexualisation” we mean the formation of an overtly sexual *persona* and promotion of sexual awareness and activity, through repeated exposure to sexual images, sexual language and lyrics, discussion of sexual issues, and sexually provocative merchandise and role models.
- By the term “Children” we are referring to persons under the age of 18 years.
- By the term “Media” we mean every medium by which sound and images, information, and interactive activity, are transmitted to persons in our society.

Toxic Environment

Our society is now a toxic environment for children to grow up in. If one compares the Australia of even thirty years ago, a huge change has occurred. The most “raunchy” show on TV in children’s air-time, when we were growing up, was “Petticoat Junction”. Now we have “Home and Away”, “M.A.S.H.” repeats, “Two and a Half Men”, “Friends”, etc. all of which contain, to some degree, an element of sexualisation.

Adult air-time has now been moved forwards from after 9.30pm to after 8.30pm, despite the fact that many impressionable children are still awake and possibly watching television at that hour. Concerned parents have been forced to be excessively protective, in order to keep their children innocent. For some, sadly, this means the total removal of the television set.

Our children live in a world where access to the Internet is a part of life. It has become inescapable, because it has become so essential. In addition to needing to teach their children good values, parents then need to, in order to allow children to work safely on the Internet, be vigilant in the following ways:

1. They have to have at least some control over the computer environment, and Internet usage.

2. They have to install some sort of safety mechanism, to attempt to block the more unsuitable web-sites. This can be extremely difficult to do successfully.
3. They have to warn their children of the dangerous aspects of Internet use. The children have to learn to be wary of Internet predators. This, in itself, may mean the early exposure to unnecessary sexual information.
4. They have to be able to trust their children. This is a highly risky endeavour, and not always likely to have a successful outcome.

To enable children to use the Internet safely, either for educational or recreational purposes, parents are required to do all these things. Why should all this extra stress and vigilance be necessary? There should be no need. Parents should be able to allow their children to use a computer just as easily as they would refer to an encyclopaedia.

If the Internet were not such a toxic and dangerous medium, parents would not have these extra worries.

Sexual Messages

Free-to-air television, cable television, television and radio advertising, Internet, video games, radio, movies at cinemas, videos/DVDs, CDs, billboards, newspapers, magazines, supermarket and newsagency racks, school sex education programmes and advertising brochures are all bombarding our growing children with very strong sexual messages. The messages are:

- Sex is the most important aspect of life.
- Your sexuality is your main function.
- How sexy you are determines how successful you are.
- Love is all about sex.
- Happiness is all about sex.
- If you please your man/woman sexually, then you are guaranteed a good relationship.
- An interesting story-line must include sex.
- It's important to view sex-scenes, so that you can learn how to be sexually fulfilled.
- The sexiest one gets the man.
- The sexiest one gets the job.
- These clothes will make you sexy.
- These accessories will make you sexy.
- The only way to look feminine is to look sexy.
- The only way to make a man interested in you is to be sexy.
- The thinner you are the sexier you are.
- When you dance, it's important to be sexy.
- It's important to learn about sex early, so that you don't come to think of it as dirty.
- When you have sex, make sure you don't become pregnant.
- When you have sex, make sure you don't catch a disease.
- Pornography is a natural expression of sexuality.
- Prostitution is an essential sexual service.
- Sex has nothing to do with marriage.
- Sex outside marriage is good, normal and healthy.
- Sexually explicit language is part of a normal vocabulary.
- Early sexual activity is normal and good.
- If you are not sexually active, then you are abnormal.
- It's manly to be sexually promiscuous.
- Deviant forms of sexual activity are simply other valid choices.

Sex Education

The day that sex education moved from the home into the classroom was a sorry day for Australia. Although there

are good reasons to make certain that children receive correct instruction, this does not mean that the current method is the ideal, and nor does it mean the parents, in the home, cannot provide this information correctly.

Parents seem to have been stripped of their rights in this area, especially where the so-called experts ("sexperts") claim that they know better how to teach this delicate subject. Parents often don't even know what their children are being taught. Sometimes they find out afterwards, and sometimes not at all. Even parents who try to take more control of how the sex-ed is taught to their own children can sometimes encounter huge obstacles. Yet they are the ones who know and love their children the most.

The sex-education that is currently taught in most schools:

- Is very graphic and detailed,
- Introduces quite mature concepts at early stages,
- Is separated from the context of faithful marriage,
- Sets out to make sexuality just another bodily function, instead of accepting it as very private and intimate,
- Assumes that all children come from a sexually-liberal type of home environment,
- Ignores the values and belief systems of the home environment, especially when they are not liberal,
- Grooms children to become sexually active as soon as possible,
- Assumes that children will become sexually active in their teens.

These last two points highlight the major irony in the situation. The current sex-ed curriculum firstly assumes that children will become sexually active quite early, and then, allegedly to prevent this, teaches them exactly how to become sexually active. The first assumption then becomes self-fulfilling.

Children making clay models of human genitalia should be repulsive to any right-thinking person, yet this is how young children are introduced to sex-education in a (supposedly age-appropriate) deliberately tactile way in Australia's classrooms. Australian children are being robbed of their innocence far too early, and this is often where it is starting: right inside our schools.

Movies, Videos, DVDs

Movies often have strong sexual messages. It is very hard for parents to censor unsuitable material from videos and DVDs, and absolutely impossible when the movie comes on TV, or is seen at a cinema.

The messages are sometimes veiled, so that only older viewers or listeners understand. This happens with some sexual innuendo. Even the Disney movie, "Aladdin: The Return of Jafar" has the sly, sexual line: "I thought the earth wasn't supposed to move until the Honeymoon". But, why is it there at all, in a children's movie?

Most of the time, however, any sexual message in a movie is loud and clear. It is usually either visually presented, or else discussed by the characters. Even visual presentations, where the scene is partially visible, can have a pornographic effect. It's natural to us, as human beings, to be able to envisage further into the scene than is shown. It stands to reason. What of the effect on the youth, especially boys, who are highly susceptible to visual images? They are being de-sensitised to pornography in puberty, priming them to become porn consumers as soon as they are able. Furthermore, the consumption of pornography has been linked to the crimes of serial killers (example Ted Bundy), gang rape, and more frequent and more violent use of prostitutes.

In addition, movies are often produced that are 99 percent innocuous, with one percent sexual content. This makes it extraordinarily difficult for parents to control. The movie may have a good message, but be sprinkled throughout with unsuitable scenes or dialogue. Three movies that spring to mind are "Ever After", "A Knight's Tale", and "A Walk to Remember".

- The first has dialogue including the statement, "I'm very well endowed" spoken with a sexually-suggestive leer. This is ostensibly a children's movie, especially appealing to teen and pre-teen girls.
- "A Knight's Tale" has several references to virginity and sexuality, and includes a mild sex scene. Such a good story does not need such scenes or dialogue.
- "A Walk to Remember" is a lovely movie with a beautiful message. Unfortunately, within the first ten minutes, a friend of the main character mocks his girlfriend's virginity with some sexually explicit actions

and sound effects. The scene is appalling, and it spoils the movie so that it is really only suitable for much older teenagers. Our fifteen year old is not permitted to watch it.

Television: Advertisements and Programming

Television is a huge source of sexually explicit material. It is probably much worse than the Internet, because younger children are less likely to gain access to pornographic sites on a computer, whereas the television is easily utilised by the children as young as three years old.

Any quick glance through a TV Guide will demonstrate the number of programmes that are aired:

- In children's viewing time-slots with a "PG" rating,
- With the "s" symbol, indicating some sexual content,
- Later in the evenings with blatantly sexual titles, such as "Sex in the City".

For example, the "West Australian" TV Guide for Monday 31st March showed:

- "Teachers (M, als, rpt)" (ABC)
- "Dirty Sexy Money (M series return)" (Ch. 7)
- "Movie: *Sexy Beast* (Crime, 2000, AV15+, lv, rpt)" (Ch. 7)
- "South Park (M, a)" (SBS) ["a" referring to "adult themes"]
- "Drawn Together (MA15+, sav, rpt)" (SBS) [This one was scheduled for 9pm; far too early]

On Sunday, 30th March at 7.30pm, a show called "Gladiators" (rated "PG") was aired. The costumes alone were sexually revealing. Despite (or more probably because of) the inanity of the programme's content, making most adults switch channels, many children were likely to be watching the programme.

"Australia's Funniest Home Videos", again aired in children's viewing times, and clearly oriented towards so-called "family viewing audiences", often has crude images and sexually-oriented innuendo. Our children are not permitted to watch the programme, mainly for this reason.

The ABC Channel has a show called "Doc Martin", which is aired at 7.30pm, Saturdays. Every second or third episode has sexual content to a greater or lesser degree. On 29th March, the episode included a scene where a girl of 15 requests the morning-after pill. The doctor then discusses her sexual activity and tells her that she is too young to be having sex. Later, lewd remarks are made, by her "friends", about the size of the girl's breasts.

On Sunday 30th March, during an 8.30pm show on Channel 9, two advertisements came on for future programmes. The first, advertising the programme "Moment of Truth", to be aired on Tuesday 1st April, at 7.30pm, well within children's viewing times, had the following question: "During your marriage, have you ever had a sexual relationship with anyone else"?

The second, advertised a little later, was describing a special "controversial" episode of "Cashmere Mafia", to be aired at 9.30pm on Wednesday, 2nd April. The programme was described as "saucy", and we were told that it would "make you blush". Snippets of sex scenes were shown, with some special blurring effects. Even though 9.30pm is an adult viewing time-slot, a sizeable proportion of children will be awake and watching television at this time. Even if this were not the case, this is simply one example of the type of television programme that the Australian public are expected to ingest and enjoy.

At around 5.30pm on Monday, 31st March, a segment of Channel 9's "A Current Affair" was advertised. It was to be about plastic surgery, but its advertising ploy was to use very raunchy, well-endowed models in very sexy poses. "A Current Affair" airs at 6.30pm!

With so many "PG" programmes aired in children's viewing hours, one has to seriously consider the options for concerned parents. If a "PG" programme is to come on, does the parent:

- Sit with the child and wait for something unsuitable to be aired, and then switch off the programme, or
 - Sit with the child, noting the unsuitable elements, and then finding time later to discuss them with the child,
- or

- After noting any unsuitable element, interrupt the child's viewing to discuss the element immediately, or
- Not allow the child to watch at all?

This begs the question, what about when the parent is not awake, or not at home, when the "PG" programme is aired? What are they supposed to do? These are real questions about real dilemmas, and parents shouldn't be placed in these situations at all.

It is obvious that, in the single-minded quest for the almighty dollar, the television stations have no concern either for the suitability of material for children, or for the difficulties placed on parents by having to control the children's viewing environment to a burdensome degree.

In addition to the aforementioned concerns, we have noted that programmes often come on in the evenings, with a prior warning of violent content, and then proceed to have at least several sexual elements, although no mention has been made in the warning. Sometimes there are sex scenes, and sometimes sexual discussions and/or allusions. We have noticed this on many, many occasions. It is as though only violence is perceived to have any damaging effect on children, and only the violent element requires a warning.

It is also rather incongruous, that a) the portrayal of violence is accepted as being damaging to children, and is accepted as necessitating a warning, b) the advertising industry spends millions of dollars advertising to children because it believes in the efficacy of repeated exposure for selling purposes, and yet c) the TV media studiously avoids limiting the amount of sexual content in programmes, even to the extent of sometimes not even bothering to have a warning regarding sexual images, themes or topics. If advertising works because of repeated exposure, it means that genres of any unsuitable material are similarly influential through repeated exposure. **It is clear, therefore, that the Contemporary Australian Media seeks to deliberately sexualise our children.**

Furthermore, the story-lines of many programmes accept pre-marital and promiscuous sex as totally acceptable and normal, despite the fact that a large proportion of Australian society attempt to prevent their children from becoming involved in this type of self-destructive behaviour for as long as possible. Extra-marital sex (adultery) is also presented as being acceptable when: a) one of the parties doesn't feel "loved" inside the marriage, and b) the persons concerned are pursuing "happiness". Marital fidelity, and the welfare of any children concerned, always seems to come a bad second to these other considerations. Pursuit of love and happiness, expressed by a sexual relationship, are the all-important goals in these frequent and recurring plot scenarios.

Radio

Songs have had sexual lyrics for many years now. We recall songs from our youth with titles and lyrics like: "If you want my body, and you think I'm sexy, come on baby...", and "Tonight's the night" (Rod Stewart); "When your body's had enough of me, and I'm laying [sic] flat out on the floor..." (Dr Hook); "I'm gonna kiss you all over, and over again..." (unknown artist); "Can't get enough of your love, Baby" (Barry White), and on and on. Even "Crocodile Rock" had the words: "Suzie wore her dresses tight", thus introducing the concept of sexiness. The situation on the airwaves, however, has become unbelievably bad.

Eminem came into prominence some years back, because of the foul language that was used in some of his rap songs. Foul language demeans and trivialises sex. He and his song lyrics are merely the tip of the iceberg in this huge opportunity that the media utilises to sexualise the young.

For a fuller understanding of the extent of sexualisation of today's youth, a perusal of the lyrics (at www.lyrics.com) of the Top Ten Hits is well worthwhile. We looked at the lyrics of four songs ("Low", "Touch My Body", "With You", and "Love Song"), and noted the titles of others. While some songs appear to be of the more "old-fashioned" genre, albeit with some subtle sexual lyrics, others are the exact opposite.

Mariah Carey sings "Touch my Body", Flo-rida' sings "Low", while Chris Brown's song "With You" includes the following lyrics:

Hey lil mama, ooh you're a stunner
Hot little figure, yes you a winner,
(and later)

I gotta have you and I cannot wait now...

Ray J and Jung Berg sing a song with the title "Sexy Can I?" We did not look at the lyrics.

The full lyrics to Mariah Carey's "Touch My Body" has been included as **Appendix 1**, and the full lyrics of Florida's song, "Low", as **Appendix 2**. The lyrics make interesting (and educational) reading. The meaning of the name of the group "Flo-rida" becomes apparent when reading the lyrics: Not only is it a clear pun on the U.S. State name Florida, but "Flo" means "Floor", and "Rida" means the man who is having sex with the other person. In the song "Low", a girl is on the floor, and the singer is having sex with her. That is what the song is about.

Both "Touch My Body" and "Low" are verbal pornography. What is most interesting is that the Federal Government clearly believes that songs with these messages are fitting entertainment for the children of Australia.

Video clips

Video clips are another scandalous source of sexually explicit material. These clips are shown on free-to-air television with impunity, and during children's viewing hours.

For example, a fifteen or twenty minute viewing of Channel Ten at 10am on Saturday 22nd March, gave a quick snapshot. Of the five video clips seen by us, in this time, two had political anti-war themes, one seemed to be about taking drugs, and the other two had sexual elements. The first was Kylie Minogue singing "Wow". Some of the dance sequence was pole dancing, and the song had very sensual lyrics. The second video clip was a song called, "Move Your Feet", and had amateur video clips from Australian youth. Sadly, one girl looked about 10 or 11 years of age. Her first name was Danika, and she danced in quite a sexually suggestive way, wearing skimpy acrobics gear. Others in the clip, fortunately, were less provocative.

It was interesting that the programme was classified "PG", but was shown on Saturday morning. The "PG" rating shows that the TV channel was fully aware that some material was unsuitable for young children, but cared so little that they aired it in children's time anyway.

Newspapers and Magazines

Newspapers and magazines always contain at least some sexually suggestive and even sexually explicit material, despite the fact that children as young as 6 are usually able to read. It is rare to read a newspaper without at least one article with a sexual theme. Even the news items that report a rape or other sexual assault are generally replete with details. When the little girl (Sofia) was killed at Livingston Shopping Centre, Canning Vale, some time back, some reports gave information of how she was found naked, and some of the vicious things that had been done to her. No doubt the television reports had similar details for the public to ingest. It may be of interest to some adults to know these things, but there seems to be no discernment in relation to the descriptive language utilised.

Appendix 3 is from *The West Australian: Seven Days* "Gossip" section (22nd March, 2008). Despite the fact that there must be many images of Janet Jackson to choose from, the magazine editors chose this one, showing a very revealing neck-line. Again, the adage that "sex sells" says it all. And what is the purpose of the "Gossip" page anyway, except to titillate those who have nothing better to read?

The covers of magazines, freely visible and accessible to even very young children, regularly show:

- Scantly clad and sexually alluring models and celebrities,
- Sexually-gossipy lines such as "Paris Hilton's Sex Secrets", or "Why I Cheated with Dave's Best Friend".
- Sexually informative hook-lines for the teenage market: "The Secrets of Keeping your Man Happy in Bed" or "Do you need the Morning-After Pill?"
- Sexually-oriented diet hook-lines: "Slim is Sexy", or "How to have the Hottest Body".

The content of the magazines, and especially those designed to appeal to young teens, is also highly sexualised. The hook-lines on the covers indicate the types of topics covered inside. One of the strongest messages is: Be slim, be sexy, get your man and make him happy in bed.

Advertising to Children

Apart from the sexualised values that Australian children imbibe with their sex-saturated culture, they are also specifically targeted, as sex objects, by the Advertising Industry. Children are known to have a huge amount of “pester power”, and so they are targeted by any company wanting to sell to children or their parents. This appears fair enough, until it crosses into selling risky, dangerous, or unhealthy products. Australia’s Consumer “Watchdogs” are quite effective at identifying and regulating these products, **except** where it comes to sexualising products. It seems that unless something is physically dangerous, it raises no concerns.

Over the past few years, little girls’ underwear has become more and more raunchy. The “Playboy Bunny” symbol is used, for example, and some styles are very similar to adult styles. Why are our little girls being groomed to be pole-dancers, strippers, sex-puppets, prostitutes and paedophile victims? Is that what we really want?

Role Models

The number of role models, showing children how to look and act in a sexually alluring/provocative way, is extensive. Various movie stars, television presenters, singers and cat-walk queens easily come to mind. These people not only teach our children sexual values by the way they dress, but their lives, as presented in publicity articles and gossip columns in newspapers and women’s magazines, show their lifestyles to be largely empty, dysfunctional and superficial. They commit adultery with regularity, marry, divorce and re-marry at an alarming rate, and get involved and caught in sex-scandals at an equally alarming rate. For the celebrities themselves, “Any publicity is good publicity”, but the net result is extra exposure of Australia’s children to negative role models. The celebrities have no interest in the welfare of our children.

In addition to this, they are frequently waxing lyrical about how they “shed kilos” on such and such a “miracle diet”, with all the before and after pictures on display, and usually wearing scanty clothing. The magazines also love to catch them out looking fat or unattractive, and present weight gain as almost a “cardinal sin”.

These role models, therefore, give the messages:

1. that being thin is the be-all and end-all,
2. being sexy is what it is all about,
3. having money, fame and good looks is what to aim for in life, and
4. if this man doesn’t make you happy, then go for that one.

Kylie Minogue is a very popular Australian artist, and role model, who not only displays (lots of) herself on raunchy video clips and televised concerts, to sell her CDs, but extends her marketing into her own brand of sexy underwear. We have seen parts of her televised concerts, where she is centre-stage singing provocatively, while her dancers gyrate around her, simulating sexual movements.

The Australian Government’s Responsibility

The Australian Government has clearly **allowed this to happen**, by allowing the vested interests of the providers of all of these sorts of sexualising material, to operate almost completely uncensored. There is no solace in knowing that the Government’s regulatory bodies have kept out the very worst in sexual pornography, when what has been allowed in remains so offensive.

Internet: The Australian Government has sat on its hands in relation to Internet pornography, despite the fact that there are Internet filtering measures that can have been pursued. There are ways to censor pornography at the Server level. Can the Government claim to have even **tried** to pursue this avenue of protection for Australia’s children?

Television: Any current regulations and regulatory bodies are, in reality, a joke. Sexual themes are common on News and Current Affairs programmes, and are aired throughout the day. Sexually explicit material is shown at any time from 8.30pm onwards, on free-to-air TV. Once 11pm is reached, semi-pornographic advertisements can be seen, ostensibly to do with love, but in reality to do with sex, and soliciting sex. “Lava Life” immediately springs to mind. In fact, by comparison, “Lava Life” is one of the more innocuous of this genre of advertisements.

Movies: The movies allowed into Australia are classified by the official Government body, the OFLC. Their guidelines have, within the past few years, been successfully relaxed to allow more and more offensive material to be viewed, ostensibly to more accurately reflect the standards of contemporary Australians. The huge numbers of submissions from concerned citizens, in 2001, including us, were ignored. Despite their best efforts, these people can now comfort themselves with the knowledge that younger Australians can now view more sexually (and violently) explicit material earlier.

Radio: The transmission of so many songs with sexually explicit lyrics demonstrates that the Government has also been particularly lax in the control of the airwaves. Some songs are verbal pornography.

Newspapers, Magazines, Billboards and other advertising media: "Want longer lasting sex?" is the current ubiquitous question being blazoned for all and sundry to read. First it was in various places in the newspapers, and then on the backs of "shopper-dockets". Now (as we formulate this submission) it is in huge, colourful letters on billboards around town. This is, obviously, just one example of sex-oriented advertising methods. A more recent ad on a billboard says "Drink Sprite. Be sexy." (or similar), and shows a voluptuous model in a bikini. This ad not only deceives by pretending that drinking a soft drink will make you sexy, but it has the underlying assumption that "being sexy" is highly desirable.

Sex sells, and the advertisers use sex as a selling tool as much as possible, for as long as possible, and to the degree that the market will bear. If the ASB is supposed to be the "watchdog" for this industry, it is simply not doing its job.

No Effective Means of Complaint

The most serious aspect of the current sexualising culture is that concerned citizens who complain get **nowhere**. Their complaints are trivialised and ignored. Any complaint that we have ever made was referred on to a committee or board, which then decided that there was no cause for complaint. "Complaint dismissed" was the inevitable reply.

For example, bus-stop and billboard advertisements are supposed to be controlled by the Advertising Standards Board. When we sent in a complaint about a billboard advertisement, we were told that our complaint had been referred to a board (the ASB), and eventually our complaints were dismissed. By the time this process had taken place, the ads had been removed because their exposure time had expired.

The whole system is an outrage.

Most people do not bother to complain, even if they are concerned. We have spoken many a time to people in this category. We, personally, who are used to writing letters to newspapers and regulatory bodies, on issues, fairly frequently, only complain about 5 to 10 per cent of the time that we see or hear something objectionable.

Furthermore, those who **do** complain are only a tiny percentage of those who are concerned. This fact not only seems to have no bearing, whatsoever, on the outcome of the complaints process, but when complaints are made they are often dismissed with the statement: "Not many other people complained".

Common sense dictates that for someone to complain, they must:

- Be very concerned,
- Have taken the time and effort to find out who to complain to,
- Have taken the time and effort to formulate, write and send the complaint.

To have these complaints so easily dismissed is insulting and discouraging.

This is clearly a self-perpetuating process: When you do complain, your complaint is dismissed, yet the bodies in charge claim that not enough people have complained on such and such an issue, and therefore it can't be offensive. This is clearly irrational, and only serves to benefit their own corporate agendas.

Vested Interests Put Ahead of the Welfare of Children and Society

It is a well-known fact that the Media Industry itself has a huge influence on how Australia's regulatory bodies operate. The Pornographers were allowed as much, if not more, influence in the "Review of the Film and Computer Games Classification Guidelines" by the OFLC in 2001, than thousands of concerned parents and groups. We put in a submission, clearly, strongly and urgently requesting tighter guidelines. Later on, we read the Review findings, which clearly asserted that there was not sufficient reason to object to the new, more relaxed Guidelines. That meant that those who gained by monetary profits, the ones calling for the relaxing of the OFLC guidelines, had won the day. Those who wanted tighter controls and censorship were relegated to being a minority group, despite the fact that they sent in the majority of the submissions.

After all, it stands to reason: Why would the Pornography industry:

- Support tighter controls on its output,
- Accept limitations on its profit-making potential, or
- Regulate itself towards the protection of minors and society?

No reason, whatsoever. That is society's job, and it is the Government's job. The Government should be cooperating with concerned members of society, against the profit-making interests of those marketing their products, in order to ensure a safe environment for all.

If producers of something as vile as pornography can hold sway over what Australians can see and do, is it any wonder that the contemporary Media, *in toto*, with no real restrictions put on its output, and with no reason to adequately self-regulate in the interests of children, can do likewise?

The Long-term Effects of the Sexualisation of Children

Many organisations have been tracking the negative effects of undesirable elements in our society. The pervasive nature of the sexual culture has been shown to have contributed to: 1) Early sexual activity, some even pre-adolescent, 2) Teenage promiscuity, 3) Increase in the incidence of sexually-transmitted diseases, 4) Increase in the number of teenage pregnancies, 5) The commensurate increase in the number of abortions, 6) Increase in the incidence of paedophilia, 7) Increase in the incidence of rape, including date-rape 8) Increase in the incidence of all sexual crimes, 9) Increase in the number of eating disorders – bulimia and anorexia nervosa, 10) Increase in the number of single-mothers, 11) Increase in the number of broken homes, leading to higher poverty and crime rates 12) Increase in demands upon Government Welfare.

The steadily increasing level of sexualisation of our young will only add to these current societal problems. There is likely to be a greater push for the age of consent to be lowered. Prostitution, a bad enough problem already, and closely linked with drug and crime syndicates, will be soliciting younger and younger girls into the trade, since customers will be seeking younger and younger girls for hire. The customers themselves will be younger and younger. This will have serious consequences for our girls (and boys), both here in Australia, and in the countries that are targeted for the sex-slave trade.

There is no reason why our rapists shouldn't get younger. And our little girls, with their sexually provocative outfits, will provide more ogling material for paedophiles.

It is highly likely that sex abuse within families will become even more prevalent than at present. Sexually explicit material, consumed near children, whether or not they view it themselves, places them at risk of being targeted for abuse. Sex abuse of this kind is another, indirect, way of sexualising the young. They are not only exposed to the material, but it also becomes a vehicle for making them sexually-active victims.

The long-term effects of home-based sexual abuse have been well-documented. Among other facts, it is known that these victims are more likely than others to become abusers of children, sexual predators or prostitutes in the future. They are also much more likely to have failed relationships/marriages, and more likely to become drug addicts or commit suicide.

Some of our own experiences

As relief teachers, we have the opportunity to see some of the effects of our sexualised culture first hand. One of us noticed 9 and 10 year old boys leering at pictures in a women's magazine that was kept in the class-room for cutting up. These boys were far too immature to cope with the excessive sexual knowledge that they had obviously been exposed to. In another class, in another school, the 10 and 11 year old students had been down-loading lyrics of popular songs from the Internet. Only a quick glance was needed to show how sexually explicit and unsuitable these lyrics were for these children. Yet, this was part of a class assignment.

In our own home, the Internet has been very difficult to police effectively. Despite the rules that we have in place, and the fact that our computer is set up in a family area, our teenagers have gained access to highly unsuitable material. Even Internet filters have caused more problems than they have solved. This particular problem has caused untold stress, misery, and frustration, as well as many sleepless nights, adding excessively (and we believe unnecessarily) to the anxieties of raising teenagers.

What the Government needs to do

The Federal government of Australia needs to:

- Accept that the problem of sexualisation of the young is happening, and is increasing.
- Accept that the long-term effects will mean only more damaged children, the creation of more and younger victims, and more and younger perpetrators of heinous sexual crimes.
- Accept that the problem is large, but can be tackled in several areas.
- Accept that parents and other concerned citizens, who have been trying to be heard for many years, not only have been right to be concerned, but that they have had the genuine needs of their children, and of society, at heart.
- Accept that the Government, at both State and Federal levels, needs to act swiftly and effectively to reduce the problem. They need to:
 1. Stop allowing the profit-driven vested interests to take precedence over the interests of children, youth and society.
 2. Institute an effective complaints process that takes complaints seriously, and acts upon them effectively,
 3. Replace the current self-interested, regulatory bodies with a Media "Watchdog" Board with real powers and with a mandate to actively pursue infringements and enforce legislation. Any "Watchdog" Board needs to do its job.
 4. Introduce mandatory Internet filtering at the ISP level.
 5. Re-introduce mandatory and stricter regulations for free-to-air TV, where any programming content aired prior to 8.30pm must be free of sexual innuendo, sexual images and sexual language. This must include the stricter regulating of advertisements, and of news reports.
 6. Introduce stricter regulations regarding free-to-air TV, for the post-8.30pm time-slot.
 7. Introduce very much stricter regulations regarding the radio, and the songs and advertisements that may be played on air.
 8. Introduce guidelines to limit sex education, in schools, to children older than ten years of age, and to ensure that sex-ed is confined to strictly age-appropriate material.
 9. Ensure that the rights of parents are not usurped by the school in relation to sex-education.

Conclusions


The sexualisation of children problem is huge, and the ramifications serious. Those who have been warning the Government, and who have tried to make specific complaints, have been ignored.

In spite of this, the Federal Government can do some things to rein in the contemporary Media. To do this, the Government needs to immediately and urgently:

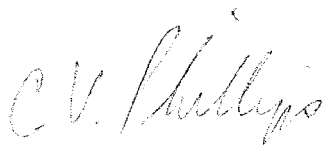
- Enact effective changes to the regulatory systems.
- Be prepared to go in for the long-haul to clean up the current toxic environment.

- Put the safety and welfare of Australia's children, and future citizens, ahead of profit-driven vested interests.

Yours sincerely,



Mr Graham Phillips



Mrs Carol V. Phillips

2nd April, 2008

(Appendices 1, 2 & 3 attached.)

Appendix 1:

(Lyrics down-loaded from www.lyrics.com - Two versions)

(Mariah Carey)

Touch My Body [Version 1]

MC, you're the place to be
Oh yeah, oh yeah, oh yeah, oh yeah, oh yeah
Oh yeah, oh yeah, oh yeah, oh yeah

I know that you've been waiting for it
I'm waiting too
In my imagination I'd be all up on you
I know you got that fever for me
Hundred and two
And boy I know I feel the same
My temperature's through the roof

If there's a camera up in here
Then it's gonna leave with me
When I do (I do)
If there's a camera up in here
Then I'd best not catch this flick
On YouTube (YouTube)
'Cause if you run your mouth and brag
About this secret rendezvous
I will hunt you down
'Cause baby I'm up in my bidness
Like a Wendy interview
But this is private
Between you and I

Touch my body
Put me on the floor
Wrestle me around
Play with me some more
Touch my body
Throw me on the bed
I just wanna make you feel
Like you never did.
Touch my body
Let me wrap my thighs
All around your waist
Just a little taste
Touch my body
Know you love my curves
Come on and give me what I deserve
And touch my body.

Boy you can put me on you
Like a brand new white tee
I'll hug your body tighter
Than my favorite jeans
I want you to caress me
Like a tropical breeze
And float away with you
In the Caribbean Sea

If there's a camera up in here
Then it's gonna leave with me

When I do (I do)
If there's a camera up in here
Then I'd best not catch this flick
On YouTube (YouTube)
'Cause if you run your mouth and brag
About this secret rendezvous
I will hunt you down
'Cause baby I'm up in my bidness
Like a Wendy interview
But this is private
Between you and I

Touch my body
Put me on the floor
Wrestle me around
Play with me some more
Touch my body
Throw me on the bed
I just wanna make you feel
Like you never did.
Touch my body
Let me wrap my thighs
All around your waist
Just a little taste
Touch my body
Know you love my curves
Come on and give me what I deserve
And touch my body.

Imma treat you like a teddy bear
You won't wanna go nowhere
In the lap of luxury
Baby just turn to me
You won't want for nothing boy
I will give you plenty
Touch my body

Touch my body
Put me on the floor
Wrestle me around
Play with me some more
Touch my body
Throw me on the bed
I just wanna make you feel
Like you never did.
Touch my body
Let me wrap my thighs
All around your waist
Just a little taste
Touch my body
Know you love my curves
Come on and give me what I deserve
And touch my body.

Oh yeah oh yeah oh yeah
Oh yeah oh yeah
Oh oh oh oh yeah
Touch my body...

Appendix 2

(Lyrics down-loaded from www.lyrics.com)

LOW (Flo-rida)

[Chorus:]

Shawty had them Apple Bottom Jeans [Jeans]
Boots with the fur [With the fur]
The whole club was lookin at her
She hit the flo [She hit the flo]
Next thing you know
Shawty got low low low low low low low low

Them baggy sweat pants
And the Reeboks with the straps [With the straps]
She turned around and gave that big booty a smack [Ayy]
She hit the flo [She hit the flo]
Next thing you know
Shawty got low low low low low low low low

[Verse 1:]

I ain't never seen nuthin that'll make me go,
this crazy all night spendin my dough
Had a million dollar vibe and a bottle to go
Dem birthday cakes, they stole the show
So sexual, she was flexible
Professional, drinkin K and ooo
Hold up wait a minute, do I see what I think I
Whoa
Did I think I seen Shorty get low
Ain't the same when it's up that close
Make it rain, I'm makin it snow
Work the pole, I got the bank roll
Imma say that I prefer them no clothes
I'm into that, I love women exposed
She threw it back at me, I gave her more
Cash ain't a problem, I know where it goes

She had them

[Chorus:]

Apple Bottom Jeans [Jeans]
Boots with the fur [With the fur]
The whole club was lookin at her
She hit the flo [She hit the flo]
Next thing you know
Shawty got low low low low low low low low

Them baggy sweat pants
And the Reeboks with the straps [With the straps]
She turned around and gave that big booty a smack
[Ayy]
She hit the flo [She hit the flo]
Next thing you know
Shawty got low low low low low low low low

[Verse 2:]

Hey
Shawty what I gotta do to get you home
My jeans full of gwap
And they ready for Shones
Cadillacs Maybachs for the sexy grown
Patrone on the rocks that'll make you moan

One stack (come on)

C'mon

Shawty got low low low low low low low low low low
Next thing you know
She hit the flo [she hit the flo]
She turned around and gave that big booty a smack [Ayy]
And the Reeboks with the straps [with the straps]
Them baggy sweat pants

Shawty got low low low low low low low low low low
Next thing you know
She hit the flo [she hit the flo]
The whole club was lookin at her
Boots with the fur [with the fur]
Apple Bottom jeans [jeans]
[Chorus:]

Gah it was fly just like my glock
Had to break her off that gwap
Shortly did that pop and lock,
She wouldn't stop, made it drop
I'm makin in them rosay bottles foam in
They be want it two in the mornin
I was on it, sexy woman, let me show in

I had to handle that,
Tattoo Above her crack,
got her them paper stacks,
The way she bit that rag,
and I ain't want it back,
I'll mama took my cash,
Yes she was worth the money

Shawty
Whoa

[Verse 3:]

Shawty got low low low low low low low low low low
Next thing you know
She hit the flo [she hit the flo]
She turned around and gave that big booty a smack [Ayy]
And the Reeboks with the straps [with the straps]
Them baggy sweat pants

Shawty got low low low low low low low low low low
Next thing you know
She hit the flo [she hit the flo]
The whole club was lookin at her
Boots with the fur [with the fur]
Apple Bottom jeans [jeans]
[Chorus:]

She showed her
Like a pornography poster
Sorry but I had to fold her,
Shortly was hot like a toaster
So lucky oo me, I was just like a clover
She ready for Rover, I couldn't control her
Got me like a soldier
I knew it was ova, that Henny and Cola
That's what I told her, her legs on my shoulder
I'm the man, I'll bend the rubber bands
What you think I'm playin baby girl
Three stacks (come on, now that's three grand)
Two stacks (come on)

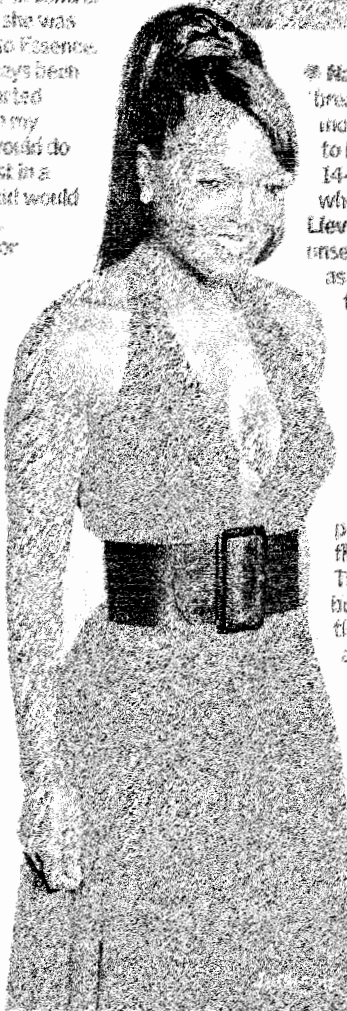
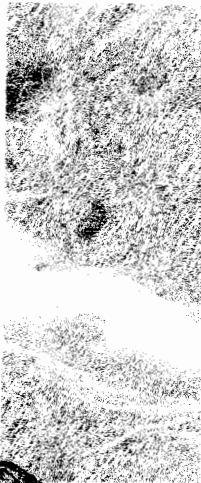
(Janet Jackson picture, "The West Australian: Seven Days" - TV Guide)

Revealing neck-line: Why is this necessary, and what does it teach our children?

PHOTOGRAPH BY [unreadable]

GOSSIP NADIA ARSALANE

Janet Jackson says the fear of failure keeps her alive. The singer hates losing and views everyone in the music industry as a threat to her success. She said: "Everyone is my competition. Even though I do feel there's room for everyone as long as I'm first -- no, I'm just kidding! I grew up competitive. We even grew up like that as brothers and sisters but it's a healthy competition. It keeps me going. It keeps me moving the way music and other things do." The 41-year-old has been busy promoting her latest album, *Discipline*, which went to number one on the US Billboard 200 chart. Janet revealed she named the LP *Discipline* because she has always wanted to be in control of her life -- even when she was growing up. She added to *Esquire* magazine: "Discipline has always been a part of me. When I started to perform onstage with my brothers and sisters, I would do my own hair. And not just in a messy way that a little kid would do, it had to be very neat. That's a lot of discipline for a kid and I've always had that."



Naomi Campbell's first month of a 14-hour workday who is unsettled as soon as the plane she is out to bid. Live first class plane. fly-first. The but he the and good. "Pec out gay ju pie up ne an les "H dr ha

The most popular zip code on television is back. An American network is developing a contemporary spin-off of Aaron Spelling's seminal 1990s teen soap, *Beverly Hills, 90210*, sources said. Details on the project, including which if any of the characters on the original series will make the transition to the spin-off, remain sketchy. The spin-off has been put on the fast track by the CW network and it is expected to decide soon whether or not to order a pilot. According to sources, *Beverly Hills, 90210* creator Darren Star is not involved.