

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts Department
of the Senate PO Box 6100 Parliament House Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Inquiry into the sexualisation of children in the contemporary media environment

As an MEAA affiliated Journalist and a Youth Worker I am greatly concerned about the effect sexually orientated images have on youth and young adults.

With the age of children participating in sexual acts decreasing every year I think it is about time our society took a look at where these children are getting their reinforcement for such encounters from. When the media is saturated with sexually suggestive advertisements and marketing, we are sending our children the message that this behaviour is not only acceptable but is to be applauded.

We need to turn back the tide of sexually promiscuous behaviour and we need to start by tightening the AANA Code of advertising to children. At present this code has no section which deals with the sexualisation of children and I find this appalling! The code needs to prevent the use of sexually provocative or highly sexualised images of adults and adolescents, prevent images that sexually objectify men and women and prevent images of children that display a preoccupation with bodily appearance and/or that depicts them in sexually suggestive behaviour.

Furthermore, the ASB should take a more proactive approach to protecting our children. At present they only act if a complaint is made regarding marketing and advertising and with the present complaints process being complicated and non-user-friendly the advertisement has already inflicted maximum damage before anything is done. The ASB needs to act in greater consultation with child development experts to ensure they are acting as a community watchdog and not as a clean-up-crew once the damage has already been done!

Finally, it is my belief that a Federal Children's Commissioner should be appointed with the power to ban sexualised products and practises and who can educate the industry and the general public about the dangers of a sexually saturated society and the damage it is causing to our children.

I thank you for taking the time to listen to my concerns and sincerely hope and pray that you may adopt some of my suggestions.

Many thanks and blessings
Nicole T G Bristow