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

Inquiry into the sexualisation of children in the contemporary media environment

I am grateful to our government for opening up a discussion on this issue which means such a great deal to me. I have four children and I have been very shocked and disappointed at the inappropriate advertising material that has been targeted at their age group and eye level.

One of my major concerns is that there are 3 major magazines that are advertising with large posters in newsagents' windows and almost ALWAYS at toddler eye level. These three magazines are *Ralph*, *FHM* and *ZOO*. I have written to the Australian Government Office of Film and Literature Classification on both the 20 February 2007 and again on the 21st March due to the unsatisfactory reply I received and was given the address of The Hon. John Hatzistergos for my complaint. Basically, at the end of the day, the main argument for putting provocative images in front of my two young boys was, "*these magazines are not currently considered 'submittable publications'*" I actually have no idea what that means and why it hasn't been rectified.

I fully understand that these magazines represent a strong market force and that they will always be available. But why can't they be placed in a more discreet place so that the men who wish to purchase them take a few extra steps to find them? These large posters down at toddler eye level are completely unacceptable and I am tired of being baffled with classification rules and regulations. They are sexual, they are provocative, and they should be kept away from where families and small children are shopping.

The attorney General's Dept representing The Hon. John Hatzistergos sent me a letter on the 13th of November 2007 also explaining that NSW has no restriction on the way these magazines are advertised. Why not?

I have also written to channel 7 and then the ACMA regarding a sexual advertisement shown repeatedly on a Friday night during Better Homes and Gardens which my

small children were watching with me. A full investigation report (no. 1794) was sent to me outlining my complaint and the nature of the sexual content of the advertisement. Sharon Trotter then sent me a brief letter stating that although sexual, it would not offend a reasonable viewer. I believe that as a 31 year old woman, I am indeed a reasonable viewer. But what about my 5 and 7 year old children? I can assure you that as small children, they are NOT reasonable viewers. Why are the restrictions and Code of Practice regulations based on what 'reasonable adults' would perceive as 'too sexual'? Shouldn't we be protecting our young people? Shouldn't we be basing our laws and expectations with the assumption that children will be exposed to this and therefore we need to err on the side of caution? That, to me, is common sense.

I would like to see:

- The Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice adjust it's restrictions without reference to 'reasonable viewers'. All codes and classifications should be considered as whether or not they are appropriate for **small children** before 8pm. We should be determined to protect young people from seeing sexual behaviour.
- All men's sexual magazines placed in a discreet area of newsagents and petrol stations so that customers are not exposed to them whilst waiting to pay for petrol or walking with their children to the supermarket. (I sent a letter to our local independent petrol station due to them positioning a magazine stand containing ONLY men's sexual magazines angled into the door way so that it HAD to be the first thing you saw as you entered the building. You almost tripped over it! This petrol station was across the road from a primary school. I wrote to them and told them that I wanted to support local business, rather than use the discount shopper docket petrol vouchers but that I would never go to that petrol station again while such inappropriate magazine displays were irresponsibly positioned. Incidentally, it worked. It was moved and I continue to patronise this petrol station at Valentine.)

I have noticed that Adult Book Stores do not use their windows for display. Adult book stores have a screen blocking the door way so that you have to actually GO IN to find what you are looking for. This is a fantastic thing. These stores are also not in busy shopping centres, but rather on busy roads or industrial areas. It is a great thing. This is how all pornographic and sexual material should be presented to the public: 'You want it? Go and find it.'

Sexuality is a great thing. It is a beautiful part of adult hood. However, young children should be free to grow up in a safe environment free of suggestive and sexual images.

I fully support the work of Julie Gale in Kids Free 2B Kids and thank her for her dedication to help protect the young people of this country. I am not a 'prude'. I just believe that there is a TIME and a PLACE for everything. I adore my children and the innocent way that they see life. Women's breasts and seductive poses do not need to be a part of their lives.

I truly hope that some monumental steps can be taken due to this Inquiry. We need to stop **talking** about this. Put some clear thinking and moral people into positions of authority so that our children can grow up being CHILDREN and not being pushed to understand things that are just not appropriate.

Sincerely,
Corrina Fairweather.