

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Environment,
Communications and the Arts.

Dear Sir/Madam

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

I would like to express my concern and absolute dismay at the type of advertising that is currently being shown on billboards, on television and at the cinema. Billboards along busy roads are a particular affront because as citizens we have absolutely no choice in the matter. Whether we want it or not these massive advertisements scream out at us with all manner of sexually explicit images – such as the Kolotex ad of a woman in high heels doing ghastly things to men who are tied up, or enormous billboards on every major road into Sydney at the moment that read: “*Would you like to have longer lasting sex? What are parents to say to their children when they innocently ask, What does that mean mummy? or what are they doing daddy?*”

I am also constantly outraged by advertising in bus shelters in the inner city of Sydney where children who wait for their school buses are confronted by lewd and sexually explicit advertising for magazines such as FHM.

Over the past years I have seen this type of advertising become more and more debased as advertisers continue to push the boundaries of acceptability without any obvious controls put on them. Advertisers freely use sexual images that are provocative, sexually titillating and border on the pornographic. These images are totally inappropriate for the community at large but especially for our most vulnerable community members ie. *our children and teenagers*. As a society we must do everything possible to protect innocence and provide a wholesome and nurturing environment for children to grow up in.

On several occasions I have written to both the advertiser company and the Advertising Tribunal but all to no avail as I am told that these images do not offend anyone anymore. I beg to differ. These type of non-responses however leave me as an ordinary citizen feeling frustrated, with no one to turn to.

Therefore as a matter of urgency I call on this committee to implement appropriate legislation that will protect our children from this willful sexual exploitation. Self-regulation clearly does not work and in the interests of our community, the government must step in to regulate and rein in the advertisers who appear hell bent on diminishing our community standards to the lowest common denominator.

Yours faithfully

Rosalind Hecker
15th April 2008