



SEX SERVICES ADVERTISING IN NEWSPAPERS

Prelude

WARNING!!!!

This submission to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee for its inquiry in the Australian Film and Literature Classification Scheme is graphic, as in both offensive and obscene text. But it is the reality of the nature of this topic and it must be confronted.

Media Standards Australia is against pornography in all of its forms, prostitution, and any sex services advertising in all of its forms. It is abundantly clear that both women and children are being assaulted, and abused, in all of these areas and there is no co-incidence that violence, drugs and mafia type gangs have a large role in them. In our submission, we are trying to briefly show the link and the pattern of how it is all related.

Even though MSA does not support any sex services advertising, we have nevertheless made recommendations for changes in the self-regulatory code.

There is no doubt that women are being abused in the sex services industry, but also being objectified in advertisements such as Billboards using sex imagery to entice sales. It is also no co-incidence that the actress in the first pornographic movie to hit mainstream cinemas, “Deep Throat”, was also physically abused. The actress, Linda Lovelace tells that she was hit repeatedly to perform on set and was stood over with a gun. Some viewers of the movie report that you could see bruises on her body to confirm her story.

What is telling was that the mafia not only financed the movie but used ticket sales as part of their money laundering operation. Decades later, it seems that nothing has changed, even in Australia, and now bikie gangs are the new masters and drug lords!

In the “old days” pimps for prostitutes used to go out and solicit business but now it seems, the local newspaper has largely taken over that role! Yes, newspapers that print sex services advertising are the new pimps without a conscience. Knowing the tragic circumstances that many women go through in the sex industry, being abused in all matter of ways, is heart- and gut-wrenching and our /your local newspaper is making money from it! Because it is the local paper, chances are, children are coming across these advertisements, becoming yet another assault on them from the media!

Another controversial film screened just a few years ago was *Lolita*, about an older man infatuated with a young 12 year old girl. In fact, the actress Sue Lyon, who played a lollipop-sucking Lolita in the 1962 film, says her sudden fame led to a personal downward-spiral of drink, drugs and depression. Now 51, she has told friends that any young actress playing such a role would need to be at least 18 to deal with the huge pressures involved. We suspect that she would need to be much older.

"I defy any girl rocketed to fame at 15 in a sex nymphet role to stay on an even keel," she said. "I am appalled they should revive the film that caused my destruction as a person."

There are also reports that paedophiles use such films to groom their young victims.

A website www.makelovenotporn.com was specifically set up because young men were acting out what they see in pornography, and abusing women in the same manner. There is a section on this website that explains the "fantasy" in pornography and the reality of what women really want and desire. It is easy to argue that adults already know what is real, and what is fantasy, but it would surprise many people to know how many adults think that public wrestling matches are real! Furthermore, and crucially, pornography **trains the brain** to respond with arousal at images which need to become more and more "hard-core" as time goes on.

Former porn actress Shelley Lubben in her new book, **"Truth Behind the Fantasy of Porn: The Greatest Illusion on Earth"**, rips the seductive mask off pornography and exposes the hardcore truth behind the "greatest illusion on earth".

Her spectacular journey from childhood sexual abuse to prostitution to the deadly unglamorous realm of porn sets, Shelley is brutally honest about her past. But that's not all. Having escaped the porn industry at 26, Shelley exposes the "secret" side of porn and the hardcore truth. Pornography is modern day slavery for thousands of women and the millions of porn addicts who can't stop clicking.

Shelley writes.....

Sex-packed porn films featuring hot dirty blondes whose man-eating eyes say, "I want you," are the greatest illusion on earth. Trust me, I know. I hustled for eight years in strip clubs and whorehouses, manhandling my way to the Big Top, where I was promised fame, fortune and glamour. I was 24 years old when I entered the world of porn. I put on a good show but I never liked performing tricks in the sex circus and preferred spending time with Jack Daniels rather than the male performers I was paid to fake it with. That's right, none of us hot blondes enjoy making porn. In fact, we hate it. We hate spreading our legs for sexually diseased men. We hate being degraded with their foul smells and sweaty bodies. Some women hate it so much that I would hear them vomiting in the bathroom between scenes. I would find others outside, smoking endless chains of Marlboro Lights...

When we entered our adult years we became sexual spectacles and demanded higher payment in the form of attention and cash as compensation for the neglect and sexual abuse that we suffered as children. I like to call it porn star currency. We will lie to get it. We will steal to get it. We will prostitute ourselves and risk our lives to get it. Porn stars can juggle HIV, Gonorrhea and Chlamydia while we fearlessly reinfect our-selves with even more STD's. We can do amazing feats with our minds and bodies that would terrify most ordinary people. We can walk a thin line of death and life at great heights without any fear of falling. With the help of drugs and alcohol our skills are enhanced to tolerate huge amounts of physical, mental and emotional pain. Our infected bodies are covered with sores and traces of bruises hidden beneath our daring and flaring images. We are pornographic superstars performing in the world's greatest freak show at a website near you!

Sex services advertising in newspapers also seem to have a running theme catering for "kinky" behaviour, mirroring pornography.

Everyone in Australia has the right to be safe and feel safe. In fact, many people come to Australia to escape the violence in their own countries. The Australian Government has an opportunity to ensure that this happens.

RECENT SUBMISSION TO THE WEST AUSTRALIAN NEWSPAPERS

A submission was made to the *West Australian*, a while ago, outlining improvements they could make to their voluntary code of practice re: Personal column adverts. (Also attached is a copy of the West's code of practice re. sex ads – See Appendix 1).

The main point - that the method of monitoring these ads is largely ineffective and allows many offensive adverts promoting child sex, sexual violence and degradation of women to be published.

Ideally of course, these ads should be banned altogether but it would help to reduce the problems if the newspapers, at least, had sensible guidelines on what is unacceptable to publish. It is also worth noting that an advertising campaign that features the sorts of descriptions of women and girls such as routinely appear in sex ads would not usually be considered acceptable in ads for other products or services.

There seems to be a culture of acceptance that sex industry ads is all about promoting a fantasy (albeit distorted) about women and girls as fantasy "products" and that therefore it would defeat the purpose of these ads if they were "cleaned up".

The West made no changes to its code or actual practice as a result of this submission and seem to have completely ignored it.

Concerns re. the advertising of sex industry services (prostitution, phone sex services, adult entertainment clubs) published in the print media and online:

1. Inadequate "codes of practice" that are voluntary (therefore easily ignored) and fail to apply appropriate guidelines as to what is acceptable or unacceptable to publish. Little or no response from the advertisers to community complaints about inappropriate advertising. Codes of practice seem to be formulated to allow the maximum freedom of advertisers to publish adverts and only the most minimal restrictions on sexually suggestive content. These voluntary codes seem to have no reference whatsoever to Advertising Standards Bureau guidelines.
2. Voluntary Codes of Practice for sex industry advertising that routinely allow supposedly unacceptable advertising to be published and has no follow-up or consequences for breaches of the code. Little or no response from either advertisers or regulatory bodies such as the Advertising Standards Board to community complaints about sex industry ads.
3. Routine publishing of sex industry advertising that portrays and promotes sexual activity between adults and child-like persons is available; acceptable and desired by the child-like person advertised.
4. Routine publishing of sex industry advertising that portrays and promotes violent and abusive treatment of a (paid) person as available; acceptable and desired by the person advertised.
5. Routine publishing of sex industry advertising that portrays and promotes images of women in a derogatory and discriminatory way including offensive racial and sexist stereotypes.
6. Phone sex adverts that appear to breach regulatory requirements by advertising what presents as a phone sex service that is available through simple mobile phone contact number (rather than 1900 number that requires a PIN code). These services are accessible to children and appear to be linked to prostitution services. They also allow children access to pornographic images through mobile phones. No follow-up or effective monitoring from advertisers or telephone business regulatory body. Any community complaints to phone services regulator **assumes you are a phone sex service user** who is dissatisfied with the service provided!

7. Routine publishing of deceptive advertising - many sex industry adverts present themselves as being something other than sex services, through suggestive advertising: eg prostitution services that present as "therapeutic" massage; "health" or "stress management" services or even "counselling" services; paid escort services that present as "introductory" services for lonely hearts seeking relationships; prostitutes who present themselves as being "nurses"; "air hostesses", solo mothers "seeking help to pay school fees" or even "students" requiring "teaching". Some of these adverts are not in the "personal" or "adult services" sections so it is not clear how the viewer [reader] is supposed to distinguish between genuine "therapeutic massage" services, for instance, and prostitution services.

NEWSPAPERS MAKING MONEY FROM ILLEGAL BROTHELS/MASSAGE PARLOURS

The "Inside Cover" comment in the *West Australian* (Sat, 26th March 2011) by Gary Adshead wrote a comment entitled "Massage Message", reporting on a comment he had received from a Korean woman called Ms Jeong, who worked in a number of Perth massage parlours and explained how many are illegal brothels staffed by Asian women working on temporary work or student visas arranged for them by "boss men". This is legalised trafficking and shows how much the WA Gov't needs to make it illegal for temporary visa holders to work in the sex industry. There is an obvious need to crack down on these operators. Also (importantly) the woman suggests the solution of making the illegal brothels' advertising illegal to stop them. Gary Adshead's comment - "a solution that could get IC sacked"!

- a) Gary Adshead should get some kind of medal for speaking out about his employer's unethical advertising policy - *The West* knows full well that the prostitution ads they publish are often for illegal operators using trafficked women, but they make millions from the ads, so they don't care.
- b) The Gov't should take up the suggestion of this lady and make prostitution ads illegal.
- c) The Gov't should make it illegal for temporary visa holders to be employed in any prostitution business.
- d) The Gov't should also look at regulation of massage services to ensure they are not a front for illegal brothels. Suggest they need a strict licensing system, too, in order to advertise to ensure they are qualified therapeutic operators.
- e) Also need to make it an offence to request sex services for money as this will deter the men who harass vulnerable women for sex services. Make it risky for them to ask! This deterrent has been used in some European countries, and has worked extremely well.

MASSAGE MESSAGE FOR NEW SEX INDUSTRY LAWS:

[Letter sent to *The West* and only partially published.]

Inside Cover writer, Gary Adshead is worried the *West Australian* would sack him for publishing ex-prostitute Ms Jeong's revelations that covert brothels are operating under the guise of being "therapeutic massage, beauty and health centres, including some in major shopping centres" and that these could be limited by banning the advertising of these businesses ("Massage message" Inside Cover, 26th March)

If you calculate what the West is raking in from prostitution advertising (I estimate around \$10million plus a year) you can see why Gary Adshead is worried about his boss's reaction to any suggestion these ads should be banned!

Apart from challenging *The West* to be more socially responsible advertisers, Inside Cover's "Massage Message" carries a number of messages for the WA Government as they prepare to release WA's latest prostitution law reform effort, too.

Firstly; it appears that temporary work and student visas are being systematically abused by illegal brothel operations staffed with Asian women on such visas, obtained for them by

shadowy “boss men”. These activities are given a rubber stamp of legality by the Australian Immigration Department, as these women are working with legal visas. Attorney General Christian Porter needs to follow through on his promise to ban persons on temporary visas working in prostitution in order to help fight this legalised sex trafficking from Asia into Australia.

Secondly; it is also clear that, if the Government focuses only on licensing the obvious brothels in designated areas, many who do not qualify for a license will continue to advertise and operate in the suburbs as “massage” centres (or other euphemisms) to evade the new restrictions. A better system of regulating and accrediting those advertising as therapeutic health businesses is needed to ensure they are genuine – not fronts for illegal prostitution rings. It is a health and occupational safety risk to both consumers and providers of genuine therapeutic massage services if the distinction between these genuine services and prostitution is muddled by this deceitful advertising.

Gail Gifford (MSA Vice-President)

(P.S. I have been told by a number of journalists and politicians that it is an open secret that no-one can question the West's publishing of these ads without incurring the wrath of the newspaper management because they are a substantial earner for this news company.)

The *West Australian* identified (from the map provided) over 50 illegal brothels operating in suburban areas of Perth ("Unlawful Brothels Flourish in Suburbs" 23/5).

We were even given a lot of worrying details about the nature of some operators. *The West's* investigators found *"some 'facilitators' offering a range of Asian women from a single address"*.

Perth brothel madam Beverley Clarke was quoted as warning that these *"so called 'Asian Houses' were opening at an alarming rate. In some cases girls were living in the ceilings of houses and were crammed together"* and that criminal operators can establish a brothel *"right next door to your grandmother or someone with children."*

Perth MLA John Hyde also stated he had been informed of many brothels establishing in suburbs and that some of these operators *"were carrying out unsafe sex practices and offering unsafe sex"*.

Unfortunately this report did not give much hope of anything being done soon about these criminal activities. The best Attorney General Christian Porter could offer is that he *"is working towards delivering the Government's election promise to ban prostitution outside designated zones"*. As successive WA Governments have been *"working towards"* controlling the WA brothel trade for decades with no noticeable results, this is not very encouraging!

We have to ask what the *West Australian* newspaper is going to do about the 100's of illegal brothel operators advertising in their classifieds columns each week? After all, *The West's* own journo's are telling them that, of the more than 100 prostitutes advertising in *The West's* classifieds whom they phoned for their survey, many were operating illegally from suburban homes, appeared to be immigrant women controlled by pimps, or may be offering “unsafe” sex practices. Is *The West* going to stop advertising these highly suspect businesses as a result of their own survey? Are they going to communicate the details of their findings to the police and follow up any action taken? It seems *The West* would have to forfeit a significant proportion of the advertising revenue it receives from prostitutes if it was to respond responsibly to its own survey findings!

Brothel keeping or "keeping a premises for the purposes of prostitution" is supposedly an offence liable to up to 3 years gaol under current WA law, but police rarely even attempt to enforce this law, although suburban brothels advertise their services openly in community newspapers.

Brothel madams like Ms Clarke, who openly talk in the media about their business interests in prostitution, complaining (in this report) about a "*decline*" in her business because "*too many girls [who] have been allowed to work privately*" face no criminal charges, though they are obviously also committing the offence of "living off the earnings of prostitution".

If the WA Government and Police do not enforce the current laws concerning prostitution, what confidence can the WA community have that any new laws they can come up with will ever be enforced effectively?

Conclusions

Media Standards Australia, being concerned about the wellbeing of children and families in our society, have grave concerns about the prostitution industry and the sex industry newspaper advertisements. We are equally concerned about the objectification and abuse of women. The views given in Appendices 2 & 3, below, essentially reflect the views of Media Standards Australia.

- The government should do all in its power to protect children from exposure to sexual and sexualising material, whether it be from advertising on billboards, television, radio or newspapers.
- The newspapers in WA are permitting blatantly sexual material in the Personal Columns to be advertised regularly, and are not even adhering to their own guidelines in relation to disallowed terminology and allusions to under-age prostitutes.
- The prostitution industry, with all its associations with drug abuse and other criminal activity, is posing a danger to society and, most importantly, children.
- Prostitution and pornography, with their association with violence, paedophilia and other abuse, have infiltrated and damaged large portions of current society, where adults are addicted, and children are consequently affected, either directly or indirectly.

We trust that our concerns will be treated with the seriousness they deserve.

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