

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

To the Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

RE: Inquiry - the Harm being done to Australian children through access to pornography on the Internet.

We are the parents of three school aged children. As part of our children's curriculum, they are required to purchase and use Apple i-pads at school for many of their subjects. This is of course necessary, to equip them with the knowledge and skill set they require for further studies and employment.

One of the issues that arises, however, is the danger of exposure to inappropriate images and as we know, one cannot 'unsee' what has been 'seen'. Something that struck us as parents, is that the default settings on the i-pad are all set to 'explicit' and are completely unrestricted, so a parent or guardian must intentionally go into the settings to put restrictions in place. This is all well and good for some but for those parents who come from a culturally and linguistically diverse background or for those who may not understand the technology, their children are at risk.

We're sure 'Apple' have the capabilities to design a child friendly i-pad but at the very least, it would be helpful if the default settings were more stringent rather than being unfettered and reliant on a responsible adult to put boundaries in place.

Raising children today has many challenges and having children damaged or damaging others through seeing or acting out images or movies that they do not have the maturity or capacity to understand or process, is a very real threat. As parents we try and do our very best, but we cannot be with our children every second of the day. We ask you, the Senate Committee, to partner with parents, to protect our children and their innocence. Childhood is a time where children should be free to be kids.

Yours sincerely

Marcus and Michelle Verkerk