

I would like to make a submission to the Senate enquiry into the harm being done to Australian children through the access to pornography on the internet.

I am a proud parent of 3 teenage boys. I am also a corporate lawyer, psychotherapist and executive coach.

In 2012, when my Year 7 twin sons told me about the huge number of their contemporaries who were watching porn on their phones and ipads, I became interested and deeply concerned about the influence of porn on young people and our broader community. I felt a strong calling to do something about it. I learned about the evidence-based research that shows how porn is socialising young men and women around sexuality, gender, power, consent and relationships. I learned about the statistics on mainstream porn of the physical (88%) and verbal (75%) aggression that men were using on women. I learned how porn is 30% of all internet traffic. I saw how porn is the main sex educator for young people and the problematic messages that it is sending our young people about intimacy, relationships, violence and power. Porn is pervasive and it is here to stay and I believe we need to respond to this influence in thoughtful and non-alarmist ways that invite young boys and girls into conversations about it.

I became aware of the movers and shakers on this platform in Australia. The main person in this space is Maree Crabbe. Maree is Founder of the Reality and Risk Project - a community based initiative that supports young people, parents, schools, government and the community sector to understand and address the influence of pornography. I introduced Reality and Risk into Melbourne Grammar School in Melbourne in 2013. Her work was received with huge support and accolades. I then introduced her into many other schools and went about raising funds for this project. I brought scale, influence and attention to this pressing social issue by organising groups and one on one meetings of potential funders to raise awareness, funding and pro bono resources to the project. Every person who I have introduced Maree to is blown away by her evidence based work and her compelling and informative message.

I urge the Governemnt to show courageous leadership in addressing this issue with schools, parents, young people and the broader community.

Parents all over Australia want the Government to address this important and challenging issue which is impacting so many aspects of our community.

Thank you.

Warm Regards
Mim