

SUBMISSION TO INQUIRY INTO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE BROADCASTING CODES OF PRACTICE

Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts

As a mother of a large family I have for many years been very concerned about the type of programs available on television and particularly the time slot in which there are very inappropriate programs.

Bad language seems to be a given in many programs now and while the Television stations generally warn of coarse or bad language coming on, a child does not often understand this warning and is confronted with words which it does not need to know. I also feel quite uncomfortable watching a really interesting program and suddenly having language used which I would not allow in my house. I think there should be a limit to what words are appropriate in a program. The language often does not add to the program it just seems to be added on as a 'must have'.

I do not think that parental guidance programs should be showing sex scenes or be very violent. When I allow a child to watch television I would presume that the program with a PG rating would have some aspects which would need to be explained but I do not think sex scenes are appropriate. I also object strongly to advertisements with sexual under and over-tones during what would be considered child viewing hours. I have allowed my children to watch sporting events and the advertisements have been very crude.

I am glad of this opportunity to air my complaints about television stations and the complaints process. Last year I wrote to a station about a very distasteful advertisement which I objected to and I am still waiting for a reply. This has happened to me on other occasions. I am not a frequent writer but on occasion feel that we should express our disagreement with the airing of some programs/advertisements if they do not reflect community standards. I am very disappointed that a station does not feel that it should reply to a genuine complaint. If I get a reply it is usually a standard answer saying that we have the option of turning off the program. While that seems a sensible course what about the other families whose children could be watching the distasteful advertisements and the parents who do not guide their children's television watching habits? Also I am frequently assailed by images of nudity in advertising of programs. My family is not watching the program but the advertisements can be quite embarrassing to those of us seeing these images.

Another complaint I have is the way the commercials are directed at children. I understand that advertisers are paying to inform us of their products but their method of advertising makes children feel that they must have everything advertised. I am also against the type of product advertised as some of the food products are not healthy and they are made to seem that way. A review of these commercials would be advisable since we have such a big problem in Australia with childhood obesity.

It is about time we raised the standards of our television and radio.

Surely we can cater for all tastes without offending those of us who would like to watch television with our families without having to turn off programs frequently because of offensive material. At present one could hardly call television a family medium. I would love to be able to watch a comedy without bad language and sexual inferences. I would love to be able to allow my children to watch a program without constantly having to watch every word and action. I do not think sex scenes and violence are necessary for a story line and think television should have a much more stringent code of practice to identify with the ordinary person on the street.

Nola Drum

