

Re: Inquiry into the effectiveness of the broadcasting codes of practice

Dear Committee Members,

I am 31 years old, I've always lived in Australia (Vic & 8 years in Qld) and have a 3 year old daughter.

It is mainly now, that I am a parent of a beautiful daughter that I realise our broadcasting codes are NOT effective and actually are themselves inadequate, especially regarding what is appropriate for children.

Since I was a teenager the standards in the areas of foul language, accuracy of classification, and (a related matter) sexualised imagery, nudity etc have DROPPED considerably.

I was shocked to see an ad in March 2008, immediately before a children's morning program showing full nudity!

I was shocked to see the development of ads for soft-porn mobile phone downloads reach a 9pm time slot (or any time-slot).

I was shocked to see the A.S.B. reject 300 complaints for the pole-dancing Nandos chicken ad.

I was shocked to learn that the the A.S.B. has 60 days to reply to a complaint and that after that ACMA could take up to 12 months to reply!! Is this called democracy!

CSI style shows used to be intriguing, now family viewing time includes extremely graphic depictions of dead bodies, their mutilated limbs, organs. In one case, the last detail of a sexual & violent homicide was 'examined' on the coroner's table. This is not appropriate viewing for family time slots!

If a self-regulating industry clearly fails in its responsibilities the government must intervene to regulate. Let's take, as an example of the 'libertarian agenda' amongst the A.S.B., this response to a complaint about a 'SEX: no chocolate or flowers required' billboard for a brothel along a school route in Victoria...

"It is acknowledged that the billboard is located in a route for school children before and after school. To claim that this creates a problem is naïve. Such a claim ignores the valuable educational role played by advertising, and in this instance will assist in helping to debunk misconceptions that are frequently held by some members of the community with regard to lawful prostitution." Source: www.kf2bk.com

Educational! No thanks, not if the A.S.B. plans to make sex-workers of my children. Since when did my children have misconceptions about lawful prostitution? What cheek!

Please intervene. Adjust the codes to protect children. Abolish the ASB and replace it with a body independent of the industry OR at least reduce the reply time to 6 days (not 60) and the ACMA response to 1 month (not 12). Obviously appropriate fines would be effective also.

An appeals process that includes a fee of \$1000 is not fair, by the way!

Enough is enough. The A.S.B. even admits as much when it reported that the community is more conservative than the board in matters pertaining to sexual depictions.

On a related matter it is clearly the government's responsibility to address the problem of classification regarding internet websites. It should be required that website owners self-classify and therefore create a first-step avenue for parents to guide children's internet use. E.g.. Set my computer to only view 'G' rated websites for my younger children. Websites that have inaccurate classification would be reported to an appropriate government regulating body.

Thank you for opening up this very important inquiry.

Sincerely,

Luke McCormack, B.Sc., B.Theol., Grad.Dip.(Ed).