

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

1.12 The committee considers that the inappropriate sexualisation of children in Australia is of increasing concern. While noting the complexity of defining clear boundaries around this issue, the committee believes that preventing the premature sexualisation of children is a significant cultural challenge. This is a community responsibility which demands action by society. In particular, the onus is on broadcasters, publishers, advertisers, retailers and manufacturers to take account of these community concerns.

1.13 Noting this heightened concern, the committee believes that this issue should be followed up and therefore recommends that the steps taken to address it by industry bodies and others should be further considered by the Senate in 18 months time.

Recommendation 2

3.30 The committee recommends that the Commonwealth through the National Health and Medical Research Council or other appropriate body commission a major longitudinal study into the effects of premature and inappropriate sexualisation of children.

Recommendation 3

4.29 The committee recommends that, as part of its review of the Children's Television Standard (CTS), the Australian Communications and Media Authority consider revising the requirement that CTS content be broadcast for at least half an hour per day to enable broadcasters to schedule it in extended blocks at times which are more likely to attract children to watch it.

Recommendation 4

4.56 The committee recommends that broadcasters review their classification of music videos specifically with regard to sexualising imagery.

Recommendation 5

4.65 The committee recommends that broadcasters consider establishing dedicated children's television channels.

Recommendation 6

4.108 The committee recommends that publishers consider providing reader advice, based on the Office of Film and Literature Classification systems of classifications and consumer advice, on magazine covers indicating the presence of material that may be inappropriate for children.

Recommendation 7

5.17 The committee recommends that, in 18 months, the Senate review the effectiveness of the operation of the Australian Association of National Advertisers' Code for Advertising and Marketing Communications to Children, introduced in April 2008.

Recommendation 8

5.28 The commissioner recommends that the Advertising Standards Board and Free TV Australia consider establishing a media and advertising complaints clearing house whose functions would be restricted to:

- receiving complaints and forwarding them to the appropriate body for consideration;
- advising complainants that their complaint had been forwarded to a particular organisation; and
- giving complainants direct contact details and an outline of the processes of the organisation the complaint had been forwarded to.

Recommendation 9

5.46 The committee recommends that the Advertising Standards Board produce a consolidated half-yearly list of all complaints, including those received by 'phone, where the impact of an advertisement on children, however described, is a factor in the complaint.

Recommendation 10

5.76 The committee recommends that the Advertising Standards Bureau consider adopting a process of pre-vetting advertisements either (a) at the request of the advertiser where they are concerned that the content of the material may be pushing the boundaries of the codes or (b) where an advertiser or agency has regularly produced advertising material that has been the subject of complaints.

Recommendation 11

5.78 The committee recommends that, to ensure that the Advertising Standards Board is able to make determinations that are in keeping with prevailing community standards, the Advertising Standards Bureau should develop a formal schedule or process for community consultation, including the use of focus groups, and research to act as a benchmark for board determinations.

Recommendation 12

5.96 The committee recommends that the Advertising Standards Board rigorously apply standards for billboards and outdoor advertising to more closely reflect community concern about the appropriateness of sexually explicit material and the inability of parents to restrict exposure of children to such material.

Recommendation 13

6.39 The committee recommends that state and territory governments, which have the responsibility for education, consider the introduction into all Australian schools of comprehensive sexual health and relationships education programs which are inclusive of both young people and parents, adopting a consistent national approach to the question.

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