Inquiry into improving the delivery of respectful relationships and sex education relevant to the use of technology in Queensland state schools

Submission No 030

Inquiry into improving the delivery of respectful relationships and sex education relevant to the use of technology in Queensland state schools

Griffith University Law Reform Class of 2017

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17 June 2017

The Committee Secretary

Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee

Parliament House, George Street, Brisbane, Qld, 4000

Email: etisbc@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Ms Sue Cawcutt,

This submission was prepared as part of the course 6000LAW Law Reform at Griffith Law School, Griffith University under the supervision of Associate Professor Kieran Tranter. This submission is a result of the joint effort of law students Elizabeth Englezos, Alex Somers, Yassamin Olson and Vanessa Antal.

This submission will argue that the vast prevalence of digital technology and gender-biased media has a detrimental impact on adolescent development and healthy relationships. This submission will also engage with developmental learning theory to assert that the harmful use of digital technology by adolescents can serve as a predictive pattern of Domestic Family Violence ('DFV'). The current Queensland curriculum and the recently implemented Respectful Relationships Education program ('RRE') will also be analysed in order to determine whether students are effectively educated about these harms. Whilst this enquiry acknowledges that DFV is prevalent in

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non-heterosexual relationships, concurrent with the Queensland Special Taskforce's recommendations, primary focus will be placed on the gendered nature of DFV as perpetrated by males. Ultimately, this submission praises the effectiveness of the RRE program, but further recommends that it should be made compulsory across all Queensland schools in Years 1-10. This submission also recommends expanding the RRE to include age appropriate material for Years 3-10 that explores in greater depth the harms of digital technology and the impact of gender-bias stereotypes in the media.

We thank you in advance for taking the time to consider our proposal, and trust you find our submission beneficial to your review.

Kind Regards,

Elizabeth Englezos, Alex Somers, Yassamin Olson and Vanessa Antal

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INTRODUCTION

1. On the 2nd of November 2016, the member for Sandgate, the Hon S.J. Hinchliffe asked the Education, Tourism and Innovation Small Business Committee ('ETISBC') to inquire into possible methods that could improve the delivery of respectful relationships and sex education in Queensland State Schools.[1] The terms of reference are as follows:

> 1. *The Committee is asked to consider the following:*
>   i. *The prevalence of sexualised content and the unsafe use of technology by students;*
>   ii. *How adequately the Health and Physical Education curriculum supports students to make safe and healthy choices and understand respectful relationships, particularly given students' greater access to technology; and*
>   iii. *Consideration of other jurisdictions' approach to tackling sex education and the issue of at risk behaviour and sexualised content creation by students.*
> 2. *In undertaking the inquiry, the committee should also consider, the potential benefits of students being better informed about the risks behind the use of technology in a sexual nature.*

2. Recommendation 24 of the Special Taskforce on DFV also served as a catalyst for this enquiry, which sought to change cultural attitudes regarding the maintenance of respectful relationships, gender equality and self-respect. [2] The Taskforce further recognised a direct link between the prevalence and perpetration of DFV against women and the social and cultural attitudes of the community.[3] As a result, the Queensland Government introduced the Respectful Relationships Education ('RRE') program for junior and senior schools in 2016.[4]

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[1] Queensland, *Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Assembly, 2 November 2016, 4019-20 (Hon SJ Hinchliffe).
[2] Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland, *Not Now, Not Ever, Putting an End to Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland Taskforce Report* (Report, Queensland Government, 2015) 22.
[3] Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland, *Not Now, Not Ever, Putting an End to Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland Taskforce Report* (Report, Queensland Government, 2015) 22.
[4] Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland, *Not Now, Not Ever, Putting an End to Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland Taskforce Report* (Report, Queensland Government, 2015) 22.

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3. **Part 1** of this submission explores the prevalence of domestic violence in Queensland and the social and cultural drivers of gender inequality. This section also analyses the drivers of DFV through a developmental learning theory lens, in order to demonstrate that gender-bias attitudes and beliefs adopted in adolescence can form predictive patterns of students' behaviour in adult relationships.

4. **Part 2** of this submission reviews literature surrounding the prevalence of digital technology and explores the detrimental impact it can have on adolescents' perception of healthy relationships, peer relations and gender roles. **Part 2.1** presents evidence of the causal link between the inappropriate use of digital technology by adolescents and DFV in adult relationships. **Part 2.2** proffers that mobile phone use has facilitated constant connectivity, which normalises harmful communication patterns and enables hacking and stalking behaviours. **Part 2.3** suggests that developments in technology have increased adolescent access to gender-biased media, which has perverted their perception of gender roles and undermined the development of healthy relationships. **Part 2.4** asserts that online technology has also increased adolescent exposure to sexual content including violent pornography. **Part 2.5-2.7** argues that digital technology has facilitated harmful trends such as the distribution of self-created sexual content, cyber bullying and access to dating applications such as Tinder. **Part 2.8** confirms that these negative consequences have been exacerbated by a lack of parental control and awareness. **Part 2.9** explores the benefits of social media such as the ability for victims to seek 24-hour online support through mobile applications.

5. **Part 3** analyses the current Queensland curriculum in order to determine whether it effectively educates students about the harms with digital technology (as identified in Parts 1 and 2 of this submission). Whilst the RRE program should be praised for seeking to decrease violent and anti-social behaviours and promote equitable and respectful relationships, its non-compulsory nature has resulted in a vast majority of Queensland students failing to receive comprehensive sex education. The RRE also fails to consider the impact of digital technologies on contemporary adolescent development. Moreover, it neglects to teach students at a suitable age the critical media skills required to properly contextualise gender-bias content. By way of explanation, this submission suggests that the majority of essential educational interventions regarding sexual education and the unsafe use of technology are not implemented early enough within the current curriculum.

6. **Part 4** of this submission makes several recommendations to the current Queensland Education program, by adopting reform strategies that emulate the Victorian state school curriculum. **Part 4.1** recommends that the RRE should be made compulsory across all Queensland schools in Prep –Year 10. **Part 4.2** recommends expanding the RRE curriculum to include a critical literacy program in Years 3-10 to provide students with the appropriate tools to contextualise harmful and sexualised content produced by the media and popular culture. Victoria's 'Catching On Early Program' provides a successful framework for implementing this new material. **Part 4.3** recommends the inclusion of educational material in Years 3-10 that outlines the harms and benefits of digital technology and the importance of creating healthy boundaries in relationships. **Part 4.4** recommends the introduction of an online content portal to facilitate further parental involvement in sexual education programs across Queensland schools.

1.0. DOMESTIC FAMILY VIOLENCE & ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT: THE CAUSAL LINK

1.1. Domestic Violence

1. Domestic violence is broadly defined in the Queensland *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012* as 'behaviour that is physically, sexually, emotionally, psychologically or economically abusive,' that occurs between members of intimate, family relationships, or informal care arrangements.[5] Between 2014-2015, there were 71,775 reported incidents of DFV in Queensland, 29 of which resulted in homicide.[6] The primary victims of domestic violence are women, with one in six experiencing physical abuse at the hands of a former or current partner.[7] Domestic violence in Queensland also imposes social costs of 2.7-3.2 billion dollars per year.[8]

2. The *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act* seeks to deter domestic violence through traditional criminal justice mechanisms, such as protection orders and punitive sanctions.[9] However, the current regime only makes reparations for violence suffered and does not reduce future incidents. The *Act* also fails to address the complex political, cultural, and social drivers of gender inequality, discrimination, and violence. The recent homicides of Queenslander mothers, Tara Brown in 2015 and Teresa Bradford in 2017 sparked intense media scrutiny surrounding current DV policies and served as a bitter reminder that more meaningful reform is needed to facilitate cultural change.[10]

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[5] *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012* (Qld) s 8.
[6] Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland, *Not Now, Not Ever, Putting an End to Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland Taskforce Report* (Report, Queensland Government, 2015) 6.
[7] Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland, *Not Now, Not Ever, Putting an End to Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland Taskforce Report* (Report, Queensland Government, 2015) 6.
[8] Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland, *Not Now, Not Ever, Putting an End to Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland Taskforce Report* (Report, Queensland Government, 2015) 6.
[9] See *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012* (Qld) pt 3.
[10] Michael Atkin, 'Teresa Bradford's family calls for Government to offer domestic violence murder assistance' ABS (online), 18 April 2017 < http://www.abc net.au/news/2017-04-18/bradford-domestic-violence-victim-family-calls-for-govt-help/8450158>; Andrew Kos et al., ' Tara Brown murder: Estranged partner Lionel Patea pleads guilty to killing Gold Coast mother' ABC (online) 27 February 2017 < http://www.abc net.au/news/2017-02-27/tara-brown-death-lionel-patea-pleads-guilty-murder-brisbane/8305604>.

1.2. The Drivers of Domestic Violence & Adolescent Development

The following section will briefly explore the relevant aspects of developmental learning theory, in order to understand the causal link between drivers of DFV and adolescent development.

1. There are several stages of adolescent development including 'identity development, individuation from parents, maturation of decision-making abilities, and a shift in orientation towards peers.'[11] Developmental learning theory posits that identity progression involves an experimentation process whereby adolescents gain individualistic personality traits, attitudes, values and beliefs through the process of trial and error.[12] During the final stages of development, teenagers gain autonomy, begin to spend less time with parents and seek out information from peers in order to define healthy or intimate relationships.[13] Research further indicates that the development of intimate relationships during adolescent years has a long lasting effect on self-esteem and romantic values, thus forming a 'predictive pattern' of how they will engage in adult relationships.[14]

2. According to King-Ries, teenage relationships are the 'training ground for adolescents to improve communication, negotiation skills and empathy' however, teenagers often lack life experience and 'adopt exaggerated stereotypical gender roles.'[15] These roles perceive men as dominant and encourage females to adopt submissive attitudes.[16] As a result, adolescents may perceive jealousy and possessiveness as normal, or that male control and dominance within relationships constitutes a sign of affection.[17]

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[11] Andrew King-Ries, 'Teens, technology, and Cyberstalking: the domestic violence wave of the future' (2011) 20(2) *Texas Journal of Women and the Law* 131, 143-144.

[12] Lauren A. Spies Shaprio and Gayla Margolin, 'Growing Up Wired: Social Networking Sites and Adolescent Development' (2014) 17 *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review* 1; Andrew King-Ries, 'Teens, technology, and Cyberstalking: the domestic violence wave of the future' (2011) 20(2) *Texas Journal of Women and the Law* 131, 143-144.

[13] Lauren A. Spies Shaprio and Gayla Margolin, 'Growing Up Wired: Social Networking Sites and Adolescent Development' (2014) 17 *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review* 1; Robert Crosnoe, 'Research on Adolescence in the Twenty-First Century' (2011) 37 *Annual Review of Sociology* 439.

[14] Andrew King-Ries, 'Teens, technology, and Cyberstalking: the domestic violence wave of the future' (2011) 20(2) *Texas Journal of Women and the Law* 131, 143-144.; Robert Crosnoe, 'Research on Adolescence in the Twenty-First Century' (2011) 37 *Annual Review of Sociology* 439.

[15] Andrew King-Ries, 'Teens, technology, and Cyberstalking: the domestic violence wave of the future' (2011) 20(2) *Texas Journal of Women and the Law* 131, 147.

[16] Andrew King-Ries, 'Teens, technology, and Cyberstalking: the domestic violence wave of the future' (2011) 20(2) *Texas Journal of Women and the Law* 131, 149-150.

[17] Andrew King-Ries, 'Teens, technology, and Cyberstalking: the domestic violence wave of the future' (2011) 20(2) *Texas Journal of Women and the Law* 131, 149-150.

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3. A 2016 survey of 600 Australian girls conducted by Plan International Australia supports the notion that gender inequality is prevalent from a young age, with 90% of respondents indicating they were not treated equally to their male counterparts. In addition, 72% of respondents agreed that teaching adolescents the definition of respectful relationships would help prevent violence and abuse; with 58% further suggesting that parents and teachers should actively promote gender equality.[18]

4. Scholars also assert that traditional media content such as film and music can have a detrimental effect on adolescent development by normalising gender stereotypes and violence.[19] Makin and Morczek suggest that mass media content serves as 'mentor to the masses, reinforcing traditional gender roles and promoting sexist attitudes.'[20] In addition, the media's tendency to present sexism as "cool" promotes the degradation and objectification of women, which is subsequently reinforced by other males seeking to preserve masculine ideals.[21] Evidence also suggests that the sexualisation of women in unrestricted and mainstream media has increased significantly over time, with one study calculating a 15-fold increase in markers of in teen magazines between 1994 and 2011.[22]

5. Behaviours referred to as 'gendered drivers of violence against women' are the most prominent predictors of DFV and are reinforced by various cultural and social norms, including:[23]

- Past exposure of violence towards women;
- Male control of decision-making processes;
- Limits on a woman's independence;
- Rigid gender roles and identities;
- Male peer relationships that endorse or promote aggressive and disrespectful behaviour towards women;[24]
- Socio-economic inequality and/or discrimination;

[18] Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence, Summary and Recommendations (March 2016) 25.

[19] David A. Makin and Amber L. Morczek,, 'X Views and Counting: Interest in Rape-Oriented Pornography as Gendered Microaggression' (2016) 31(12) *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 2131, 2132; Robert Crosnoe, 'Research on Adolescence in the Twenty-First Century' (2011) 37 *Annual Review of Sociology* 439.

[20] David A. Makin and Amber L. Morczek,, 'X Views and Counting: Interest in Rape-Oriented Pornography as Gendered Microaggression' (2016) 31(12) *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 2131, 2132.

[21] David A. Makin and Amber L. Morczek, 'X Views and Counting: Interest in Rape-Oriented Pornography as Gendered Microaggression' (2016) 31(12) *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 2131, 2132.

[22] Michelle I. Jongenelis et al, 'An investigation of young girls' responses to sexualized images' (2016) 19 *Body Image* 150, 151.

[23] Our Watch, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) and VicHealth (2015) *Change the story: A Shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia,* Our Watch, Melbourne, Australia, 8.

[24] Our Watch, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) and VicHealth (2015) *Change the story: A Shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia,* Our Watch, Melbourne, Australia, 23.

- Backlash factors such as violence and aggressive responses to females who seek access to male dominated segments of society.[25]

6. Gendered micro-aggression refers to real-world choices, actions, and inactions that occur on a daily basis within society that 'promote and reinforce the subordination, exploitation, violence and disrespect towards women.'[26] Content that objectifies women and is sexually violent further reinforces hypermasculinity, which has been linked to an increase of gender-linked crimes.[27] These deeply ingrained beliefs ultimately reinforce male dominance, toughness and a lack of empathy.[28]

7. The 'GamerGate Controversy' of 2014 exemplifies an instance in which a male-dominated culture was 'forced to accept the inclusion of women' and female perspectives within gaming.[29] Three women in particular became the targets of malicious campaigns, which included "trolling", death-threats, revenge-pornography and defamation as a sanction for their increasing success within the gaming industry. GamerGate demonstrates 'how symbolic violence can transcend the boundaries of the games [or other media] and has the potential to become "real" physical violence' where male dominance is threatened or challenged.[30] Therefore, cultural attitudes clearly have the potential to drive gender inequality and it is critical that students learn the skills to contextualise these messages before they become internalised as normal.[31] These issues are further complicated by the vast prevalence of adolescent digital technology use.

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[25] Our Watch, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) and VicHealth (2015) *Change the story: A Shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia,* Our Watch, Melbourne, Australia, 23.

[26] David A. Makin and Amber L. Morczek, 'X Views and Counting: Interest in Rape-Oriented Pornography as Gendered Microaggression' (2016) 31(12) *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 2131, 2139.

[27] David A. Makin and Amber L. Morczek,, 'X Views and Counting: Interest in Rape-Oriented Pornography as Gendered Microaggression' (2016) 31(12) *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 2131, 2134.

[28] David A. Makin and Amber L. Morczek,, 'X Views and Counting: Interest in Rape-Oriented Pornography as Gendered Microaggression' (2016) 31(12) *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 2131, 2133.

[29] Kishonna L. Gray, Bertan Buyukozturk and Zachary G. Hill, 'Blurring the boundaries: Using Gamergate to examine "real" and symbolic violence against women in contemporary gaming culture' (2017) 11(3) *Sociology Compass* n/a, 2.

[30] Kishonna L. Gray, Bertan Buyukozturk and Zachary G. Hill, 'Blurring the boundaries: Using Gamergate to examine "real" and symbolic violence against women in contemporary gaming culture' (2017) 11(3) *Sociology Compass* n/a, 2.

[31] Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence, Summary and Recommendations (March 2016) 30.

2.0. THE PREVALENCE OF SEXUALISED CONTENT AND THE UNSAFE USE OF TECHNOLOGY BY STUDENTS

2.1. The Prevalence of Digital Technology

1. According to King-Ries, 'teenagers incorporate technology into the formation of their sexual identities' which can serve as a tool for domestic violence.[32] As digital communication has become a primary method of interaction, adolescents are likely to experience the aforementioned drivers of domestic violence through technology.[33] The 2010 AU-Kids Online survey of 400 children aged 9-16 confirmed the vast prevalence of digital technology, with 76% of Australian children accessing the Internet daily (for an average of 99 minutes).[34] In comparison with European countries, Australian children also spend a longer amount of time on the Internet; with over 55% of respondents indicating they spent less time with family and friends as a result.[35]

2. On average, 54% of Australian girls and 38% of boys between the ages of 9-16 access the Internet in their bedroom at home, while 60% of all children have access through a mobile device such as smartphones, tablets, and media players.[36] Private Internet access also increases with age; 19% of 9-10 year olds have unsupervised access, in comparison to 70% of 15-16 year-olds.[37] The most common Internet activities include 'schoolwork, watching videos, playing games, emailing and social networking.'[38] In comparison to European countries, Australian children reported coming into contact with hurtful or upsetting imagery more often and were two and a half times more likely to be bullied.[39] Therefore, the wide prevalence of digital technology use by adolescents has the potential to facilitate harmful patterns of access and use. A significant number of scholars also suggest that these trends can mirror acts of DFV in adulthood.

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[32] Andrew King-Ries,'Teens, technology, and Cyberstalking: the domestic violence wave of the future' (2011) 20(2) *Texas Journal of Women and the Law* 131, 143-144.

[33] Andrew King-Ries,'Teens, technology, and Cyberstalking: the domestic violence wave of the future' (2011) 20(2) *Texas Journal of Women and the Law* 131, 143-144.

[34] Leila Green, Brady Danielle, Kjartan Ólafsson, John Hartley and Catharine Lumby 'Risks and Safety for Australian children on the Internet: Full findings from the *AU Kids Online* survey of 9-16 year olds and their parents' (2011) 4(1) *Cultural Sciences* 1, 16.

[35] Leila Green, Brady Danielle, Kjartan Ólafsson, John Hartley and Catharine Lumby 'Risks and Safety for Australian children on the Internet: Full findings from the *AU Kids Online* survey of 9-16 year olds and their parents' (2011) 4(1) *Cultural Sciences* 1, 18.

[36] Leila Green, Brady Danielle, Kjartan Ólafsson, John Hartley and Catharine Lumby 'Risks and Safety for Australian children on the Internet: Full findings from the *AU Kids Online* survey of 9-16 year olds and their parents' (2011) 4(1) *Cultural Sciences* 1,, 14.

[37] Leila Green, Brady Danielle, Kjartan Ólafsson, John Hartley and Catharine Lumby 'Risks and Safety for Australian children on the Internet: Full findings from the *AU Kids Online* survey of 9-16 year olds and their parents' (2011) 4(1) *Cultural Sciences* 1, 14.

[38] Leila Green, Brady Danielle, Kjartan Ólafsson, John Hartley and Catharine Lumby 'Risks and Safety for Australian children on the Internet: Full findings from the *AU Kids Online* survey of 9-16 year olds and their parents' (2011) 4(1) *Cultural Sciences* 1, 14.

[39] Leila Green, Brady Danielle, Kjartan Ólafsson, John Hartley and Catharine Lumby 'Risks and Safety for Australian children on the Internet: Full findings from the *AU Kids Online* survey of 9-16 year olds and their parents' (2011) 4(1) *Cultural Sciences* 1, 20.

2.2. Constant Connectivity and Control

1. Numerous studies indicate that digital technology enables perpetrators of domestic violence to inflict greater control over victims' lives.[40] For example, mobile phones can serve as 'tools by men to exert control and power over their former and current intimate female partners.'[41] Jill Dimond indicates that mobile phones are distinct from landline telephones, traditional mail, physical interaction and computers because they are physically present with a person at all times.[42] Accordingly, perpetrators often rely on the constant connectivity provided by mobile technology to inflict a sense of 'omnipresence' over victims.[43] As a result, victims of abuse can feel helpless, trapped or paranoid, due to fears of being constantly watched.[44] Constant connectivity can also prevent victims from permanently severing ties with perpetrators, which prevents them from escaping the cycle of domestic violence.[45]

2. Examples of perpetrators using technology as a form of control encapsulates seemingly innocent acts such as constant text messaging and phone calls, but also more sinister activities such as GPS tracking and hacking personal information.[46] Victims who use mobile applications such as Facebook, Snapchat, and Instagram can also inadvertently publish their current location through photographs or location tracking, which enables perpetrators to stalk or contact them without consent.[47] A survey of 152 DFV workers and 46 victims conducted by the Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria found that 97% of 'perpetrators were using mobile technology to stalk women in the context of DFV,' 82% of which arose out of smartphones and social media use, and 29% originating from GPS tracking.[48]

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[40] Jill Dimond, 'Domestic Violence and information communication technologies' (2011) *Interacting With Computers* 5, 6-7; Delanie Woodlock, SmartSafe Technology-facilitated stalking: findings and recommendations from the SmartSafe project' (Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria, 2013); Andrew King-Ries, 'Teens, technology, and Cyberstalking: the domestic violence wave of the future' (2011) 20(2) *Texas Journal of Women and the Law* 131, 143-144.

[41] Walter S. Dekeseredy and Martin D. Schwartz, 'Thinking Sociologically About Image-Based Sexual Abuse: The contribution of Male Peer Support Theory' (2016) 2(4) *Sexualisation, Media & Society* 1.

[42] Jill Dimond, 'Domestic Violence and information communication technologies' (2011) *Interacting With Computers* 5, 8.

[43] Jill Dimond, 'Domestic Violence and information communication technologies' (2011) *Interacting With Computers* 5, 6-7.

[44] Delanie Woodlock,'SmartSafe Technology-facilitated stalking: findings and recommendations from the SmartSafe project' (Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria, 2013) 16-18.

[45] Jill Dimond, 'Domestic Violence and information communication technologies' (2011) *Interacting With Computers* 5, 8.

[46] Jill Dimond, 'Domestic Violence and information communication technologies' (2011) *Interacting With Computers* 5, 8. Delanie Woodlock, SmartSafe Technology-facilitated stalking: findings and recommendations from the SmartSafe project' (Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria, 2013); Andrew King-Ries, 'Teens, technology, and Cyberstalking: the domestic violence wave of the future' (2011) 20(2) *Texas Journal of Women and the Law* 131, 143-144.

[47] Jill Dimond, 'Domestic Violence and information communication technologies' (2011) *Interacting With Computers* 5, 8.

[48] Delanie Woodlock,'SmartSafe Technology-facilitated stalking: findings and recommendations from the SmartSafe project' (Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria, 2013) 15.

3. Given these harms, it is no longer sufficient for victims to terminate their relationships with perpetrators; they must also adopt additional privacy strategies to protect themselves from cyber abuse.[49] However, the availability of text message and call blocking services varies based on the network provider and often involves additional costs.[50] Furthermore, the ability to block people on social media sites such as Facebook does little to prevent perpetrators from harassing victims by-proxy.[51] As Dimond suggests, real life relationships are far more complex than Facebook binaries such as 'friend' or 'not friend,' allowing perpetrators to publish hurtful, embarrassing or private information over social media to target victims through family members, friends and acquaintances.[52]

4. In acknowledging the vast prevalence of mobile phone use by adolescents, scholars also suggest that constant connectivity can negatively impact healthy, teenage relationships by removing personal boundaries and privacy.[53] This normalises the expectation that a significant other must be available 24 hours per day, which perpetuates the driver of control and dominance from a young age.[54] These factors, combined with cultural attitudes that normalise male dominance and disrespectful attitudes towards women, means that adolescent peer groups are less likely to intervene or express any disapproval of these behaviours.[55] The Queensland curriculum must therefore educate students how to responsibly use technology as well as how to develop preventative strategies to avoid technology being used against them as a tool of DFV.

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[49] Jill Dimond, 'Domestic Violence and information communication technologies' (2011) *Interacting With Computers* 5, 7.
[50] Jill Dimond, 'Domestic Violence and information communication technologies' (2011) *Interacting With Computers* 5, 7.
[51] Jill Dimond, 'Domestic Violence and information communication technologies' (2011) *Interacting With Computers* 5, 7; Delanie Woodlock, 'SmartSafe Technology-facilitated stalking: findings and recommendations from the SmartSafe project' (Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria, 2013) 15; Andrew King-Ries, 'Teens, technology, and Cyberstalking: the domestic violence wave of the future' (2011) 20(2*) Texas Journal of Women and the Law* 131, 134-137.
[52] Jill Dimond, 'Domestic Violence and information communication technologies' (2011) *Interacting With Computers* 5, 7.
[53] Delanie Woodlock, 'SmartSafe Technology-facilitated stalking: findings and recommendations from the SmartSafe project' (Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria, 2013) 15.
[54] Delanie Woodlock, 'SmartSafe Technology-facilitated stalking: findings and recommendations from the SmartSafe project' (Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria, 2013) 15.
[55] Our Watch, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) and VicHealth (2015) *Change the story: A Shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia,* Our Watch, Melbourne, Australia, 9.

2.3. The Effects of Streaming Services and Gender-Biased Media on Adolescent Development

1. According to the Council on Communications and Media, adolescents should not have access to content that normalises gender-biased stereotypes and violence against women until they are old enough to contextualise it.[56] Current legislation seeking to classify and restrict adolescent access to such content has failed to adapt to changing digital modes of access. Whilst the *Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act 1995* (Cth) has historically prevented certain age groups from purchasing media containing explicit content or themes in retail stores; these safeguards have been circumvented by online applications such as YouTube, Spotify and Netflix, which cannot verify proof of age to the same standards.[57]As a result, streaming services such as Netflix provide adolescents with instant, unrestricted access to thousands of different titles through mobile phones, computers and tablets.[58] Although these mediums do allow parents to self-restrict and password-protect classified content, monitoring digital media now requires parents to be more conscientious and proactive than ever before, as current legislation no longer provides an additional layer of supervision.[59]

2. Provisions under the *Broadcast Services Act* (the *Act)* also place a wide range of restrictions on the timeslots in which explicit content can be broadcast on traditional television.[60] Whilst schedules 5-7 of the *Act* seek to protect consumers from harmful online content, the regime is a complaints-based system and relies primarily on users reporting content.[61] As the 2010 AU-Kids Online reports that only half the children who view troubling content online report it to parents,[62] it is unlikely that the complains system achieves meaningful results.[63] Consequently, the "on-demand" nature of many artistic works nullifies the impact of censorship, and increases access to content that normalises violence against women and male control.[64]

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[56] Council on Communications and Media, 'Media Use in School-Aged Children and Adolescents' (Report**,** American Academy of Pediatrics, 2016) 1,

[57] Radio New Zealand online, 'Law to regulate 'Video-on –demand' likely later this year' *Radio New Zealand* (online) (23 April 2017) retreieved from <http://www radionz.co nz/news/national/329321/law-to-regulate-video-on-demand-likely-later-this-year>.

[58] Radio New Zealand online, 'Law to regulate 'Video-on –demand' likely later this year' *Radio New Zealand* (online) (23 April 2017) retreieved from <http://www radionz.co nz/news/national/329321/law-to-regulate-video-on-demand-likely-later-this-year>.

[59] The Australian Law Reform Commission, 'National Classification Scheme Review' (The Australian Government, 2011) < http://www.alrc.gov au/publications/2-current-classification-scheme/broadcasting-services-act>..

[60] *The Broadcast Services Act 1992 (Cth) Schedules 5-7;*

[61] The Australian Law Reform Commission, 'National Classification Scheme Review' (The Australian Government, 2011) < http://www.alrc.gov au/publications/2-current-classification-scheme/broadcasting-services-act>.

[62] Leila Green, Brady Danielle, Kjartan Ólafsson, John Hartley and Catharine Lumby 'Risks and Safety for Australian children on the Internet: Full findings from the *AU Kids Online* survey of 9-16 year olds and their parents' (2011) 4(1) *Cultural Sciences* 1, 30.

[63] Leila Green, Brady Danielle, Kjartan Ólafsson, John Hartley and Catharine Lumby 'Risks and Safety for Australian children on the Internet: Full findings from the *AU Kids Online* survey of 9-16 year olds and their parents' (2011) 4(1) *Cultural Sciences* 1, 7.

[64] Radio New Zealand online, 'Law to regulate 'Video-on –demand' likely later this year' *Radio New Zealand* (online) (23 April 2017) retreieved from <http://www radionz.co nz/news/national/329321/law-to-regulate-video-on-demand-likely-later-this-year>.

3. Whilst countries such as New Zealand are considering implementing regulations that apply to 'video-on-demand,'[65] this cannot reduce access to pornography or "black-market" dissemination of inappropriate digital content.[66] In addition, implementing tighter restrictions would not mitigate the impact of user-generated content, which can also normalise gender bias and violence towards women.[67]

4. The use of mobile technology as a form of DFV is further reinforced and normalised by popular media and literature. *The Twilight Saga* is estimated to have grossed well over 250 million dollars,[68] and is widely marketed at young audiences.[69] Despite being presented as a romance, both the novel and film contain acts of physical, mental, emotional violence.[70] The recurrent theme of "loving control" and "heartbreak-fuelled violence" reinforces and normalises the gendered drivers of domestic violence, such as male dominance and disrespectful attitudes towards women. For example, the audiences' hero Edward,[71] and his rival Jacob, both exhibit abusive behaviour towards the heroine Bella.[72] Ultimately, children and young adults who view popular media such as *Twilight* need to be able to identify, contextualise and reject these themes in order for widespread cultural change to be achieved.

5. Many popular music artists also present constant phone communication as normal and acceptable behaviour. Even female artists that are perceived as empowering and independent may unintentionally normalise and condone controlling behaviours. The song *Telephone* performed by Beyoncé and Lady Gaga peaked at number 3 on the ARIA billboard, charting for

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[65] Radio New Zealand online, 'Law to regulate 'Video-on –demand' likely later this year' *Radio New Zealand* (online) (23 April 2017) retreieved from <http://www radionz.co nz/news/national/329321/law-to-regulate-video-on-demand-likely-later-this-year>.

[66] Electronic frontiers Australia, Submission 13 to Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee, *Senate Inquiry into the Australian Film and Literature Classification Scheme*, undated, 3.

[67] Radio New Zealand online, 'Law to regulate 'Video-on –demand' likely later this year' *Radio New Zealand* (online) (23 April 2017) retrieved from <http://www radionz.co nz/news/national/329321/law-to-regulate-video-on-demand-likely-later-this-year>

[68] The Wertzone online (7 March 2015) accessed 1 June 2017 <http://thewertzone.blogspot.com.au/2015/03/the-updated-sff-all-time-sales-list html>.

[69] Booktopia recommends 'Twilight for children 13+< http://www.booktopia.com.au/twilight-stephenie-meyer/prod9781904233657 html>; Angus and Robertson lists 'Twilight' as suitable for children and young adults http://www.angusrobertson.com.au/books/twilight-stephenie-meyer/p/9781904233657.

[70] Jessica Taylor, 'Romance and the Female Gaze Obscuring Gendered Violence in The Twilight Saga' (2014) 14(3) *Feminist Media Studies* 388, 390.

[71] Jessica Taylor, 'Romance and the Female Gaze Obscuring Gendered Violence in The Twilight Saga' (2014) 14(3) *Feminist Media Studies* 388, 390.

[72] Jessica Taylor, 'Romance and the Female Gaze Obscuring Gendered Violence in The Twilight Saga' (2014) 14(3) *Feminist Media Studies* 388, 390-395; The central female figure of this romance is Bella. She is under Edward's constant surveillance. He watches her with friends and while she sleeps, warns her that he listens to her conversations thereby forcing her to censor conversations with friends. In addition, he withholds information, acts unpredictably, makes cryptic remarks, and constantly reiterates how dangerous he is. All of this subtly implying 'it would be best if she complied with his wishes.' Even Jacob, presented as the safe and sensible alternative, becomes 'justifiably' enraged and violent towards her at several points throughout the story.

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33 weeks. [73] Presented as a song of strength and independence, the theme of constant connectivity is depicted as irritating but inevitable:

> *Boy, the way you blowin' up my phone*
> *Won't make me leave no faster*
> *Put my coat on faster*
> *Leave my girls no faster….*
> *Not that I don't like you, I'm just at a party*
> *And I am sick and tired of my phone ringin'…*
> *Stop telephonin' me…[74]*

At no point does the song admonish the caller's behaviour as unacceptable. Instead the artists' "power" comes from being able to enjoy themselves despite constant harassment.

6. The popular male artist, Mac Miller named his last album '*The Divine Feminine.*'[75] It reached number 13 on the ARIA charts and serves as a reflection of lessons and experiences gained from relationships throughout his life.[76] His lyrics on the first track, *Congratulations* explore how the use of digital technology has become engrained in contemporary relationships and highlights how mobile phones can serve as a tool of control and driver of domestic violence:

> *'And every time I call your phone you better pick up your cell*
> *I swear to God I'mma freak out if it go straight to voice mail*
> *Well I'm the jealous type..*
> *But I swear that ass is what heaven's like…'[77]*

Whilst female artists such as Beyoncé and Lady Gaga suggest that these behaviours are normal, but won't let it stand in the way of their independence, Mac Miller highlights the potential seriousness of any breach of the expectation of constant connectivity.

7. With influential formats of mainstream media reifying themes of abuse and 46% of 9-16 year olds accessing the internet via handheld devices, [78] it seems likely that the incidence of

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[73] Australian-charts.com <http://www.australian-charts.com/showitem.asp?interpret=Lady+GaGa+feat%2E+Beyonc%E9&titel=Telephone&cat=s>

[74] Lady Gaga, *Telephone* (Darkchild Studios, 2010) <https://play.google.com/music/preview/Tr6zlzmvtxg3bnfhlgyeglwgr24?lyrics=1&utm_source=google&utm_medium=search&utm_campaign=lyrics&pcampaignid=kp-lyrics&u=0#>

[75] Mac Miller, 'Congratulations', *The Divine Feminine* (Warner Brothers Records, 2016).

[76] Australian-charts.com <http://www.australian-charts.com/showitem.asp?interpret=Mac+Miller&titel=The+Divine+Feminine&cat=a>

[77] Mac Miller, *The Divine Feminine* (Warner Brothers Records, 2016).

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controlling and constant connectivity will continue to increase. The Queensland Government must therefore implement critical media literacy strategies that help students' contextualise and reject themes of control and abuse within various forms of media, and ultimately in real-life situations from an early age.

2.4. Online Sexual Content

1. A large majority of adolescents are exposed to online material that objectifies and sexualizes women before their first sexual experience.[79] The 2010 AU-Kids Online survey estimates that 44% of Australian children (9-16 year-olds) have seen sexual images within the previous 12 months;[80] 28% of these children accessed these images online. Furthermore, 36% of these children admit to having been affected by the content.[81]

2. A 2010 study of the best-selling pornographic films found that in over 300 scenes, 94.4% of women were the targets of violent and verbal aggression.[82] In addition, 89.8% of films contained aggressive behaviour and in 95.1% of these scenes, women responded pleasurably, neutrally or with 'no discernible opposition.'[83] 'Porn hubs' promoting "most viewed" content added to the normalisation of micro-aggression by making users feel as if they are not the only ones who enjoy violent or aggressive content.[84] This normalisation of violence towards women, has been directly linked to increased rates of DFV.[85]

3. Given that adolescents often lack life experience and are unable to fully understand the material they consume, violent pornography is likely to pervert their understanding of healthy relationships. Young people who consume pornography may develop unrealistic sexual values and beliefs.[86] Similarly, increased exposure to sexual content leads to increased perception of

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[78] Leila Green, Brady Danielle, Kjartan Ólafsson, John Hartley and Catharine Lumby 'Risks andSafety for Australian children on the Internet: Full findings from the *AU Kids Online* survey of 9-16 year olds and their parents' (2011) 4(1) *Cultural Sciences 7.*

[79] Maree Crabbe and David Corlett, 'Eroticising inquality' 2010 (Spring) *Domestic violence Resource centre Quaterly* 1, 3.

[80] Lisa Gunders et al, 'Risks and Safety for Australian Children on the Internet: Full Findings from the AU Kids Online Survey of 9-16-year-olds and Their Parents' (2012) (142) *Media International Australia Incorporating Culture and Policy* 182, 28;

[81] Lisa Gunders et al, 'Risks and Safety for Australian Children on the Internet: Full Findings from the AU Kids Online Survey of 9-16-year-olds and Their Parents' (2012) (142) *Media International Australia Incorporating Culture and Policy* 182, 28.

[82] David A. Makin and Amber L. Morczek, 'X Views and Counting: Interest in Rape-Oriented Pornography as Gendered Microaggression' (2016) 31(12) *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 2131, 2136.

[83] David A. Makin and Amber L. Morczek, 'X Views and Counting: Interest in Rape-Oriented Pornography as Gendered Microaggression' (2016) 31(12) *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 2131, 2136.

[84] David A. Makin and Amber L. Morczek, 'X Views and Counting: Interest in Rape-Oriented Pornography as Gendered Microaggression' (2016) 31(12) *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 2131, 2140.

[85] Our Watch, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) and VicHealth (2015) *Change the story: A Shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia,* Our Watch, Melbourne, Australia, 8.

[86] Karen Elizabeth Baker, 'Online pornography - Should schools be teaching young people about the risks? An exploration of the views of young people and teaching professionals' (2016) 16(2) *Sex Education* 213, 223.

women as sex objects, as well as a belief in female 'token resistance,'[87] which undermines the sexual agency of women and girls.[88] DeKeseredy and Schultz also suggest a link between consumption of pornography, DFV and divorce.[89]

4. The Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence noted that consumption of violent pornography is linked to an increase in violent and coercive behaviour, and/or offences where the girl or woman has not immediately consented.[90] A survey by the Commission also concluded that some young men believe that pornography depicts normal sexual relationships and that young women may feel pressured to meet these unrealistic expectations.[91]

5. Furthermore, some men are more likely to fantasise about raping women after viewing violent pornography and believe that "women secretly wish to be raped" or enjoy it.[92] Studies also indicate that consumers of violent pornography are less likely to intervene in the event of a sexual assault.[93] This normalisation of gender stereotypes and violence against women poses a real threat of actual sexual violence towards real women in the community.[94] Therefore it is critical that future generations are armed with ways to help them assess and contextualise such content.

6. In addition, perpetrators clearly regard technology and social media as a platform to showcase such violence, demonstrating that technology is a medium for learning and distributing sexual violence.

> *In November 2013, a flurry of media attention uncovered the existence of a group of young New Zealand men, aged 17 and 18, calling themselves 'the Roast Busters'. These men allegedly group-raped drunk, underage girls, and then bragged about their exploits on a Facebook page. The Facebook page remained active for 2 years,*

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[87] J. M. F. Van Oosten, J. Peter and P. M. Valkenburg, 'The influence of sexual music videos on adolescents' misogynistic beliefs: the role of video content, gender, and affective engagement' (2015) 42(7) *Communication Research* 986, 988.

[88] Rebecca R. Ortiz, Shawna White and Eric Rassmussen, 'Do Individual Perceptions Matter in Pornography Effects? How Perceived General Acceptance and Influence of Pornography may Impact Agreement with Sex Roles' (2015) 33(2) *Communication Research* 88, 89.

[89] Walter S. Dekeseredy and Martin D. Schwartz, 'Thinking Sociologically About Image-Based Sexual Abuse: The contribution of Male Peer Support Theory' (2016) 2(4) *Sexualisation, Media & Society* 1, 1.

[90] Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence, Summary and Recommendations (March 2016) 29.

[91] Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence, Summary and Recommendations (March 2016) 30.

[92] Rebecca R. Ortiz, Shawna White and Eric Rassmussen, 'Do Individual Perceptions Matter in Pornography Effects? How Perceived General Acceptance and Influence of Pornography may Impact Agreement with Sex Roles' (2015) 33(2) *Communication Research* 88, 89.

[93] David A. Makin and Amber L. Morczek, 'X Views and Counting: Interest in Rape-Oriented Pornography as Gendered Microaggression' (2016) 31(12) *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 2131, 2137.

[94] David A. Makin and Amber L. Morczek, 'X Views and Counting: Interest in Rape-Oriented Pornography as Gendered Microaggression' (2016) 31(12) *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 2131, 2138.

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and although the police knew about the site, no arrests were made. Moreover, Facebook did not shut down the site until the media broke the story about the group, and a number of victims came forward to tell their stories, despite the site clearly breaching Facebook's terms and conditions. Although the site has since been removed, it is alleged that the photos, videos and messages are accessible via Internet caches or saved screenshots of websites.'[95]

7. Baker also determined that teachers generally acknowledge the prevalence and impact of sexualised content and imagery on children, with the majority indicating that some form of education addressing sexualised content and pornography would be beneficial to students.[96] In addition, 62.3% of the students surveyed also agreed that the impact of regular pornography use (on perceptions and attitudes towards sex and women) should be addressed at school. [97] Therefore, Queensland curriculum must include educational material surrounding the harms of online pornography in order to facilitate cultural change.

2.5. Self-Created Sexual Content ('Sexting')

1. Self-taken sexual content, colloquially known as 'sexting', 'nude selfies' or 'nudes' further reinforces violent or abusive behaviour. [98] 'Sexting' is defined as 'sexually explicit content communicated via text messages, smart phones, or visual and web 2.0 activities such as social networking sites.'[99]

2. As the definition of 'sexting' is so expansive, only a limited amount of studies have been conducted and it is difficult to ascertain the prevalence of the activity. However, a 2012 report by the National Children's and Youth Learning Centre and Legal Aid NSW found that 37.1% of

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[95] Anastasia Powell and Nicola Henry, 'Blurred Lines? Responding to 'Sexting' and Gender-based Violence among Young People (2014) 39(2) *Children Australia* 119, 119.

[96] Karen Elizabeth Baker, 'Online pornography - Should schools be teaching young people about the risks? An exploration of the views of young people and teaching professionals' (2016) 16(2) *Sex Education* 213, 222; see also Rebecca R. Ortiz, Shawna White and Eric Rassmussen, 'Do Individual Perceptions Matter in Pornography Effects? How Perceived General Acceptance and Influence of Pornography May Impact Agreement with Sex Roles' (2015) 33(2) *Communication Research* 88, 93.

[97] Karen Elizabeth Baker, 'Online pornography - Should schools be teaching young people about the risks? An exploration of the views of young people and teaching professionals' (2016) 16(2) *Sex Education* 213, 224; Sonia Livingstone and Jessica Mason, 'Sexual rights and sexual risks among youth online: A review of existing knowledge regarding children and young people's developing sexuality in relation to new media environments' (report Commissioned by ENACSO, The European NGO Alliance for Child Safety Online, September 2015) 11.

[98] Anastasia Powell and Nicola Henry, 'Blurred Lines? Responding to 'Sexting' and Gender-based Violence among Young People (2014) 39(2) *Children Australia* 119, 119.

[99] Joris Van Ouytsel et al, 'Adolescent sexting from a social learning perspective' (2017) 34(1) *Telematics and Informatics* 287.

adolescents aged between 14-17 had been asked for a sexual photograph, 29.5% further admitted to sending such photographs, and 17.2% had their photograph non-consensually shared.[100]

3. 'Sexts' can be shared in several different contexts including consensually within a romantic relationship, experimentally, or as a response to pressure from a romantic partner or friend.[101] Requests for such content require young girls to negotiate a middle ground between two opposing positions: being 'frigid' or being considered a 'slut.'[102] Conforming to these requests due to peer pressure can also have both serious and detrimental effects on adolescents.

4. As shown, harmful consequences of sexting mirror and emulate acts of DFV. Coercive control is the 'patterned and repeated use of controlling behaviour to limit, direct, and shape a partner's thoughts, feelings and actions,'[103] and may manifest itself in repeated and persistent requests for sexually explicit images. Whilst adolescent boys are likely to get peer approval if they possess a nude image of a girl, by contrast; girls often report being subject to shame or embarrassment for sending such photos.[104] Cooper concurs, finding that 21% of girls reported feeling upset, embarrassed or afraid after sending sexually explicit photos or messages.[105] This has an additional disempowering effect on young women that undermines their sexual agency and independence.

5. A survey of Australian girls conducted by the Victorian Government program called *Our Watch* found that more than half of the respondents felt pressured to comply with requests for sexts.[106] Personal and sexually explicit images may be shared "consensually" but not voluntarily, as young women may feel coerced into complying with their partner's requests. At the same time, young people – particularly women – may feel forced to stay in a harmful or abusive relationship so that the images will not be disseminated without their consent.[107] Therefore, electronic

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[100] Joris Van Ouytsel et al, 'Adolescent sexting from a social learning perspective' (2017) 34(1) *Telematics and Informatics* 287 from Kelly Tallon et al., 'New Voices/New Laws: School-age young people in New South Wales speak out about the criminal laws that apply to their online behaviour' National Children's and Youth Law Centre and Legal Aid New South Wales, 2012, 28-34.

[101] Karen Cooper et. al, 'Adolescents and self-taken images: A review of the literature' (2016) 55 *Computers in Human Behaviour* 706, 709.

[102] Sonia Livingstone and Jessica Mason, 'Sexual rights and sexual risks among youth online: A review of existing knowledge regarding children and young people's developing sexuality in relation to new media environments' (report Commissioned by ENACSO, The European NGO Alliance for Child Safety Online, September 2015) 40.

[103] Rhea Almeida and Tracey Durkin, 'The Cultural Context Model: Therapy for Couples with Domestic Violence' (1999) 25(3) *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy* 313, 313.

[104] Karen Cooper et. al, 'Adolescents and self-taken images: A review of the literature' (2016) 55 *Computers in Human Behaviour* 706, 713.

[105] Karen Cooper et. al, 'Adolescents and self-taken images: A review of the literature' (2016) 55 *Computers in Human Behaviour* 706, 711.

[106] Plan International Australia and Our Watch 'Everyday Sexism: Girls' and young women's views on gender inequality in Australia' October 2016, 22 <http://apo.org.au/system/files/68539/apo-nid68539-47586.pdf>.

[107] Victorian Law Reform Committee, *Inquiry into Sexting*, Parliamentary Paper No 230 Final Report (2013), 25.

communication makes 'the threat of releasing an intimate image or footage a powerful one – images can be posted online or transmitted to a large number of people quickly and easily'[108]

6. Studies suggest that the sharing of sexually suggestive or explicit images is not an uncommon practice.[109] 'Sneaky Hat' photo sharing emerged on social media in late 2011, encouraging young people to post near-naked photos, essentially censored by a hat.[110]

> *A new Facebook craze where teenagers take near-naked photos of themselves has cyber-safety experts horrified. The Sneaky Hat trend … involves mostly young people posing in nothing but a hat covering their genitals. Countless Facebook pages and other sites, open for anyone to see, have sprung up showing male and female teens in provocative poses after reportedly originating at a Queensland high school. The craze has spawned spin-offs such as girls and boys-only sites, and location-specific groups such as 'Sneaky Hat Brisbane'.[111]*

7. While sexting is commonly considered an issue for older adolescents, it should be remembered that young children are not immune from receiving online requests for sexual images from adults masquerading as other children or celebrities,[112] via social apps such as 'Musical.ly' or 'Instagram.'

8. Despite the aforementioned challenges with sexting, a significant body of literature also suggests that it can have a positive impact on adolescent development when used appropriately. It may help them to explore their sexuality,[113] and may be particularly beneficial to teenagers who struggle to express such feelings in person, or may be restricted from associating with members of the opposite sex due to cultural, moral or religious reasons.[114]

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[108] Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence, Summary and Recommendations (March 2016) 24.

[109] Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence, Summary and Recommendations (March 2016) 24, 32 from Kelly Tallon et al., 'New Voices/New Laws: School-age young people in New South Wales speak out about the criminal laws that apply to their online behaviour' National Children's and Youth Law Centre and Legal Aid New South Wales, 2012, 28-34.

[110] The Victorian Law Reform Committee, *Inquiry into Sexting*, Parliamentary Paper No 230 Final Report (2013), 18.

[111] Victorian Law Reform Committee, *Inquiry into Sexting*, Parliamentary Paper No 230 Final Report (2013) quoting Angus Thompson, 'Teenagers pose near-naked in Sneaky Hat trend on Facebook', Herald Sun, 23 November 2011, viewed 6 February 2013, <www heraldsun.com.au>.

[112] Kay Dibben, 'QUT Lecturer Accused Of Posing As Justin Beiber to Groom Overseas Kids' *The Courier Mail* (Online) 5 November 2016 <http://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/crime-and-justice/qut-lecturer-accused-of-posing-as-justin-bieber-online-to-groom-overseas-kids/news-story/a5cfff61a250502e3d8ddb9ce192b196>.

[113] Sonia Livingstone and Jessica Mason, 'Sexual rights and sexual risks among youth online: A review of existing knowledge regarding children and young people's developing sexuality in relation to new media environments' (Report Commissioned by ENACSO, The European NGO Alliance for Child Safety Online, September 2015), 41.

[114] Joris Van Ouytsel et al, 'Adolescent sexting from a social learning perspective' (2017) 34(1) *Telematics and Informatics* 287, 288-289.

2.6. Cyberbullying and Distributing Sexual Content

1. Another challenge that arises from self-created sexual content is bullying and cyberbullying.[115] Cyberbullying is described as an 'aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact (such as abusive text messages and emails) repeatedly and over time against victims who cannot easily defend themselves.'[116] Acts of cyberbullying include imbalance of power, the ability for repetition and an intention to cause harm.[117] One off occurrences of cyberbullying are reported at a rate of approximately 20%, with serious or repeated instances reported in around 5% of cases.[118]

2. Cyberbullying is different in many ways to the traditional understanding of bullying, as perpetrators can act anonymously, yet victims will often know them personally.[119] According to Spies Shapiro, 'the viciousness of online bullying is exacerbated [by] the depersonalised yet public nature' and the pervasiveness of digital technologies.[120] In addition, a "snowball" effect can occur whereby a single instance of bullying, conducted by one perpetrator, can lead to other students joining in such behaviour.[121] This distressing or objectionable material can also be spread instantaneously via digital technologies across an adolescent's entire social network.[122]

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[115] Joris Van Ouytsel et al, 'Adolescent sexting from a social learning perspective' (2017) 34(1) *Telematics and Informatics* 287, 288-289.

[116] Sonia Livingstone and Peter K. Smith, 'Annual Research Review: Harms experienced by child users of online and mobile technologies: the nature, prevalence and management of sexual and aggressive risks in the digital age' (2014) 55(6) *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 635, 638.

[117] Sonia Livingstone and Peter K. Smith, 'Annual Research Review: Harms experienced by child users of online and mobile technologies: the nature, prevalence and management of sexual and aggressive risks in the digital age' (2014) 55(6) *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 635, 638.

[118] Sonia Livingstone and Peter K. Smith, 'Annual Research Review: Harms experienced by child users of online and mobile technologies: the nature, prevalence and management of sexual and aggressive risks in the digital age' (2014) 55(6) *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 635, 638.

[119] Sonia Livingstone and Peter K. Smith, 'Annual Research Review: Harms experienced by child users of online and mobile technologies: the nature, prevalence and management of sexual and aggressive risks in the digital age' (2014) 55(6) *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 635, 638.

[120] Lauren A. Spies Shaprio and Gayla Margolin, 'Growing Up Wired: Social Networking Sites and Adolescent Development' (2014) 17 *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review* 1, 2.

[121] Sonia Livingstone and Peter K. Smith, 'Annual Research Review: Harms experienced by child users of online and mobile technologies: the nature, prevalence and management of sexual and aggressive risks in the digital age' (2014) 55(6) *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 635, 644.

[122] Lauren A. Spies Shaprio and Gayla Margolin, 'Growing Up Wired: Social Networking Sites and Adolescent Development' (2014) 17 *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review* 1, 2.

3. Research further indicates that cyberbullying has equally damaging effects on victims as traditional bullying such as increased risk of suicide, depression, low self-esteem and body image.[123] Medical literature further suggests that acts of cyberbullying can predict symptoms of depression 3-6 months after the event in both boys and girls.[124] This perpetuates a cycle of abuse whereby cyberbullying leads to depression and substance abuse, which then predisposes victims to further cyberbullying as a result.[125] Furthermore, children that experience both kinds of bullying are more likely to report exacerbated symptoms.[126] Boys are likely to be involved in acts of traditional bullying, whilst girls more likely to engage in cyberbullying.[127]

4. The 'non-consensual sharing of intimate images' more commonly known as 'revenge porn' has become more prevalent with the increased use of technology.[128] These images can be vastly distributed and passed around for revenge, peer respect or fun.[129] In plain terms, this is where sexually explicit images or video recordings are created or distributed consensually, however following a 'falling-out,' for example, a break up or fight, the image may be distributed out of spite, anger or 'revenge,' with the intention of embarrassing the victim.[130]

5. Cooper et al describe 'revenge porn' as affecting the victims in ways which include, but are not limited to 'fear and apprehension about personal safety, sense of being watched, hyper vigilance online, disruption to education or employment, social withdrawal, damage to reputation, reduced community standing and body shame.' [131] Consequently, the combination of acts of cyberbullying and the distribution of self-created sexual content without consent by adolescents can mirror acts of DFV and serve as a 'predictive pattern' of the commission of these acts in adulthood. These issues must be addressed in the Queensland Curriculum.

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[123] Sonia Livingstone and Peter K. Smith, 'Annual Research Review: Harms experienced by child users of online and mobile technologies: the nature, prevalence and management of sexual and aggressive risks in the digital age' (2014) 55(6) *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 635, 643-644.

[124] Sonia Livingstone and Peter K. Smith, 'Annual Research Review: Harms experienced by child users of online and mobile technologies: the nature, prevalence and management of sexual and aggressive risks in the digital age' (2014) 55(6) *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 635, 639-440.

[125] Sonia Livingstone and Peter K. Smith, 'Annual Research Review: Harms experienced by child users of online and mobile technologies: the nature, prevalence and management of sexual and aggressive risks in the digital age' (2014) 55(6) *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 635, 643.

[126] Sonia Livingstone and Peter K. Smith, 'Annual Research Review: Harms experienced by child users of online and mobile technologies: the nature, prevalence and management of sexual and aggressive risks in the digital age' (2014) 55(6) *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 635, 640.

[127] Sonia Livingstone and Peter K. Smith, 'Annual Research Review: Harms experienced by child users of online and mobile technologies: the nature, prevalence and management of sexual and aggressive risks in the digital age' (2014) 55(6) *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 635, 641.

[128] Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, Parliament of Australia, *Inquiry into the phenomenon colloquially referred to as 'revenge porn', which involves sharing private sexual images and recordings of a person without their consent, with the intention to cause that person harm* (2016), 3.

[129] Joris Van Ouytsel et al, 'Adolescent sexting from a social learning perspective' (2017) 34(1) *Telematics and Informatics* 287, 290.

[130] Joris Van Ouytsel et al, 'Adolescent sexting from a social learning perspective' (2017) 34(1) *Telematics and Informatics* 287, 290.

[131] Karen Cooper et. al, 'Adolescents and self-taken images: A review of the literature' (2016) 55 *Computers in Human Behaviour* 706, 720.

2.7. Mobile Dating Applications

1. The mobile application, Tinder, has been subject to wide popularity since its introduction in 2012, with 50 million users around the globe.[132] Users sign up through social media accounts, providing their first name, age, geographical location, several pictures and a brief blurb.[133] The application then allows users in close proximity to 'like' or 'skip' one another. Once two users mutually 'like' each other, the application opens a private chat room.[134] Initially, Tinder was available for persons aged 13 and over, with users under 18 grouped together in a separate, virtual 'lobby.'[135]

2. Whilst Tinder recently amended its terms of use to prevent persons under 18 from signing up to the application per se, the sign up process does not verify the true age of the person.[136] This means that persons under 18 can still easily access the application by providing a false age.[137] As a result, applications such as Tinder further increase the risk of teenagers engaging in explicit conversations and 'sexting' practices, or having underage sex with unknown adults.[138]

3. Commentators have also suggested that applications such as Tinder promote a 'hook up culture,' which overemphasises the importance of physical attractiveness.[139] Over the last few decades, scholars and medical professionals have proffered that magazines, advertising and films have normalised unrealistic standards of body image, sexuality, and gender.[140] However, social media applications have further exacerbated these issues by creating intermediary levels of 'fame' and

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[132] Cara McGoogan, 'Tinder is banning under 18s - previous limit was 13,' The Telegraph UK (online), 9 June 2016 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/2016/06/09/tinder-to-ban-under-18s-from-dating-app/>.

[133] Sarah Biddlecombe, 'Tinder Isn't For Teens So Why Are So Many Using The App?' *The Independent* (online), 12 March 2014 < http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/tinder-isnt-for-teens-so-why-are-so-many-using-the-app-9152087.html>

[134] Sarah Biddlecombe, 'Tinder Isn't For Teens So Why Are So Many Using The App?' *The Independent* (online), 12 March 2014 < http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/tinder-isnt-for-teens-so-why-are-so-many-using-the-app-9152087.html>.

[135] Cara McGoogan, 'Tinder is banning under 18s - previous limit was 13,' The Telegraph UK (online), 9 June 2016 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/2016/06/09/tinder-to-ban-under-18s-from-dating-app/> .

[136] Cara McGoogan, 'Tinder is banning under 18s - previous limit was 13,' The Telegraph UK (online), 9 June 2016 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/2016/06/09/tinder-to-ban-under-18s-from-dating-app/>.

[137] Cara McGoogan, 'Tinder is banning under 18s - previous limit was 13,' The Telegraph UK (online), 9 June 2016 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/2016/06/09/tinder-to-ban-under-18s-from-dating-app/>.

[138] Cara McGoogan, 'Tinder is banning under 18s - previous limit was 13,' The Telegraph UK (online), 9 June 2016 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/2016/06/09/tinder-to-ban-under-18s-from-dating-app/>.

[139] Hannah Schacter, 'Love Me Tinder: A Psychological Perspective on Swiping' Psychology in Action (online) 16 April 2015 <http://www.psychologyinaction.org/2015/04/16/love-me-tinder-a-psychological-perspective-on-swiping/>:Hannah Schacter, 'iLoveYou, iLoveYouNot: The Psychology of Online Dating & Romantic Relationships' Psychology in Action (online) 17 July 2014 <http://www.psychologyinaction.org/2014/07/17/iloveyou-iloveyounot-online-dating-romantic-relationships/>.

[140] Brian Primack, 'Association Between Media Use in Adolescence and Depression in Young Adulthood: A Longitudinal Study' (2009) 66(2) *Arch Gen Psychiatry* 181; Gwenn Schurgin O'Keeffe et al, 'The Impact of Social Media on Children, Adolescents, and Families' (2011) 127(4) *The American Academy of Paediatrics*;. Jan Van den Bulck, 'Is Television Bad for Your Health? Behavior and Body Image of the Adolescent "Couch Potato' (2000) 29(3) *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* 273, 285-286.

online popularity. [141] Scholars suggest that social media localises and further perpetuates these unrealistic standards, with the accounts of friends and classmates presenting a 'highlight reel' of their lives.[142] As a result, adolescents can constantly compare themselves to unattainable images, which can lead to depression and low self-esteem.[143] This normalises the notion that adolescents, like adults, must act in an overly sexualised manner, in order to develop healthy relationships and connect with others. Therefore, these issues must be addressed in the Queensland Curriculum.

2.8. Lack of Parental Control

1. The harmful use of digital technology by adolescents is further exacerbated by an apparent lack of parental control. Whilst the 2010 AU-Kids Online study indicates that two-thirds of Australian parents talk to their children about the content they access online, only 35% monitor their Internet use or block/filter websites. [144] Furthermore, despite 30% of 9-10 year olds reporting troubling content online, only 16% of parents were aware that such content had affected their child. [145] In this regard, a significant gap exists between children who are expressing their concerns to their parents and the overall number of children negatively affected. The survey further highlights that 25% of children who discuss appropriate online activities ignore parental advice.[146] In addition, adolescent technology use has formulated its own rules of digital, social engagement and idiosyncratic communication methods (such as memes, suggestive selfies etc.) [147] These unique conventions can further distance adolescents from parents, subsequently limiting their ability to monitor online activities.[148]

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[141] Rae Jacobson, 'Social Media and Self-Doubt: How parents can help kids resist the pressure created by artfully curated social media feeds' *(The Childmind Institute,* 2015*);* Lauren A. Spies Shaprio and Gayla Margolin, 'Growing Up Wired: Social Networking Sites and Adolescent Development' (2014) 17 *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review* 1, 1.

[142] Rae Jacobson, 'Social Media and Self-Doubt: How parents can help kids resist the pressure created by artfully curated social media feeds' *(The Childmind Institute,* 2015*);* Lauren A. Spies Shaprio and Gayla Margolin, 'Growing Up Wired: Social Networking Sites and Adolescent Development' (2014) 17 *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review* 1, 1.

[143] Brian Primack, 'Association Between Media Use in Adolescence and Depression in Young Adulthood: A Longitudinal Study' (2009) 66(2) *Arch Gen Psychiatry* 181; Gwenn Schurgin O'Keeffe et al, 'The Impact of Social Media on Children, Adolescents, and Families' (2011) 127(4) *The American Academy of Paediatrics;.* Jan Van den Bulck, 'Is Television Bad for Your Health? Behavior and Body Image of the Adolescent "Couch Potato' (2000) 29(3) *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* 273, 285-286.

[144] Leila Green, Brady Danielle, Kjartan Ólafsson, John Hartley and Catharine Lumby 'Risks andSafety for Australian children on the Internet: Full findings from the *AU Kids Online* survey of 9-16 year olds and their parents' (2011) 4(1) *Cultural Sciences* 7.

[145] Leila Green, Brady Danielle, Kjartan Ólafsson, John Hartley and Catharine Lumby 'Risks andSafety for Australian children on the Internet: Full findings from the *AU Kids Online* survey of 9-16 year olds and their parents' (2011) 4(1) *Cultural Sciences* 7.

[146] Leila Green, Brady Danielle, Kjartan Ólafsson, John Hartley and Catharine Lumby 'Risks andSafety for Australian children on the Internet: Full findings from the *AU Kids Online* survey of 9-16 year olds and their parents' (2011) 4(1) *Cultural Sciences* 7.

[147] Andrew King-Ries, 'Teens, technology, and Cyberstalking: the domestic violence wave of the future' (2011) 20(2*) Texas Journal of Women and the Law* 131, 149.

[148] Andrew King-Ries, 'Teens, technology, and Cyberstalking: the domestic violence wave of the future' (2011) 20(2*) Texas Journal of Women and the Law* 131, 149.

2. Adolescent preoccupation with social networking sites and digital media may also frustrate parent-child relationships and communication. Increased access to technology has seen children spending less time with family members, leading to increased parent-youth conflict. [149] In addition, this reliance (and often addiction to) digital media can create sleep disturbances and depression, which can further impair the judgment of young adults and alienate them from parents.[150] Therefore, the Queensland curriculum must facilitate further parental involvement to affect meaningful cultural change.

2.9. Online Support

1. Despite the aforementioned challenges, a significant number of scholars suggest that social media use can have a positive impact on adolescents seeking to connect with peers or receive emotional support/guidance.[151] A US survey conducted by Duggan found that teenagers who actively use social networking sites were more likely to report that they had **'**increased emotional support, self-disclosure, reduced social anxiety and belongingness.'[152] Quinn concurred, with a UK survey of 9-13 year olds noting that social media sites facilitated a sense of 'community and belongingness' between adolescent peer groups.[153] A survey of Australian teachers conducted by Baker supports this; with the majority of respondents indicating that digital media and social networking sites can be beneficial to the development of students.[154]

2. In recent years, some social media applications have sought to move away from perpetuating unrealistic values by creating a safe space for users to express concerns and seek support. The 2016 application 'Lyf' seeks to enable users to 'share aspects of themselves' previously considered too personal for social media,' either anonymously or via their social media accounts. [155] In this regard, a large number of threads are dedicated to overcoming DFV,

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[149] Lauren A. Spies Shaprio and Gayla Margolin, 'Growing Up Wired: Social Networking Sites and Adolescent Development' (2014) 17 *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review* 1, 2.

[150] Elle Hunt, 'Teenagers' sleep quality and mental health at risk over late-night mobile phone use' The Guardian (online) 30 May 2017 <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2017/may/30/teenagers-sleep-quality-and-mental-health-at-risk-over-late-night-mobile-phone-use>

[151] Lauren A. Spies Shaprio and Gayla Margolin, 'Growing Up Wired: Social Networking Sites and Adolescent Development' (2014) 17 *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review* 1, 1;Paul Best, 'Online communication, social media and adolescent wellbeing: A systematic narrative review' (2014) 41 *Children and Youth Services Review* 29; E.F. Gross, 'Logging on, bouncing back: An experiential investigation of online communication following social exclusion' (2009) 45 *Developmental Psychology* 1787–1793.

[152] Jennifer Duggan et al, 'An examination of the scope and nature of non-suicidal self-injury online activities: Implications for school mental health professionals' (2013) 4 *School Mental Health*, 56.

[153] S.V Quinn et al, 'Is the iGeneration a 'We' generation?: Social networking use and belonging in 9–13 year olds' (2013) 31(1) *British Journal of Developmental Psychology* 136, 143; Spies Shapiro and Margolin, above n 22, 1.

[154] Karen Elizabeth Baker, 'Online pornography - Should schools be teaching young people about the risks? An exploration of the views of young people and teaching professionals' (2016) 16(2) *Sex Education* 213, 222.

[155] Lyf App Pty Ltd, *Lyf – Your journey starts here*, Apple Itunes Store (9 May 2017) <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/incogo/id909556526?mt=8>.

unhealthy relationships and porn addiction, in which users form a "non-judgemental community" offering advice, personal anecdotes and general support. 'Lyf' is a good example of how social media can serve as a powerful tool for changing cultural attitudes towards DFV as well as providing free, 24-hour, emotional support for victims.[156]

3. While the trend towards more "supportive" forms of social media is encouraging, unlike social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, which have significant longevity, many applications are quite transient. In June 2016, the Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria released an app called SmartSafe+ which was 'designed to help [victims] collect and store evidence' of harassment or abuse, thereby helping them substantiate claims of abuse or harassment. [157] SmartSafe+ received the 2016 'Inaugural Premier's iAward,' [158] and was available for both android and apple smartphone users. By May 2017, the app was no longer available for either platform. While these apps and websites help to overturn cultural stereotypes and correct issues of violence and disrespect, their transitory nature further reinforces a need for a long-lasting educational program to address these issues. It is suggested that this program should enable students to support and recognise abuse and harassment towards themselves, other peers and family members.

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[156] Lyf App Pty Ltd, *Lyf – Your journey starts here*, Apple Itunes Store (9 May 2017) <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/incogo/id909556526?mt=8>.

[157] Victoria State Government, 'Family Violence App Wins Inaugural Premier's iAward' (Media Release, 29 June 2016).

[158] Victoria State Government, 'Family Violence App Wins Inaugural Premier's iAward' (Media Release, 29 June 2016).

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3.0. REVIEWING THE QUEENSLAND CURRICULUM

3.1. Sexual Education Is Not Mandatory In Junior and Senior Schools

1. The Queensland sex education curriculum does not derive from a single source, making it difficult to ascertain exactly what is being taught in junior and senior schools. The Queensland curriculum in schools (Prep to Year 10) is prescribed in part from the Australian National Curriculum (ANC), which mandates compulsory material for subjects such as 'English, Mathematics, Science, History and Geography.'[159] Whilst Queensland is in the process of implementing the ANC in its entirety, the Health and Physical Education curriculum relating to 'alcohol and drugs, food and nutrition, physical activity, mental health,' is not yet compulsory in junior schools.[160] As a result, the sex education curriculum implemented in many Queensland junior schools is formulated from elements of the ANC, the RRE, or any other approved program such as The Daniel Morcombe Child Safety Curriculum.[161] Strategies that facilitate parental involvement are also left to the discretion of individual schools. By contrast, the Queensland Education System is responsible for administering the curriculum in senior schools (Years 11 to 12), which is also non-compulsory. This lack of uniformity makes it difficult to determine the extent to which the current curriculum addresses sex education, healthy relationships and digital technology within junior and senior schools.[162]

2. In response to recommendation 24 of the Special Taskforce, the Queensland Government introduced the RRE program in 2016. This program expanded upon the pre-exiting Health & Physical Education Essential Learning curriculum to include 'a primary prevention program focus[ing] on influencing behaviour change to prevent undesirable social consequences such as domestic and family violence.'[163] The RRE program has been developed for Prep to Year 12 students, providing 5 hours of new material per grade, however it is not compulsory in junior or

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[159] *Education (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority) Act 2014* (Qld) s 10; Queensland Government, *Curricular and extra-curricular programs*, (25 March 2017)
<https://www.qld.gov.au/education/schools/information/programs/pages/curriculum html>

[160] *Education (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority) Act 2014* (Qld) s 10; Queensland Government, *Curricular and extra-curricular programs*, (25 March 2017)
<https://www.qld.gov.au/education/schools/information/programs/pages/curriculum html>; Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education Focus Areas <https://acaraweb.blob.core.windows net/resources/HPE_-_Focus_Areas.pdf>

[161] Department of Education and Training, Queensland Government, *Daniel-Morcombe Child-Safety Curriculum Fact-Sheet for Ministers* (June 2016)
<http://s3-apsoutheast2.amazonaws.com/wh1.thewebconsole.com/wh/5246/images/Daniel-Morcombe-Child-Safety-Curriculum-Fact-Sheet-for-ministers-June-2016.pdf>

[162] Department of Education and Training, Queensland Government, *Respectful relationship education program* (25 February 2016)
<http://education.qld.gov.au/parents/information/respectful-relationships/index.html>.

[163] Department of Education and Training, Queensland Government, *Respectful relationship education program* (25 February 2016)
<http://education.qld.gov.au/parents/information/respectful-relationships/index.html>.

senior schools. [164] Therefore, the current Queensland curriculum, in particular the RRE, contains material that effectively addresses healthy relationships and DFV, yet access to this material varies at the discretion of individual schools. A study by Family Planning Queensland supports this, estimating that only one-third of junior school students receive comprehensive sex education, one-third get a "one-off" talk, and the other third receive no education.[165]

3.2. Reviewing The RRE Program

Prep – Year 2

1. From Prep to Year 2, the RRE educates students on how to self-regulate emotions and develop social skills.[166] Students also learn the foundations of maintaining respectful relationships such as how to be a good friend, the importance of understanding the similarities and differences of others and what it means to belong.[167] The RRE also teaches students how to recognise unsafe situations, contact emergency services and use anatomically correct names for private body parts.[168]

2. This submission contends that the Prep-Year 2 RRE program effectively provides age appropriate content that allows students to learn the foundations of healthy relationships. In this regard, scholars suggest that educating 5-6 year-old students about their own bodies can reduce mental health issues and mitigate instances of abuse.[169] Arming students with this knowledge can also assist children to communicate with investigators, thus discouraging potential perpetrators from committing sexual abuse. [170] Laura Palumbo, a prevention specialist for the America National Sexual Violence Resource Centre, supports this by indicating that teaching children (aged 6) to use anatomically correct terminology promotes positive body image, self-

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[164] Department of Education and Training, Queensland Government, *Parent fact sheet: Respectful Relationships Education Program* (2016) <http://www.pandcsqld.com.au/documents/2016/05/respectful-relationships-fact-sheet-rr-program.pdf>.

[165] Leisa Scott, 'Schools leave kids fumbling in the Dark', The Courier Mail (online) 13 February 2016, accessed 10 July 2017, <http://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/sex-education-queensland-schools-letting-children-down/news-story/be139162c7d714a4d164f0e3b8e5ce19>

[166] Department of Education and Training, Queensland Government, *Parent fact sheet: Respectful Relationships Education Program* (2016) <http://www.pandcsqld.com.au/documents/2016/05/respectful-relationships-fact-sheet-rr-program.pdf>. ;Department of Education and Training, Queensland Government, *Respectful relationship education program: Prep to Year 2* (25 February 2016) < http://education.qld.gov.au/parents/information/respectful-relationships/p-2 html>

[167] Department of Education and Training, Queensland Government, *Respectful relationship education program: Prep to Year 2* (25 February 2016) < http://education.qld.gov.au/parents/information/respectful-relationships/p-2 html>

[168] Department of Education and Training, Queensland Government, *Respectful relationship education program: Prep to Year 2* (25 February 2016) < http://education.qld.gov.au/parents/information/respectful-relationships/p-2 html>

[169] Kerryann Walsh, Donna Berthelsen, Jan M Nicholson, Leisa Brandon, Judyann Stevens, Jerome N Rachele, 'Child sexual abuse prevention education: A review of school policy and curriculum provision in Australia' (2013) *Oxford Review of Education* 1, 18.

[170] Catherine Buni, 'The Case for Teaching Kids 'Vagina', 'Penis' and 'Vulva'' (2013) *The Atlantic* 1, 2.

confidence, and parent-child communication.[171] Therefore, the entirely of the RRE program in Prep-Year 2 should be made compulsory across Queensland schools.

Years 3-6

3. In Years 3-6, the RRE expands upon these foundations by teaching students the importance of diversity, empathy and emotion within relationships. In addition, students learn social skills and how to communicate with others.[172] Whilst students are taught methods of conflict resolution, the information relates primarily to physical instances of harassment, rather than cyber bullying.[173]

4. The RRE program in Years 3-6 provides students with some information surrounding 'unsafe phone and online incidents, such as accessing rude or offensive materials online.' However, it fails to consider how technology can serve as a driver of DFV.[174] According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, 79% of 5-8 year olds have personally accessed the Internet within the last 12 months.[175] The use of touchscreens such as iPads and tablets, 'promote independence, by allowing very young children to play in a self-directed manner' with a 'burgeoning choice of apps [now] targeted at toddlers and pre-schoolers'.[176] As a result, junior school children would benefit from the implementation of an age-appropriate program, beginning in Years 3-6, that effectively addresses the impact of digital technologies on healthy relationships.[177]

5. Although the RRE addresses issues surrounding culturally constructed notions of gender and drivers of DFV in the final years of schooling, it fails to formally teach younger students any critical media literacy skills. In this regard, the aforementioned literature indicates that digital technology and traditional media can lead to decreased confidence, low self-esteem, anxiety and

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[171] Catherine Buni, 'The Case for Teaching Kids 'Vagina', 'Penis' and 'Vulva'' (2013) *The Atlantic* 1, 2.

[172] Department of Education and Training, Queensland Government, *Parent fact sheet: Respectful Relationships Education Program* (2016) <http://www.pandcsqld.com.au/documents/2016/05/respectful-relationships-fact-sheet-rr-program.pdf>.

[173] Department of Education and Training, Queensland Government, *Parent fact sheet: Respectful Relationships Education Program* (2016) <http://www.pandcsqld.com.au/documents/2016/05/respectful-relationships-fact-sheet-rr-program.pdf>.

[174] Department of Education and Training, Queensland Government, *Daniel-Morcombe Child-Safety Curriculum Fact-Sheet for Ministers* (June 2016) <http://s3-apsoutheast2.amazonaws.com/wh1.thewebconsole.com/wh/5246/images/Daniel-Morcombe-Child-Safety-Curriculum-Fact-Sheet-for-ministers-June-2016.pdf>

[175] The Australian Bureau of Statistics, 'Children's Participation in Cultural and Leisure Activities, Australia' (Report, 2012) <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@ nsf/Products/4901.0~Apr+2012~Main+Features~Internet+and+mobile+phones?OpenDocument>

[176] Donald J. Holloway, Leila R. Green, and Danielle J. Brady, '0-8: Young Children's Internet use' (2013) *Edith Cowan University Research Online* 3 <http://ro.ecu.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1262&context=ecuworks2013>.

[177] See also Sonia Livingstone and Jessica Mason, 'Sexual rights and sexual risks among youth online: A review of existing knowledge regarding children and young people's developing sexuality in relation to new media environments' (report Commissioned by ENACSO, The European NGO Alliance for Child Safety Online, September 2015) 9.

eating disorders in girls as young as 6-9 years old.[178] A survey of Australian female junior school students by Our Watch also concluded that 56% of female respondents indicated that their looks were valued higher than their intellectual capacity.[179] In addition, Flood and Pease found that young males aged between 12-14 year-old were more likely to support violent attitudes towards women than 15-20 year olds surveyed.[180] Therefore, critical literacy training must be implemented in Years 3-6 in order to reduce violence against women and facilitate cultural change as early as possible.[181]

Years 7-10

6. The curriculum in Years 7-10 contains a significant amount of material relating to the dangers of digital technology and basic principles of cultural construction and gender roles.[182] In Year 7, students are first introduced to 'factors that influence people's beliefs, attitudes, behaviours and opportunities' such as information detailing why the Nuclear Family is not a fixed binary.[183] Students are also provided with information surrounding puberty and the lifestyle changes that can occur during this period of development. In Years 7-9, the RRE, through the former Daniel Morcombe Curriculum, teaches students about cyberbullying, online predators, hacking and the social/ criminal consequences of 'sending and receiving sexual text messages or pornographic material.[184] The RRE also explores the pros and cons of social media use, the significance of protecting private passwords, the permanency of online footprints and how a person's online identity can differ from their personal identity. In Years 9-10, students are first introduced to notions of gender inequality, domestic violence statistics and physical and emotional abuse within romantic relationships.

7. Whilst the Years 7-10 curriculum effectively addresses issues such sexting, cyberbullying, revenge porn, privacy, online identity and self-esteem, it fails to address the impact of constant

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[178] Michelle I. Jongenelis et al, 'An investigation of young girls' responses to sexualized images' (2016) 19 *Body Image* 150, 151.

[179] Plan International Australia and Our Watch 'Everyday Sexism: Girls' and young women's views on gender inequality in Australia' October 2016, 15 <http://apo.org.au/system/files/68539/apo-nid68539-47586.pdf>.

[180] Michael Flood and Bob Pease, 'Factors Influencing Attitudes to Violence Against Women', (2009) 10(2) *Trauma, violence, & Abuse*, 125, 132.

[181] Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence, Summary and Recommendations (March 2016) 29.

[182] Department of Education and Training, Queensland Government, *Parent fact sheet: Respectful Relationships Education Program* (2016) <http://www.pandcsqld.com.au/documents/2016/05/respectful-relationships-fact-sheet-rr-program.pdf>.

[183] Department of Education and Training, Queensland Government, *Respectful relationship education program: Years 7 to 10* (25 February 2016) < http://education.qld.gov.au/parents/information/respectful-relationships/7-10.html>

[184] Department of Education and Training, Queensland Government, *Respectful relationship education program: Years 7 to 10* (25 February 2016) < http://education.qld.gov.au/parents/information/respectful-relationships/7-10.html>

connectivity facilitated by mobile phone use, GPS tracking and the impact on online dating applications such as Tinder.

Years 11-12

8. In senior school (Years 11-12) the RRE program places a strong emphasis on the causal link between gender-biased stereotypes and the prevalence of DFV and sexual assault. Students are taught about power relations and learn critical literacy skills that identify values and beliefs that condone DFV online and in the media.[185] To combat these attitudes, students also learn about the ethics of maintaining respectful relationships, anger management strategies and are 'encouraged to become active citizens and commit to making improvements in the community.'[186]

9. This submission contents that the RRE program in Years 11-12 effectively addresses gender-bias stereotypes located in online and in the media.[187] The RRE curriculum contains similar material to the Australian Communications and Media Authority's (ACMA) report on 'Media Literacy – Concepts, research and regulatory issues,' which provides an effective framework for changing cultural attitudes surrounding DFV. The ACMA's inoculation model recommends that children are trained in their 'powers of discrimination and critical awareness' to protect them against the harms resulting from exposure to mass media content. Similarly, the demystification approach arms adolescents with an 'array of conceptual tools… to expose the hidden ideologies of media content' thereby demystifying (and therefore minimising) their negative impact.[188] The RRE effectively contains elements of each model by teaching students crucial information surrounding the cultural drivers of DFV and informing them that technology and mass media normalises gender-biased stereotypes and violent behaviour. Therefore, this submission praises the Years 11-12 curriculum and suggests that it contains sufficient material to facilitate meaningful cultural change. However, it must be noted that the Year 11-12 RRE program is not compulsory, meaning that many Queensland students are unlikely to enrol in the course.

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[185] Department of Education and Training, Queensland Government, *Respectful relationship education program: Years 11 to 12* (25 February 2016) < http://education.qld.gov.au/parents/information/respectful-relationships/11-12 html>

[186] Department of Education and Training, Queensland Government, *Parent fact sheet: Respectful Relationships Education Program* (2016) <http://www.pandcsqld.com.au/documents/2016/05/respectful-relationships-fact-sheet-rr-program.pdf>.

[187] Our Watch, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) and VicHealth (2015) *Change the story: A Shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia*, Our Watch, Melbourne, Australia, 6.

[188] Australian Communications and Media Authority Report, 'Media Literacy – Concepts, research and regulatory issues' July 2007.

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4.0. REFORM RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. Mandatory Sex Education in Years 1-10

1. This submission recommends that the RRE program be made compulsory for all Queensland school students in Years 1-10.[189] Rather than the junior school curriculum being comprised of a complex combination of the RRE, ANC and other approved materials, the RRE should be implemented it its entirely, due to its comprehensive nature. This approach was adopted in Victoria whereby the 'comprehensive sexuality education is a compulsory health education curriculum component from Prep to Year 10.' [190] Whilst a mandatory curriculum will have a stronger impact if taught by classroom teachers themselves, an external group of lecturers should also be created for those who feel uncomfortable or are unwilling to personally address such content. [191] Therefore, introducing a comprehensive mandatory curriculum would assist in facilitating meaningful, cultural change surrounding the prevalence of DFV and the harmful use of technology.

4.2. The RRE Must Be Expanded To Include Age Appropriate Critical Literacy Skills for Years 3-10

1. In order to facilitate meaningful cultural change, it is also recommended that age appropriate critical media literacy training begins at 8-10 years of age, similar to Victoria's 2004, 'Catching On Early Program.'[192] This program focuses on delivering age-appropriate sexual education to students to help keep the lines of communication open between teachers and students. It achieves this by prompting educators to welcome questions, allow laughter from students, and

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[189]State Government Victoria, *Catching on Early Sexuality Education for Victorian Primary Schools*, (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, February 2011)
<https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/teachlearn/student/catchingoneyrsv.pdf>.
[190] State Government Victoria, *Catching on Early Sexuality Education for Victorian Primary Schools*, (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, February 2011)
<https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/teachlearn/student/catchingoneyrsv.pdf>.
[191] State Government Victoria, *Catching on Early Sexuality Education for Victorian Primary Schools*, (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, February 2011)
<https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/teachlearn/student/catchingoneyrsv.pdf>.
[192] State Government Victoria, *Catching on Early Sexuality Education for Victorian Primary Schools*, (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, February 2011)
<https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/teachlearn/student/catchingoneyrsv.pdf>.

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promote freedom of expression when discussing these topics.[193] While not all parents agree,[194] the majority prefer their children to begin sexual education whilst still young.[195] Scholars suggest that withholding information regarding sexual education can lead to a shutdown of communication,[196] and reinforce the culture of secrets, shame, and silence which perpetrators of sexual abuse rely on for cover.[197]

2. The Catching On Early Program provides younger students, beginning in Years 3, with the tools to contextualise harmful/sexualised content located online and in the media. Accordingly, level 3 of the program suggests that 'by the age of 8, students will display a sense of the rules about gender, for example, girls can't play soccer' or 'boys don't cry.'[198] To combat these issues, the curriculum teaches students how to reject gender-biased stereotypes from a young age. This is evident in the following section of the curriculum:

> *This learning sequence helps students to separate fact from fiction about being a boy and being a girl. A safe space and time to question strict gender rules can help to broaden their options and make it easier for the students who don't fit the stereotypes. - I won't let being a boy or being a girl stop me from doing the things that I love. I won't stop other students doing things they love because they are breaking 'boy rules' or 'girl rules.'[199]*

3. This submission further recommends that the Years 11-12 component of the RRE should be slightly modified and be implemented in Years 7-10. Given that the Years 11-12 program effectively teaches students that digital technology and the media normalises violent behaviour and gender-biased stereotypes, mandating this compulsory program in Years 7-10 would assist in facilitating meaningful cultural change surrounding gender-biased attitudes and DFV.[200]

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[193] State Government Victoria, *Catching on Early Sexuality Education for Victorian Primary Schools*, 84 (February 2011) Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
<https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/teachlearn/student/catchingoneyrsv.pdf>.

[194] Catherine Buni, 'The Case for Teaching Kids 'Vagina', 'Penis' and 'Vulva'' (2013) *The Atlantic* 1, 2.

[195] See Eg: Audrey K. Madison B.A, "When They Start Asking, You Should Start Answering": Why and How Parents Teach Sex and Sexuality to Young Children (Masters Thesis, Saint Louis University, 2012).

[196] Catherine Buni, 'The Case for Teaching Kids 'Vagina', 'Penis' and 'Vulva'' (2013) *The Atlantic* 1, 3.

[197] Catherine Buni, 'The Case for Teaching Kids 'Vagina', 'Penis' and 'Vulva'' (2013) *The Atlantic* 1, 3.

[198] 'State Government Victoria, *Catching on Early Sexuality Education for Victorian Primary Schools*, (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, February 2011)<https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/teachlearn/student/catchingoneyrsv.pdf>.

[199] State Government Victoria, *Catching on Early Sexuality Education for Victorian Primary Schools*, (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, February 2011)
<https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/teachlearn/student/catchingoneyrsv.pdf>.

[200] Our Watch, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) and VicHealth (2015) *Change the story: A Shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia,* Our Watch, Melbourne, Australia, 6.

This amended curriculum should also remain cognisant of aforementioned inoculation and demystification approaches as recommended by the ACMA.

4.3. The RRE Must Teach Students The Dangers Of Digital Technology In Years 3-10

1. This submission recommends the inclusion of educational material relating to the harms and benefits of digital technology and the importance of creating mutual, healthy boundaries in Years 3-10 of the RRE. The program must also teach students the impact and repercussions of the unsafe use of Internet technologies, with specific emphasis placed on teaching them how to sustain healthy relationships and respect for the people's privacy, both online and offline. Whilst victims should not be persuaded to abandon digital technology all together, they should be taught how to deactivate GPS tracking setting and other safety precautions.[201] To achieve this, the Queensland Education Department should develop an age appropriate mobile phone application similar to Victoria's 'SmartSafe+', which can effectively provide students with all the relevant information.[202]

2. This submission further recommends introducing additional material in Years 3-10 that encourages students to challenge, condemn and report abusive/offense online content, in order to combat unhealthy behaviour on social media,[203] Given that teenagers look to peer groups to determine 'normal' behaviour, encouraging social media users to disapprove of harmful content in a public manner would be the most effective means of deterring online bullying and harassment.[204] In addition, adolescents should be taught about the positive benefits of mobile applications such as 'Lyf,' which allow them to seek emotional support in a confidential manner. Ultimately, this would use the power of social media to 'renormalise' healthy, social interactions and offer emotional support to victims of bullying or DFV.[205]

3. The amended RRE program must also include material highlighting the ramifications of revenge porn, cyberbullying and dating applications, reinforcing the fact that adolescents of both genders

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[201] Andrew King-Ries,'Teens, technology, and Cyberstalking: the domestic violence wave of the future' (2011) 20(2) *Texas Journal of Women and the Law* 131, 142.

[202] Victoria State Government, 'Family Violence App Wins Inaugural Premier's iAward' (Media Release, 29 June 2016).

[203] Our Watch, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) and VicHealth (2015) *Change the story: A Shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia,* Our Watch, Melbourne, Australia, 34.

[204] Andrew King-Ries,'Teens, technology, and Cyberstalking: the domestic violence wave of the future' (2011) 20(2) *Texas Journal of Women and the Law* 131, 160.

[205] Andrew King-Ries,'Teens, technology, and Cyberstalking: the domestic violence wave of the future' (2011) 20(2) *Texas Journal of Women and the Law* 131, 142.

should not feel pressured to send such images against their will. Furthermore, the program should also highlight the positive treatment of victims, encouraging them to come forward and report abuse. This would promote a community-wide understanding that these issues are unacceptable and must be taken seriously.

4.4. The Curriculum Must Facilitate Parental Involvement

1. This submission recommends introducing strategies that facilitate further parental involvement in sexual education programs as the negative consequences of digital technology are exacerbated by the limited extent of parental monitoring.[206] This can be achieved through an online website similar to that of the sexual education portal used in Victoria.[207] This portal enables parents and teachers to interact and engage with the curriculum.[208] Alternatively, physical meetings should also be conducted every semester for non-tech savvy parents. This program could extend beyond Victoria's focus on sexual education and include additional, age appropriate information for parents regarding:

   - How to place a parental lock on digital media streaming services (Netflix & Spotify)
   - How to block people on social media sites, remove location tracking and remove harmful content
   - What mobile applications parents should closely monitor and if necessary, restrict access to (Tinder)
   - The latest harmful trends to look out for (Sneaky Hat, or new websites such as www.thiscrush.com).

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[206] See also Sonia Livingstone and Jessica Mason, 'Sexual rights and sexual risks among youth online: A review of existing knowledge regarding children and young people's developing sexuality in relation to new media environments' (Report Commissioned by ENACSO, The European NGO Alliance for Child Safety Online, September 2015), 33 – which recommends that parents and teachers increase their role in the provision of guidance regarding online behaviours.
[207] State Government Victoria, *Catching on Early Sexuality Education for Victorian Primary Schools*, (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, February 2011) <https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/teachlearn/student/catchingoneyrsv.pdf>.
[208] Family Planning Victoria, *Relationships & Sexuality Education Portal* (2017) Family Planning Victoria <http://www fpv.org.au/schools>.

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5.0. CONCLUDING REMARKS

1. The Special Taskforce's report on Domestic Violence resulted in a comprehensive plan designed to facilitate cultural change and reduce instances of DFV. This submission has assessed the current sex education curriculum within Queensland State schools and the relevant recommendations of the special taskforce report. Several different approaches (such as Victoria's Catching on Early, and Queensland's Respectful Relationships Education Program) have also been analysed to determine the most successful reform framework.

2. This submission has highlighted several gaps in the RRE program, such as the failure to implement critical media literacy skills and provide information surrounding digital technology at a young age. It has been widely accepted that domestic violence legislation has not – and could not have – foreseen the use of digital technologies as a tool of controlling/coercing women and young girls. It has also been shown that digital technologies can be used to circumvent censorship and age-restrictions, that otherwise may have reduced the access to sexualised imagery.

3. This submission has also presented evidence indicating that that school-based approach is the most effective means of providing training and education to students. Due to the non-compulsory nature of sex education and a lack of uniformity across Queensland state schools, the RRE program should also be made mandatory in Prep-Year10. In addition, the RRE should be expanded upon to include critical media literacy skills, and educational material from a young age surrounding the harms of pornography, sexual content, stalking, harassment, coercive control and gender equality.

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