

From: [Cherie Bailey](#)
To: [Health and Community Services Committee](#)
Subject: SEXUALLY EXPLICIT OUTDOOR ADVERTISING
Date: Sunday, 23 June 2013 1:17:42 PM

To the Chair and Members of the Health & Community Services Committee:

Mr Trevor Ruthenberg MP, Chair, Member for Kallangur
Mrs Jo-Ann Miller MP, Deputy Chair, Member for Bundamba
Ms Ros Bates MP, Member for Mudgeeraba
Mr Steve Davies MP, Member for Capalaba
Dr Alex Douglas MP, Member for Gaven
Mr John Hathaway MP, Member for Townsville
Mr Dale Shuttleworth MP, Member for Ferny Grove

For years now, members of our Queensland community have been raising the issue of sexually explicit material appearing on outdoor advertising and shop-fronts and the difficulty parents have of protecting their children from the adult concepts and images that invade their lives through no choice of their own. One of the major complaints appears to be that the regulatory system in place is such that the onus is on the community to make complaints before they are eventually able to have it removed, if indeed they are successful in their endeavours. In the meantime a lot of damage will already have been done to the impressionable minds of our precious children and teenagers who live in a society where they are becoming increasingly sexualized. Many health professionals claim that our sex-soaked culture is taking an insidious toll on the emotional psychological and physical well-being of children and young adolescents.

The case of the billboard erected in 2012 outside the Grammar School for "Honey B" Strip Club is a case in point. The nature of the billboard is highly suggestive, showing only the bottom half of a woman (suggesting a woman only has value from the waist down), wearing high heels with honey dripping down her buttocks and straddling the word Sweetest. Underneath this image the phrase 'Adult Club' is clearly visible.

Those laying the complaint before the Advertising Standards Board said: "The main message this billboard sends to the large volume of students that frequent the schools in the local area is that a woman's body is a commodity for male entertainment. Honey B's placement of the advertisement could be interpreted as a deliberate decision to inform their next generation of customers."

The billboard stayed in place while parents and teachers from the school took their complaint to the Advertising Standards Board which in the end found in favour of the advertisers. The billboard stayed there even longer while those outraged by its placement outside the school organized a petition and eventually in 2013 after action by the Outdoor Media Association, it was removed. However, it was placed 8 km away at an intersection where many children see it on their way to and from school and demonstrates all too clearly that this adult

strip club business is not going to show any restraint in advertising its wares in appropriate places where children won't be forced to see it.

This trend in society for people, particularly women and girls to see themselves primarily as "product" concerns many people. Recently, the noted child psychologist and author Steve Biddulph weighed into the debate with a tirade against our society for contributing to the one in five girls who are suffering from anxiety manifesting as "self-harm, eating disorders, binge drinking, bullying and risky sex".

The fact that the Advertising Standards Board dismissed this claim proves that self-regulation is not working and that government needs to intervene to protect our children from this pollution of their minds and the resulting destructive behaviours which ruin their lives. The system as it is plays into the hands of the profit-obsessed businesses which don't take any responsibility for the damage they incur to vulnerable members of our society.

I would like to thank the Attorney General of Queensland, Jarrod Bleijie for establishing this inquiry into sexually explicit outdoor advertising. I look forward to the findings of the Health and Services Committee and the concurrent inquiry into the Classification of Publications (Billboard Advertising) by the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee.

I would also ask that the Parliament of Queensland liaise with the Australian Government to ensure that any processes and legislation set in place will be effective Australia-wide. In April last year, Dr Steve Hambleton, President of the Australian Medical Association spoke of the concern being expressed almost unanimously amongst his 27 000 members about the premature sexualisation of children in marketing and advertising, and called on the Federal Government to do something. This followed a 2008 Senate committee report on the issue which was meant to produce a follow-up review 18 months later. That review never took place. With a Federal election coming up in September, it is likely a review won't happen now. But regardless of the result of the election, I am hoping that our politicians are able to put aside their factional and party interests for the benefit of our vulnerable children.

It is my opinion that our current Queensland Government is having difficulty working with the current Federal Government on issues such as Education and Disability Services so that our Queenslanders benefit. I appeal to you to overcome this difficulty so that all levels of government work together to protect our children from the effects of sexually explicit advertising. Please put aside political point scoring which has become a common strategy used by our political parties in this current climate.

I would also ask that you bring in legislation which **makes all outdoor advertising including billboards, shop windows, bus shelters etc G rated**

so that organizations and businesses which don't have the best interests of our children at heart will not get away with this disgusting behaviour. In this way, the problem of the present system where the onus is on the community to make complaints before they see it removed won't apply, as the censorship has occurred before it appears.

I appeal to you also to build into this legislation large enough fines for those who disregard the laws introduced which will seek to deter such people. I am reminded of the outrageous Foxtell billboards in Sydney recently showing a man supposedly having sex with a pig which gained the effect they wanted – to shock people enough to bring attention to the coming Festival of WTF (Watch the Forbidden). While Foxtell apologized for its appalling taste, they got what they wanted. While people can choose to watch the program when it arrives, they had no say in seeing the billboard and as far as I am concerned, Foxtell should have received a huge fine which would be a disincentive to other organizations trying the same trick. In other words, any legislation should have “teeth” which will make it effective. The other advantage of large fines is that the system implemented will have some funding with which to operate.

Please take advantage of this opportunity to improve life for our young people. They are living in a society which is extremely difficult to navigate and as adults, it is our responsibility to remove as many of the dangers and pitfalls they face as we can. This is something we can do and I look forward to your findings and the legislation that will make it possible.

With kind regards

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