

Submission to QLD Parliament regarding Sexually Explicit Outdoor Advertising

Kathleen Bates,
Townsville, QLD



Submission Summary

Terms of Reference

1. As far as I am aware there is currently little to no legislation guiding outdoor advertising. Exposing children to sexually graphic material is detrimental to their development as children. Children make sense of the world around them and develop their own sense of who they are by what they see, hear etc. There is a reform needed to the current legislation to protect children from what is often exposure to very suggestive and objective material often involving women wearing little to no clothing
2.
 - a. Children today are exposed to so much more than children of previous generations. With children's access to computers, smart phones, Ipods etc they don't have to look far to find sexualised images. Even if they are not intending to often advertising on the internet, television or even the shop down the road depict sexualised images of women having an impact on children like there has never been seen before. Child Psychologist Dr Sloane Madden, in an article to the ABC News, states that "half of 10 to 11 years old are unhappy with their body". Effects like these are just the beginning to the epidemic of sexualised culture children are being exposed to
 - b. An example of an adult store on a main road in the Town I live, down the road from a primary school, across the road from a church depicts a woman's bottom in a g-string with a branded logo on one of her cheeks stating 'hot stuff'. How can an image this size be placed in a public place where numerous amounts of children have seen this image and understand the meaning of it in their own way. I have spoken to numerous parents who have stopped at the traffic lights and had to address questions from their children such as 'what the burning writing on the woman's bottom says' or 'why there is a picture of a woman's bottom on a sign?' How can this be allowed to happen?
 - c. Currently there has been numerous complaints, over a period longer than 6 months, about the sign mentioned above and the Australian Standards Board has listened to the complaints and advised the owner to take the sign down. However it is still flying loud and proud exposing

children to sexualised images of women not to mention violence (the branding) also. This is not a one off or the only image in around like this. We could use the generic example of going into a petrol store and the pornographic magazines that are at a child's eye level awaiting their confused gazes as little minds attempt to make sense of what they are seeing. Therefore whilst the Australian Advertising Standards Board has been responsive to complaints their current power is not adequate to make effective changes to protect children.

- d. Often advertisements on Television still use women wearing next to no clothing to sell things cars, tools, and music and these advertisements are played during the day. However the regulation that certain advertisements, selling sex etc, are to be played after a certain hour of the night I agree with and believe this is effective in decreasing the amount of sexualised images that children are exposed to. However majority of what is considered the norm in society today still allows children access to sexualised images long before they can understand what they are actually seeing affecting their understanding of the world around them and how they see themselves.
 - e. I believe outdoor advertising in Australia should go through a very strenuous process – however I understand financially this may not be viable – however the effects for children in the long run will be invaluable. Advertisements should be screened for nudity, sexualisation, objectification, violence etc and given a classification based on what they display. Some advertisements could even be rejected for being too sexual, violent etc. Depending on what grading an advertisement is given could then be guidance on where it is allowed to be shown. For example an advertisement depicting a woman's bottom (although I believe this type of degrading material should not exist at all) should be within the walls of the sex shop alone where only adults have access to it. Other advertisements given a G or PG rating can be advertised publically. I believe in doing this businesses who want to advertise publically will be more inclined to make advertisements family friendly and to actually use creativity to make the sign interesting instead of 'how much nudity can we put into this sign to make it attention grabbing?'
3. I believe consulting with businesses, government agencies, and other key stakeholders as well as accepting submissions from the public should be mandatory to ensure a holistic view of outdoor advertising is taken into consideration. However this should be a time-effective process and not take months to respond to submissions and talk to businesses and stakeholders etc. The committee should be better supported to respond to submissions particularly when they are of an offensive nature. I am talking in particular to

the woman's bottom I have to look at every morning on my way to work; the old look the other way trick doesn't work when you're driving a car and the sign is large enough to see any which way you look. I am using this as a continual example as it is one that I have to deal with in my day to day activities although as I have previously mentioned there are numerous others.

4. Finally it would be extremely effective for the committee to respond to the legislative assembly by January 2014. Outdoor Advertisers have self-regulated for too long and this needs to stop. Something needs to happen before the 'half of 10 to 11 year old already suffering body image issues becomes ALL 10-11 year old, male and female, suffer with issues of body image.

Kat Bates