

Please recommend Opt-in legislation for Internet porn in Australia.

ISPs can, at present, send the most dangerous, hard core pornography directly to anyone's Internet-connected device in Australia, thereby exposing vulnerable children to its proven-harmful effects. Opt-in laws would only allow ISPs to send such imagery to those who apply for Internet porn.

Former Senator Richard Alston, as former Prime Minister John Howard's Minister for Communications, introduced and passed such laws pertaining to the widely-accessed-by-children Dial-a-Porn phone numbers. Some similar safety measure regarding children's unrestricted access to Internet porn should be adopted.

A Polish study, "Prevalence, Patterns and Self-Perceived Effects of Pornography Consumption in Polish University Students: A Cross-Sectional Study" published in International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health 2019, 16(10),1861; <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16101861> agrees with other reputable research in asserting, "the new technologies have undoubtedly led it to new heights. It is now offered in almost unlimited sexual diversity via free-of-charge online websites accessible through any device with Internet access, mostly in the form of video pornography, which was reported to be the most sexually arousing of all forms of explicit material [8,9]. The ease, diversity, and arousal strength with which online pornography can reach its consumers indicates that it may operate as a supernormal stimulus [10,11,12]. Some studies reported that long-term use correlates with erectile dysfunction, decreased libido [12,13,14,15], higher interest in pornography than sexual contacts with real partners [13,16], and lower sexual and relationship satisfaction [15,17,18,19,20]."

A recent study <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?zx=1t3h6b4ub5llx&shva=1#inbox/FMfcgxwGDNSxBHcSwGXqhPVFLnchBHph?compose=CllgCJTKWQGRIgxDcMkWwtnKvvmTLvSHnXMGdnmzsrJrhtPrDPkBrzlxVZVfSxnzWrNTFLqRSB> involving teenagers and their parents across the UK found:

- \* British teenagers are increasingly turning to pornography as an educational tool because schools do not tell them "what to do" in early sexual encounters, with teachers instead focusing on issues such as contraception.
- \* Most children had viewed pornography they found disturbing or overly aggressive, with many saying they believed it influenced how they behaved in sexual encounters and influenced concerns about body image.
- \* Viewing pornography has been normalised among children from their mid-teens onwards, with more encountering it on networks such as Snapchat and WhatsApp than on dedicated pornography sites.

ABC Radio in Australia reports <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?zx=1t3h6b4ub5llx&shva=1#inbox/FMfcgxwGDNSxBHcSwGXqhPVFLnchBHph?compose=CllgCJTKWQGRIgxDcMkWwtnKvvmTLvSHnXMGdnmzsrJrhtPrDPkBrzlxVZVfSxnzWrNTFLqRSB> "A leading child protection expert has warned of a rise in the number of young children sexually abusing their peers in preschool and primary schools across Australia. Professor Freda Briggs of the University of South Australia has told the ABC that children as young as five are displaying problem sexualised behaviour. She says while international research shows it is happening more often, there have been no attempts to measure rates in Australia. Professor Briggs has recently written a report about the phenomenon for Taylor and Francis Online, which publishes scholarly journals and books. 'Children of say six are sexually abusing children of five, and usually it is about replicating either what's happened to them as abused victims or that they've seen too much pornography and (they're) trying to do what they've seen the grown-ups do,' she said.

Professor Briggs is currently advising parents at an Adelaide school, where a group of six-year-old boys have been forcing five-year-olds to perform oral sex on them."

A massive reduction of people applying to receive the Dial-a-Porn service occurred thanks to Senator Alston's bill whereby only those phones who actually applied for the service could access it. This is indicative of the fact that parents do indeed want their children better protected from unrestricted access to pornography. Children's Internet connected devices are invariably linked to their parents' accounts. Opt-in laws for Internet porn should be welcomed by the vast majority of these parents.

This is NOT a censorship proposal in that nothing is proscribed. This Opt-in provision simply gives parents the opportunity to better protect their vulnerable children from the proven harm caused by unrestricted access to Internet porn imagery.

Jack Sonnemann  
Australian Federation for the Family  
c/o Grove PO, Grove, TAS 7109

