

In relation to the eSafety Commissioner's comments on 6 November 2020 that: "Time and time again, governments and the technology industry have prioritised privacy and data protection over safety, and it's time we all drew a line in the sand." \* I would like to say the following:

As a parent, I would like my children to grow up with the level of privacy that I enjoyed in the 1980s, which allowed children to develop freely and properly, safe from overbearing observation by corporations and governments. We know criminalising young people leads to no positives for society. Successive Australian governments have restricted privacy in the name of "anti-terrorism" even though terrorism is extraordinarily rare in Australia. And governments have continually had poorly thought-out, knee-jerk responses to media discussion about bullying and online dangers.

As a parent of daughters, I teach them over and over again about privacy and how to identify when their privacy is being invaded, whether by governments, corporations, friends or family. Knowing that violence against women is a problem and that controlling behaviour and invasion of privacy is a tactic used by perpetrators of domestic violence and violence against women, I do not think the government should condone further legislation that restricts privacy. I believe the government should start guaranteeing greater privacy protection to all citizens, including, particularly, children.

I personally really dislike pornography, I think it often (but not always) denigrates women. However, I am well aware that past attempts to limit pornography in Australia and overseas have harmed things I very much care about. Information about women's health, sexual health and LGBTQIA+ information is almost always erroneously targeted by anti-porn legislation. The words, such as vagina, penis, breast (and their accompanying images) that are needed for clear and accurate health discussions cannot be algorithmically distinguished from pornography. Indeed, even humans may come to different conclusions after quick review of such material, Any suppression of this information will lead to untreated illness / cancer, preventable disabilities and even death. High rates of teenage anxiety and even suicide in LGBTQIA+ teens could be reduced with increased easy

access to information about their own bodies, sexual health and gender / sexual diversity. Anyone who has been a teen will admit that it is not always comfortable to discuss these topics with family or school, other information sources must exist. With the market for paper books continually decreasing, this information needs to be on the Internet. The role parents and schools can play, and should do more of, is in teaching children and teens how to assess the quality of the information they find there.

I recognise that the Internet, just like real-life locations, has its share of unsavoury places and people. I actively counsel my children against visiting those real-life locations, or go with them. But that does not mean I would welcome government restriction on which real life locations we can visit and I would also not welcome any further government restriction on the Internet / virtual places my children and I can visit. It should be for the parents to counsel or accompany their children on the Internet, it is a personal responsibility, not a place for government to take on a heavy-handed, pseudo-parenting role.

\* <https://www.esafety.gov.au/about-us/blog/protecting-children-should-always-trump-protecting-privacy>