

LABOR RESPONSE TO: YOUNG MEDIA AUSTRALIA

1.1 Children's media experiences have a significant impact on their healthy development.

1.2 Marketing products to children under the age of 10 yrs is an unfair practice.

Labor recognises that the media helps to inform us and shapes our view of the world. Accordingly, Labor is concerned that Australian children have a positive media experience- not just as passive recipients but also as creators of media using such platforms as the internet.

2.1 The "glamorisation" of violence (performed well by an attractive hero who is rewarded for it) is wide spread in our media.

2.2 Children (under 12 yrs) are put at risk by frequent exposure to media violence.

Labor is concerned about the portrayal of violence on television and in films, videos, the internet and video games and the impact of this on Australian children. Labor will ensure that appropriate controls are in place to protect all Australians and will conduct research into the impact of the portrayal of violence on our society.

3.1 Producers who market M rated movies and games to children under 10 yrs (for eg via cereal packets and fast food meals) are misleading children.

Labor is aware that the AANA is presently reviewing its Advertising to Children Code and will await the outcome of this review before advancing policy in this area.

4.1 The portrayal of children in sexualized poses and clothing in the media creates risks for the health and welfare of Australian children.

Labor's National Platform acknowledges concerns about the sexualisation of young women and children, and the problems this can cause, including eating disorders and mental health. Labor will develop strategies to prevent and reduce the damage being caused by the increased sexualisation of young women in all media. To this end, Labor is awaiting the outcome of the current reviews into the Commercial Television Code of Practice and the Commercial Radio Code of Practice which will consider the effect of sexualisation of children in the media and report on strategies to prevent and/ or reduce sexualisation of children in the media.

5.1 Advertising for foods of low nutritional value adversely influences children's eating preferences, and makes parents' jobs harder.

Labor understands that parents are concerned about pester power. We also know that one in four Australian children are overweight or obese, and that that poses serious health challenges. Accordingly, Labor has already announced such policies as its primary school kids health check and its Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden program in schools. Labor will await the outcome of the current reviews into the Commercial Television Code of Practice, which will consider this issue, before advancing further policy in this area.

6.1 Marketing to children places undue pressures on parents.

6.2 Existing regulation is effective in protecting children in the "old" media such as TV, movies, videos, and DVDs.

6.3 Existing regulation is effective in protecting children in "new" media such as videogames, the internet, mobile phones.

6.4 Parents need more support in choosing healthy experiences in the old, as well as the new media.

Labor considers that parents play an important role in teaching and guiding their children through all aspects of their life- not just media. Labor recognises that there a number of initiatives that provide information to parents about film ad TV content and believes that these are of value in assisting parents in determining what television programs and films are appropriate for their children.

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Internet

Labor believes that the Government should do all that it can to prevent Australian children from being exposed to harmful and inappropriate internet content. That is why in March 2006 Labor announced that it would require ISPs to offer a clean feed filtering service to all households, schools and public libraries. This will:

- prevent users from accessing sites prohibited by ACMA, including child pornography and sites that contain violent material; and
- ensure that sites that contain harmful or inappropriate content such as pornography and violent material are not accessible by children.

Classification

While it is Commonwealth legislation which provides for the classification of material, it is largely state government legislation which enforces the ratings, and provides penalties for non-compliance. Labor believes that adults should be entitled to read, hear and see what they wish in private and in public, subject to adequate protection against persons being exposed to unsolicited material offensive to them and preventing conduct exploiting, or detrimental to the rights of others, particularly women and children. Labor is particularly concerned about the portrayal of violence on television and in films, videos, the internet and video games. Labor will ensure that appropriate controls are in place to protect all Australians and will conduct research into the impact of the portrayal of violence on our society. Labor does not believe that there are any fundamental flaws with the classification system as it currently operates in Australia.

How much importance do you place on the provision of support to families in the areas listed below?

7.1 Marketing to children

7.2 Exposure to violent media

7.3 Exposure to marketing for violent media

7.4 Exposure to junk food advertising

7.5 Exposure to sexualised images of children

7.6 Media awareness programs and strategies for avoiding harm

Please see above.

Disclaimer

Your information request raises a number of complex public policy issues. Every effort has been made to respond to your request in full and provide accurate information on Federal Labor policy. In some cases it is not possible to provide responses in a requested format while accurately reflecting Federal Labor's policy position. Please monitor the ALP website - www.alp.org.au - for further information.