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MEDIA RELEASE

So Sexy So Soon: Action So Slow

The introduction of the private Member's motion on the *S*xualisation of girls in the media* by Member for Kingston Amanda Rishworth in Federal Parliament on Monday evening 8 February has been applauded by the Australian Council for Children and the Media (ACCM), (incorporating Young Media Australia.)

ACCM's Vice President, Professor Elizabeth Handsley said that the action by Ms Rishworth is to be commended. "We have waited for too long for the Government to take action on this serious issue of harm to children. The Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts reported on this issue in June 2008 but the Government has taken little effective action since then. Instead the matters raised were left to self regulation by the industry. The law has failed children in this area." Professor Handsley concludes: "We are greatly encouraged by the bipartisan support given to Ms Rishworth's motion, and believe that the time for action is now."

Dr Emma Rush, lead author of *Corporate Paedophilia* (2006) commented "My argument is that whatever industry has done to date, it appears to be hopelessly inadequate since s*xualisation and associated risks for children continue apace. Industry have had a chance, with a warning, to voluntarily self-regulate, and failed. It is now time for the government to take the lead, on behalf of Australian children."

ACCM will put a further spotlight on the issues at a forthcoming conference *Growing up fast and furious: Reviewing the impacts of violent and s*xualised media on children* being held in Sydney on 19 March 2010. The program of the conference will include a review of the research of the harms to children by Professor Louise Newman, Director of the Monash University Centre for Developmental Psychiatry and Psychology. She says "The psychological impacts of s*xualisation in the media include effects on self-esteem and self-worth and ongoing self-scrutiny. Depression, anxiety and disordered eating behaviours are associated with sexual objectification of girls and are seen in primary school children.

The ACCM is a unique national community which strives for a media environment that supports the health, safety and wellbeing of Australian children. It is committed to promoting healthy choices and stronger voices in children's media. Parents, caregivers and the general community can access information and advice about the impact of the media on children by calling the Children and Media Helpline (1800 700 357, national, freecall, 24/7) or visiting the ACCM Website (www.childrenandmedia.org.au).

For more information about the *Growing up fast and furious: Reviewing the impacts of violent and s*xualised media on children* conference, and how to register, go to www.childrenandmedia.org.au.

*For more information or to arrange an interview,
please call Elizabeth Handsley (SA) on 0448 898 185, or
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