

Submission
No 32

INQUIRY INTO IMPACTS OF HARMFUL PORNOGRAPHY ON MENTAL, EMOTIONAL, AND PHYSICAL HEALTH

Organisation: Catholic Women's League, Wollongong Diocese

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As a great grandmother I am concerned for my young great granddaughter's future.

Germane to the startling statistics from the 2023 eSafety Commissioner report that found some 75% of 16–18-year-olds surveyed in Australia have been exposed to online pornography, and sometimes before the age of thirteen.

The report highlighted that studies point to a common and readily accessible 'mainstream' form of pornography which often contains depictions of sexual violence and degrading sexual scripts about women. I believe, sexual polarization creates an unequal power balance, particularly between men and women. The prospect of undignified pornography that promotes deepfake and AI-generated content is damaging for all women. It disrupts healthy sexual satisfaction and, distorts sexist attitudes, particularly when pornography is promoted as 'self-help.'

Sexual polarization, is argued by feminist theorists to be a controlling act upheld in many societies which have been constructed and over time, codified into our social order. Our knowledge specific to Domestic Violence needs to progress so we can recognise *indicators* of the many manifestations of violence. The explosion of degrading pornography should be **a red flag** and, should be seen as a public health crisis. Acts of sexual gratification, misrepresent sexual values and the significance of future sexual relationship, instead delaying personal developmental factors that might lead to mental health issues detrimental to our youth's future and wellbeing.

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