



Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee

Inquiry: Inquiry into anti-LGBTIQ+ hate crimes in Victoria

Hearing date: 25 June 2026

Question taken on notice

Directed to: Jesuit Social Services

Received date: 13 July 2026

1. **Ann-Marie HERMANS, page 51**

Question Asked:

Melanie THOMSON: In terms of the percentage of young people watching pornography – you are testing my memory slightly there and I can get back to you with more specifics.

Ann-Marie HERMANS: Yes. Happy to take that on notice if you want to send us back more specifics.

Response:

Our Adolescent Man Box findings found that experience with pornography is commonplace for adolescents in Australia (The Men's Project, 2025). It is likely that the reported rates of viewing pornography are underreported in this study, with generally lower pornography use and exposure than found in other research (Crabbe et al., 2024).

In the Adolescent Man Box study:

- 52% of adolescents reported they had ever viewed pornography. Boys were more likely than girls to report viewing pornography: 59% of boys reported they had ever viewed pornography, compared to 43% of girls.
- Older boys were more likely than younger boys to report having ever viewed pornography: 70% of boys aged 16-18 reported having viewed pornography, compared with 43% of boys aged 14-15.
- Of those adolescents who had ever seen pornography, 43% of respondents reported viewing pornography once per month or more. Boys were more likely than girls to report frequent pornography viewing: 52% of boys viewed pornography once per month or more, compared with 27% of girls; and 11% of boys view pornography almost daily, daily or multiple times a day, compared with 2% of girls.

We believe the Adolescent Man Box results likely under-report pornography consumption among adolescents. Some adolescents were approached directly to do the survey (some 16-18 year olds), and others were

approached via their parents (all 14-15 year olds, and some 16-18 year olds). When we compared the results for boys 16-18 years who were directly invited to do the survey (and most likely using their own device to do the survey) compared with boys of the same age who were invited via their parent (and most likely doing the survey on their parent's device), we found a significant difference in reported behaviour. The boys using their own device were much more likely to report frequent pornography use: 72% reported viewing pornography once per month or more, compared with 38% of boys who did the survey on their parent's device. This may suggest that the boys who did the survey on a parent's device were less likely to be honest with their responses about pornography viewing.

Another Australian survey in 2020 found that many young people are exposed to pornography early – by age 13 for nearly half (48%) of boys, and age 15 for the same proportion of girls, and that on average, boys are viewing pornography for the first time approximately three years before their first sexual relationships (Our Watch 2020). This early exposure can be deliberate or accidental, facilitated by the ease of access and anonymous use of technology such as mobile phones (Marshall & Miller 2019).

References:

Crabbe, M., Flood, M. & Adams, K. (2024). Pornography exposure and access among young Australians: A cross-sectional study. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, 48, 100-135.

Marshall & Miller (2019), Consistently inconsistent: A systematic review of the measurement of pornography use, *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 48(2):169-179.

The Men's Project (2025), *The Adolescent Man Box: Findings from a survey with Australian adolescents aged 14-18 years*, Jesuit Social Services: Melbourne.

Our Watch (2020), *Pornography, young people and preventing violence against women – Background Paper*.

2. **Ann-Marie HERMANS, page 52**

Question Asked:

Can I take it on notice just to get a percentage of violent pornographic engagement. You have given us some data, but it would be really good if we could have a little bit more insight into that. If there is any more data that you can send to us, that would be helpful for us to be able to examine the

behaviour, the trends, the things that are leading to this in terms of pornography, because it may be something that we can put filters on that might make a huge difference.

The CHAIR: Are you happy to help us?

Melanie THOMSON: Absolutely.

Response:

In the Adolescent Man Box survey, we asked respondents who had viewed pornography if they had been exposed to a range of harmful content which included: someone being strangled (referred to commonly as being 'choked'), being treated aggressively (pushed, shoved, kicked, punched, slapped or gagged); and being subjected to non-consensual acts (something happening without the person's permission or against their will, including verbal pressuring, intimidation, physical force, tricking someone, hidden cameras, and acts happening to someone while they are asleep). We view these acts as harmful because of the risks associated with normalising aggression, lack of consent, and strangulation (which has significant health risks).

We found that 69% of those who had seen pornography said they had viewed one or more of these harmful acts.

In terms of the proportion of adolescents who see harmful acts when they look at pornography:

- 70% reported they had seen any harmful act happening to a female
- 50% reported they had seen any harmful act happening to a male
- 36% reported they had seen any harmful act happening to a gender diverse person.

Boys with the strongest endorsement of the Adolescent Man Box were more likely than other boys to report they had watched harmful acts in pornography.

Girls were more likely than boys to report seeing harmful acts in pornography. This may reflect a difference in what girls and boys consciously notice and remember, rather than (or as well as) a difference in the content that girls and boys are seeing.

Overall, these figures likely under-report exposure to pornography with harmful acts. We found that adolescents accessing the survey on their parents' devices consistently reported lower exposure to harmful pornography compared to adolescents using their own devices.

3. Sheena WATT, page 52

Question Asked:

I want to ask about recruitment methods for young people. Do you have any insights about any differences or how these young folks are being recruited to be perpetrators? And are we seeing any differences geographically on how folks are recruited?

Mischa BARR: I am not sure we have any data on that that I can share with you today, but we can certainly take that on notice. From the work that we have done with some of the young people who have been charged with these kinds of offences, they have generally been engaged through a group, and there is usually one main person who is motivating people to do it, and they have been motivated by, in many cases, YouTube content. We can get back to you with some more specific data on that in terms of geographic locations and that kind of thing.

Response:

Jesuit Social Services' Community Justice team has conducted a small number (n=6) of restorative conferences with young people charged with offences related to anti-LGBTIQA+ violence. The young people involved were all Australian-born 14 to 17 year old males.

All spoke of being influenced by a peer after having watched YouTube videos encouraging young people to "hunt paedophiles". The general sentiment was that they participated in the offence because they did not want to be left out, but they expressed remorse afterwards.

The referrals for these restorative conferences have come from southern and eastern metropolitan Melbourne. However, given the small numbers, these referrals cannot be considered representative of where anti-LGBTIQA+ hate crimes have taken place. Other agencies, such as Victoria Police, are better placed to provide this data.

4. Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO, page 53**Question Asked:**

I want to start with your submission. You spoke about Victoria's youth justice system not having a framework for identifying or programs for responding to misogynist, anti-LGBTQA+, religious, racist and other forms of prejudice or radicalisation among young offenders. Is there a jurisdiction that does good work in this space that we should be looking to for potential recommendations?

Mischa BARR: That is a great question. That might be one we need to take on notice in terms of other jurisdictions and any international evidence in that regard. From what we understand, there is not a great deal of

evidence in terms of what works to deradicalise young people outside of those engaged in religious extremist ideology, so there is probably a need for more research into that space. But yes, there is certainly a gap in terms of working with young people who have offended to actually change those attitudes and behaviours. We know that prison is not a rehabilitative environment. There is really an opportunity as part of reintegration and rehabilitation programs for young people who are leaving custody to integrate some more explicit focus on addressing some of those kinds of attitudes. We can look into what evidence there might be from elsewhere.

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: Thank you. I appreciate that.

Response:

Since the hearing we undertook a high-level scan of publicly available evidence and could not find an example of a jurisdiction that has developed or rigorously evaluated deradicalisation or rehabilitation programmes with specific attention to anti-LGBTQIA+ offences.

Recent academic research has identified an LGBTQIA+ focus as a significant gap in both counter-extremism and hate crime research. For example, Dmello et al. (2025) argued that anti-LGBTQIA+ violence is increasingly a feature of extremist movements, and this is across ideological spectrums (including Jihadis, right-wing extremists, QAnon and Incels). However, there is almost no research on interventions specifically designed to deradicalise people motivated by anti-LGBTQIA+ ideology.

The evidence that does exist tends to relate to generic violent extremism initiatives (for example, New South Wales' Proactive Integrated Support Model, Germany's Violence Prevention Network, Denmark's Aarhus Model). These work with participants whose extremist beliefs may include anti-LGBTQIA+ prejudice but do not evaluate outcomes specifically related to this cohort.

One illustrative example of a violent extremism initiative is the NSW Proactive Integrated Support Model (PRISM). PRISM is a Corrective Services NSW intervention for prison inmates with a terrorism conviction or risk of radicalisation. PRISM does not use a single curriculum, but rather provides: individual case plans; psychological support; social support; ideological discussion; and reintegration planning. A qualitative evaluation of PRISM focused on implementation and self-reported benefits of participants (Cherney, 2018). It found that:

- PRISM achieves some beneficial outcomes for participants – including self-reflection on what motivated participants to commit a terrorist act; and helping them to gain insights into how they were radicalised.

- Trust was fundamental, and participants only engaged meaningfully once practitioners established trust.
- Behavioural disengagement often occurred before ideological change. People often withdrew from extremist networks, reduced violent intent, and rebuilt family relationships *before* significant ideological change.
- Participants needed positive alternatives to extremist identities. Employment, family relationships, community support, and social identity were critical protective factors.

References:

Cherney, A. (2018). Evaluating interventions to disengage extremist offenders: A study of the proactive integrated support model (PRISM), *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression*.

Cherney, A., & Belton, E. (2019). *Assessing intervention outcomes targeting radicalised offenders: Testing the Pro-Integration Model of Extremist Disengagement as an evaluation tool*. Behavioural Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression.

Dmello, J. R., Bloom, M., & Moskalenko, S. (2025). LGBTQ+ Victimization by Extremist Organizations: Charting a New Path for Research. PS: Political Science & Politics. Cambridge University Press.