Reality & Risk: Pornography, young people and sexuality

Project outline

*Reality & Risk: Pornography, young people and sexuality* is a Victorian community education project which seeks to respond to the social and personal implications of increasingly pervasive and hardcore pornography, and its impact on young people’s perceptions of men, women and sexuality. The project grew out of Maree Crabbe’s work in sexuality education with young people in secondary schools and community settings, in which she noticed that pornography was increasingly a source of sex education for young people.

Together with her colleague, David Corlett, Maree developed the *Reality & Risk* project. The project aims:

- To develop and promote a critique of the messages about men, women and sex conveyed in mainstream pornography.

- To articulate a framework of sex and gender based on an understanding of shared human dignity and respect, using concepts such as communication, consent, and mutual pleasure.

Stage 1 of the project initially included two components:

- To develop education resources for use in secondary schools – including curriculum resources, audiovisual materials, teacher training, and resources for parent education and policy development – promoting critical thinking about pornography.

- To engage in public discourse about the implications of pornography consumption for young people, through production of a documentary film for broadcast, written articles and speaking events.

More recently the project was commissioned to develop a module on education about pornography for Victorian Universities teaching sexuality education.

The project recently has received funding to begin a second phase. The aim of Stage 2 is to engage, at state and national levels, in advocacy and training with government departments and key non-government organisations, resourcing them to develop:

- Knowledge of the issues

- An analysis of the ways these issues impact on the organisations, communities and individuals with whom they work

- Strategies to address these issues in policy and practice

- Capacity to develop resources to assist in the implementation of these strategies
Project Management
*Reality & Risk* grew out of the work of and is auspiced by Brophy Family and Youth Services in Warrnambool, South West Victoria. The project Reference Group meets in Melbourne and includes expert representatives from VicHealth – Prevention of Violence Against Women, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development – Sexuality Education, Department of Human Services – Family Violence and Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria, and the University of Wollongong.

Project Funding
The project has been funded by grants from philanthropic trusts including:

- The William Buckland Foundation
- The Victorian Women’s Trust
- The Ian Potter Foundation
- The Myer Foundation
- The Melbourne Lord Mayor’s Charitable Foundation

Project research
The research for the project has included:

- Reading academic and other literature, and
- Conducting over 140 interviews with young people, academics and professionals, and performers, producers, directors, executives and agents from the pornography industry in Hungary and the US.

A brief article on some of the issues addressed by the project can be found at: [http://www.dvrcv.org.au/eroticising-inequality/](http://www.dvrcv.org.au/eroticising-inequality/)

Project Staff
The project’s two staff, Maree Crabbe and David Corlett, have designed, developed and delivered the project, which began formally in early 2009.

Maree Crabbe has worked with young people in the community sector for 18 years, including 10 years in sexuality education. She has developed and delivered programs focusing on sexual violence prevention, sexual diversity and prevention of sexually transmissible infections. Maree’s articles on young people, sexuality and pornography have been published in online and print media.

David Corlett (PhD) is a freelance writer and researcher. He has had articles published on issues including refugees, climate change, war in Iraq and pornography in a variety of online and print media. An honorary research fellow at La Trobe University and adjunct research fellow at Swinburne University, he is the author of *Stormy Weather: The challenge of climate change and Displacement* (UNSW Press, 2008) and *Following Them Home: The fate of the returned asylum seekers* (Black Inc., 2005). In 2011, David was the host of the groundbreaking documentary series *Go Back To Where You Came From* (SBS Australia).