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Senate porn inquiry details harm

A Senate inquiry on internet porn has detailed its harms, but failed to recommend 'clean feed' internet – unlike a bill given initial approval by the Israeli parliament.



The report of the Australian inquiry by the Senate Environment and Communications References Committee was tabled on 23 November. It detailed the growing problem of children's exposure to online pornography – and porn harms, including child-on-child sex abuse. It recommended more Australian research, and advice for parents on how to keep their children safe. But although many submissions backed a clean feed internet service to block harmful websites, the report did not recommend this option.

By contrast, the Israeli bill, co-sponsored by lawmakers from across the political spectrum in late October, would require clean feed internet by default. Customers would need to contact their internet providers to have the block removed. "The damaging influence of watching … pornographic and severe violence has been proven in many studies," said MP Moalem-Refaeli.

Libertarian groups are pressuring the Israeli government to weaken the legislation – but there is hope that the final wording will nevertheless provide greater protection for children than there is now.

New FamilyVoice national director Ashley Saunders has praised the Senate for investigating the issue. "The evidence of porn harm, detailed in our FamilyVoice submission and those of many other groups, is a warning governments cannot ignore," he said.

"While more research is always worthwhile, I believe the time has come for action. The Israeli bill is a positive step, and I commend it to our country's leaders."

Toowoomba's porn-free campaign

A Toowoomba campaign to combat violence against women is seeking to create a porn-free city (Christian Today, 24/10/16).



Letitia Shelton

The campaign is led by Letitia Shelton of City Women of Toowoomba. She believes her ambitious goal is achievable – and points to the anti-smoking campaign success.

"You need to show the impact of porn on people's lives," she says. "Over 80% of pornography shows violence against women such as choking or gagging."

On 18 October, 250 people attended the campaign launch in a Toowoomba park, addressed by porn victims as well as Toowoomba mayor Paul Antonio. He said: "We must begin this journey with one step … pornography has no place in proper relationships."

John Minz told the crowd that pornography resulting in domestic violence is a "social cancer".

"Politicians and police are doing what they can in relation to drugs and alcohol," he said. "But who is taking responsibility in relation to pornography? No one!"

US votes for pro-life Congress

Donald Trump won the US presidential election on 8 November, to the amazement of most media 'experts'. Even more astounding were the congressional elections that resulted in pro-life majorities in both houses.



Mike Pence

America's new Senate and House of Representatives will begin sitting on 3 January 2017. In both houses there will be a majority of Republicans – and a majority of pro-life Republicans and Democrats. President Trump will be sworn in on 20 January. He is expected to mark the annual Washington March for Life on 27 January with a message of support.

That support will be more than mere words. Donald Trump has put Mike Pence, his pro-life, pro-family running mate, in charge of the transition team to help choose his new cabinet.

The new president will need to replace pro-life US Supreme Court judge Antonin Scalia, who sadly died in February. Barack Obama unsuccessfully nominated a judge with anti-life views. By contrast, Donald Trump has promised to choose a judge who respects both the US Constitution and the right to life of the unborn. He has also promised to appoint future Supreme Court judges who would help overturn the 1973 Roe v Wade and Doe v Bolton decisions that legalised abortion right up to birth across the nation.

New FamilyVoice national director Ashley Saunders said neither the Democrat nor the Republican presidential candidate has been free from serious character flaws. "But there is now some hope for a more pro-life, pro-family culture in the US government," he said.

Rights Commissioner meets FamilyVoice

Edward Santow, recently appointed Australian Human Rights Commissioner, paid a personal visit to the FamilyVoice national office on 9 November.



Edward Santow (centre) with Ros and David Phillips

He said he had read with interest the FamilyVoice submissions on human rights issues. He is seeking to listen to, and hopefully build bridges between, groups with differing views. He visited the Adelaide office of LGBTIQ (Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Intersex Queer) activists on the same day.

National director Dr David Phillips explained the inherent injustice of federal and state anti-discrimination laws. "These laws ban unfavourable treatment of groups with various attributes," he said. "But they allow unfavourable treatment of all other groups. Complaints are 'conciliated' in private. They cost the complainant nothing, but the respondent is often advised to pay compensation even if he or she is innocent, because the cost of proving one's innocence is so great."

Research officer Ros Phillips said FamilyVoice had approached a company earlier this year for help with website development. "They refused, saying they disagreed with our values," she said. "That is their right. They have broken no law.

"But if the boot was on the other foot – if we had been a bakery like Ashers in Northern Ireland, and had refused to decorate a cake with a slogan saying 'Support gay marriage', we could be in big trouble. How fair is that?"

Dr Phillips also explained why the so-called *Marriage Equality* slogan is based on a false premise. "Marriage, ever since the beginning of human history, has been about children," he said. "Only a man-woman union has the potential to produce the next generation together – and that is the reason governments have an interest in regulating and encouraging the man-woman marriage commitment.

"Other couples or groups can legally establish their relationships via wills, deeds and powers of attorney. They are not unfairly treated. Marriage does not discriminate: all Australians have the right to marry if they are 18 or over, and intending to be faithful for life to a spouse of the opposite sex who is not closely related."

Mr Santow thanked FamilyVoice for their hospitality and said he had some new ideas to think about.

Is 'Safe Schools' founder a bully?

A dramatic photograph of 'Safe Schools' co-founder Roz Ward assaulting a male bystander has reinforced parental concerns about the supposedly anti-bullying program.

Ms Ward was holding copies of the Marxist newspaper *The Red Flag* while taking part in a Melbourne protest on 11 November against Donald Trump's US election win. A peaceful bystander was wearing a Trump campaign hat with the words, Make America Great Again – and Roz Ward assaulted him, trying to pull it off his head.

New FamilyVoice national director Ashley Saunders said this kind of behaviour – bullying people with different opinions – has increased in some schools using the so-called Safe Schools program. "Many parents are relieved that the federal government will not fund these counter-productive and misleading materials next year," he said. "I urge the Queensland government to withdraw them completely from state schools," he said.



Wardenclyffe Photography

Roz Ward tries to remove a Trump supporter's hat

An end to 'Wicked Camper' offences?

A new Queensland bill has given hope that Advertising Standards Board rulings against vehicles with offensive slogans can be enforced.

A FamilyVoice submission on the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) (Offensive Advertising) Amendment Bill said the bill is an important step to better protect children from exposure to sexually explicit material.

The bill requires the deregistration of Queensland vehicles displaying sexually explicit or obscene advertisements that have failed to comply with an adverse Advertising Standards Board determination.

"The proposed law is long overdue," the FamilyVoice submission says. "For too long, parents have been unable to protect their children from offensive advertisements displayed on other vehicles, particularly by Wicked Campers. One vehicle featured the slogan: "In every princess there is a little slut who wants to try it just once".

However the wording of the Australian Association of National Advertisers (AANA) Code of Ethics implies that political advertisements may be subject to an adverse finding. FamilyVoice has recommended an amendment to the bill to protect political material.

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Editorial

How did US opinion polls get it so wrong?

US opinion polls predicted that Hillary Clinton would be elected US president, possibly by a landslide, on 8 November 2016.

But they were wrong – very wrong. Billionaire businessman Donald Trump won more votes than Hillary Clinton in 30 of the 50 US states. He won an expected 306 electoral college votes: she gained only 232.

The mainstream media wrote off Trump as an unelectable, egotistical bigot. They failed to note his secret weapon – running mate and now US Vice President-elect, Mike Pence. Pence's name was linked with Trump on placards at every campaign rally. Pence stood at Trump's side on every major podium. Donald Trump has chosen Mike Pence to lead his transition team in the lead-up to the presidential inauguration on 20 January – a key role.

Mike Pence is the opposite of Donald Trump in many ways. The former congressman and Governor of Indiana speaks quietly and rationally. He is widely respected for his political wisdom and experience, and his careful management of Indiana's finances. In a YouTube video that went viral on 4 November, Mike Pence said he is "a Christian, a Conservative and a Republican – in that order".

The morning after the US election, Australia's Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce told journalists he had just phoned the US to congratulate the man behind Trump's unexpected victory: Mike Pence. Mr Joyce said voters were attracted to Pence's Christian values.

But what about those flawed opinion polls? Former Australian PM Tony Abbott says one reason the polls were so wrong is that "people aren't always upfront with the pollsters". After seeing the abuse poured on those who are not "politically correct", many people don't want to say what they really think (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 11/11/16).

There is a message here for those who have ears to hear. Opinion polls claim that up to 70% of Australians support same-sex "marriage". But since the media vilify anyone who says marriage should remain man-woman, many people who hold this view are reluctant to reveal it.

Labor and others voted against the Turnbull government's plebiscite bill last month. Their real reason may have been fear – that in the privacy of the polling booth, a majority of Australians could vote to keep our Marriage Act the way it is.

Letters

The Ten Commandments

What Moses brought down from Mount Sinai were not Ten Suggestions. They are – or were – God's rules for living. They are not ten good ideas or moral suggestions.

So why are Christians so catastrophically silent about them these days?

Dr Arthur Hartwig
Nerang, Qld

Parenting equality

The language of "marriage equality" does not provide "parenting equality" for children raised in homosexual marriages. The nature of the man-woman relationship in marriage is radically different from that of a same-sex couple. Talk of "marriage equality" is inappropriate labelling.

Of course two women can love each other and two men can love each other, but common sense leads to the conclusion that the nature of the loving, sexual relationship between a man and a woman is very different to that in same-sex relationships.

For example, same-sex relationships can be very promiscuous. In one study of gay male couples, 41.3% had open sexual agreements with some conditions or restrictions, and 10% had open sexual agreements with no restrictions on sex with outside partners. One-fifth of participants (21.9%) reported breaking their agreement in the preceding 12 months, and 13.2% of the sample reported having unprotected anal intercourse in the preceding three months with an outside partner of unknown or discordant HIV-status.

Spencer Gear
North Lakes, Qld

The meaning of marriage

Some people are complaining that the Howard government changed the wording of the Marriage Act in 2004 to define marriage as a man-woman union.

But John Howard did not change the definition of marriage. It was already included in the original 1961 Act as words a marriage celebrant could say during the ceremony. Mr Howard was simply stating, in the main part of the Marriage Act, the long-accepted fact that marriage is a union of one man and one woman, to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life.

Jackie Butler
Wynnum, Qld

Same-sex "marriage" is a contradiction in terms!

Regardless of the length of a relationship between two people of the same sex, and regardless of the depth of love they may feel toward each other, their relationship cannot be a marriage. A majority of votes in a plebiscite or the passing of legislation in a parliament cannot change this truth. Marriage requires the union of two persons who are different but complementary, not the same, and this can only be realised with one man and one woman.

The foundational pattern of Genesis 2 has not always been followed throughout human history, but that does not mean that Genesis 2 is merely suggestive. God has not said, "Here's a good idea, but feel free to redefine it however you like." No, God's truth is that marriage needs a man and a woman. And we mess with that at our peril!

Pastor Brian Robertson
Bargara, Qld

Courage in a hostile world

Re-reading David Phillips' book, *Courage in a hostile world* has given me greater thanksgiving for the example of David and Ros in their obedience to Jesus' leading.

Margaret Moyse
Marryatville, SA



- Passing on the baton
- Haters, rocks and Bill Shorten
- Plebiscite block allows more time

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Who is Ashley Saunders?

The new national director of FamilyVoice Australia was not your average child – he loved reading Hansard!

By the age of ten, Ashley Saunders was an avid reader of federal parliament's Hansard – the printed record of all debates. By then he had already settled on his life ambitions: to be a father, a lawyer and a politician.

So it was, at the age of 20, he became Australia's youngest candidate for a seat in federal parliament. *The Australian* newspaper ran a feature article under the heading: *Old Hat? Not on the Hustings* – noting Ashley's remarkably young age to have formed an interest in politics.

His candidacy was all the more extraordinary since, to Ashley's knowledge, no one from either side of his family going back many generations had ever finished high school, and there had never been any active political involvement.

"We didn't have a television, and I'd never met a lawyer," he says. "But even at that tender age, I sensed that this was something of a direction for my life."

There was never much money in the Saunders family home, but there was faith, hope and love. "My life has been shaped by the Good News of Jesus Christ, and by the gospel values of service and hospitality – values I learned as part of a family of six living in a one-bedroom home," Ashley says.

His father Fred was the Australian Secretary of Merchant Navy Christian Fellowship, a ministry that extended hospitality to Christian seamen. "We only had six chairs in the house, and a small eat-in kitchen," Ashley recalls. "But that didn't stop us having sailors or missionaries home for a meal.

"We'd move the table into the living room that served as Mum and Dad's bedroom, and the children would sit along the edge of the bed so that the adults could sit on chairs to eat their meals. Then, when I was eight years old, Mum and Dad prayerfully agonised over their decision to borrow what was for them the enormous sum of $6,000 to extend the house."

They added two bedrooms and a sunroom – and a bathroom, which the children thought was really special. Before then they had used a bath in a corner of the laundry. The sunroom soon became a bedroom for a young girl whom the Saunders adopted.

> **"My life has been shaped by the Good News of Jesus Christ, and by the gospel values of service and hospitality."**

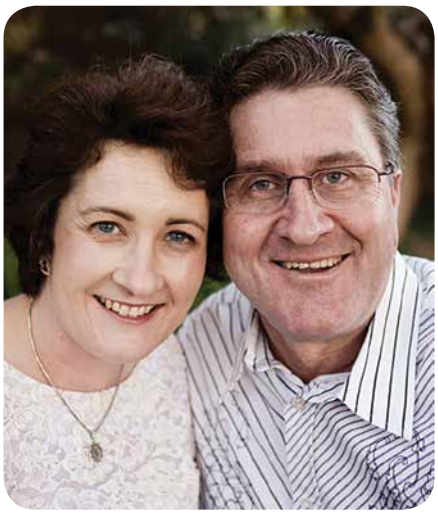
Ashley was offered a place to study law at the University of Sydney after he completed high school, but was unable to accept because his parents could not financially support him. He thought he would not be able to achieve his ambition.

"But I was then offered employment as a law clerk by the solicitor of a friend of a family friend," Ashley says. "I started with that firm as an enthusiastic 17-year-old, studied law by correspondence, was asked to stay on as a solicitor, and then invited to buy into the practice."

In the meantime, he also welcomed the first of his four children into the world – fulfilling another of his life ambitions.

At the age of 26, Ashley was elected as an Alderman of Newcastle City Council, and was later re-elected for a second term. He became involved with politics at an organisational level.

He also became an active lay preacher, mentored by Milton Morris, the long-serving NSW Minister for Transport – known for his committed Christian faith, and a strong supporter of the Australian Festival of Light as FamilyVoice Australia was then known. Later, after relocating to Port Macquarie on the state's mid north coast, Ashley began preaching regularly at churches in the region.



Ashley and Lindsay Saunders

He also commenced theological studies by correspondence – repeating the pattern by which he had studied law many years earlier. Then, at the age of 40, Ashley and his family moved to Sydney to complete his theological studies on a full-time basis. He accepted an invitation to join the pastoral team of a local Baptist Church.

Many people he knew found his decision to leave his successful law practice hard to understand, but Ashley believes it made perfect sense.

"I was clearly led into law and I was clearly led out of it," he says. "What's more, my motivation was the same: to serve the Lord by serving people in whatever ways He chooses."

That brings us to the further crossroads where Ashley found himself earlier this year, after serving as Senior Pastor of a Queensland Baptist Church for over seven years. Reflecting on that journey, Ashley muses, "Lindsay and I sensed that my ministry with the Church was coming to an end. Then, as I was prayerfully considering what the Lord would have me do in the next chapter of my life, the possibility of serving with FamilyVoice Australia came across my desk.

"As I prepare to step into this new challenge, I am extremely conscious of our nation's vital need for a Christian voice in the civic arena for family, faith and freedom.

"To borrow from the Apostle Paul, our nation desperately needs the enduring qualities of faith, hope and love – the godly, selfless and true kind of love taught and modelled by our Lord Jesus Christ."

