

BPW NZ Oral Submission for the Objectionable Publications and Indecency Legislation Bill 2013

10.30 am Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> March Parliament House Meeting Room 3

**Justice and Electoral Select Committee:**

Present: Chair **Scott Simpson** National, Cormandel, Deputy Chair **Paul Foster-Bell** National, List, **Joanne Hayes**, National, List, **Raymond Huo**, Labour, List, **Alfred Ngaro**, National, List, **Denis O'Rourke**, NZ First, List, **Hon Maryan Street**, Labour, List, **Holly Walker**, Green, List, **Hon Kate Wilkinson**, National, Waimakariri

***Kia ora tatou, Ko Hellen Swales taku ingoa Leonie Dobbs***

The New Zealand Federation of Business & Professional Women (BPW NZ) is committed to working for women and their families to encourage the New Zealand government to implement Legislation which supports and refers to the protection of all Women and Children.

This includes all forms of Objectionable Publications and Indecency

We are on record of having submitted to the government of the day from 1989 through to present day government on Objectionable Publications. Whether it was to support:

- the rationalisation of the legislation, around pornography,
- the increase of sentencing allowable,
- the inclusion and awareness of child pornography,
- or the awareness of the threat that the internet provides for accessibility of such material.

With the advances in technology and the ease of access to objectionable materials and the ability to live stream from the privacy of your home; makes this an important piece of legislation. Evidence shows that the content of the publications are getting worse and more explicate in content. Also in many cases the children involved are getting younger. The ease at which this information can be shared and the audience it can reach is just prenominal now and it is there for ever.

These advances in technology also provide many forums in which one can communicate or take advantage of our young adults and children easily:

- social networking site
- chat rooms
- texting

Through the internet, cellphones and tablets the risk is high for those less suspecting such as a child.

We appreciated the need for balance when considering the application of this bill, public safety verse the rights of the individual, but when you have the most innocent of our community at risk we would like to see stronger sentences being issued. We applaud the increase in the sentences that can be handed down; but there is still a perception that if you plead guilty to the charges brought against you, the likely hood of the court showing leniency and a reduction in your sentence is pretty high statically.

We pose the question is this not the ideal opportunity to sentence these offenders and whilst servicing their time they have access to remedial rehabilitation?

If we let them go with something like a slap on the wrist - have we lost this opportunity and left ourselves open to the possibility of allowing this person to reoffender?

Also are we collecting good data on offences under this section of the act, as I see many over laps here with regard to objectionable material, cyber bully and even trafficking of children?

If we are rigorous in the collection of this data we can then look more effectively at implementing appropriate remedial support networks to assist these offenders.

- ***WE also need to be mindful that there must be safeguards in place for those young people who do not have the maturity to be discerning and post unappropriated objectionable material on the internet. Who have no appreciation of the seriousness of the offence, do not gain a criminal record that will blight them for many years to come. The consequences will have a huge impact on their lives.***

We would support and encourage this government to appropriate a large sum of funds into the education of; awareness of, and the access for help with issues around this piece of legislation. Organisations like ""Wellstop" which operates in the Lower North Island with its base in Lower Hutt. They have done some insightful research into schools and would see this program as a good tool in the government's arsenal towards the education and protection of our children. Their Mission Statement is:

***"WellStop enhances community safety by working to prevent the next incident of sexual abuse"***

We congratulate the government for the introduction of this Bill which will address the need to provide for the protection of the community at large.

As elected representatives of New Zealand you have a duty to draft, debate and pass legislation that ensures the safety of our community and drives the change in behaviour to ensure we achieve this in order to protect our community.

Please have the courage to do it.

Welcomed by the Chair as regulars to the process of giving an oral submission, Scott Simpson also informed us that we were being streamed live over the radio.

We were also complemented on our submission and it was also noted we were the only ones that asked for a review of the legislation on a regular bases. (Maryan Street)

Then there were a lot of questions around how we saw the education of the public being delivered.

At what age did we see this starting?

Were we happy with the length of the sentences?

Did we feel there needed to be more clarity around the definition of objectionable materials?