

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed Online Safety Bill 2020. Firstly, I'd like to say that I support the cyber-abuse, non-consensual sharing of intimate images, and abhorrent violent material parts of the bill.

Where I feel the bill has real problems, however, is with the online content scheme in Part 9. Unless I've very much failed to comprehend the proposed legislation, it seems like the intent is to ban, or at least give the esafety commissioner the ability to ban, almost all pornographic material available on the internet. This has implications for the ability of Australian adults to enjoy healthy sexual activity and expression and poses serious financial risk to sex workers that depend on selling content and advertising services on the internet.

Part 9 seems to capture a great deal of material that has nothing to do with abusive, violent, or harmful content. Nor does it deal with cyberbullying, revenge porn, or terrorism, all of which is adequately addressed in the rest of the bill. Part 9 seems to be nothing but an assault on our freedom of speech and smacks of a moralistic anti-porn crusade. Australians have been safely enjoying online sexual content for decades now and I'm not sure what problem part 9 seeks to solve.

I believe that due to Part 9, many social media platforms and websites will simply expunge sex workers and sexual content, or will geoblock Australians, rather than have to deal with the implications of this bill in a similar fashion to US sites after the passage of SESTA/FOSTA (Stop Enabling Sex Trafficking Act/Fighting Online Sex Trafficking Act). This could lead to demonstrable harm to sex workers, many of which are already in a vulnerable financial position due to COVID-19 restrictions and their ineligibility for Jobkeeper/jobseeker, as they will lose a large source of their income and may have to resort to in-person sex work or if they already offer those services, to see riskier clients or engage in riskier acts to make up for the income loss.

If you're still going to insist on classifying and banning all internet porn then surely that belongs in its own separate legislation so that it can be debated fairly and to allow the very good parts of this bill to be quickly passed into law without controversy.