



Representation of women in advertising

Clearinghouse Connector – March 2016

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Introduction

This Connector presents a selection of freely-available current research on the impact of advertising on women's health and wellbeing. We present case studies where individuals and campaigns have taken action against ads, current examples of promising practice from around the globe, and the importance of women in the control and creation of advertising. We then cover the current policy landscape in Australia, and provide links to related websites for further exploration.

Advertising that represents women as commodities – and which objectifies and sexualises women – perpetuates and normalises degrading and disrespectful beliefs about the role and value of women, and undermines gender equity measures. This representation of women has negative impacts on the mental and physical health of women, and how women are perceived by society.

The research presented in this Connector explores the gap between standards that advertisers have set for themselves and the advertisements that appear. Promising practice from other developed countries demonstrates that there are various ways for governments at the state and national level to introduce regulation of advertising.

The Connector also presents research on the rise of online campaigns against sexist, misogynistic and objectifying ads that have appeared within the gap between industry guidelines, self-regulation and government oversight.

In gathering the research for this Connector, we have found limited publicly available academic resources. The majority of academic resources freely available to the public were produced prior to 2010, and have not been included in this Connector. However, there has been growth in practice-based reports and opinion pieces on the current state of advertising and strategies being used to end sexist advertising.

WHV thanks Dr. Lauren Rosewarne, of the University of Melbourne, for providing feedback for this Connector.

Portrayal of women

[Gender and advertising: how gender shapes meaning /In: Controversies in contemporary advertising. 2nd ed.](#) Sage, 2014

[The dangerous ways ads see women](#) TEDx Innovations, 2015

[Clearinghouse Connector: Sexualisation of women and girls](#) Women's Health Victoria, 2014

[Equal opportunity or objectification?: the sexualization of men and women on the cover of Rolling Stone](#) Sexuality and Culture, 2011

[Offensive marketing can work: but not if it vilifies women](#) The Conversation, 2015

Health impact on women

[Sexualised girls are seen as less intelligent and less worthy of help than their peers](#) The Conversation, 2015

[The effects on women from advertisements](#) Destructive Advertisements, 2010

[Perpetuating gendered identities: the 'tween' magazine](#) Griffith Working Papers in Pragmatics and Intercultural Communication, 2012

[The media's effect: media representation of the female body](#) The Sydney Feminists, 2014

[Sex and sexism in Australian alcohol advertising: why are women more offended than men?](#) Contemporary Management Research, 2011

[Self- and partner- objectification in romantic relationships: associations with media consumption and relationship satisfaction](#) Sex Roles, 2014

Case studies

[Ad watchdog in Australia a dismal failure](#) Collective Shout, 2014

[Community perceptions of exploitative and degrading images in advertising](#) Advertising Standards Bureau, 2013

[Ultra Tune discontinues 'sexist' advertisement following Advertising Standards Bureau review](#) ABC Online, 2016

[Bauer Media axes controversial Zoo Weekly lads magazine blaming tough retail conditions](#) News.com.au, 2015

[Rise of the feminist killjoy: why Paddy Power had to pull its misogynist advertising](#) The Conversation, 2014

Promising international practice

[Advertising \[Chapter\] In: Making change: Nordic examples of working towards gender equality in the media](#) NORDICOM. University of Gothenburg, 2014 – pp. 97-118

[Women and girls as subjects of media's attention and advertisement campaigns: the situation in Europe: best practices and legislations](#) European Parliament, 2013

[Gender-sensitive indicators for media: framework of indicators to gauge gender sensitivity in media operations and content](#) UNESCO, 2012

[Ad agency swears off crafting ads that objectify women](#) Wall Street Journal, 2016

[Social media campaigns that make a difference: what can public health learn from the corporate sector and other social change marketers?](#) Public Health Research and Practice, 2015

Putting women behind the content

[Women in creative: why it matters \[Opinion\]](#) Ad News, 2015

[Gender matters: women in the Australian screen industry](#) Screen Australia, 2015

[60% of female marketers have experienced sexism in the workplace according to The Drum's Women in Marketing research](#) The Drum, 2015

[This conference wants to reward advertising agencies that promote gender equality](#) Girl Talk HQ, 2015

Australian guidelines

[AANA code of ethics](#) Australian Association of National Advertisers, 2012

[AANA code of ethics practice note](#) Australian Association of National Advertisers, 2015

[Exploitative and degrading: key concepts](#) Advertising Standards Bureau, 2015

[Gender \[advertising standards\]](#) Advertising Standards Bureau, 2015

[Gender portrayal guidelines](#) Victoria. Department of Premier and Cabinet, 2012

Policy development

[Submission to the Australian Association of National Advertisers' review of code of ethics](#) Women's Health Victoria, 2010

[Inquiry into sexually explicit outdoor advertising](#) Queensland. Parliament. Health and Community Services Committee, 2014

[Submission to Australian Communications and Media Authority Contemporary Community Safeguards Inquiry issues paper](#) Australian Association of National Advertisers, 2013

[Reclaiming public space: Inquiry into the regulation of billboard and outdoor advertising](#) Australia. Parliament. House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs, 2011

Related websites

[Australian Association of National Advertisers](#) Advertising regulation guide

[Collective Shout](#)

[Advertising Standards Bureau](#) Social media advertising

[Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media](#)

How our Clearinghouse can help you

Women's Health Victoria's Clearinghouse has a wealth of information on gender in health in various forms. Our experienced health and information professionals can assist you to access this information.

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