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For immediate release

'It's time we talked about porn': A forum for parents, carers, educators and mentors of young people

A forum on the challenges and advantages of talking about porn with young people will be held on Monday 18 July at Karralyka, Ringwood. Presented by Maroondah City Council, Women's Health East and Eastern Community Legal Centre (ECLC), the session will be led by community educator on pornography and young people, **Maree Crabbe**.

Readily available and aggressively marketed online, hard-core pornography is fast becoming the default sexuality educator for young people. Pornographic content accounts for 30 per cent of internet traffic and research shows that over 90 per cent of boys and 60 per cent of girls have seen porn online.

"Many parents and people who work with children feel at a loss when it comes to talking about the barrage of pornographic content marketed to young people online," said Ms Crabbe. "Porn has become the mainstream. We can no longer afford to dodge these tricky conversations with our children and students."

Ms Crabbe says the link between gender inequality, power, sexism and violence is demonstrated clearly in modern day pornography. A recent content analysis of the most popular porn found that 88 per cent of scenes included acts of physical aggression, and 48 per cent of the scenes contained verbal aggression. In 94 per cent of cases, these aggressive acts were directed at women.

"Not only does pornography almost routinely portray gender stereotypes, gender inequality and aggression, it eroticises them. It says they are sexy," said Ms Crabbe. "Adults must be able to talk to young people about sex in a way that encourages realistic and healthy expectations and behaviours."

ECLC CEO Michael Smith stated the forum was very timely. "Eastern CLC responds to family violence issues every day and with our partner organisations also seek to prevent family violence through education and awareness with a focus on gender inequality. The role of pornography with young people and how it reinforces unhealthy relationship expectations is very important but it's really a taboo subject with parents and others not knowing how to deal with it. It's certainly time we talked about it." he said.

The session focuses on supporting adults to understand porn's impact on young people, and opening up conversations that equip children for a sexuality that is safe, respectful and fully consenting. Parents, carers, educators and mentors of young people are invited to attend.

It's Time We Talked About Porn

Monday 18 July, 7pm - 8.30pm

Karralyka, Mines Road Ringwood

Cost: Free, RSVP: 15th July

Enquiries: Maroondah Youth Services, 9294 5701.

Maree Crabbe coordinates the *Reality & Risk: Pornography, young people and sexuality*, community education project. She is co-producer and co-director of two documentaries, *Love and Sex in an Age of Pornography*, and *The Porn Factor*. She is also the author of *In The Picture*, a secondary school resource addressing the influence of explicit sexual imagery on young people. Maree has worked with young people -

and on issues effecting young people - for over 20 years. She has developed and delivered programs focusing on sexual violence prevention, sexual diversity and prevention of sexually transmissible infections.

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Media enquiries contact:

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Links and further information

Important contacts

- In emergency situations or danger, call police on 000
- For confidential help and referral, call the National Sexual Assault, Family & Domestic Violence Counselling Line on 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732)
- Eastern Domestic Violence Service 9259 4200 (Mon-Fri, 9- 5)

About Women's Health East

Women's Health East (WHE) is a regional women's health promotion agency working across the Eastern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne towards a vision of equality, empowerment, health and wellbeing for all women. It advocates for gender equity and work to improve the health and wellbeing of girls and women.

WHE also leads the Together For Equality and Respect Strategy to prevent violence against women in Melbourne's East, with a range of local government, health and community agency partners.

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