

5th March 2003

Media release

Contact: Jacqui Rees 0427 154 522 or Clive Hamilton (02) 6249 6221, 0413 993 223

93% of Parents Back Tough Net Porn Laws

Three quarters of parents of teenagers say that the Federal Government is not doing enough to protect children from Internet pornography and 93% would support automatic filtering of Internet pornography going into homes, according to further survey results released today by The Australia Institute.

The Institute commissioned Newspoll to survey households with teenagers aged 12 to 17. Parents were asked: "Would you support a system which automatically filtered out Internet pornography going into homes unless adult users asked otherwise?" An astonishing 93% said they would.

"The system of regulation of Internet pornography is failing miserably and parents know it better than anyone else", said Dr Clive Hamilton, Institute Executive Director. Last Monday, the Institute released a report showing that 84% of 16-17 year old boys and 60% of girls had been exposed to Internet pornography, including violent and extreme pornography.

The second survey reveals that parents are very anxious about easy access to Internet pornography with 85% expressing concern about their children seeing pornography on the Internet and 61% saying they are 'very concerned'.

"While the Internet industry and the sex industry are saying that it is the responsibility of parents to police their children's use of the Internet, parents are saying they cannot do it alone and want the Federal Government to take tougher measures", said Dr Hamilton.

In addition, parents strongly support the Institute's proposal for high schools to educate students about the risks of pornography in the same way they educate students about the risks of drugs and sex, with 85% in favour including two-thirds strongly in favour.

The new Newspoll survey was conducted over the weekends of 13-16 and 20-23 February 2003 and the randomly selected sample of 377 gives the results a margin of error of 5%.

The results can be found under What's New on the Institute's website. The Australia Institute is a public-interest think tank based in Canberra.

www.tai.org.au