

Reading through the Restricted Access System discussion paper, I found it quite alarming when I read "It should be noted that the new RAS declaration will not address material showing actual sexual activity between adults (which falls under the X18+ classification). Where such X18+ material is provided from Australia or is hosted in Australia it may be subject to a removal notice." - I apologise if I'm misunderstanding here (and I sincerely hope that I am), but does this mean that ALL actual sexual content from Australia can be subject to removal? Because that is absolutely shocking and very wrong.

There are so many sex workers who work exclusively online (especially within these past 18 months with the pandemic) and rely on that as their main (or sole) source of income - how are they to survive if they are suddenly subjected to having their content taken down and not being able to sell it or advertise it? How are adult consumers able to show support to Australian adult content creators if there's nothing of their's available to purchase online? Are we supposed to just forget about Australian sex workers and buy only from overseas content creators now? Or will they all be blocked to us too?

In relation to the new RAS, I am also concerned that consensual adult material will be targeted. I'm a 37 year old married woman, but you know, I genuinely love to watch consensual adult content that involves rope, bondage, choking, impact and other forms of BDSM / kink. I know a lot of Australian adults who enjoy watching that kind of adult content - where does that fall under the new RAS? - Subject to removal? - I certainly hope not!

Removing any kind of consensual adult material from online spaces is not okay. It will negatively impact sex workers who will lose their income and honestly, it's just not fair to all the adult consumers of Australia who enjoy it and just want to pay sex workers to watch some porn.

The new RAS also has me concerned for kink educators. People who participate in BDSM generally like to be safe about it. If they want to try tying someone, choking someone or using a paddle on someone (all consensually with another adult), the first place they'll go is to look online for safety information and educational tutorial videos or blogs - do they count as "material providing instruction in crime and violence"? Even when it's for consenting adults who are just trying to be safe? Take those educational resources away and some people are still going to try the activity anyway, but it will be far more dangerous because they have no information as a basis to work from.

I believe that restrictions around what a child may be exposed to should start in the home. There are many family friendly filters for home internet. We should be focusing on ways to make those even more effective and more accessible and affordable to families with children. It should ultimately be up to caregivers to educate their children and restrict what they see online.

All the adults who create, sell, buy and enjoy consensual adult material online should not be made to suffer.

I think the new RAS should allow for the adult industry to determine the most effective methods to limit children's exposure to age-inappropriate material in relation to adult content, or the eSafety Commissioner should work in conjunction with organisations such as Scarlet Alliance, so as to ensure sex workers and buyers of adult content aren't negatively impacted by the new RAS.

It's also worth mentioning that the legal age of consent throughout most of Australia is 16, so why would "realistically simulated sexual activity between adults" be classified as R18+ and why on Earth would "actual sexual activity" be classified as X18+ and possibly subject to removal when people as young as 16 are (rightly so) legally allowed to be engaging in actual sexual activity themselves?