

New Customs regulations that require all new arrivals into Australia to declare, along with firearms and drugs, whether they have any 'pornography' in their possession, now make that experience not a lot different from going through Customs in Iran.

'Pornography' is a term that western democratic governments should never use in their official language because it means nothing ....and then it means everything. The word is not used at all in the federal Classification Act, which is the ultimate reference for Customs on classifying and labelling media that comes into the country. So why did they think that this was a good term to use for their new CEO Instrument of Approval No. 9 of 2009?

They were trying to stop a perceived increase in the amount of child porn being introduced into the country so why wouldn't they simply ask the question 'Do you have any 'child pornography' or 'objectional images' or even 'illegal porn'? But no. They asked a question which now gives Government officials an unfettered right to examine someone's laptop or mobile phone as they re-enter the country, looking for legal material.

If you answer 'No' to the Customs question, thinking that of course you don't have any of that disgusting stuff on your laptop or mobile but you do have a photo of you and your partner in the bath together at that mountain resort or the latest office funny that someone sent you, which showed a couple nudged up in a public toilet – well your done. You've lied under oath and are guilty of an offence that can carry serious penalties. "But its not illegal material!", you say. While that's perfectly true, you still lied.

In a statement to AM, Customs said that "including an express reference to pornography is intended to enhance the interception of prohibited material at the border. If travelers declare pornography and it is not illegal they will keep it. Illegal pornography will be confiscated and fines or charges may be laid."

The problem with this is that over the past decade, the amount of legal material in the adult classification categories in Australia has been severely truncated and is now the most restricted in the western world. For example, non violent, fetishistic X rated film material that is quite legal in New Zealand, is illegal here. It's not illegal to possess here but strangely, is illegal to bring into the country. Adult sexual material that is shown on late night TV in Spain is illegal to import into Australia. Again, its legal to possess here and to download but is prohibited material when you are crossing our borders. R rated computer games which are legal in most of the western world are illegal to bring in through Customs and many young people will come a cropper in this area under the new Customs regulation.

In sanctioning official searches of people for legal material, the Rudd government has stooped to an all time low in its relentless pursuit of sexually straight-jacketing Australian culture. The problem is that the Opposition, led by the mad monk Tony Abbott, is potentially worse. Tasmanian Liberal Senator Guy Barnett was the real architect of this stupid regulation. He applied extraordinary and undue pressure on Customs officials in a Senate Estimates hearing late last year and accused them in the most vitriolic way of opening the floodgates to child and 'teeny' porn in Australia. It was a performance that his old Taswegian colleague, Brian Harradine would have been proud of. Barnett is an old style, right wing, Baptist, conservative

## Rudd's Obsession With Sex Getting Out of Hand

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who has set his sites on ensuring that gay rights are repealed, that abortion is re criminalized and that sexual cultures are strongly repressed. He is a dangerous and driven ideologue who makes Harradine look like an amateur and heaven help Australia if he ever gets a Cabinet position in a future Abbott administration.

Australia is truly beginning to behave like a theocracy in its approach to sexual culture and the main problem is that both major political parties are trying to outdo each other. In NSW the problem is even worse where you have the David Clark 'Opus Dei' faction of the Liberal Party controlling pre selection and a Premier who is deeply religious in all aspects of her daily life. Couple that with a Police Commissioner who worships at Hillsong and its no surprise that last month we saw a young gay adult shop owner go to jail for the first time for selling federally classified X18+ films. That's right. He was sent to prison for selling films that the Commonwealth had classified as suitable for all Australians. These films were even legal to bring through Customs as long as you answered 'yes' to the question!

How bad or offensive can a film be when approved by a panel of experts all hand-picked by former Prime Minister, John Howard? Should someone go to jail for selling non violent consenting erotica of this kind? Well, only in a state where all semblance of normality around sex is fast disappearing. The humourless NSW Attorney General, John Hatsistagos, tried to rationalize the jail sentence in a reply to Greens MLA, Lee Rhiannon last week. He said the jail sentences were there because NSW people wanted them. This was utter bullshit and thoroughly disproved by over a dozen professional opinion polls from Morgans and McNair et al, as well as two surveys carried out by the Commonwealth Classification Board and the Bureau of Statistics. These showed three quarters of respondents wanted to see X18+ films legally sold through adult shops.

So what can people do about overturning this silly Customs law? If you're into the left-field approach then you could encourage everyone to say that they do have 'porn' on them and then drag out a bikini babe calendar from the bottom of your bag or flash a beefcake Manpower nude on your mobile phone. If everyone did this it would soon cause massive delays. But the real issue is not really with Customs. This increasing official demonization of Australian sexual culture originates in state and federal parliaments. Voting away from both major parties at the coming federal election would be a good start. While Abbott and Rudd may not understand the Nanny State message because they are in fact, the nannies, their party secretaries sure as hell will.