

Family Federation director visits Forbes

□ A 'Family' campaigner links pornography to sexual violence.

FROM The Revd
MICHAEL BAIN
St John's Forbes

The Director of the Australian Federation for the Family (AFF), Jack Sonnemann, spoke in Forbes at various meetings over the week-end 19 & 20 May.

His visit to Forbes took place at the invitation of St John's Anglican parish in Forbes where he had previously visited some six years earlier.

Jack and Margaret migrated to Australia from Memphis Tennessee 12 years ago with their 12 year old daughter, Christina.

Shocked by the open display of pornography in Australia and disturbed by the way it is freely accessible to Australian kids, they began the work of AFF in an attempt to see some sensible restrictions placed on pornography sales.

Apart from a women's rally, the screening of the Ted Bundy video 'Fatal Addiction' and a round of Sunday engagements, the Community Leaders' Breakfast was the centre-piece of the visit where there were ninety people present.

Those in attendance included the mayor of Forbes and shire councillors, a local doctor together with representatives from every church in Forbes.

Young people of the parish weren't neglected over the week-end as Jack Sonnemann spoke at a diocesan youth event at Forbes High School. He spoke to them on 'The Myth of Safe Sex' and 'Media Madness'.

"The open display of pornographic material in Australia has the effect of desensitising people, especially young people who have

been brought up with it, so that the highly detrimental effects it has are not recognised", Jack Sonnemann said.

Mr Sonnemann claims there is a huge amount of misinformation fed to the public by the media and by many leaders for reasons of either ignorance or personal gain.

It was argued at the meetings that there was a clear link between violent crimes against women and children and the free distribution of pornographic material. Surveys were quoted which suggest the rates of rape against women are higher in Australia than anywhere in the world.

Jack Sonnemann went on to suggest that Australia has the highest level of sex attacks in the industrialised world and the highest incidence of rape and indecent assault.

Those who attended the various meetings were urged to lobby politicians in order to see legislation passed to protect children from dehumanisation.

Prior to the last state election the Protection of Children from Indecent Images Bill had been passed in the Upper House.

With a new government, the meetings heard, the process must start over again.

In Victoria, Attorney General Jan Wade has passed a bill through both houses of parliament which prohibits retailers from displaying, selling to children, or allowing children's access to "objectionable magazines".

Jack Sonnemann has also taken his campaign against pornography to magazine advertisers.

Sonnemann, together with those who read the Federation's journal claim a 100% success-rate in convincing companies mentioned in the journal to remove their ads from porn magazines and to cancel sponsorship of objectionable TV programming.

■ MR SONNEMANN ... fighting to restrict pornography in the community.

Father aims to shock community against pornography

A PEREGIAN Beach father hopes the public screening of a video of US serial sex killer Ted Bundy will shock the community into doing something about pornography.

Jack Sonnemann, director of a group called Australian Federation for the Family, said he would show the video at a public meeting in Noosa tomorrow.

He said he wanted to raise public awareness of the effect of pornography on society and the need to restrict its display and access.

Mr Sonnemann, 44, said his wife Margaret started the federation when they lived in Melbourne eight years ago. It was apolitical and not linked to any church.

The couple, who have a 13-year-old daughter, has lived at Peregian for five years and run a business consultancy.

Mr Sonnemann said the video, made 11 hours before Ted Bundy was executed, showed the link between pornography and sex crimes.

He said studies and statistics had shown Australia to be the world's most sexually violent nation — yet it allowed pornography to dehumanise and degrade women and be accessed by children.

He said women posing in pornographic magazines were being "hung out like a piece of meat on a meat hook" and giving children false impressions of the role of women in society.

The public meeting will be held tomorrow from 7.30pm at the Christian Outreach Centre, Noosaville.

