

MEDIA RELEASE

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Naked charity calendars good for a laugh

People who are photographed in naked charity calendars should understand that they are setting themselves up for ridicule to raise money for charity, a University of Tasmania lecturer has commented.

Dr Pamela Turton-Turner researched many Australian and international charity calendars in her 2008 PhD thesis entitled *Naked Charity*.

She found that to be successful, a calendar needs to be funny, the naked bodies sanitized rather than erotic, and the public must regard the charity as worthy.

Dr Turton-Turner, who lives in the isolated village of Wayatinah in the Tasmanian highlands, found that the humour and appeal of such calendars was based on the stark comparison between the ageing, sometimes bizarre, non-classic bodies of the men and women in them compared with the classic, idealized and erotic bodies of people in movies and advertising.

“People who buy these calendars find them humorous because the bodies in them are *not* beautiful but ageing, comedic and even bizarre,” she said.

“In an ABC Radio interview in 2002 a Tasmanian woman involved in a calendar actually said that people buying the calendar have ‘had a good laugh and that’s what it’s all about really’.”

“Experience has shown too that in the successful calendars the bodies must be sanitized – non-erotic, maternal, coy and covered. That is, they are de-eroticised because they are accepted as maternal, giving and nurturing.”

As examples of successful and unsuccessful calendars, Dr Turton-Turner describes:

- **The Women’s Institute Calendar (UK, 2000)**, created by the Rhylstone branch of the ultra-conservative WI to raise money for leukemia research. **Successful** because they were coy and humorous. They raised \$2m and inspired the movie *Calendar Girls* starring Helen Mirren;
- **The Matildas’ calendar (2000)**, created by Australia’s elite female soccer team. **Unsuccessful** because it was too sexually explicit – frowned upon and not funny;
- **The Bare to be Different calendar (2002)**, created by the elderly women of South Arm, Tasmania, to raise funds to buy red velvet curtains for their town hall. **Successful** because their ageing, wrinkled bodies were on show but nipples and pubis were covered humorously with tea-cups, flowers or ‘prudent framing’. They raised \$100,000;

- **The Spin and Bare It calendar (UK, 2004)**, created by the east Grinstead Spinners and Weavers Guild to save a rare breed of sheep. **Unsuccessful** because they displayed their nipples and the charity was considered unworthy. They were left with a £15,000 debt and 9000 calendars for pulping;
- **The Yummie Mummies Bare All calendar (2004)**, created by a north Queensland mothers club to raise money to build a kindergarten. **Successful** because they presented themselves as children with toys, teddies and pigtaails but covered genitals and breasts.

Dr Turton-Turner, who hopes to publish a book on this subject, said she is not using her research to frown on people's involvement in nude charity calendars.

"I'm not telling people what they should or shouldn't do. I'm trying to highlight what's going on beyond the surface layer - that the calendars are not as innocent as they seem," she said.

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