

Thank you for the opportunity to lodge a submission for the Stage 2 reforms of Australia's National Classification Scheme.

Australia's National Classification Scheme **must** be based on a strong foundation of **human rights**, in particular the right to freedom of communication and the right to communicate on (sometimes highly) controversial and or objectionable subjects.

Please refer also to the Victorian and Queensland charters of human rights.

We must guard against Australia's National Classification Scheme being shoehorned into "the thin edge of the wedge" and not enable every next censorship regime du jour – that is, we must reject censorship generally, even and especially of controversial and objectionable topics, which happen to be or to become "controversial" matters at any point in time.

Such power to censor is eventually wielded despotically against individuals to maintain secrecy of evil actions – witness the case of Julian Assange.

It is right to have classification, especially industry self-classification, in order to allow parents to exercise their parenthood in respect of their own children – parents have the right to decide when and how to introduce or otherwise educate their children on controversial and objectionable subjects.

Parental rights must not be usurped by government. There lies one of the greatest tyrannies.

Government usurpation of individual and parental rights, is fraught with terrible long term consequences, including that of the tyranny of the mob being imposed on conscientious individuals.

We have a fundamental right to choose when and what content and communications we expose ourselves to. This right is where the utility of content classification is evident – to facilitate individual rights, so long as such classification regime does not devolve into censorship.

We must disclaim censorious government suppression of individual communication, especially of controversial, objectionable and even abhorrent topics.

How else can an individual oppose that which is objectionable, controversial or abhorrent, except first by communication?

Of course it is those who engage in objectionable, controversial or abhorrent actions who seek to suppress communication on those very actions – the tyrant or despot preserving his secrecy under fig leaf of “public moral virtue”. Such a devious inversion of righteousness!

The right to communicate on controversial, objectionable and even abhorrent topics, is the primal right for the individual to express his opposition to tyranny and despotism.

Suppression of “objectionable” communication is the primary tool of the despot against the individual.

For this reason alone we must, to the greatest extent possible, uphold freedom of communication as an absolute right. Regarding those who seek to damage another individual, such as through the crime of sexual imagery blackmail, there are presently sufficient laws to handle these crimes (such as the laws against blackmail, defamation, etc).

When communication suppression fails, the despot next punishmes the one who has exposed the despot’s secrets – the case of the ongoing indefinite detention of Julian Assange being the prime example today.

Censorship presumes individuals cannot be trusted and are not righteous, yet in truth it is he who acted in sin who seeks his own moral purging or secrecy through suppressive censorship. Censorship presumes individuals so weak that the mere communication of an objectionable topic leads only to evil. “Do not talk about evil, or you will become evil” cries the sinner. Such “logic” is offensive and absurd to the majority.

Those weak of mind or emotion, and or receiving professional help for personal problems, and or are parents choosing how to raise their own children, have the right to choose if, when and how to be exposed to objectionable communications, and it is right to facilitate this individual exercise of free will by way of classification. But we must not open the door to punishment backed censorship against the individual.

Censorship amounts to pre-crime punishment, “the thought police”, the Marxist foundation of controlling the community by controlling thought by controlling what we may and may not say or communicate on.

Mandated penalty-backed content assessment by government, may well be an effective censorship regime (implied within those penalties) for failure to obtain that government classification ("permission").

The reason such regimes enable despots is that age old bug bear "who does the classification/censorship?" - anyone but the individual themselves given power to choose which communication they permit to themselves, is a regime open to abuse by the tyrant, with history showing us every "good cause" power eventually abused by a tyrant.

Though historical reality is shocking to the well intentioned, we must learn from the fact that every power granted or assumed by a king or government, over the individual, is eventually abused - this is tyranny. "The road to hell is paved with good intentions."

When evil actions are done, how is it that we can justify individuals being denied the right to communicate on those evil actions?

As long as parents remain with the right to choose when and how to allow their own children to be exposed to objectionable material, the weaponisation of censorship against the individual may be kept at bay and Australia's National Classification Scheme may facilitate those parental and individual rights, which facilitation is the limit which government should be bound to.