

Submissions regarding changes to classification laws.

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

I believe that Australia's National Classification Scheme is failing to protect children. Too many films, books and computer games that are totally inappropriate for minors are displayed in public because the system is just not working.

As a priority, the goals of the system need to be reformed so that protection of children is prioritised over the rights of adults to read, see or play whatever they want.

In particular, children should not be exposed to pornography which teaches impressionable young boys especially that women are objects. Studies show that pornography is addictive and linked with violence against women. Studies also prove that it has serious and lasting negative effects on family relationships.

If we are to increase respect for women in our society and allow our sons and daughters to grow into responsible young men and women capable of building happy relationships, all pornographic content must be restricted from minors. These restrictions must include comic style books widely available which often depict pornographic content and text-based pornographic novels which are inappropriate for children to read.

Violent pornography like depictions of rape and obscene depictions such as bestiality must be completely banned. Furthermore, any content which shows children engaged in sex acts or sexualized nudity must also be completely banned. It is unacceptable that comic books like *Gender Queer*, which shows its author engaged in a paedophile fantasy, are permitted in Australia.

There should be age restrictions and filters that prevent minors from accessing online pornography and clear ratings on books, games or films that link to pornographic websites.

Those who produce pornographic content – including pornographic books – must be required to have that content assessed and classified or face heavy fines. The current system has failed. Publishers, not parents, should be forced to pay for the costs of classification.

Finally, I completely disagree with the unjustifiable decisions made by government bureaucrats to grant Unrestricted classifications to books like *Gender Queer* and *The Boys*. These books clearly depict violent rape pornography and paedophilia fantasies but have been deemed to display sexual activity between consenting adults. The assessors of those books are blind or inept. Either way, they were clearly unable to understand the material before them and the classification scheme should be amended to ensure that such incompetent bureaucrats are removed from their positions for their unacceptable failures of judgement.

Australian parents can have no confidence in Australia's National Classification Scheme unless all the changes outlined above are made and the system is reformed to ensure that children are protected.

Peter Rowswell

