



## COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

### **Classification Board Statement of Expectations**

This Statement of Expectations (SoE) outlines the Australian Government's expectations for the role and performance of the Classification Board (the Board).

The Board is an independent statutory body established to apply relevant legislation to determine film, publication and computer game classification decisions that reflect Australian community standards.

This SoE is issued in my capacity as Minister for Communications to the Director of the Board and complements the Director's statutory responsibilities under:

- the *Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act 1995* (the Act);
- the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (the PGPA Act); and
- Accountable Authority Instructions issued by the Secretary of the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (the department) under section 20A of the PGPA Act.

#### **Changing Policy Context**

As rapid technological changes enhance the range of media content available to Australians, the media environment in which the Board operates continues to evolve. I ask that the Board play a constructive role and actively engage in any measures developed or implemented to modernise the National Classification Scheme (the Scheme).

In particular, I expect the Board to work collaboratively with the department as the responsible policy agency to support any future changes to the Scheme. The Board has an important role in supporting the successful implementation of any future changes to the Scheme, particularly in maintaining the integrity of the Board's statutory responsibilities during transition.

I also expect that the Board work cooperatively with the department and other relevant government agencies to support related regulatory and policy functions of the Government such as online safety, border protection and broader media regulation.

#### **Functions and Responsibilities**

The Board performs an important role in informing the media consumption choices of Australians, including protecting children and the broader community from content that might harm or disturb them.

I expect that the Director of the Board will:

1. ensure the Board is operating in accordance with the Act and the Scheme, as well as other legislation and instruments that may be relevant to the Board's decision-making processes and procedures;
2. undertake the functions of Director and manage the work of the Board in a manner that promotes effectiveness, uses Government resources (including Board members) efficiently, minimises cost and waste, and appropriately considers and balances risks including in relation to monitoring the performance of the Board;
3. prepare and follow documented procedures for the work of the Board;
4. ensure that the classification decisions of the Board are evidence-based, and evolve over time to reflect changes in Australian community expectations and attitudes about the form of consumer advice provided to consumers;
5. represent the Board in a transparent, professional and appropriate manner, including before Parliamentary Committees and Senate Estimates hearings, at meetings with external stakeholders and events, and in the media;
6. work cooperatively with the department to improve and streamline classification processes, including in relation to updates to the Scheme and supporting the development and operation of approved industry classification tools;
7. in directing decision-making processes and procedures of the Board, take into consideration the department's advice on research, issues of public concern and on the operation of classification laws and policy, and keep the department informed of significant decisions and issues; and
8. provide me with an Annual Report of the Board's administration in line with best practice principles and, consistent with the PGPA Act, related legislation and guidance material.

When classifying materials, members of the Board are exposed to a wide range of content, some of which may be of a very confronting or graphic nature. The Director must be sensitive to potential impacts on Board members being exposed to this material and seek to minimise associated harms to their wellbeing, including minimising wherever possible the number of Board members required to view a particular piece of objectionable content and encouraging the use of dedicated mental health counselling services provided by the department.

My expectation is that the Board is appropriately supported to enable it to work effectively and efficiently. Any additional resources required to meet the operational needs of the Board may be made available upon agreement with the department, including under subsection 59(2) of the Act.

### **Statement of Intent**

The Government requests that you respond within 30 days of receiving this SoE with a Statement of Intent outlining how you and the Board intend to meet these expectations.

Michelle Rowland MP  
Minister for Communications



12 / 5 / 2023