

To whom it may concern.

I want to keep this submission short and simple. I'll do my best to address the questions outlined in the "Review of Australian classification regulation discussion paper", but I feel, first, it's important to for me to summarise my stand point so that you can read it, absorb it and understand it.

The purpose of the classification board should be to provide the person purchasing their media with the information they need to make an informed choice. It should not be their place to make morale judgements on what is good or bad, right or wrong or what should and shouldn't be included. The classification must cover all possible forms of media as best as it can and, most importantly, *allow* all kinds of media it possibly can. We are adults. We choose what we consume. Healthy adults are not the product of the media they consume, they simply encourage the media they wish to see by consuming it.

Computer games, movies, book, TV shows, songs, plays: Art in general! The classification board should not be refusing classification or rejecting these things for classification, they should be only providing us with the information we need to know if or not the media is something we wish to consume.

If you're seeking to protect children – You are not doing that by refusing the media a classification. All you are doing is denying the choice of that media to adults who adhere to the classification. It is the duty of the parents of children to use the classification to decide what is right and wrong for their family, not the classification board. In this age of technology there are so many alternative ways to secure media that refusing something classification only grants it a mythical appeal it otherwise might not have. In fact, if nothing else, it robs the creators of money and the government of the correct tax share when the item is, inevitably, pirated because it is unavailable.

If our concern is that one form of media or another has a greater impact on our behaviour, we need to let go of that outdated thinking. Extreme behaviour, madness, violence, sexual deviancy and anti-social behaviour has existed since humanity first started to learn to classify them. From plays that created riots to songs that were considered satanic, books that were favourites of killers to homicides while dressed as movie characters – We cannot stop the deranged from being deranged, and a weak mind will always cling to something to anchor their broken thinking or justify their actions. The media these unhealthy people consume doesn't cause their problems and we can't treat it as if, any time a new kind of media is created, it will somehow be the thing that amplifies these issues.

Most recent studies agree that media consumption is most people is healthy, cathartic and safe. We don't see sweeping changes in behaviour from those who consume violent, sexual or drug related media. We all know teenagers will go through a stage of seeking out this kind of media, and this is why correctly classifying it is so important! Refusing it, as if this will prevent teenagers from being rebellious, seeking it out, finding it, consuming it and treating it as a victory over authority only prevents healthy adults who are trying to do the right thing from controlling their consumption.

Allow all forms of media, classify them correctly and let adults choose how they consume.

Thank you. I'll now do my best to address the questions individually.

1) Are the classification categories for films and computer games still appropriate and useful? If not, how should they change?

The classifications are useful, but they should be changed. Currently, for some reason and despite that fact that this isn't true for all forms of media, certain topics are considered taboo and refused classifications. Drugs and sex are two that come instantly to mind, things both available in any other form of media. This thinking is a hold over from an age when people considered computer games to be solely the territory of children. That simply isn't the case any more and the vast majority of large budget games are now targeted to adults with adult themes. As you would be insulted if a movie was refused to you because someone thought you were immature for wanting to watch it and couldn't handle that it contained adult themes, so are the people who play computer games insulted when the same is done to them.

2a) Do the provisions in the Code, the Films Guidelines or the Computer Games Guidelines relating to 'themes' reflect community standards and concerns? Do they need to change in any particular classification category or overall? Are 'themes' understood and is there sufficient guidance on what they mean?

The concept of an "Adult Theme" is fine, and it should be represented on a classification. Sex and sexuality, violence, crime... These are things parents should know about before they allow their children to play a computer game and should be aware of before they, themselves, play a computer game. Under no circumstances should this be a reason to refuse a game classification.

2b) Do the provisions in the Code, the Films Guidelines or the Computer Games Guidelines relating to 'violence' reflect community standards and concerns? Do they need to be changed in any particular classification category or overall?

Again, the heart of the issue isn't in how society views the standard. I don't think anybody raises any issue with what is classified as violence. We all agree that violence should be featured in a classification and that what is currently identified as violence by the board *is, in fact*, violence. All that is required is that the definition be expanded to include all forms of violence so that no media is refused a classification because the *specific type* of violence isn't currently covered.

2c) Do the provisions in the Code, the Films Guidelines or the Computer Games Guidelines relating to 'sex' reflect community standards and concerns? Do they need to be changed in any particular classification category or overall?

Once again, there isn't much dispute over what constitutes sex or sexual content, only that the board stop refusing classification based on the presence of any sexual material. The meanings need to be expanded to include all types of sexual content to allow it classification and permit it sale.

2d) Do the provisions in the Code, the Films Guidelines or the Computer Games Guidelines relating to 'language' reflect community standards and concerns? Do they need to be changed in any particular classification category or overall?

The semantics of what is and isn't harmful language aren't overly important. The majority still consider the same things to be foul language as we always did.

2e) Do the provisions in the Code, the Films Guidelines and the Computer Games Guidelines relating to 'drug use' reflect community standards and concerns? Do they need to be changed in any particular classification category or overall?

This is, currently, one of the worst offenders. Did you know some computer games are refused classification for including real world drugs, but when the name of those drugs are changed they become fantasy items and able to be classified? Nonsense like this is insulting to everyone involved. Nobody is spared by changing the name of a real drug to a fake one... At worst, children are now exposed to drug use in the form of fantasy named drugs. Expand this to cover all drugs and allow computer game writers to call their drugs by what they are really called – This will allow parents to make informed choices about their children's media and stop the "Refused Classification" that hurts the sales of the media. Don't treat the voters and consumers like fools.

2f) Do the provisions in the Code, the Films Guidelines or the Computer Games Guidelines relating to 'nudity' reflect community standards and concerns? Do they need to be changed in any particular classification category or overall?

The classification of what counts as a naked body is fine. The refusal to allow games to be sold based on the presence of that naked body is nonsense. You cannot stop consumers from finding pornographic media if they want it. You cannot prevent them from sourcing this material from other locations if they wish. Rather than rile and thrash powerlessly, let the games with this content be classified correctly and let the parents of children be informed and take personal responsibility for what they purchase. You can only inform them and educate them.

3a) What aspects of the current Code, Films Guidelines or Computer Games Guidelines are working well and should be maintained?

3b) Are there other issues that the Code, the Films Guidelines and/or the Computer Games Guidelines need to take into account or are there any other aspects that need to change?

Please refer to my opening comments – The refusal of classification needs to end. It's not only insulting and condescending, it's also pointless. Why have a classification board at all if the things most in need of classification are refused that classification? Media that doesn't contain adult material that challenges us and addresses mature themes is covered more carefully and thoroughly than the media that needs the attention the most.

4) Considering the scope of entertainment content available in a modern media environment, what content should be required to be classified?

I think it's fair to say that all media should be treated equally. If we are giving classifications to computer games and movies, we need to use the same classification across the board to books and TV shows. It would be disingenuous to give, say, a movie a mature rating because it deals with sexual assault, then to allow someone to read the book of the movie without warning them of the same content. What good is giving a TV show a mature rating, but then allowing the movie made about it to be seen by anyone while it contains the same general material? Why refuse to classify a game when it's based on a play that isn't refused classification because the medium is, somehow, considered more mature?

We should be covering everything. All art and all media. We should be doing so with the same rules for each.

5) Should the same classification guidelines for classifiable content apply across all delivery formats (e.g. television, cinema, DVD and Blu-ray, video on demand, computer games)?

Absolutely. As mentioned above, why restrict one medium but allow the same content in another? Why rate one medium PG when the same content in another medium might be mature? We need to end the concept of things being refused a classification as if one medium was greater than another, or could have a greater impact.

6) Consistent with the current broadcasting model, could all classifiable content be classified by industry, either using Government-approved classification tools or trained staff classifiers, with oversight by a single Government regulator? Are there other opportunities to harmonise the regulatory framework for classification?

So long as the guidelines laid out give the industry the ability to create their content as intended and enforces suitable financial punishment on those that are dishonest, I don't see an issue. It works, as the document points out, for most media which already self classifies. The key is not to discourage any industry from creating content and selling it to Australia out of fear of their work not being able to meet heavy handed classification standards.

7) If a classification decision needs to be reviewed, who should review it in a new regulatory framework?

I don't think it's necessary to disband or remove the board totally if the industry becomes self-regulatory. The moral outrage crowd will always be a force that exists in society and, I promise you, there will always be people reporting a piece of media for not meeting the guidelines and asking for it to be reviewed. I doubt very much that the board will find themselves without something to do.

In the instances where a self-regulatory industry body hasn't met the standards and a fine is given, that's great! It encourages companies to keep up their standards. In instances where no fine is given, that's good as well, as it shows companies that their products and properties are safe and reasonably treated in Australia.

In the worst case scenario?... I won't pretend to know the in's and out's of the political landscape and the logistics of such an act, but maybe there could be a registry of people who will volunteer to review media in instances where a complaint is raised? Much like a Justice Of The Peace?

8) Is the current co-operative scheme between the Australian Government and the states and territories fit for purpose in a modern content environment? If not, how should it be changed?

I don't see that it needs to change, other than to ensure that all media receives the same treatment and nothing is refused a classification.

9) Are there other issues that a new classification regulatory framework needs to take into account?

Please consider expanding the current definitions to end the refusal of classification. Adults wish to be treated with respect and allowed to enjoy their lives as they see fit.

Thank you. I know I've focused on a single issue a lot, but I hope that makes it clear how important I consider it.