

CI 129 A McKenna

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Q1:

I feel the ALRC should direct its attention to improving key elements of the existing framework. Several parts of the current system are clear and easy to understand (different colours denoting different ratings, widespread community understanding of current movie and television ratings). The confusion over MA and MA15+ is an obvious problem, as is the glaring omission of an 'adult' rating for electronic entertainment media (video games).

Q2:

Standardisation of ratings categories and criteria across all media.
An easy to understand and transparent, impartial system for community use.
An age appropriate rating for video games.

Q3:

Yes, purely from a functionality level.
Digital media is so prevalent that any effort by a government body to classify said media is going to be bogged down, and will hamper the process. As evidenced by recent Government legislation to allow the Apple 'App Store' to forgo review and classification.
The same can be extended to the internet.
The sheer breadth of content on the internet makes it unsuitable for effective classification and restriction. Proposed methods for doing so are brute force, and will not meet the specified objectives.

Q4:

This seems like a reasonable measure, although due care would have to be taken to insure that complaints are actually valid, and not the product of an organised political or social agenda (as per the recent ACL campaign to ban several advertisements by masquerading as 'concerned community members').

Q5:

Potential impact should not affect whether content should be classified or not.
Legislation should be designed to be as impartial as possible, and should not predetermine that one group of content needs closer scrutiny than any other.

Q6:

No. Media comes in many forms and is primarily about conveying ideas. This should be the same across all media, no matter its audience. The scope of the proposed market shouldn't be a factor in determining whether it is subject or not.
Ultimately, the most elegant method is one of industry regulation and review by a board of peers and

government representatives.

Q7:

No. Art should be about expanding public consciousness and restricting it is probably not in the best interests of the country.

That said, galleries exhibiting said art should post notice of the themes discussed so that patrons have some idea of what they'll be getting into.

Q8:

Absolutely, there should be no distinction between different types of media.

Q9:

The classification system should exist to inform the public; but certain things, like the internet, are so vast and don't fit into any reasonable type that they defy classification. Therefore the system should be limited to the five main types: print, electronic entertainment, audio, motion picture and television.

Q10:

No, this creates an issue when it comes to enforcement and should have no impact on the classification process.

Q11:

Means of delivery. Impact on the rights of grown citizens.

Q12:

Server level, opt in voluntary filtering (it should be one of the questions when you sign up with an ISP). With a publicly listed webpage on the banned list, so going to it would tell you if your filter was active or not.

Any action in the form of mandatory filtering is draconian and easily subverted.

Q13:

Any action must start and end with better supervision by parents and guardians.

That said, a server level filter the parents can opt into would give some comfort to parents.

Q14:

This presupposes that it isn't well controlled at present.

I would argue that the current measures are sufficient, and in some cases slightly overboard (a separate section in retail stores for restricted films here in South Australia is one example of a step too far).

Q15:

Using the current standards as a guideline, anything that would carry a PG or higher rating should be required to display it.

Q16:

I would like to see a model of industry regulation, with semi annual review by a body of industry and government representatives.

Further review of individual products would be based on community complaints.

I would like to see the individual state governments removed from the process and laws regarding banned materials standardised across all states and territories.

Q17:

Yes, particularly in the realm of video games where the PEGI model brought in in the United States was reviewed and seen as acceptable by both Britain and Canada.

Q18:

Much of the media released in Australia is also released internationally.

As such, much of the stuff we see is subject to similar ratings across the world and the industries publishing films, television, games and music have a very good idea of what their audience is supposed to be. The most easy to trial this model with would be video games as they've been using the PEGI model for many years now.

Q19:

Subsidisation depends on the model used, if an industry self regulation model is selected then no subsidy may be needed.

Q20:

Yes, the only issue I'm aware of is the confusion over the MA and MA15+ ratings.

Q21:

Currently the lack of an adult rating for video games is a glaring omission.

This may be because the system itself is outdated, but really displays a lack of foresight when the current model was implemented. Current stats show the majority of Australian adults play computer games, with the average age being in their mid 30s.

I would suggest the difference between PG, MA and MA15+ be made more clear. Perhaps by adding age ratings as the primary information on the classification stickers, as opposed to the letter on the current ones.

Q22:

I believe the current branding is straightforward and easy to understand. As stated earlier it may be possible to change them to make the age associated with each rating the primary information, with the classification letter made into background information.

Perhaps display a notice at retailers outlining what each classification is and what it means.

Q23:

Absolutely, if for no other reason than to streamline the information and regulation currently in effect. Given the age of some of that legislation, and the rapidly advancing standards of film and computer game visuals and themes, they must be woefully out of date by now.

Q24:

At present, many search engines censor some of their search results.

I'm nearly thirty, and have never 'stumbled' upon offensive material. Whilst there is no denying it exists, someone needs to be looking for it before they'll find it.

This kind of risk can be reduced with proper supervision of minors using the internet.

I don't feel action should be taken to prohibit information available online. I do believe that police should be better able to investigate and prosecute criminals who use digital technologies to perpetrate their crimes.

The internet is a medium of exchanging ideas, and in the same way it's wrong to regulate against what someone thinks, it shouldn't be prohibited or controlled.

Q25:

This is difficult, as many of the things that are RC are not publicly known.

Some of the wording used in defining RC material is very vague. For example the term fetish materials is pretty broad... what defines a fetish, are some more extreme than others?

Child abuse is obviously not acceptable, however things like incitement to induce terrorist acts border on policing thought.

Detailed instruction in crime, or drug taking are interesting... anyone who has done high school chemistry will know what elements will react based on the Periodic Table, should science textbooks be refused classification because they impart knowledge of how to make explosives? Similarly, anyone who's ever had a tetanus shot knows how a needle works.

Frankly, I believe that someone isn't a criminal until they take criminal action... and banning knowledge doesn't prevent crimes.

I don't believe the current scope of RC reflect content that should be prohibited online, I feel it is too vague and needs clear definition.

Q26:

Absolutely, and further to that it should not be open to modification by state and territory governments. Australia is a country connected by roads, it is preposterous that something can be banned in one state yet readily available nine hours and one road away. I would like the states removed from the matter entirely, with classification and distribution being solely a national issue.

Q27:

A model where the commonwealth is responsible for the review of material classified by the industries.

Furthermore, states would have no control over distribution or display methods.

I would also like the Attorneys General to be able to ratify change to classification based on majority rather than unanimous decision.

Q28:

Absolutely, although I doubt we'll see any such thing happen.

Classification is a national issue and should be treated as such.

Q29:

A more stringent determination of what constitutes a complaint from the public.

More frequent overviews of legislation to keep the framework consistent with current public standards.

Other comments: