

CI 166 A Wells

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Q1:

Developing a new framework.

Q2:

To inform consumers of what the media they are viewing contains, not to censor or restrict access to content.

Q3:

No. There has been no evidence provided to indicate that accessing material via different mediums makes any difference to the impact of the content. A consistent classification scheme means that it is much easier for consumers to readily understand what they are purchasing/viewing and make an informed decision about if they should view content.

Q4:

It is impractical to classify all content, if the purpose is to inform then it makes sense to notify people of specific instances that warranted complaints. With that in mind, all content that it is practical to classify should be classified.

Q5:

No. High impact content should be classified so that people are aware of the impact of the content, as should low impact content. Content intended for children should also be classified, as the range of content available for them, and the maturity of each child can vary greatly. A parent cannot make an informed decision if they do not have the correct information available to them.

Q6:

No.

Q7:

Only for the purpose of providing consumer advice. I see no reason to restrict access unless harm can be demonstrated.

Q8:

For the sake of a consistent system, yes.

Q9:

If something is made available for public consumption, then it is preferable that it is classified with no preference made based on the audience.

Q10:

If the purpose of the classification system is to make an informed decision on if someone should

access the content, then where the content is viewed makes no difference.

Q11:

As I mentioned above, all content that can be practically classified, should be.

Q12:

Personal responsibility, and in the case of underage children, parental responsibility. Controlling access to content should only be done by the government if the content is illegal or demonstrably harmful.

Q13:

This is not an issue for the National Classification Scheme and should be handled by the guardians of the children.

Q14:

Unless the content is demonstrably harmful, I do not agree with restricting it.

Q15:

Whenever the content is made publicly available.

Q16:

The role of government agencies should be to provide a consistent classification scheme that informs the consumer of the nature of the content and prevent the release of illegal and demonstrably harmful content. Industry bodies should aid that process. Users should simply attempt to avoid spreading content to others that others do not wish to view, or in the case of children that the guardians do not wish the child to view.

Q17:

If the system is consistently applied, then it would make sense to bring in industry to help relieve some of the workload provided by the mass of content available.

Q18:

Industry bodies should be able to make an informed decision about the content they release and be able to accurately classify it should the system be consistently applied.

Q19:

The cost of classification can be particularly burdensome on independent productions, if there are ways to lower the cost of classification to make it easier for content makers to release their content, they should be investigated. If the majority of classification is handled by industry this may allow for the government to handle classification for smaller content providers who lack the means to do so themselves (as well as the less straightforward classification cases).

Q20:

As far as I am aware, and this is based on reading of studies conducted by the Classification board

prior to the introduction of the current coloured classification symbols, many people are not aware of the difference between M and MA15+ content. There also seems to be little understanding as to what separates the PG and M classification. The "Themes" guideline with a rating of "mild" or "strong" is similarly confusing as the term is vague and does not convey any real meaning. The phrase "mild themes" is meaningless without further investigation as to what the classification board means by it and the grounds that it covers are broad enough that it does not give the person viewing the content any meaningful information.

Q21:

Often the PG and M classifications are close enough that it is hard to tell where to draw the line between PG and M. Similarly with M and MA15+, which I have mentioned cause some confusion. Eliminating the M classification may help solve this confusion, but I believe that more information is best and if the difference between PG, M and MA15+ is clear there should be no need to do this. An information campaign to make sure people are fully aware of the classifications would make more sense than altering the current classifications.

Q22:

Simple, preferably unobtrusive but noticeable markings used for all mediums to show which classification group the content fits in, with clear terms showing why this content fits in that classification band. "Mild cartoon violence", "strong war violence" and "frequent profanity" are examples of clear terms whilst "mild themes" is (as mentioned above) essentially meaningless.

Q23:

Yes. For the sake of consistency.

Q24:

Only content that is illegal or demonstrably harmful. This content should be prohibited not by filtering of end user's internet but by police intervention.

Q25:

No. RC content includes many instances of content that is perfectly legal and not demonstrably harmful, such content should be available to those that wish to view it. This is particularly true of the RC category for videogames, which includes content that is accessible in other mediums under the R18+ and X18+ classification.

Q26:

By making classification a federal issue and not a state issue.

Q27:

One that focuses on informing Australians of what content they are accessing, not one that attempts to restrict access. The system should be one of classification not censorship. Nobody is forcing us to view any specific content and being able to make an informed decision should allow us to choose not to view content should we believe it will offend us.

Q28: As I mentioned above, I believe this should be a federal issue, not a state one. So yes.

Q29:

Other comments:

If people are able to make informed choices about the content they are accessing, they can make informed choices not to access content they object to. If someone does not like the content of a television show, they should change the channel not force the station to remove the show so that others may not enjoy that content.

In particular, I believe the current classification scheme is woefully inadequate when it comes to video games. The lack of an R18+ classification makes no sense as it forces otherwise acceptable content to be Refused Classification.

A Clockwork Orange by Anthony Burgess contains many sections that would be considered objectionable and of high impact. These range from drug use to rape to attempted murder to brainwashing. Similarly, the film adaptation contains largely the same material and is classified R18+. If a video game were to be released with the exact same content, it would be Refused Classification and would require heavy modification to be able to be released. Such inconsistency baffles me.

Similarly the Bible contains a wide range of content that some might object to including incest, genital mutilation, torture and even genocide. Adaptations have ranged from G to the MA15+ classified Passion of the Christ. Under the current system, a full video game adaptation of the Bible would also be Refused Classification.

I also noticed that many of these questions seemed to be framed with the idea that the purpose of the classification is to restrict access to content and censor. That should not be the role of the classification scheme.

If the purpose is to restrict access to content that is likely to offend, then I should remind you that if people are able to make informed are easily capable of not accessing that content without government intervention. If offensiveness and impact are measures by which content is restricted, then I see no means by which that can be consistently applied.

Whilst one person might object to high impact violence, another might revel in the escapism offered by it. Another person might find the writings of the Old Testament sacred and worthy of preaching to all whilst another finds it reprehensible and obscene.

"Community standards" is a term almost as meaningless as "mild themes" and should not be a term used to try and avoid the issues raised by trying to restrict content that is likely to offend. Allow the content to be accessed by all who can make an informed choice about whether they wish to view it. Those that object can simply not view the content.