

FAMILY COUNCIL OF VICTORIA Inc.

PO Box 864, North Melbourne, Vic 3151
Incorporation No. A352 37K

www.fcv.org.au



CI 1139

**Submitted on behalf of the Family Council of Victoria
By Peter Stokes
President**

List of Questions

Approach to the Inquiry

Question 1. In this Inquiry, should the ALRC focus on developing a new framework for classification, or improving key elements of the existing framework?

A totally new framework that protects our young people and children, as opposed to the current one that panders to the stupid idea that adults have a right to see and engage in whatever they like, is required

Why classify and regulate content?

Question 2. What should be the primary objectives of a national classification scheme?

To protect our young people and children from exposure to selfish adult sexualisation, violence and substance abuse.

What content should be classified and regulated?

Question 3. Should the technology or platform used to access content affect whether content should be classified, and, if so, why?

NO – the platform should make no difference, the rule for all should be to protect our young people and children from exposure to selfish adult sexualisation, violence and substance abuse.

Question 4. Should some content only be required to be classified if the content has been the subject of a complaint?

NO. By the time people complain it is TOO LATE. Set the standard and make the provider submit the work BEFORE it goes on public display. Costly but necessary because too many selfish adults want to corrupt our young people and make money from them. Including TV stations movie makers and Computer game developers.

Question 5. Should the potential impact of content affect whether it should be classified? Should content designed for children be classified across all media?

SILLY QUESTION - All content impacts –ALL content should be classified – we owe it to our children to protect them.

Question 6. Should the size or market position of particular content producers and distributors, or the potential mass market reach of the material, affect whether content should be classified?

SILLY QUESTION - All content impacts –ALL content can reach a vast audience through today's media sharing capabilities – ALL media should be classified including public Billboards / street advertising – we owe it to our children to protect them.

Question 7. Should some artworks be required to be classified before exhibition for the purpose of restricting access or providing consumer advice?

ALL artwork should be subject to age appropriate classification. To the same standards all other media

Question 8. Should music and other sound recordings (such as audio books) be classified or regulated in the same way as other content?

YES - To the same standards as all other media

Question 9. Should the potential size and composition of the audience affect whether content should be classified?

NO

Question 10. Should the fact that content is accessed in public or at home affect whether it should be classified?

NO - ALL media should be classified including all that is freely distributed such as shopping catalogues, newspapers and brochures.

Question 11. In addition to the factors considered above, what other factors should influence whether content should be classified?

Common sense – far too little is contained in the current classification Guidelines. I mean the common sense that tells us the nudity drug use and violence are harmful, especially to young people and children BUT ALSO TO ADULTS.

How should access to content be controlled?

Question 12. What are the most effective methods of controlling access to online content, access to which would be restricted under the National Classification Scheme?

Difficult as it may be, we must develop ways to limit the availability of harmful online content.

Question 13. How can children's access to potentially inappropriate content be better controlled online?

This starts in the home – Parents need to take responsibility and control of children and young people UNTIL THEY LEAVE HOME. Parents also need good education about the very real potential harm from the sexualisation and violence that abounds in our corrupted society today.

But society as a whole must also accept responsibility – government and the public. A community will break down MUCH more quicker from moral degradation, such as the normalisation of promiscuous sex, unnatural sex substance abuse and violence, than from financial market collapse.

Question 14. How can access to restricted offline content, such as sexually explicit magazines, be better controlled?

Material for adults – 18+ *Restricted (R)* must only be available in areas restricted to adults only – just as we already do with gambling/poker machines.

But society as a whole must also accept responsibility – government and the public. A community will break down MUCH more quicker from moral degradation, such as the normalisation of promiscuous sex, unnatural sex substance abuse and violence, than from financial market collapse.

Question 15. When should content be required to display classification markings, warnings or consumer advice?

At EVERY LEVEL Firstly to advise the general public and parents of the content, BUT also to make the producers of the content responsible and accountable for their actions.

Who should classify and regulate content?

Question 16. What should be the respective roles of government agencies, industry bodies and users in the regulation of content?

Just as we have police to control public behaviour we need people to be able to enforce the guidelines and immediately act if content providers step over the line.

There should NOT be self regulation. This has FAILED completely.

Question 17. Would co-regulatory models under which industry itself is responsible for classifying content, and government works with industry on a suitable code, be more effective and practical than current arrangements?

YES. Self regulation has completely FAILED – Content providers will ALWAYS push the boundaries. They must be made aware of the standards and forced by sever penalties to ensure that whatever they produce is within the guidelines. We do this with motor manufacture and building regulations why not the media and entertainment.

When the standards are set, we must ensure that we err on the conservative so as to protect the most vulnerable in our community, the children and young people. Forget the so called ‘needs or rights’ of adults – all adults need to be responsible citizens and care for the community as a whole. There is far too much selfishness and greed in today’s society – Rights have become more important that responsibility – we must change this selfish attitudes with education and penalties.

Question 18. What content, if any, should industry classify because the likely classification is obvious and straightforward?

ALL but not alone - self regulation has completely FAILED. Generally speaking, All forms of media and advertising, computer game manufacturers and the music industry have FAILED miserably to be responsible – yes, of course there are some exceptions but the vast majority have been totally obsessed with sex and violence in the pursuit of financial gain and market share. It has

to stop and if the only way to do that is to get tough then so be it. Self regulation has completely FAILED

Classification fees

Question 19. In what circumstances should the Government subsidise the classification of content? For example, should the classification of small independent films be subsidised?

NO – set reasonable rates, but ensure everything is open to full scrutiny before it is released on to the market. Impose heavy fines for ANY default – that is the only way to gain compliance as self regulation has completely FAILED.

Classification categories and criteria

Question 20. Are the existing classification categories understood in the community? Which classification categories, if any, cause confusion?

NO. Largely because the guidelines are so vague and are always being stretched.

Question 21. Is there a need for new classification categories and, if so, what are they? Should any existing classification categories be removed or merged?

The existing classification category labels should remain, except for the X18+ category for films – this should be abolished. The contents allowed in the current x18 Category should become the new standard for the ‘R’ Refused classification.

ALL other classifications should be revised DOWNWARD.

Films containing explicit depictions of sexual acts, blatant drug use and extreme violence should be Refused Classification. Such films exploit and demean women and desensitise adults generally. The current loose guidelines are the reason for increased sexual abuse, the premature sexualisation of children and the generally appalling lack of respect shown to others in our society.

We also oppose the R18+ classification for computer games, for the same reason.

Question 22. How can classification markings, criteria and guidelines be made more consistent across different types of content in order to recognise greater convergence between media formats?

SET the guidelines and stick to them – one value one category across the board for all media. Enforce the policing of them and stop pandering to selfish adults.

Question 23. Should the classification criteria in the *Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act 1995* (Cth), National Classification Code, Guidelines for the Classification of Publications and Guidelines for the Classification of Films and Computer Games be consolidated?

YES – one value one category across the board for all media.

Refused Classification (RC) category

Question 24. Access to what content, if any, should be entirely prohibited online?

All content in today’s X18+ category for films and above.

Question 25. Does the current scope of the Refused Classification (RC) category reflect the content that should be prohibited online?

NO - All content in today's X18+ category for films and above.

Reform of the cooperative scheme

Question 26. Is consistency of state and territory classification laws important, and, if so, how should it be promoted?

YES – we are one nation – all states must carry the same standard. One uniform code for the whole nation across all media/advertising/films – with the exception of computer games which must not increase beyond the current M15+ level.

Question 27. If the current Commonwealth, state and territory cooperative scheme for classification should be replaced, what legislative scheme should be introduced?

One nationally accepted scheme – all states must carry the same standard.

As above - One uniform code for the whole nation across all media/advertising/films – with the exception of computer games which must not increase beyond the current M15+ level.

Question 28. Should the states refer powers to the Commonwealth to enable the introduction of legislation establishing a new framework for the classification of media content in Australia?

YES - One nationally accepted scheme – all states must carry the same standard.

Other issues

Question 29. In what other ways might the framework for the classification of media content in Australia be improved?

GET TOUGH – REMOVE SELF REGULATION - ENFORCE THE LAW

Bring the ACT and NT into line with all other States by BANNING the production of X rated and 'R' Restricted material in Australia.

Ban the importation and sending of such material into Australia – both commercially and privately with very heavy fines for non compliance by both companies and individuals.

Peter Stokes
President
Family Council of Victoria
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