

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?

ALRC should improve the existing by making it more in line with community standards.

Why classify and regulate content?

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

To reinforce and strengthen community standards that are proven to be beneficial to individuals and to society as a whole. Key in this is to identify those standards which could be called moral standards. Prime candidates are marriage, and fidelity in marriage standards, which are proven in innumerable studies to benefit parents and children and the whole community, and to minimize social welfare costs etc. Having identified beneficial community standards, the classification should rate how well the material reinforces those standards.

In this it is important to note that surveys of the moral attitudes of people by profession, show that the morals tend to be relatively low for film makers, film actors, radio and TV reporters etc but higher for the general population. Hence the classifications should attempt to conserve rather than allow degradation.

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?

Yes. Content which is easily available via internet, DVD or computer game etc, has more impact than public film or print, yet it is extremely difficult to keep it away from children. Such material should be more strictly classified.

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

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

Yes and yes. The potential impact of DVD and computer games is higher because it can be replayed again and again and again. And it is very difficult to keep such formats away from children.

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?

No. Just because a market is small doesn't mean it should escape classification. Hopefully the market for, for example, violent sexual material is small – and should be made smaller by strict classification and regulation.

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

Yes. See answer to Q2.

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

Yes, particularly because people can listen to violent or offensive lyrics again and again and become fixated on it - and some people may decide to act it out.

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

No. Even strictly educational medical material should be classified.

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

No. What is not suitable for public is not suitable for home because of the difficulty of keeping the material away from children – and from immature people of adult age.

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

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?

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

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

Ban them entirely. We want a more mature population rather than a more immature one that seeks titillating entertainment. We should encourage sex in faithful marriage rather than voyeurism.

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

Always.

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?

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?

Self regulation seems to be a backdoor way to deregulation by degrees.

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

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.

Classification categories and criteria

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

Yes and no. I've seen PG films that I'd rate 15+ or worse and I'd be happy to take a 12 year old to see some 15+ films that are harmless and educational about life (e.g. Samson & Delilah, which, despite explicit drug use, is effectively a PG film).

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?

Yes: many G films should be PG; many PG should be 15+; and, anything worse should be banned because immature people (of any age) can be adversely affected by them and may also damage others as a result.

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?

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?

Probably – but suspect that the guidelines for computer games and DVDs should be tighter than for print or films for public showing.

Refused Classification (RC) category

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

Anything above 15+ should be fully banned. OK some may watch and/or play without apparent ill effects but others can and do become unbalanced and want to act out scenes to the detriment of society. It's like speed limits – we can usually safely speed, but we have speed limits to give greater protection to all.

There should be no 'opt in' facility either because there are immature and twisted people of all ages. The only exception should be professional medical education or similar.

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

No, it should be tighter.

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. If Canberra, ACT, is the porn capital of Australia because it is possible to legally post material to other states where it is banned, then that sets a poor example.

The law should be the same everywhere and there should be the ability to have a citizen initiated referendum in parallel with a federal election if the Federal classification does not reflect community standards.

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

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, but see answer to Q26.

Other issues

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