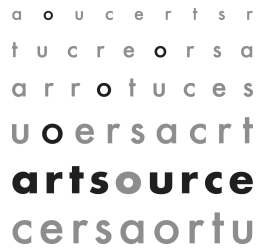


11 July 2011



ALRC NATIONAL CLASSIFICATION REVIEW

SUBMISSION – Artsource; the Artists Foundation of Western Australia Ltd

Artsource is the peak membership body for Western Australian Visual Artists. In continuous operation for 25 years and with a membership of around 940 practicing artists, Artsource is well placed to make a submission to the ALRC on this topic.

- Artsource 's primary activities include:
- Managing 60 studio spaces in metropolitan Perth
- Providing annual international and national residencies to visual artists
- Managing a registered Employment Agency that in 2010 filtered over \$14million of opportunities for artists
- Running an Arts Consultancy service providing advice, policies and project coordination for a wide range of clients
- Developing and delivering a range of professional development and networking events for artist members annually

Artsource artist members work across the widest imaginable range of disciplines from the traditional areas of practice including painting, sculpture, print-making, ceramics, glass and jewellery to name a few. Other areas of emerging practice include Live art, installation art, film, digital media, public interventions etc. Art forms are only limited by the imagination and capability of practitioners.

No matter what the medium, the core part of any artists practice is a means of communication with a wider audience.

Artsource's experience is that our artist members are responsible, committed members of society who wish to participate to the best of their ability in the development and continuation of a lively, thoughtful, engaged culture.

The Impact of Classification on Artists

Many artists responses to the world in which we live are thoughtful, reflective comments on the political, social, economic and environmental issues that face our society on a daily basis. Our society is immeasurably richer for this intense reflection and the art works that result.

We accept that just as some sections of society deal with sexual, religious, racial and political matters in a manner that is disrespectful, inappropriate or crass; so some artists can be described as being guilty of similar low standards of behaviour.

Artsource maintains that our culture grows, through filtering and discarding these responses in almost the same way as we grow through exposure to the transformative experience of exceptional art. Our culture must be adult enough to be able to filter and make judgements

about the purpose, validity and intrinsic value of what we see and read. Our culture must be mature enough to find a reasonable balance between supporting the widest freedoms of expression and managing inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour.

Artsource understands and appreciates the need for our society to protect minors and vulnerable sections of our society from unsuitable material. However we are at real risk of losing the options to review, consider and discard material whether created by artists or film, television and digital technology.

A well-tailored classification system, one whose purpose is primarily to enable adults to make an informed choice as to what they want to see, hear and read, and what to allow their children to have access to, is a good mechanism to regulate freedom of expression. It should not be used as a means to censor material that is otherwise legal.

We believe that the enormous changes in how our culture receives and disseminates material and the daily incremental changes in new, newer, newest technology have created an environment where it is important that a new framework for classification is developed. It does not appear to be useful to patch up the previous framework now at least ten years old.

We do not believe it is possible to create a new framework that accounts for *all* the changes occurring on an almost daily basis. A more reasonable and effective response would be to create a framework that encourages and supports values of self regulation coupled with a complaints system within a government process, and one that supports the education of all Australians to take responsibility for their actions and the effects of their actions on others.

In conclusion we recommend against any broadening of the current classification scheme. Instead, we would recommend that the classification be simplified and there be greater focus on:

- Correctly identifying content suitable for children;
- Correctly identifying mature and adult content that is legal but restricted;
- Increased resources used to police illegal content which would be harmful to society as a whole;
- Voluntary internet filters made available to all Australians to implement at the individual level;
- Education of the community to take responsibility for what they and their children access; and
- Consulting with content industries to develop appropriate standards for the purpose of self-regulation.



Jude van der Merwe
Executive Director

artsource: the artists foundation of WA

King Street Arts Centre t +61 (0)8 9226 2122
1st Floor, 357 Murray St f +61 (0)8 9226 2180
Perth WA 6000 e perth@artsource.net.au
A U S T R A L I A

Old Customs House t +61 (0)8 9335 8366
8 Phillimore Street f +61 (0)8 9335 3886
Fremantle WA 6160 e freo@artsource.net.au
A U S T R A L I A

PO Box 999, Fremantle WA 6959, AUSTRALIA

www.artsource.net.au