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Q1:
I support the ALRC proposal at paragraph 10 of the Issues Paper to focus on developing recommendations for a new framework, rather than an evaluation of the existing framework.
Q2:
I agree with the three key objectives identified in paragraph 50 of the Issues Paper. In years gone by, I might have disputed that the protection of children from harmful or disturbing content was a valid objective and that this was instead an issue better left for parents and guardians. Now, however, with the experience of having children of my own and having observed the extent to which other parents fail to control or even monitor the consumption of media by their children, I strongly endorse the objective of the protection of children. Having said that, children can only be adequately protected when a classification system is supported by enforcement mechanisms that discourage those who choose to ignore the classification guidelines. This comment applies not only to publishers by whose actions certain works may be classified incorrectly but also to those at the front-end: think of the last time that you observed a person under the age of 15 being refused the sale of a movie ticket to an R 18+ or MA 15+ film.
Q3:
The technology or platform used to access content should not affect whether or not content should be classified, subject to this proviso: classifying content on all media may not be practicable. There is little to be said in favour of the idea that cinema and DVD versions of the same movie cannot or ought not be classified in the same way (assuming the content is the same, which of course may not be the case with many DVDs).
Online content generated by the public is an obvious example of a medium that cannot reasonably be classified in all cases but that is not to suggest that the same impracticability exists in all cases. For example, large commercial publishers who complement offline media with online content might reasonably be expected to be subject to the same classification requirements in each case.
The real challenges for the classification of online content are the sheer volume of material and the myriad avenues for the publication of that media. I suspect that some degree of self-classification is the only practicable way of enabling the classification of such content in any meaningful way, provided that a sufficient deterrent exists for incorrect or non-classification.
Q4:
No. It is a horrible generalisation but there must be some truth to the proposition that Australian, as a rule, are loathe to complain. This seems to be the case even when conduct worthy of complaint directly affects those entitled to complain. Consider, for example, the graffiti removal services offered by many local councils or the crime reporting services offered by the police (such as the Police Assistance Line) and consider the relatively low levelling of incidents reported to those services. It would not be unreasonable to expect the same low level of reporting to a classification board.
Q5:

As a parent, the role of classification as a guide to parents is very important to me. I therefore support the proposition in paragraph 69 of the Issues Paper that the choice of entertainment for my children is very heavily informed by classification information. For example, Foxtel's electronic programme guide classifies most programmes in accordance with the national classification system and offers parents the ability to block programmes within certain classifications. My wife and I use this service at all times and, with the ability for the parents to override the system (for example, if we wish to watch a PG programme with our children), it is a very practicable solution to the issue of monitoring and guiding the childrens' viewing habits.

Q6:

Yes, I support the propositions in paragraphs 70 and 71 of the Issues Paper and in fact I have raised this issue in the context of Question 3 also.

Q7:

As a general proposition I would have thought not, as exhibitors can generally be relied upon to provide advice to those considering whether to view controversial exhibitions. A separate issue is whether the protection objective dictates that exhibitors should be prohibited from showing some artworks to children. Assuming that the children are unlikely to visit such exhibitions unaccompanied, I would tend to think not.

Q8:

Yes. Buying music online, even listening to music on the radio, is fraught with perils for a concerned parent. FM radio, for example, is generally off-limits in our family because of language not suitable for young children.

Q9:

This proposition might satisfy the protection objective of classification but not the guidance objective. One wonders how the potential audience size can be gauged with accuracy at the classification stage.

Q10:

No.

Q11:

I very strongly support the notion that interactive content (ie computer games) should not be classified differently to static content such as film and literature. The absence of an R 18+ classification for computer games not only denies me (a 40 year old avid gamer) the opportunity of legally buying certain games and playing with my counterparts overseas (or presenting me with a completely different experience as in the case of Left 4 Dead 2) but the more troubling effect is that games that should properly fall within that classification are inappropriately nudged down to the MA 15+ category.

Q12:

While is discouraging that demand for inappropriate content remains, enforcement and penalties should be directed at the supply end, with international cooperation between enforcement agencies.

Q13:

By cooperating with operating system and browser publishers so that content controls can be effectively implemented at the O/S and browser level. There has been some success in this area already but there is no panacea. A recent search by my 8 year old daughter for 'beach rocks and dee why' produced pornographic images in the search results even with parental controls activated.

Parental vigilance is an essential part of a multi-tiered approach to the protection of children from harmful content.

Q14:

Again, by focussing on the supply and enforcing the classification at that end of the distribution chain.

Q15:

Perhaps the better question is when should they not. The answer might be that consumer advice would be appreciated by parents on any content where the parent might not reasonably be aware that the particular medium contains inappropriate content.

Q16:

Q17:

Yes, especially with computer games where government cannot reasonably be expected to have access to the full game experience within a reasonable period so as to allow timely publication.

Q18:

Magazines and radio are obvious examples.

Q19:

Q20:

As noted earlier, the different classification of computer games not only causes confusion but frustration and ought not continue.

Q21:

Yes, I strongly support the introduction of an R 18+ category for computer games.

Q22:

I support the current classifications as they are widely understood and already used across different media, including the settings used by several operating system and browser publishers. Having said that, I have never seen a programme classified 'P' and was not aware of it until I read the Issues Paper. As a parent of pre-school children, this surprised me greatly.

Q23:

Yes.

Q24:

The publishing of certain content, rather than the accessing of that content, should be prohibited.

Q25:

This question is fraught with difficulty. It is much easier to be absolutely in support of this proposition in matters such as the depiction of harm to children but one wonders whether there should be an outright prohibition on matters such as the depiction of drug use when many parents might benefit from informing themselves on those matters so as to better protect their children.

Q26:

Yes. The States and Territories should cede this role to the Commonwealth.

Q27:

Yes, a Commonwealth scheme. Disparate State and Territory schemes make no sense in a country with a population as small as Australia.

Q28:

Yes. Absolutely.

Q29:

As I have mentioned, I would strongly encourage the introduction of an R 18+ category for computer games, combined with the proper classification of MA 15+ computer games so as to truly reflect their content. And sooner rather than later, please, as I am dying to despatch the zombie hordes in Left 4 Dead 2 (once my children are asleep in bed, of course).

Other comments: