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Q1:

The “media” has moved into vast new areas, internet and mobile phones particularly.

The classification scheme as it stands is failing seriously, because of ongoing breaches of the current scheme across traditional media and no scheme for new media. Stronger regulation and enforcement is needed, and should include fines and other sanctions for failure to comply with classification regulations.

Q2:

There should be several objectives:

1. There should be both government and community input to ban and block on the internet and mobile phones illegal content. This ban should be comprehensively scoped and defined clearly and publicly e.g. banning and blocking human trafficking, child porn, money laundering, dealing in illegal drugs, accessing information on self-harm and suicide methods, etc. There should be wide community input for defining such a list.
2. There is huge concern in Australia and other countries on commercial display and use of sexual images in public places and in various media in a manner contributing to the sexualisation of children and teenagers.

The classification scheme should adopt a precautionary approach, especially in regard to the images children are exposed to. Generally, Australians adopt a precautionary approach to issues of pollution and environmental degradation. A similar approach should be taken with regard to sexualised and other offensive content in the media viewed by minors and children

The classification scheme should minimise media content which reduces women to sex objects, which condones sexual violence against women, or which promotes the sexualisation of children, or which excessively promotes an idealized single body image at the expense of people's experience of other body images.

Community concerns go beyond the earlier sexualisation of children leading to earlier sexual experimentation, and greater peer pressure to be sexually active at a younger age.

Also, there is concern that the combined effects of the current media is distorting young people's body image of themselves. For example a survey by mobile entertainment providers www.thelab.tv of the nearly 1,000 girls “A staggering 63% of girls would rather be glamour models than nurses, doctors or teachers” and “a quarter thought being a lap dancer would be a good profession but just 3% picked

the teaching profession. Nearly half of those that took part saw Titmuss as a role model, compared to 33% for Jordan, 7% for Anita Roddick, 9% for JK Rowling and just 4% for Germaine Greer” as reported by SkyNews (June 6, 2005. <http://news.sky.com/skynews/Home/Sky-News-Archive/Article/200806413365755>)

The growing prevalence of such attitudes is of concern because of the relationship between distorted notions of body image and mental health problems.

The 2010 report, *Suicide and Suicide Prevention in Australia: Breaking the Silence* (produced by an array of mentally health groups including the Centre for Mental Health Research, ANU), reported:

“there is a range of other, less common, mental health conditions in which there is anecdotal or limited scientific evidence to suggest that they, too, may increase the risk of suicidality. For example, many of the conditions that involve body image, such as anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa and body dysmorphic disorder (a condition where an individual is preoccupied with a perceived defect in their appearance), may also lead to suicidal behaviours and/or other mental health conditions that are known to increase risk of suicide (e.g. depression).” Pg 69

To these ends, the key objective of the classification scheme should be to ensure that children and minors are not exposed to inappropriate material.

To achieve such an outcome, the classification scheme should give heavy weighting to the views of parents and those professionals involved in dealing with the array of modern mental health issues affecting young Australians, to assess what is appropriate and what is not appropriate for the sake of minors.

A recent independent review of sexualisation in the British media articulated this point succinctly:

"The conclusion of this Review is that parents are the experts in deciding whether something is appropriate for their child.

“The most effective way to ensure that broadcasting, advertising, goods and services are appropriate for children is to pay closer attention to parents’ views...” (Bailey Review, *Letting Children Be Children: the Report of an Independent Review of the Commercialisation and Sexualisation of Childhood*, 6 June, 2011; p8).

Compliance with the scheme must be effectively enforced.

Q3:

Q4:

Q5:

It should be designed and apply across all media to send a consistent message to children and minors.

Q6:

Q7:

Yes

Q8:

Q9:

Q10:

Q11:

Much greater weighting should be given to the views of parents in when determining classification standards.

Q12:

Online content could be better controlled via internet filtering of all adult material (i.e. R18+ and above) at the ISP level, with age-verified opt-in capabilities for R18+ material. Filtering should also be applied to mobile telephone networks.

It's difficult for parents, particularly time-poor working parents, to always manage their children's access to internet and mobile phone content. What is illegal or restricted in other media should be illegal and restricted in the internet and mobile phone media.

Q13:

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Other comments: