Please find below my submission to various questions in the Classifications Review:

From Janelle Patch

List of Questions

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

• Ensure that classification reflects community standards.
• Give consumers and parents accurate information about the nature of the classified material. Parents need to be assured that the rating matches the content so they can be secure in allowing their children to watch what their morals allow their children to watch.
• Protect children from unsuitable material eg if it is G rated, we all assume there is no violence or sexual connotation or scenes etc.
• Prevent the distribution of material that violates community standards or is harmful for example, is it degrading to women sexually? Does it show excessive violence especially towards minors?

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. All classifications should be the same across the board eg if it is available on the internet, it is still available potentially to minors so the classification system on the internet should not be lessened.

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

NO. Before complaints happen, many people may have already watched something they didn't want to watch because the classification was not suitable. Get the classification right and there won't be the need for complaints so much.

Question 5. Should the potential impact of content affect whether it should be classified?

YES. It's all about the content and how it impacts society. Studies have shown that the use of violent computer games or watching violent movies affects the behaviour (negatively) of those who continue to watch these things.

Should content designed for children be classified across all media? It doesn't matter what the media is – everything should be classified so we know or have an understanding of it's content.

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. Once again, the content and it's potential impact on the community is the issue, not whether money will be made out of it etc.

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

YES. Those who do not want to expose their children to certain images should be given the opportunity to know whether an exhibit is appropriate for them or not. ALSO, artwork depicting children in a manner that is exploitative or offensive, including any sexualised depictions of children, should be Refused Classification regardless of any alleged artistic merit.

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

YES, as these also have the potential to harm and negatively impact people and they should be warned in some way and a classification system would move towards such a warning. ALSO, music with lyrics which demean women by treating them as sexual objects have been permitted for sale in Australia, showing that the current self-regulation system for music is inadequate.

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

Once again, it's all about content, it's got nothing to do with the medium or the distribution or potential population size. If it's out there, someone's going to see it and we need to be responsible to let everyone know what type of content is in each item. Once you have released some material to a group, you cannot control where that material may end up. Therefore, inappropriate material should not be allowed in Australia in any medium.

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

NO. Same as above question.

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

Whether it is harmful at large to the community as shown by research studies eg violent and explicitly sexually violent media shown to have connection with similar real offences in those continually watching such things.

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?

Mandatory filtering of internet content at the ISP level is the best way to exclude all material that would be classified RC, X18+ or R18+. Opt-in access to R18+ could be provided if there is age verification.

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

As above, mandatory filtering.

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

Not have them available at any mainstream shops – adult shops only. Publications classified as *Restricted* (R) should only be allowed to be sold in an enclosed area which children are not permitted to enter.

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

On every media item.

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?

Users and industries may voice their opinions, but the government should have standards that reflect the level of harm the different media may have on the community and classify accordingly.

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?

No, government or an independent body needs to be primarily involved as industry itself has too much financial interest involved that may skew their views.

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

What industry thinks is obvious and straight forward may not be as mentioned in Q17.

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?

Once again, it depends on the content because if the content is harmful to the community or not uplifting values that assist good community living, then the government should not support it by subsidising it.

Classification categories and criteria

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

Classification definitions should be available at place of purchase or viewing upon request so people can know what they mean if they have forgotten or not come across a particular category before.

Question 21. Is there a need for new classification categories and, if so, what are they?

The existing classification categories should remain, apart from the X18+ category for films which should be abolished. Films containing explicit depictions of sexual acts should be Refused Classification. Such films exploit and demean women. They have been implicated in the sexual abuse and premature sexualisation of children.

Should any existing classification categories be removed or merged?

No R18+ classification should be introduced for computer games, because the violence in these games is associated with an increase in violent attitudes and behaviour.

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?

Just make them the same across the board.

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?

Refused Classification (RC) category

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

Access to all material that would be classified RC, X18+ or R18+ should be prohibited to the general user. Opt-in access to R18+ could be provided, subject to strict age verification procedures.

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

YES. If it has been prohibited elsewhere, it shouldn't be available anywhere else in Australia, including online.

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 classification should be consistent across Australia.

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?

Other issues

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