

HOW TO MAKE A SUBMISSION

To participate in this consultation, you need to answer the question:

Should the Australian National Classification Scheme include an R 18+ classification category for computer games?

Submissions can be sent by email in Word format without embedded images. Submissions can also be posted or faxed. You are also encouraged to keep any commentary short and succinct.

Unless you clearly request confidentiality, **submissions are public documents** and may be accessed by any member of the public, may be published on a website and quoted in further review papers. If you do not want your submission to be published, or you would like to request anonymity, you must clearly request this in your submission.

Submissions must be received by **28 February 2010**. Submissions received after this date may not be able to be considered.

Submissions should be sent to:

Email: classificationreview@ag.gov.au
Fax: 02 6141 3488
Post: Classification Review
Attorney-General's Department
3 -5 National Circuit
BARTON ACT 2600

TEMPLATE FOR MAKING SUBMISSIONS

PERSONAL (???) INFORMATION¹: (This sheet is completed as per your ‘template’)

*Name: Civil Liberties Australia - we give permission for this submission to go on your website.
Civil Liberties Australia Inc A04043*

Email address: secretary@cla.asn.au*

Gender: Irrelevant...how can this be a “mandatory” field when an organisation makes a submission? This is very poor template-making! It is as if the government decided in advance from whom it would – and would not – accept submissions. That is not a government prerogative.*

Street Address: Box 7438 FISHER (“street”? see comment above re “mandatory”)*

State/Postcode: ACT 2611*

Country of Residence: Australia*

Age range: under 18/18-24/25-34/35-44/ 45-54/55-64/ 65+*

This question is inappropriate for a submission from a non-government organisation (NGO).

Do you play computer or video games? yes no Irrelevant to our submission*

How frequently do you play?

Daily Weekly Fortnightly Monthly Other..... Irrelevant “

How long do you play in an average session?

0-15minutes 15-30 minutes 30-60mins 1-2 hours 2+ hours Irrelevant “

*(Note: fields marked * are mandatory fields)*

Is the government trying to preclude organisations making submissions?

If an individual – or an organisation – wishes to make a submission, why should it be mandatory that they do so in a way dictated by the Attorney-General’s Department?

Surely people have freedom of choice as to what they want to say, and in what manner? This template approach is excessively dictatorial, and should not become a model for government submissions/consultations. Curtailing comments to “250 words maximum” is also a gross denial of people’s rights to free of expression.

THE QUESTION

Should the Australian National Classification Scheme include an R18+ classification category for computer games?

YES

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ARGUMENTS

To help us understand your reasons for your answer, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following arguments:

- *Adults should not be prevented from playing R 18+ level computer games simply because they are unsuitable for minors*
5) strongly agree
- *The R 18+ classification category sends a clear, unambiguous message to parents that the game material is unsuitable for minors*
4) agree
- *Consistent classification categories for films and computer games are easier to understand*
4) agree
- *A new classification will supplement technological controls on minors' access to age-inappropriate computer games*
4) agree
- *Comparable classification systems internationally have an adult rating for computer games - international parity is desirable*
5) strongly agree
- *Consumers access games which would be R 18+ illegally – it would be better if they were legally available with appropriate restrictions*
5) strongly agree
- *Computer games should be treated differently from films given the specific, negative effects of interactivity on players, particularly their participation in violent and aggressive content.*
1) strongly disagree
- *It would be difficult for parents to enforce age restrictions for computer games.*
1) strongly disagree
- *Minors would be more likely to be exposed to computer games that are unsuitable for them.*
2) disagree

- *An R 18+ for computer games would exacerbate problems associated with access to high level material in Indigenous communities and by other non-English speaking people*

1) strongly disagree

- *There is no demonstrated need to change existing restrictions.*

1) strongly disagree

Comments (Optional - up to 250 words)

The Classification Board exists to help adults make informed decisions about the media they choose, and to reject the gratuitously obscene or unlawful to protect, particularly, the young. Over decades, the CB has increasingly allowed adults to read, hear and see what they want. In a free society, ideally, deciding what material adults can choose should not be made by other people for them. But protecting young people is important, so that a classification of “over 18” (or “adult”) is appropriate – in films and books and computer games. Introducing an R18+ rating for computer games is thus long overdue.

The Attorney-General of one State (Atkinson, SA) being rabidly against sensible classifications should not to hold back Australia from having a proper national scheme, as has been occurring. The power of veto by one A-G – the blackball vote – which currently exists is an archaic colonial mechanism which all Ministerial Councils and the like must immediately overturn. COAG must agree to formally abandon – that is ban – the veto (blackball) system.

If books, films and video games don't break any law, they should not be “Refused Classification”. Australia is not a free society if the Government intrudes into people's minds by denying their civil liberty, their right to choose for themselves where they get their “information and ideas” from, provided their choice does not harm anyone else.

Australia is a signatory to the UDHR, where Article 19 says: *...Everyone has the right to...seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media...*

(249 words)