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Broadcasting
Authority



Australian Government

Office of Film and Literature Classification

Community Attitudes Towards Media Classification and Consumer Advice

Research conducted by:
Michelle Spratt
for the Office of Film And Literature Classification

with the assistance of the
Australian Broadcasting Authority

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Executive summary

- The Office of Film and Literature Classification (OFLC), with assistance from the Australian Broadcasting Authority (ABA), conducted qualitative research in October 2002, in the form of focus group discussions, to better understand community attitudes towards classification ratings and consumer advice for films/videos/DVDs, computer games and television.
- Consumer advice provides information about the content of a film, computer game or TV program.
- The framework for the qualitative study is the Howard Government's electoral policy statement to 'review consumer advice to ensure that it offers a sufficient and adequate guide to the themes or classifiable elements contained in specific entertainment products'.¹
- The study covered the key consumer segments, namely: parents of both young children (3 to 9 years) and older children (10 to 15 years); young working adults (20 to 29 years); seniors (55 years and over) and teenagers (14 to 15 years).
- Ten focus groups were conducted across three geographic locations – Sydney, Bundaberg and Hobart. A market research consultant moderated the focus groups and has prepared this report. Each session consisted of around eight respondents, ran for two hours and followed an agreed discussion guide. A specialist recruitment agency was used to recruit participants to required specifications.
- This summary outlines key findings across the different target segments. The report contains individual analysis and verbatim comments on each of the four demographic groups that participated in the study.

¹ *The Howard Government. Putting Australia's Interests First Election 2001, Our Future Action Plan, Better Law, More Options.* A range of products are referred to in this action plan, including: audio recordings; programs on television; films; videos; computer games; and publications.

OFLC film classification scheme

- There was high awareness amongst all segments of the OFLC's rating symbols for films and videos/DVDs.² Generally, there were very few negative comments regarding the current scheme.
- Parents, more than any other segment, claimed to use the ratings to decide on films for their children. Word of mouth was also an important factor, particularly with films for younger children.
- Film ratings appeared to hold less relevance for other segments. When questioned on last film seen, most young adults had no idea as to the classification.
- The youth segment was waiting to turn 15 so they could gain entry to films rated MA15+ while seniors' experience was primarily limited to G and PG films.

Classification symbols

- G, PG, R18+ and X18+ were well understood, however, there was general confusion with M15+ and MA15+ across all segments.
- There were many respondents who believed that M15+ was restricted to people 15 years and over, while MA15+ was commonly misinterpreted as Mature Audience for film.
- Exposure of relevant films for each rating helped to show the differences between the M15+ and MA15+ categories. There were, however, mixed views on the difference between the categories, heavily influenced by each classification carrying M as well as 15+ as well as the desire for simplification.

Consumer advice

- Very few participants were aware that consumer advice was available for films at the cinema. Across all groups there were only one or two mentions of noticing consumer advice in newspaper advertisements or posters for films. Due to this lack of awareness, exposure to consumer advice examples

² See appendix 5 for each of the classification systems for film and computer games.

during the groups, was for many, their first experience with this kind of information.

- Awareness of consumer advice on video/DVD boxes was stronger (after prompting) although not universal. Parents of younger children seemed to be more familiar with this advice; however, there were few people in all groups who had noticed this kind of information was included.
- When the consumer advice was pointed out there was general criticism of both the prominence of the information as well as the size of the type compared to rating classification information.
- Amongst parents in particular, there was a strong desire to have this information made more readily available as well as included with film reviews.
- There was also wide agreement amongst parents that choosing a film for their child was ultimately their choice and in doing so, they took into account many factors including the personal maturity of their child which was not always age-based.

Specific consumer advice lines

- There was mixed response to the use of ‘medium level’ across categories.
- For some, ‘medium level’ was considered acceptable as the rating classification itself was the principal component, whilst for others it was very confusing to have ‘medium level’ appear in PG, M15+ and MA15+.
- People were also unclear exactly what ‘medium’ described, as it was open to different interpretations by different audiences.
- The term ‘adult themes’ was also strongly criticised as being vague. Most were unsure exactly what this term referred to with the most common interpretation being ‘sex scenes’.
- Overall the current OFLC consumer advice was seen as complicated. There were suggestions for a simplification such as a system containing simply V for violence, S for sex and L for language as were used in some TV guides, or making it similar to the information provided by the television broadcasters. Preference by some participants for the consumer advice used by TV that appeared to be largely driven by familiarity.

TV classification system

- There was high awareness of all TV symbols except AV.³ There was limited awareness of children's and preschool children's (i.e. ABA classified C and P) programming.
- There was spontaneous mention of both the audio and visual rating and consumer advice messages used by the television broadcasters. When prompted most could recall seeing or hearing consumer advice. The voice-over was regarded as a strong contributor to awareness.
- As with OFLC consumer advice, there were mixed reactions to TV consumer advice. Some felt television descriptions were easier to understand and avoided duplication across categories while others seemed more comfortable with OFLC descriptions. It was recognised that there was some room for improvement in both systems.
- Consumers were informed that currently, television broadcasters are not required to include consumer advice for G and PG films. The notion of extending the provision of consumer advice to these programs was presented. There was strong consensus amongst parents that the television broadcasters include this kind of information.

Computer games classification scheme

- With the exception of the seniors' groups, most respondents were aware of the existence of a scheme to classify computer games.
- Parents had partial knowledge of the different rating classifications. The youth segment and some young adults were more knowledgeable than parents about the classification scheme.
- There was, however, little familiarity with consumer advice and exposure to examples was generally met with some bewilderment, particularly amongst parents.
- Parents have genuine concerns about their child's use of computer games and at the same time are also very concerned about their roles as parents to restrict in restricting access and monitoring their child's game playing.
- Opinions on the effectiveness of this system were mixed. Some parents were using the rating classifications to vet games played by children.

³ See appendix 6 for the classifications for commercial television programs.

Parents expressed difficulty in monitoring behaviour as children were borrowing games from friends.

Media classification convergence

- After exposure to the three classification systems, film/video/DVD, TV and computer games, the most common request was to make all three the same – symbols and advice where possible – and to keep the one system as simple as possible so it was easy to understand for everyone.
- This request was strongest amongst parent groups.

1. Research background

In 2002, the OFLC conducted quantitative research that highlighted the need to gather a deeper understanding into how the Australian community feels about classification and consumer advice in relation to the various entertainment media.²

The OFLC decided to conduct follow-up qualitative research in the form of focus group discussions with key consumer segments, and invited the ABA to partner in the study.

Findings of the quantitative study include:

- ninety-seven per cent of the Australian 14+ population are aware of the classification symbols used by the OFLC
- high levels of comprehension for G, PG, R18+ and X18+ symbols. Only 6 % correctly interpret MA15+ symbol; 66% correctly interpret M15+. Widespread confusion is evident between these two classification categories
- seventy-one per cent positive towards convergence of film/video/DVD and computer game classification systems
- the majority of Australian parents (61%) nominated rating classification as a source of influence when choosing a film for their child/children
- trailers, at the cinema and on TV, are a powerful motivator in stimulating interest in a film (55% for adults and 88% for 14 to 17 year olds)
- universal recognition in the community of the benefits of classification (94% positive agreement); this attitude also held strongly by teenagers (93%)
- parents, overall, were more positively disposed towards the OFLC and classification than were those without children.

This study represents the first stage in a proposed multi-stage review. Its main focus was an understanding of consumer response to the systems of consumer advice for various entertainment media as well as insights on classification categories. The study will be used as input for possible revisions to consumer advice lines. The second stage may entail development of options for consumer advice lines, in consultation with practitioners. The proposed third stage may

² OFLC - *Australian consumer's understanding of classification information, preliminary consumer market research*, 7 March 2002 and *Classification usage and attitude study draft report – consumer market research findings*, November 2002.

involve a further round of consumer research to test the options developed in stage two with consumers.

Background to the classification scheme for films/videos/DVDs and computer games

- The Classification Board classifies films, computer games, and publications that are to be exhibited, sold or hired in Australia, under the authority of the *Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act 1995*. The OFLC administers the classification scheme for these media types. The scheme is a cooperative national scheme, which is overseen by Censorship Ministers in the States and Territories.
- The Classification Board determines a classification, and distributors of the product are legally required to show the classification category, including the consumer advice, on advertising material for the product and on the product packaging before it is sold, hired or exhibited.
- The Classification Board also determines consumer advice for films or computer games. Currently, the consumer advice provides information about the classifiable elements in the film or computer game that caused it to be classified at a particular classification level, and indicates the frequency and/or intensity of that element.

Background to the classification scheme for television programs

- The *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* encourages the various broadcasting industry sectors to set their own programming guidelines, in the form of codes of practice, and to register them with the ABA. The ABA has registered codes of practice for all broadcasting sectors, with the exception of the ABC and SBS codes, which are notified to the ABA.
- The Broadcasting Services Act indicates that, for the purpose of classifying film, the codes of practice for commercial television licensees apply the film classification system administered by the OFLC.
- Television broadcasters each have their own classifiers and are responsible for ensuring their programs are appropriately classified. Under the complaints process set out in the Broadcasting Services Act, complaints about material broadcast (including about classification matters) must be referred to the licensee in the first instance. Complaints can be referred to

the ABA if the viewer is not satisfied with the licensee's response to their complaint or if the licensee does not respond within 60 days.

Consumer advice - differences between the schemes

- There are similarities and differences in the consumer advice lines used by the Classification Board and those set out in the Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice used by the commercial television industry.
- The Classification Board always provides consumer advice for films and computer games that are classified PG and above, and sometimes provides consumer advice for films and computer games that are classified G.
- Television broadcasters provide consumer advice for films and programs classified MA15+ and AV and for certain programs classified M15+. Consumer advice is not generally provided for programs classified G and PG.
- The Classification Board currently uses wording such as low, medium and high to indicate the intensity or frequency of a classifiable element in consumer advice wording e.g. medium level violence.
- Television broadcasters currently use terms such as 'mild', 'some', 'strong' and 'frequent' to indicate the intensity or frequency of a classifiable element in consumer advice wording e.g. 'frequent violence'.
- Current Classification Board practice for consumer advice is to indicate only those elements that put a film or computer game into a particular classification category. Television consumer advice can flag any number of elements that appear in the program, regardless of how that particular element may be classified.
- Television consumer advice is both written and spoken at the start of programs, with briefer consumer advice appearing when programs resume after breaks.

2. Research objectives

This research was designed to explore and provide clarification on a range of classification issues across film, TV and computer games. Questions included:

Classification scheme

- How do consumers feel about the current classification systems used by the OFLC and that used by the television broadcasters?
- Do these match with their needs and allow them to make informed decisions on the types of film/video, TV programs and computer games that are suitable for them and their family?
- How can these systems be improved to increase understanding and improve audience and consumer decision-making?

Consumer advice

- Which content elements are of the greatest concern for adults and children?
- What kind of classification information are consumers looking for in relation to these elements?
- How much information do they want and how do they want to see this expressed?
- Reactions to current systems – depth of understanding, strengths and weaknesses and areas for improvement.

Exemption slide

- Reactions to revised version – ability to clearly communicate the intended meaning, strengths, weaknesses and identification of areas for improvement.

3. Research design and methodology

Overview

A qualitative approach in the form of focus group discussions was adopted. This environment allowed for free flow and rich discussion as well as intensive probing to provide the required understanding and insights.

Michelle Spratt, an independent research consultant with more than 20 years' experience, conducted the research. Ms Spratt moderated the focus groups and was also responsible for analysis and reporting.

Recruitment was based on a number of key criteria to ensure an appropriate cross-section of the community participated in the study. A specialist recruitment company (J&S Research Services) was contracted to recruit participants. A screening questionnaire was used to ensure respondents were recruited to specifications. A copy is included in appendix 1 to this report. Ten focus groups were conducted covering a major and smaller city as well as a country area.

Each focus group consisted of seven or eight individuals with the discussion running for around two hours. A copy of the discussion guide appears as appendix 2 to this report. This guide was discussed and agreed on by both OFLC and ABA.

Observation facilities were available for groups conducted in Sydney and Hobart.

The groups were conducted during the period 21 to 31 October 2002.

Sample design

Four different target segments were included:

- youth – 14 to 15 year old boys and girls – two groups
- young adults – 20 to 29 year olds, working, single or married no children – two groups
- parents with child/children aged three to nine years; parents with child/children aged 10 to 15 years – four groups
- seniors – 55+ years – two groups.

Specific recruitment criteria included:

- mixture of regular (two or more times per month) and light (once a month) movie/video frequency
- minimum of five to seven hours TV viewing per week
- youth and young adults – half to have computer games experience.

Respondents were recruited from a cross-section of socio-economic backgrounds.

In the majority of groups there was at least one participant from a non-English speaking background.

Three geographic areas were included – Sydney, Hobart and Bundaberg.

Breakdown of the different segments across the three locations was as follows*:

Segment	Sydney	Hobart	Bundaberg
Male youth	X		
Female youth			X
Young adults	X	X	
Parents 3 to 9 years	X	X	
Parents 10 to 15 years		X	X
Seniors 55+	X		X
Total number of focus groups	4	3	3

* Refer to appendix 4 for comparison ABS data for each city

4. Overview of findings across the demographic segments

Key media entertainment issues

Growing community desensitisation to violence was a recurring issue across all demographic segments. This was largely attributed to the types of films being released as well as the graphic nature of news broadcasts.

There were greater concerns voiced in relation to violence than for other classifiable elements such as language, sex and drugs. The extensive use of special effects in modern films contributed towards this concern.

Frequency and volume of exposure to violence across the various entertainment media – TV, film and computer games – was also perceived to be an issue.

People also expressed concern about the more frequent use of coarse language.

Marketing influences were recognised for their powerful ability to trigger interest in audiences, children in particular.

Parents' concerns with the different media

Cinema

There was high concern expressed regarding children of all ages being exposed to violence. Parents indicated they wanted more specific information to aid selection of films for their children.

There was general appreciation of the enhanced effects of the cinema environment, such as reduced lighting and surround sound, and this was factored into parents' decisions.

Parents also mentioned experiencing some concern when the exemption slide was exposed at the cinema as the trailer being previewed was not always for a film they considered to be suitable for their child, i.e. potential to be at a higher classification than the film they were about to watch.

Video/DVD

Parents had some concerns but felt they generally had more control of video/DVD than at the cinema. Parents mentioned previewing a film prior to allowing their

children to view so they were aware of the content and could handle any potential issues. The ability to fast-forward when necessary was also seen as good control measure.

Most parents admitted that they were less stringent with regard to the classifications of films to be viewed at home and generally allowed their children to see higher rated films that they would at the cinema.

TV

Parents tended to use program times as a guide for which programs they allowed their children to view and this reduced strong concerns. The ability to change channels was also mentioned as a way to control exposure to unsuitable material.

Computer games

Parents were very concerned about computer games usage both in terms of content and playing mode. They generally felt quite powerless to manage computer game usage due to their limited experience and involvement in the games their children played. This was compounded by lack of familiarity with the current classification scheme.

Classification awareness across the different media

Awareness of the existence of a classification scheme/system for TV, film and video/DVD was similarly high. Awareness was also high for the classification ratings for the three types of media.

Awareness of consumer advice however was markedly stronger for TV than for either film or video/DVD. The voiceover used by television broadcasters was particularly effective in creating awareness. Most parents were not aware consumer advice existed for films at the cinema while in the case of videos/DVDs, most claimed to check the classification rating but had not noticed the consumer advice lines.

There was a general lack of familiarity across the different target segments of the computer game classification scheme.

Adoption and usage of media classification schemes

Usage and adoption of the classification scheme for both film and video/DVD selection appeared to be well entrenched but based primarily on classification rating with very limited reference to consumer advice.

- Most participants claimed to have noticed the rating on video/DVD boxes but failed to notice associated consumer advice, citing position and size of the print as barriers.

In the case of the classification scheme for commercial television, it appeared that the time slot assisted with program vetting and selection more so than the consumer advice.

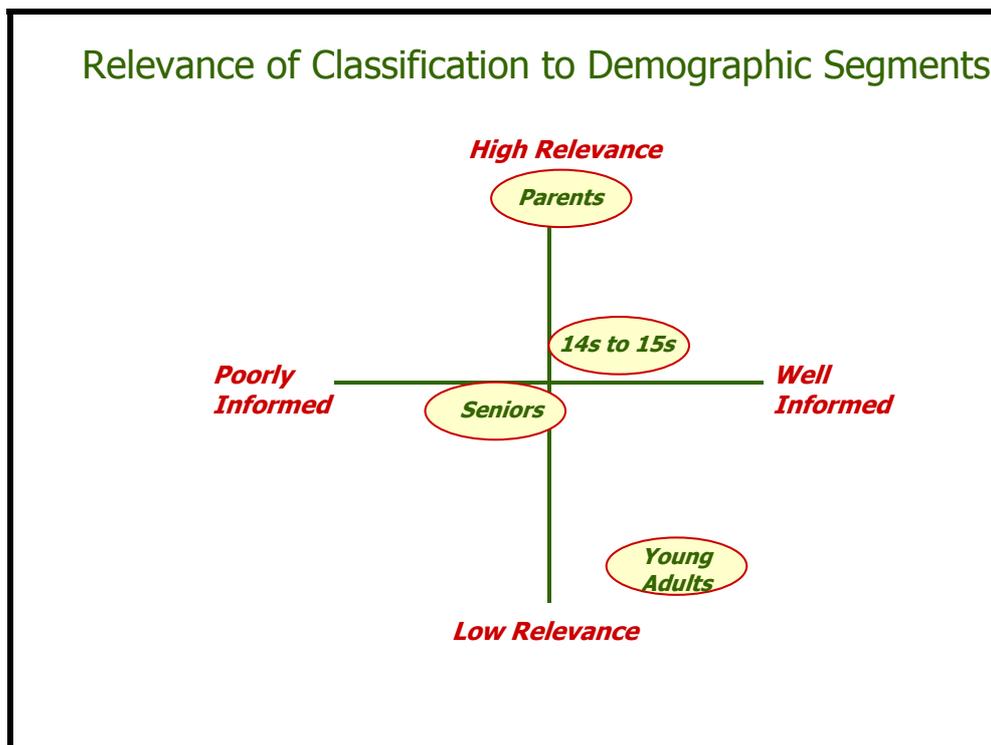
Relevance of classification to target segments

Of the four segments included in the research, young adults appeared to be the most well informed on classification, however, classification was the least relevant criteria in viewing selection.

In terms of relevance, parents expressed the highest need for the scheme but at the same time also clearly indicated a need to be better informed.

Amongst 14 to 15 year age group, there was some misunderstanding regarding the differences between M15+ and MA15+, however, the scheme was still relevant particularly for those aged 14 years.

Seniors in general considered themselves to be as informed as they needed to be, relying heavily on the G and PG classifications for choices for themselves and grandchildren.



Attitudes towards classification

Different attitudes towards classification were evidenced amongst parents and non-parents (14 to 15 years old, young adults and seniors).

Parents tended to rely on classification information for selection of films for younger children and for vetting films for older children.

There was general confusion between films rated M15+ and MA15+. Typically, there was one parent in each group who was better informed and took on the role of explaining the differences between the two categories to the other parents.

As parents became more informed of the various types of classification information available, there were strong requests for this information to be more readily available to enhance their decision-making, thereby allowing them to feel they were exerting appropriate parental control, i.e. being a good parent.

Most of the 14 to 15 age group said that the age limit for M films should be 12 or 13, and not 15 years.

Young adults tended to view classification as something for parents to use to decide on films for their children. They claimed the rating made little difference to their choice and they were more concerned about the classifiable elements in a film as in some cases they may choose not to see a film on this basis.

Films with G and PG classifications were the only ones considered by seniors for both their grandchildren and themselves. Seniors said that M15+ and MA15+ were categories for parents to make decisions on.

Parents' film selection hierarchy for children

Request by child was claimed to be the dominant factor in film selection for children. Peer pressure and marketing activities drove child's request.

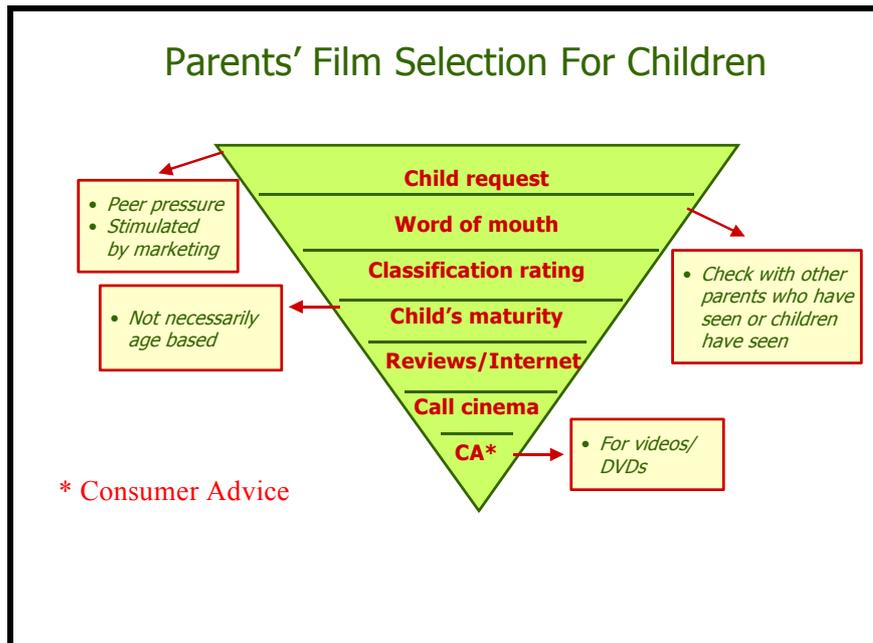
Word of mouth was also an important factor. Many parents mentioned checking with parents of other children who had seen a specific film to assist with decision-making.

The classification rating was next in order of decision hierarchy

Child's maturity was also taken into account with parents recognising that sometimes, younger siblings were more mature than their older siblings.

Reading reviews and checking on the Internet were used by some parents and some also mentioned calling the cinema to get information.

There was also some limited usage of consumer advice for video/DVD selection.



Interpretation of G rating symbol

This symbol when exposed was generally well understood for all segments. The following interpretations were offered:

- Disney films which can be trusted and can be comfortably selected
- children can watch these films unsupervised
- happy families/happy endings – ‘safe’, ‘sigh of relief’
- no violence or swearing
- typically good versus evil
- general – for all ages – ‘even for Grandma’
- teens and young adults considered G films to be boring.

Interpretation of PG rating symbol

Overall there was a clear understanding of the differences between films rated G and PG amongst all demographic segments. The following interpretations and comments were volunteered when the symbol was exposed:

- may contain some mild violence, light language and minor sexual references
- some explanation likely to be needed depending on maturity of child
- more of a story line
- ‘A little more adult than G films’

- parent guidance needed – ‘G requires no thinking whereas PG requires some thinking’
- young adults considered PG films to be mainly for kids
- teens considered PG films to be ‘not cool’.

Interpretation of M15+ rating symbol

There was some confusion with M15+ and MA15+, more evident amongst parents and the 14 to 15 age group. The following interpretations and comments were offered:

- mature – most common explanation
- some mentions of ‘for 15 years and over’; uncertainty amongst some parents and the 14 to 15 group whether 15 was mandatory
- majority of films fall into this category
- aimed at teenagers but usually suitable for those aged 12 to 14 years
- ‘more adult - likely to contain violence, language, sex and drugs’ - the frequency and intensity of these elements varied by demographic segment.

Interpretation of MA15+ rating symbol

There was general misunderstanding and confusion with the MA15+ symbol. It was interpreted to mean ‘mature audiences’. Young adults and 14 to 15 year olds were aware ID was needed but only some parents and very few seniors were aware. In terms of content the following comments were made:

- ‘more explicit’
- potential to be more emotionally disturbing
- ‘the films that under 15 years old want to see’.

Parents expressed varying viewpoints regarding M15+ and MA15+ ranging from:

- general confusion because both include M and 15+
- request for differences to be made clearer so they can make more informed choices
- M15+ and MA15+ should be the one category
- considering the difference between the two not to be large enough to warrant two categories.

Interpretation of R18+ rating symbol

Most participants were clear on the definition and likely content of films with this classification:

- for 18 years and over
- definitely adult films
- tendency to be very violent and potentially emotionally disturbing
- simulated sex not hardcore
- contain heavy drug use.

TV classification categories

With the exception of AV, participants were very familiar with the classification categories used by the television broadcasters. MA was correctly interpreted as ‘mature audiences’ which is considered to largely account for the misunderstanding with the OFLC’s MA 15+, ‘mature accompanied’.

AV was guessed as meaning adult viewing rather than adult violence.

Parents claimed to be using program time more than classification category as a guide to selection and vetting.

Behaviour and attitudes towards consumer advice

There was virtually no awareness of the existence of consumer advice for films being shown at the cinema. Once revealed, there was a strong desire expressed for access amongst parents.

There was limited usage of consumer advice for video/DVD selection. Once pointed out on boxes, there was strong criticism of positioning, prominence and font size.

Most participants were aware of the consumer advice information displayed by television broadcasters with the voiceover playing a strong role in creating high awareness. Some parents claimed to use this information to vet programs for their children and some seniors also indicated they used it.

With regard to consumer advice for computer games, parents tended not to really understand the implications of this advice due to limited ‘hands on’ experience.

Specific film consumer advice lines

After exposure to a range of OFLC consumer advice, several terms were consistently criticised across the demographic segments – medium level, violence and adult themes.

The following comments summarise general feelings in relation to ‘medium level’.

- What does it really mean? Can be open to different interpretation.
- How can medium level be in PG, M15+ and MA15+ films?

Participants generally wanted more information on violence:

What type of violence? What is the context?

How frequent? How intense?

‘Adult themes’ was generally interpreted as meaning a film contains sex scenes. It was criticised for being vague.

Overall, OFLC consumer advice was seen to be complicated with participants commonly wanting distinct lines for each classification. Strong desire for a simpler system was also universally voiced.

Television broadcaster consumer advice lines

Participants were generally much more familiar with TV consumer advice and therefore tended to view it more favourably. They recalled hearing the voiceover as well as seeing the information displayed at the beginning of relevant programs.

‘Strong’ was considered a more appropriate description than ‘medium level’. Conversely there was criticism of the usage of ‘some’ on the basis that a film contained an element or it didn’t.

Parents responded positively to the concept of consumer advice being provided for G and PG TV programs.

Computer games classification and consumer advice

There was general awareness of a system to classify computer games but very superficial knowledge amongst most demographic segments. Familiarity with the symbols used to classify computer games was considerably lower than for film and TV. Understandably, young adults and the 14 to 15 age group were more knowledgeable than parents.

There was some confusion with the G8+ symbol amongst parents. Some thought that children did not have the appropriate skills to manage a game with this classification until they were eight rather than the content being unsuitable for under eight years old.

Most parents were unaware of consumer advice for computer games. There was strong concern expressed about violence but mixed views about the differences between animated violence and real violence and what stand to take on animated violence. Most tended to believe that game playing was about skill development i.e. getting to the next level, which reduced their concerns about violence and any sexual references. Overall, parents seemed to be more concerned about the behavioural and socialisation issues associated with game playing.

Parents admitted that they wanted to be able to ‘manage’ computer game usage but currently felt that they lacked the means.

Comparison of OFLC and television broadcaster classification schemes

The classification categories being used in the two schemes were largely seen as similar.

There was a lot of confusion with the OFLC's M15+ and MA15+ categories primarily due to the inclusion of 'M' and '15+' in each and the use of Mature Audiences by television broadcasters.

Familiarity with the consumer advice used on TV contributed to its more positive response than that generated by the OFLC's advice for film.

When aware that separate systems existed for film, TV and computer games, request for a universal system was strongly voiced. However riders were imposed in that any revised system would need to be simple and easy to understand, in other words 'foolproof'.

Parents in particular demanded easier access to consumer advice for films.

5. Parents: 3 to 9 years and 10 to 15 years

Entertainment media behaviour

Recent films that had been seen by parents of younger children included *Lilo and Stitch*, *Stuart Little 2* and *Crocodile Hunter* while those seen by parents of older children were *Goldmember*, *Lord of the Rings*, *XXX*, *Clockstoppers* and *Aussie Rules*.

Preferred TV programs watched by parents included DIY shows, *The Bill*, *Stingers*, *CSI*, current affairs, documentaries and comedies such as *Everyone Loves Raymond*.

Entertainment media attitudes

Parents were asked to express their general opinions on the types of films currently being made. Several recurring themes emerged. These included:

- violence/action/special effects
- animation/computer graphics
- fantasy
- language/swearing – more likely to be raised by parents with younger children.

There was also a general feeling that children have become desensitised towards violence and language which was attributed to the entertainment media as well as the graphic nature of news broadcasts.

Gore of it all. They see graphic things at a younger age. Words I didn't know

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Hobart)

Violence. In the past you heard a thump and saw them fall. Today you see it all.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Hobart)

A lot of violence and too much reality for children. There is a lot of swearing, violence in general, buildings blowing up. Children become so accepting of everything. It's all so acceptable. Everyone is getting shot.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Western Sydney)

Quite violent. Gone as far as they can go. Special effects are marvellous but they are all the same

(Parent, 10 to 15 year years, Bundaberg)

Focus on action and violence, things blowing up. Money seems to be spent on that part rather than development of the plot or characters.
(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Hobart)

Attitudes towards computer games

Most parents were concerned about computer games but tended to feel somewhat powerless in their ability to restrict access or monitor. This attitude was much more prevalent amongst parents of older children. In most households there seemed to be some house rules in terms of limited play time each day and no unauthorised installation.

The violent nature of games as well as playing mode, solitary and tending towards obsession, were key concerns for all parents.

I'm worried about computer games. I would rather them watch TV than play computer games.
(Parent to 9 years, Hobart)

[animated violence] ... they are trying to make it not so bad but it is.
(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Western Sydney)

My son would play 24 hours a day and I have a real problem picking something suitable.
(Parent 3 to 9 years, Hobart)

Animated violence may be things like Mario going along and someone smashes him in the face. But the kids don't see this as violence.
(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Western Sydney)

I think it effects them quite a lot if they are getting into it deeply ... looking at weapons.
(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Hobart)

I've never heard anyone say anything to my kids about not being able to hire it or buy it. Have you seen the people working behind those counters? They are kids themselves and they are telling those kids to play them. They are cool.
(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Bundaberg)

If you are supervising what your kids are watching, but if you are not then you really don't know about the level of violence.
(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Hobart)

The point is that it's up to you to decide. But if you tell your kids they can't do it then they want it.
(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Bundaberg).

Film selection process

Several factors come into play when selecting a suitable film for children. Request by child to see a particular film is high on the list, either based on peer pressure – friends have seen or are going to see – or stimulated by advertising. In assessing the suitability of a film for children, the opinion of other parents is generally

sought. In most cases parents want to talk to another parent who has seen the film themselves in order to reach a decision.

Often you don't get to think about it. Child has seen ads or friends saw it. You are swayed a lot by what your child wants to see. They have seen the ads for the next movie [at previous movie].

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Western Sydney)

Network. Other parents tell you. Children also hear from friends.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Hobart)

... not so much [reviews]. I would rather talk to someone I know and who knows my children.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Hobart)

I will wait until someone else has seen it and be guided by them if I trust their judgement – I am very concerned about violence, not so much about sex.

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Hobart)

Best recommendation is when the other person has seen the film

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Bundaberg)

Peer group pressure is so strong – they play one parent off against another – 'so and so is letting their daughter see it'.

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Hobart)

They have mates that tell them about it so they tease them.

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Bundaberg)

Some parents also mentioned calling the cinema to get a better idea of the nature of a film a child had requested to see. Search on the Internet was also a means used by some parents.

On the Net, my husband always investigates it before we go to a movie.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Western Sydney)

I use the ratings, ring the theatre or go by personal recommendation, *Movie Show* on TV.

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Hobart)

In each of the four group discussions, there were some parents who spontaneously mentioned the rating classification as being part of the decision process.

I choose a film based on what I think, what I hear, and a bit on the classification.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Hobart)

I don't look at anything above MA15+, anything at G, PG is okay.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Western Sydney)

You go by the category M15+. I'm concerned about sex, drugs and violence – not so gratuitous at M15+.

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Hobart)

Hell come and ask to go to the movie. I tend to ask how he's getting there and who with. He likes MA15+, teen movies. He's disgusted when they won't let him in.

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Bundaberg)

Using consumer advice to assist decision making for films seemed to be a rare occurrence. Only one or two parents mentioned it spontaneously. Unprompted there was also limited awareness of consumer advice on video/DVD boxes. Overall, parents were much more familiar with consumer advice on TV.

... in small print. You have to really look hard to find the information. The industry is just covering itself. They aren't making it easy.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Hobart)

If you get it on a video of a movie, it will have low level violence. My daughter would see more videos. That's how I decide. Because it is written on the bottom of videos.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Western Sydney)

I've seen advice on TV before the session starts.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Hobart)

The midday movie, they have MA15+, contains sex scenes, violence and language. The movies I don't think go into such detail.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Western Sydney)

I like TV much better because it tells you exactly what's in it. The adjectives are useful.

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Hobart)

Depending on the age of the child, parents had different concerns regarding films to be viewed by their child or children. Parents of younger children were concerned about the 'scary' elements in films. This concern was overlaid by recognition that personal maturity of individual children varies, i.e. some younger children are more mature than older siblings. There was also a general appreciation of the enhanced effects created by the cinema experience that makes viewing more atmospheric.

[*Lion King*] ... my child was hysterical. The child kept saying, 'I was really scared. He lost his daddy'.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Hobart)

Going to the movies is more scary than watching at home. With video you have more control. In the cinema it's dark, its all amplified.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Western Sydney)

You have to know your child, not so much the age, but how that movie will affect your child. My seven year old can handle more than my nine year old. She can separate; she knows what's real. My nine year old believes too much.

(Parent, 3 to 9, Western Sydney)

Even *Toy Story*. When someone doings [hits] their head or they are having fights. It depends on the age of the child how you view it.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Sydney)

Parents of older children were more likely to be concerned about violence, drugs and sex in films. There was, however, general agreement that children were maturing faster these days.

At 13, *Shindler's List* is not appropriate ... because of the brutality.
(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Hobart)

Everything has to do with sex. That's what sells. Throwing it out there for the kids.
(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Bundaberg)

A 13 year old today is not a 13 year old. Generations have just changed. What 13 year olds know. Heaven forbid.
(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Bundaberg)

As well as asking for details on the requested film, parents indicated they generally asked their children who they were seeing the film with, as this was also seen to be a good indicator of the film's suitability.

When choosing a film for personal viewing, parents indicated they often used film reviews to decide on whether to see a particular film.

[*Aussie Rules*] ... read the review in the *Weekend Australian*. I know the rating but wasn't concerned because it was for myself and sounded like an interesting story.
(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Hobart)

Information needs

Particularly amongst parents with younger children there was spontaneous mention of the need for more information about films in order to have a better idea of what to expect in a film.

Harry Potter, my daughter was scared, it would have helped to have more information.
(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Hobart)

I think they need to advertise it [consumer advice] with the movie when it comes out.
(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Sydney)

We need this information when the film is advertised.
(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Hobart)

We need more information on why a film is PG, M15+.
(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Bundaberg)

Parents offered a variety of information access points including listing in the newspaper along with advertisements for film, pamphlets at the cinema and inclusion with film reviews.

And this comment at the conclusion of the session from a Sydney mother particularly highlights parent desire to be better informed on classification.

I feel like I'm not a very good parent because I've never really thought about it that much. Even seeing a movie I'm not seeing it through a four year old's eye. And I am dreading it now ... him getting older, dreading the M as it sounds confusing.

Film classification scheme

Awareness and knowledge of film classification scheme

There was widespread awareness of the classification symbols used for films and videos/DVDs. There was very limited awareness of the existence of consumer advice for films, unprompted or prompted.

Spontaneous awareness of consumer advice on video/DVD boxes was also quite low. When prompted many recalled seeing it but paid more attention to the rating symbol rather than the consumer advice description, primarily due to the font size.

When the topic of classification was raised, there tended to be further discussion on trailers and the exemption slide. Particularly amongst mothers of younger children, there existed some concern when the exemption slide was shown at the cinema. They were not always confident that the trailer to be shown would be suitable for the audience. There was general agreement that trailers should be classified before being shown at the cinema.

... but they still show PG rated trailers at G films. There is a big difference.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Western Sydney)

A lot of people wouldn't take their children to PG. Mine I didn't take until they were about 9.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Western Sydney)

You see the trailer and think that would be pretty good, kids think the same, but when it comes it may not be appropriate.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Hobart)

Harry Potter, seeing the trailer at the movies, he was climbing up my lap. That is going to be PG and we were seeing a G film.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Western Sydney)

They should be classified before they can show us the trailer.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Hobart)

It annoys me, they should wait until the film is classified.

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Hobart)

How can they show when they haven't been classified?

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Bundaberg)

Parents of both younger and older children are unsure of the reason behind the use of the exemption slide. Opinions range from the OFLC being under-resourced to a marketing gimmick.

First thing they say is they are snowed under.
(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Bundaberg)

They probably do that on purpose so you don't make your mind up.
(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Western Sydney)

I've been going to the movies for 30 years and never understood it.
(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Bundaberg)

Usage of film classification scheme

Usage of classification ratings to help film selection at the cinema and video shop tended to be more prevalent amongst parents of younger children, although decision-making was primarily based on child request accompanied by vetting of film by another parent. Parents of older children indicated they checked the classification rating of the films their children wanted to see.

If there is nothing in G or PG, we just don't go.
(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Hobart)

I read the box and see why and if it's suitable. I use that to my advantage. If it has that coding I prefer it. I would rather have more information and err on the safe side with my children.
(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Bundaberg)

Among adults there appears to be limited use of film classification system when selecting films for personal viewing.

... [classification ratings] mainly for children, not for myself.
(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Hobart)

Attitudes towards film classification scheme

Generally, attitudes were largely positive. Parents cited some examples of films not being classified properly, either too scary for young children or because they did not understand why a film was rated at a high classification.

Classification is good. It tells you what's coming.
(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Hobart)

There has to be something and it has its flaws. The area where it gets hazy is around the M ratings. I have some nephews – they go to a lot of M movies but to me they would seem inappropriate.
(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Western Sydney)

Ratings are a little bit skewiff. M15 movies that my daughter could see and others on video. Yeah, she could have seen it ... a few foul words but get on the school bus ...!
(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Bundaberg)

Parents of older children felt that the current system was working in limiting children's access. Most could relay an incidence of a child not gaining entry to a particular film.

My son has been knocked back [MA15+ films]. Cinemas are quite strict.

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Hobart)

OFLC film classification categories

Understanding and interpretation of film classification categories

In order to explore participants understanding of each of the classification symbols, respondents were exposed to each in turn and asked for interpretation and comment.

As evidenced in earlier quantitative research, people were largely correct in the interpretation of G, PG, R and X symbols. There was however widespread confusion with M15+ and MA15+ categories. The difference between these categories became a little clearer once video/DVD boxes with ratings and consumer advice for films in each category were shown. However there were many parents who still struggled to understand the differences between the two classifications.

G rating

G films were universally described as:

- films for everyone, for all ages.

Other descriptions include:

- general
- ‘Even for Grandma’
- should not contain any elements of concern – ‘G shouldn’t have any warning. It shouldn’t need it’
- child can watch on their own
- likely to be animated and from Disney – ‘I trust Disney’
- happy endings/happy families
- ‘Breathe a sigh of relief’
- documentaries
- boring – more likely to be mentioned by parents of older children
- no swearing, violence or sex.

PG rating

Films with this classification were understood to require some parental guidance. Other descriptions included:

- child needs some level of maturity if explanation required
- may contain a few swear words – ‘the odd shut up; no bloodies allowed; no butts’
- may show people in bed but nothing else
- some violence – ‘the sort of violence that if its in Tarzan, you can put it aside from reality’
- not appropriate for younger children – under five years
- ‘More scary, a little bit more adult’
- more of a story line – ‘a bit more real’
- ‘Harmless fun’
- ‘Wholesome family values’.

Associated with the need for parental guidance, was recognition that parents faced a more difficult selection task due to the differences between films rated G and PG. The other issue facing parents was that older children felt they had outgrown PG films.

PG is more difficult. There is so much variation. Sex and violence. It’s much harder.

(Mother, 3 to 9 years, Hobart)

G requires no thinking whereas PG requires some thinking – like do you have an impressionable child? You may need to know more about it before making a decision.

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Hobart)

My 12 year old son thinks its cool to go to M15+ films, not so cool to go to PG films.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Hobart)

There’s no way a child in year 7 or 8 are [sic] ever going to go to G or PG. – It’s not cool.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Western Sydney)

M15+ rating

M15+ films were considered to contain violence, sex and be more adult. The M was correctly interpreted as ‘mature’ but most parents were unable to articulate the remainder of the description, i.e. recommended for 15 years and over. Some of the parents with younger children were really yet to encounter this classification so were generally less familiar. In each group there were however some parents who incorrectly interpreted as meaning a child needed to be 15 years to see a film

with this rating. Typically someone more informed in the group took on the role of educating these parents.

Other comments included:

Fifteen year olds should be able to handle, they can separate reality from the film.

I think it's good because it gives you the idea if your child is more mature maybe they can go.

M means nothing to me. It says nothing.

I thought that's the majority of movies today. That's my PG. If I didn't let my daughter see those she wouldn't see anything.

Claytons rating.

A lot of girly feel-good movies are rated M15+. Teenage girls love that sort of thing. Just have more mature story lines. I let my 12 year old go to those sort of M movies.

MA15+ rating

The most common description given to this symbol was for 'mature audiences'. Some of the more informed parents were aware that ID was needed for teenagers to gain entry but only a very few were aware that younger children can be accompanied by a parent to see a film rated MA15+.

The reason films were classified MA15+ was seen to be related to containing more explicit violence, sex and drugs compared to M15+ films and potentially more disturbing emotional content. However parents were clearly confused about the differences between the two classifications until informed of example films for each category.

Other comments before exposure of example video/DVD boxes for each category included:

Fifteen year olds aren't adults.

I treat them both the same.

The difference isn't big enough.

Why do they have both?

All the movies that used to be R, are now MA15+.

M15+ and MA15+ is confusing.

It's like recommended versus a rule.

After exposure the differences were understood however there were still some mixed views across the groups.

Can't see any difference to *Gladiator* and *Saving Private Ryan*.
Violence was in both movies.

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Bundaberg)

There is a difference between the two – some I would let my kids see and some I wouldn't.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Hobart)

Braveheart and *Gladiator* are the same.

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Bundaberg)

I think they are well classified. MA15+ goes up one level higher.

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Hobart)

I think they shouldn't have M15+ and MA15+. They are too close.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Western Sydney)

There was recognition amongst parents of older children, that films rated MA15+ were the films that held most appeal for under 15 year olds. There was also considered to be strong peer pressure to see MA15+ films.

When something is rated MA15+ it attracts them. They want to see it.

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Bundaberg)

MA15+ is almost R rated. This is the one they all want to go to cause they have to show ID.

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Bundaberg)

MA15+ is more interesting for a 14 year old to go to.

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Bundaberg)

Some parents made suggestions that the MA15+ rating should be changed to include ID required to make this classification easier for parents to understand.

Make it clearer for parents to know. So they can make a choice.

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Bundaberg)

R18+ rating

R18+ was widely recognised as being adult. Comments included:

Not hardcore, simulated sex.

Men's movies.

Heavy drug use.

Can be violent as well, not just sex.

OFLC film consumer advice

Awareness and usage of consumer advice

In order to better understand consumer response to current consumer advice, respondents were shown various stimulus materials. This included film posters, video/DVD boxes as well as individual descriptions for actual films in each category. A full list of the stimulus material used appears in the appendix.

Most parents were unaware of the existence of consumer advice to accompany a film's rating. There were one or two members in each group who could recall seeing it on video/DVD boxes and across the four focus groups of parents, only one mother mentioned seeing consumer advice in newspaper advertising for a film. In very few instances was the consumer advice being used to help decide on the suitability of a film. As a result, for most parents seeing the consumer advice in the group was their first exposure.

With awareness of the existence of consumer advice came questions:

So why can't they be on at the movies as well?

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Western Sydney)

How would you find out unless you have seen it?

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Western Sydney)

What is 'medium level' coarse language?

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Bundaberg)

It's always 'medium', do they have 'extreme'?

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Bundaberg)

This R film has the same advice for the PG film and the MA15+ one before. Why is that?

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Bundaberg)

Positive responses reinforced consumer need for more classification information:

I think that it is great. They are spelling it out so people get to make the choice if it's suitable.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Western Sydney)

Yes, it clarifies it more. Gives you more information.

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Hobart)

Yeah, so you are prepared for it. You can sit there with them.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Western Sydney)

If they have those ratings for videos why can't they put them on for the movies also? It gives an idea of why it's rated M15+. I think it's great information.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Western Sydney)

Attitudes towards consumer advice

Whilst the consumer advice was recognised as providing more information, it also served to create some confusion.

The term that was most often criticised was medium level violence and the fact that the same phrase was used across the rating classifications. 'Adult themes' also attracted negative comments. Most parents interpreted this as sex scenes and it was only after further discussion that they arrived at adult issues or concepts.

It doesn't tell you much. Medium level violence – that means different things to different people.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Hobart)

Supernatural themes. That doesn't tell you much these days.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Hobart)

PG, M15+ – both have 'medium level' coarse language, is it the same level?

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Hobart)

'Coarse language' doesn't give you much information.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Hobart)

But this is vague. What is 'adult themes'?

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Western Sydney)

... [adult themes] it isn't clear. It doesn't tell you what it is about.

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Hobart)

How disturbing is it going to be? Maybe we shouldn't see it? I would investigate it further.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Western Sydney)

Parents were also highly critical of the low prominence given to the consumer advice that appears on video/DVD boxes and the size of the font of this information.

Print is not obvious. A lot of people would see the G and not read any further so they wouldn't see some scenes may scare ... so they would think it's okay.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Hobart)

Your attention is drawn to the classification not to the consumer advice.

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Hobart)

They should be more prominently labelled like cigarette packs – smoking kills.

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Hobart)

They don't want people making the choice not to watch a movie. At least make the consumer advice writing above the classification.

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Hobart)

There were also many comments about consumer advice being complicated and not easy to understand.

But isn't the whole idea of classification keeping it simple?

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Western Sydney)

We want to keep it simple. You have to think okay, it will have a bit of this and use your own discretion.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Western Sydney)

It's too complicated.

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Hobart)

It confuses more than it helps.

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Hobart)

Should be like in the TV guide where it has the letters – easy to understand. You know what the letters stand for so you know exactly what you're getting. It's too ambiguous with all the words.

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Bundaberg)

Television classification system

Awareness and usage of TV classification system

The time of day tended to be used as more of a programming guide for TV viewing rather than the rating.

Time slots reflect a safe zone before 8.30 pm.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Hobart)

It seems they go by the time more than by the ratings.

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Hobart)

Parents were familiar with G, PG, M15+ and MA15+ symbols. Expectations as to the type of content that would fit into each classification category were much the same as for film and video/DVD. However, given the reported low levels of late night-time viewing, it is unclear to what extent participants had had exposure to MA15+ and AV programming.

There was a low level of familiarity with the concept of C and P (children's and preschool children's) programming.

Parents indicated shows rated M15+ were more likely to come on after 8.30 pm.

But it's on at 8.30 pm at night, not in kids' times.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Western Sydney)

MA15+ was generally correctly interpreted as 'mature audiences'.

If it was on at the movies it would be R18+.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Western Sydney)

Awareness of AV was limited. Some participants had never seen this symbol while others guessed it was adult viewing rather than adult violence.

Awareness and usage of TV consumer advice

The combination of visual and audio classification information was very powerful in achieving awareness. Virtually all parents were aware of television broadcasters providing this information for shows and movies.

It's always on for movies.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Western Sydney)

I like the voiceover. You can be doing something else.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Western Sydney)

They say it and they show it. I remember both.

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Bundaberg)

It comes up on a blue screen. Sometimes it has four or five things.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Western Sydney)

It's written on the programs a lot. It has it in brackets with letters like S for sex.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Western Sydney)

With the midday movies there is always a description and you notice that. Because in the middle of the day, its when your kids are around. Late at night I don't notice because it's me watching the tele.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Western Sydney)

Parents did not appear to be using TV classification information for personal viewing however the audio advice in particular indicates that it is no longer time for children's TV time.

As soon as I hear that, 'Right, television off'.

(Parent, 3 to 9, Western Sydney)

Sometimes you sit passively, so it helps when you hear it.

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Hobart)

The other issue with regard to TV viewing frequently mentioned by parents was that viewing was a matter of choice and unlike a cinema experience; the power to change channels or switch was always present.

I think the impact is less at home. There are more distractions and you can get up and turn it off.

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Hobart)

Attitudes towards TV classification and consumer advice

Perceptions of the classification information provided by television broadcasters were very positive, particularly in comparison with films consumer advice.

Consumer advice on TV are easy to see and hear.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Hobart)

Much better than the cinema ones. More explanatory.

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Bundaberg)

It's good they bring it up in front of the TV show.

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Hobart)

There were mixed views regarding terminology on violence. Some was not seen to be meaningful while strong was perceived to be a much better description.

'Some violence' doesn't work.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Western Sydney)

The first is wishy washy. Violence would be stronger than some violence.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Western Sydney)

TV consumer advice is better, the terms they use have more impact, strong is better than medium level violence.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Hobart)

What you classify as medium varies according to the person, strong violence is clearer.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Hobart)

There were some parents who seemed to be just as confused as they were with film consumer advice.

With the symbols, we didn't get it one hundred per cent, so how will we get all those other bits?

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Bundaberg)

Its like fine print.

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Bundaberg)

All the writing and reading means nothing. Need numbers one to ten.

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Bundaberg)

Comparison of film and TV classification systems

Parents were asked to compare the two systems with the most common response being to question why the same system was not being used. Many parents wanted the same kind of information for films as was being used on TV while others thought an improvement could be made on both systems incorporating level and frequency descriptions. There were also other parents who wanted a simpler system to make it foolproof to understand.

I don't see why it can't be the same system.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Western Sydney)

Why isn't it consistent?

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Hobart)

All TV, film and videos should be the same, unified.

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Bundaberg)

Low, medium, high, some violence, strong violence, how does it all fit together?

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Hobart)

I don't think movies are descriptive enough. TV is good. Movies need to elaborate more, then they would be consistent.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Western Sydney)

That would be great at cinemas.

(Parents, 10 to 15 years, Hobart)

A combination of both – the level and the frequency.

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Hobart)

Like in the TV guide where it has letters – easy to understand. You know what the letters stand for so you know exactly what you're getting. It's too ambiguous with all the words.

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Bundaberg)

Computer games classification

Awareness, usage and attitudes towards computer games classification

Most parents were aware there is a system to classify computer games but were nowhere near as familiar with it as they were with film/video/DVD and TV. Comments about being age based were more likely to come from those with younger children.

It's good they have guidelines but we don't understand them.

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Bundaberg)

They are put into age groups.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Western Sydney)

They had partial knowledge of the different symbols that are used to classify games. Although there existed some confusion regarding the meaning of G8+.

The do it because some kids can't play the games. It's to do with the ability to deal with their bits and pieces. Eight and overs can actually work the games.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Western Sydney)

There are games with obstacles so younger kids can't play them.

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Bundaberg)

Parents expressed concern about computer games usage by children but unlike their behaviour and attitudes towards other entertainment media, they did not seem to have adopted the current system to either assist decision-making or monitor child's behaviour.

Parents are very strict about movies but they couldn't care about computer games.

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Hobart)

A number of factors contributed to current behaviour.

- Higher concern about the amount of time games were being played and solitary playing mode over game content. Parents were concerned about violence and potential effects, but as they typically have less involvement in actual playing, tended to suppress some of these concerns.

Games were considered to be targeted at children, so why the need for a classification system?

Why do you have classifications for these when they are for children?

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Bundaberg)

- Belief that animation did not equal real coupled with belief that games were about skill development.

I think with computer games, they are unreal so I don't know why they are rated.

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Bundaberg)

Animated violence may be things like Mario going along and someone smashes him in the face. But the kids don't see that as violence.

(Parent, 3 to 9 years, Western Sydney)

My boys play to go to the next level, they don't pay attention to the sex. They're not looking at that.

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Bundaberg)

It's more about skills levels than about the violence.

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Hobart)

- Easy access via friends and at retail level and on the Internet.

I've never seen anyone say anything to my kids about not being able to hire it or buy it.

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Bundaberg)

I like the idea of classification but the 'Net is the problem.

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Hobart)

- Impact of marketing in creating desire for particular games

Kids get caught up in the marketing. If the new Star Wars comes out they want it no matter what the classification is.

(Parent 3 to 9 years, Hobart)

- Parents did not appear to have noticed the consumer advice included with games. There were mixed responses when this was exposed.

Sexual references on a computer? I cant think what that would be.

(Mother, 3 to 9 years, Western Sydney)

But low level violence could be anything?

(Mother, 3 to 9 years, Western Sydney)

What is comic horror?

(Mother, 3 to 9 years, Western Sydney)

If I saw 'medium level violence', I wouldn't know what it was. Is it Elmer Fudd hitting Bugs Bunny or what ... ?

(Parent, 10 to 15 years, Bundaberg)

6. Young adults: 20 to 29 year olds

Entertainment behaviour and attitudes

Recent films seen by young adults included *Bourne Identity*, *Garage Days*, *Goldmember*, *Red Dragon*, *Blade 2*, *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*.

Programs watched on TV included *CSI*, *Law and Order* and documentaries.

Young adults used a broad set of parameters for deciding on films. These included:

- special effects and the use of computer generated images
- action
- thrillers and mysteries
- actors in the film.

Art house and independent films were popular. Support for the Australian film industry was also evident. Most of the participants in the Sydney group had been to see the Australian film, *Garage Days*.

Young adults also expressed strong attitudes about elements they do not like to see in films, including:

- Violence
 - Real life violence, rather than made up violence. (Hobart)
 - Solid violence in every scene. (Sydney)
 - I hate blood and guts. (Sydney)
- Sexual violence
 - Non violent erotica is okay. I don't like sexual violence. (Hobart)
 - Really aggressive violence against women is really disturbing. (Sydney)

- Drug use

I hate it when they show you a person shooting up. (Hobart)

Seems to be glorifying it. (Hobart)

Syringe going in that type of thing. (Sydney)

A number of sources were used for input into the decision to see a particular film. These included recommendations from friends, the Internet and marketing, including trailers and other communications. Accompanying friends who wanted to see a particular film also came through as a reason, rather than choosing the film themselves. Film reviews did not appear to be playing a strong role for young adults.

Movies are heard about through the hype that is created (Sydney)

Trailers are important in choosing films. (Hobart)

Going to the cinema tended to be a planned occasion, usually with a particular film in mind, but in some cases the film of choice was not actually seen due to time of arrival at the cinema and/or incorrect knowledge of session time. Young adults claimed to be discriminating in their selection of films, but often it seemed to be a case of best of the bunch being screened at the cinema.

OFLC Film Classification Scheme

Young adults were knowledgeable about the rating symbols. They were also familiar with consumer advice but very much associated this with videos and DVDs rather than films at the cinema.

When I see a video I know what it is. When I see a movie I don't. (Sydney)

When questioned on the last film they had seen very few recalled the rating or indicated that this was something they considered in their film choice. There were also many cases of incorrect ratings

Goldmember ... I assumed it was R18+. (Sydney)

My Big Fat Greek Wedding ... M15+ I think. (Sydney)

Most young adults believed that the classification scheme was not relevant for them, as they had outgrown it.

I stopped paying attention when I turned 18. (Hobart)

I associate classification with age, over 18 or under 15 the only difference.

(Sydney)

It was recognised that classification was very much targeted at the parents of young children.

Don't use the system, it's for kids.

(Sydney)

For parents of young kids.

(Hobart)

Not very relevant for me but very relevant for people with kids.

(Hobart)

When given a hypothetical situation of taking a child to the cinema, most agreed they would use the rating as a guide and then seek further information.

Attitudes were largely positive towards the OFLC system. There were suggestions that consumer advice for films could be made more accessible.

It would be good to have at the movie – but once you've got your ticket it's too late.

(Sydney)

Maybe reviewers or marketers should include it.

(Sydney)

OFCL classification categories and consumer advice

Young adults were able to give the correct interpretation of all the rating symbols including, M15+ and MA15+ although opinions were mostly negative on the need for two M classifications due to confusion factor.

G films were typically described as boring and aimed at children.

Young adults were aware that PG films required parental guidance to help interpret some situations or elements in the film. Some were unsure how this would actually be put into practice.

Compared to G films, PG films were also recognised as being mainly for children but were considered to require some thought processing, as themes may be slightly older. They may contain some low level violence but no swearing or sexual references.

Films rated M15+ were typified by young adults as likely to contain low level violence – 'non bloody fight', 'cars blowing up/crashing', 'people shot from a distance'; some sexual references – 'people kissing'; some drug use – 'smoking a joint' and swearing – 'occasional F word but never the C word'.

The MA component of the MA15+ classification was interpreted as Mature Audience however young adults were aware that films with this rating were

restricted to 15 years and over. Expectations were for medium level classifiable elements and slightly more interesting stories.

When asked to comment on the differences between the two classifications, there were many negative comments.

M15+ and MA15+ are confusing. (Hobart)

It's ridiculous. (Sydney)

One must be redundant. (Sydney)

Means the same as the last one [M15+]. (Sydney)

R18+ films were considered likely to contain sexual violence, high level violence and potentially disturbing emotional elements.

The descriptions offered by young adults for the different categories suggested they have higher expectations of classifiable elements for each category. Films rated PG by the young adults were actually closer to G, M15+ were closer to PG and so on.

Exposure to consumer advice examples while perceived as beneficial generated some criticism. The use of medium level across categories was considered confusing and some young adults did not understand the term adult themes.

Different types of films have the same consumer advice – medium level violence?
(Hobart)
Private Ryan and *American Beauty* are very different films but have the same consumer advice. (Hobart)

Gladiator is higher than *Lord of the Rings*, they should have put something in about the frequency of the violence. (Sydney)

Can't be all medium level violence. (Hobart)

R, ID assume it would have high level of everything. (Sydney)

'Low', 'medium', 'high': irrespective of the rating, that's really confusing. Maybe every category should have it's own level? (Sydney)

'Adult themes' is confusing. (Hobart)

I've never really understood 'adult themes'. (Sydney)

TV classification system

Young adults were very familiar with the classification system used by television broadcasters and aware that the rating and consumer advice was shown before particular programs. They also mentioned the audio announcement.

I identify with these [television classification information] far more. (Sydney)

They tell you what's coming up. (Hobart)

As with the film classification system most young adults do not believe it is relevant to them, but more for families and older viewers.

As an adult viewer, I don't use it. (Sydney)

My Mum would probably flip the channel. (Sydney)

It's good. Its more important for parents to know kids can watch. (Sydney)

For kids you can say wrong classification, you can't watch it but an adult wouldn't say that. (Hobart)

TV consumer advice was considered helpful, but again not particularly relevant for young adults.

If it's something I want to watch I wouldn't dismiss it because of the classification or consumer advice. (Hobart)

The inclusion of frequency in TV consumer advice was recognised as a positive, but there was criticism of the term some violence.

Good, it's got frequency. (Sydney)

'Some violence', what does that mean? 'Strong violence' makes sense. (Hobart)

Comparison of OFLC and TV classification systems

The two rating systems were perceived to be similar by young adults, however, differences in consumer advice were identified. Overall, the consumer advice included for programs by the television broadcasters was seen to be clearer and potentially stronger in definition.

I think TV consumer advice is clearer. (Hobart)

‘Strong violence’ sounds worse than ‘medium level violence’ but I find it strange that *Young Lions* is more violent than *Gladiator*.

(Hobart)

There was strong agreement that there should be a single industry standard.

I think they should be the same.

(Sydney)

There is potentially 15 different classifications.

(Hobart)

Should have the same wording for TV and movies.

(Sydney)

Computer games classification

Young adults were aware of the existence of a system to classify computer games.

It was seen to be a system designed to assist parents in choosing and vetting games for their children. There was recognition of the violence contained in games and also that a parents role in monitoring was a difficult one.

Games have more impact. With a movie you are not as much a part of it.

(Hobart)

People at work buy games for their kids and I think that’s a bit scary for a seven year old.

(Hobart)

Young adults were able to offer little constructive comment on examples of consumer advice for computer games but agreed that it would be helpful for parents to determine what was appropriate for their child.

7. Seniors: 55 years and over

Entertainment behaviour and attitudes

Films that had been seen at the cinema recently were quite diverse including *Bend It Like Beckham*, *Nugget*, *Insomnia* and *Last Orders*. Films they had seen with their grandchildren included *Scooby Doo*, *Harry Potter*, *Snow Dogs*, *Lord of the Rings*, *Crocodile Hunter*, *Monsters Inc.*, *Lilo and Stitch* and *Stuart Little 2*.

The types of films that appeal to the 55 and over age group were described as:

- feel good
- light romances
- mysteries or thrillers
- comedies
- historical/period films
- musicals.

Interesting stories with good actors were also motivators in film preference. Reviews as well as recommendation from a friend were also commonly mentioned as selection criteria.

When choosing films at the cinema for their grandchildren they tended to rely on what was showing during school holidays with Disney films giving greater confidence in selection.

I choose things that are really suitable for them like the *Crocodile Hunter*.

(Western Sydney)

School holidays has releases for children.

(Bundaberg)

Popular TV programs included *The Bill* as well as British comedies and dramas, current affairs, documentaries, travel and gardening shows and the midday movie.

Older people tended to be quite critical of the films that are being made nowadays. They were concerned about violence, language and sex and tended to avoid films where they believed these elements were likely to be depicted to a stronger degree than they felt was appropriate. Overall their attitudes to films and TV tended to be quite conservative.

They show everything these days. Years ago someone was shot and you didn't see anything. Now they show decapitation.

(Western Sydney)

They plan all the violence and murders and they [children] pick up from that and they learn. They show the full planning. They are teaching people that don't know.

(Western Sydney)

I think the 'f' word is used far too often. Language is bad. I don't tolerate it at home and hate going to a movie and being stuck with it.

(Western Sydney)

I don't like the swearing or the violence.

(Bundaberg)

Just swearing all the time shows a lack of intelligence.

(Bundaberg)

... [sex scenes] embarrassed no end. They can't just fade out with a kiss. Why do they have to go into detail?

(Bundaberg)

The real intimate things they show. They say 15 can watch. It's terrible. How can they show you a movie so intimate to children 15 or above?

(Western Sydney)

[drug usage] Well it becomes the norm. People think it's normal.

(Bundaberg)

(drug usage) I don't agree with a lot of modern day culture being acceptable. You have to have a society maintaining standards. You can undermine those standards. You can show it but you don't have to enlarge it.

(Western Sydney)

There was also recognition that both adults and children were becoming desensitised to these themes with much of this being attributed to television.

I think we are becoming desensitised to violence, sex and language. Put on the news and you see the same thing.

(Bundaberg)

Even the commercials are explicit so there's no hiding from kids unless you ban TV.

(Bundaberg)

The young children today, unless it has blood and guts then it's not a really good movie.

(Western Sydney)

OFLC film classification scheme

Older people were largely positive towards the OFLC classification scheme. Knowledge existed at the G and PG level but awareness of the other rating classifications was not strong nor considered particularly relevant. Most were able to guess at the ratings of the films they last saw but generally did not seem to take

this into account but relied on other factors for selection. There seemed to be very little awareness of consumer advice either for films or videos/DVDs.

The Gs are okay, Walt Disney is pretty good. Classifications are pretty good. G is alright and PG is alright too.

(Western Sydney)

They are pretty accurate. If someone wants to see an R rated movie you cant stop them if they want. I think they do a pretty good job.

(Bundaberg)

Not really because I'm an adult.

(Western Sydney)

[*Stuart Little*] ... no idea. Probably a G. It's a great movie.

(Western Sydney)

Most of the over 55 age group believed that the classification system was used by their sons or daughters to monitor their children's viewing behaviour.

My daughter and her husband definitely do. They have 6 and 10 year olds. They have a lock out on the video. They have to be G rated otherwise they can't see them.

(Bundaberg)

OFLC classification categories and consumer advice

The older age group was quite familiar with G and PG and was able to identify some differences between the two classifications. They had some awareness of M15+ and MA15+ but had difficulty defining the differences between these two classifications. Most had also heard of the R18+ and X18+ classifications.

Films with a G classification were largely interpreted as entertaining; from Disney and something they know they will enjoy watching, either on their own or with grandchildren. The G was known to mean general.

Other terms used to describe these films were:

- for the whole family– safe and wholesome
- very little violence and if included more likely to be like in fairytales – good versus evil
- suitable for those over 50
- 'Feel comfortable. Could take along a grandchild and not be embarrassed.'

Films with a PG rating were known to need parental guidance. There was an expectation that these films may contain some mild violence and potentially some light swearing and a hint of sex.

I always think if I see PG, I have to sit with the child. G they could watch.

(Western Sydney)

I'm comfortable with G but wary with PG. There will always be something in it that you can't watch.

(Bundaberg)

Because if you were with children, you might have to explain things to the children, even if there is a death or something.

(Western Sydney)

There was limited awareness of the M15+ symbol. Films with this classification were generally associated with violence, sex, drugs and strong language. Most interpreted it as meaning a film for mature audiences and that you needed to be 15 years and over to see a film with this classification.

There was also very little familiarity with the MA15+ symbol and as a result there was confusion between the two classifications and a tendency to suggest the two categories be grouped together.

Very few older people seemed to be aware of any consumer advice for either films or videos/DVDs, even when prompted.

There was a general appreciation of the consumer advice examples that were exposed. However this age segment was largely confident of its understanding of the G and PG classifications to view this advice as necessary to decide upon a film either for themselves or their grandchildren.

I haven't actually taken any notice but it's a good idea.

(Bundaberg)

There was also some confusion created by the different terms used to describe the classifiable elements. Older people also tended to place less focus on animated violence, as this was not considered to be real. Adult themes was also incorrectly interpreted to mean inclusion of explicit sex scenes.

It's enough to confuse anyone.

(Bundaberg)

Don't like the 'strong', 'medium', 'low'. Doesn't make any difference. Someone crashing a car or someone getting his head chopped of. It's all the same.

(Bundaberg)

Low level can't be too bad.

(Bundaberg)

Because it's animated violence, it's not real so that wouldn't worry me.

(Western Sydney)

TV classification system

As with film, G and PG were well known and some confusion existed with M15+ and MA15+. Programs rated M15+ or MA15+ were believed to be shown after 8.30 pm. Very few older consumers had seen the AV symbol and there was also mention of R18+ movies on TV.

There was limited awareness of C and P (children's and preschool children's) programming.

Participants in the 55 and over age group were more familiar with TV consumer advice than other age groups. They were also more familiar with TV consumer advice than with TV classification symbols, and mentioned it spontaneously early in the discussion group.

There were also indications that some older consumers were using the consumer advice to vet the shows they watch. However based on claimed viewing behaviour, it is unlikely that they watch many of the current programs where this advice is shown. As a result, the older age group was unable to offer any constructive criticism regarding actual wording.

They will say something before it starts. To give you an idea.
(Western Sydney)

Basically they say some scenes may upset some people.
(Bundaberg)

Well it is a good description. Fair enough if you want to watch that, you know what you are getting.
(Western Sydney)

I think it's good to differentiate between some violence and strong violence, and also frequent coarse language and against the coarse language.
(Western Sydney)

Comparison of OFLC and TV classification systems

There was common agreement that it would be beneficial if film and TV ratings and consumer advice were the same.

I think it should be universal.
(Bundaberg)

You would know what to look for. When you are looking for the rating. It's all the same for movies and films. I can't see why they can't be the same.
(Western Sydney).

... [consumer advice] should be uniform as well.
(Bundaberg)

Some older people also expressed the need to keep the classification system simple to make sure people can easily understand.

The language should be simplified, not complicated. It's very fragmented. Some people don't pay much attention.
(Bundaberg)

I've seen it in the papers and they have the rating then they have L, V and S. You pretty much know it's going to be raunchy.
(Bundaberg)

Some respondents believed that classification given to material on TV was stronger than classifications for film.

TV people have to put it stronger because everyone has access to it.

Parents can't watch it all the time.?

I just thought they used different words but used the same sort of thing.

I should imagine the TV would be stricter because it's right in your home.

(Bundaberg)

Computer games classification

There was some vague awareness that a system existed to classify computer games but very little depth of knowledge. There were mentions of concerns expressed by daughters or sons in relation to their child's game playing behaviour.

Even my daughter limits her son to half an hour a day. Because they totally lose social skills and conversation.

(Bundaberg)

But my daughter is very fussy about what they are doing on the computer and the games she buys.

(Western Sydney)

No one had any experience buying games for their grandchildren as cost was seen as prohibitive.

This age segment was unable to make any worthwhile comments on examples of consumer advice that were exposed, as they were not at all familiar with any of the games. This type of information was very much seen to be for the benefit of parents.

They seem to run around a lot.

(Western Sydney)

Always some shooting. Boom, boom, boom!

(Bundaberg)

They seem to be people wrestling, martial arts and that sort of thing.

(Western Sydney)

It's good (consumer advice) because parents can keep an eye on it if they buy it.

(Bundaberg)

8. Youth: 14 to 15 years old

Comment on participants

Observable differences were noted between the 14 to 15 year old boys in the Sydney group and the 14 to 15 year old girls interviewed in Bundaberg. The girls tended to be more mature (physically and emotionally) and more willing to discuss the various classification issues. The boys tended to exhibit attitudes of nonchalance and disregard for the issues under discussion. Most of the girls in the Bundaberg group were yet to turn 15 years and parental control seemed much stronger than for the Sydney boys. The boys claimed that they could freely choose whatever films they wanted to see without seeking any parental approval. The Sydney boys were however more knowledgeable on the rating classifications of M15+ and MA15+ whilst there was general misunderstanding amongst the girls.

Where relevant, noted differences between boys and girls will be highlighted. Findings should however, be viewed within the above context. Some differences in attitude may also be a function of geographic environment – Sydney versus Bundaberg.

Entertainment behaviour and attitudes

The types of films enjoyed by 14 to 15 year old boys were quite different to those liked by girls of the same age. Boys tended to like action films with violence and guns while girls opted for romantic comedies and teen movies. These appeals are evident in recent films seen by each sex:

- Boys: *XXX*, *Swimfan*
- Girls: *Goldmember*, *Bend it like Beckham*

Boys liked comedies but of a different genre to the girls: popular films included *Faulty Towers*, *Monty Python* and *Cheech and Chong*. The comedy films mentioned by girls were those with Adam Sandler and Mike Myers.

In relation to TV viewing habits, *The Simpsons* was popular with both the boys and the girls. The boys also mentioned *South Park* as a favourite. The girls tended to have a wider range of programs they watched. These included reality shows like *Big Brother* and *Survivor*, *Home and Away*, *Dawsons Creek*, *Malcolm in the Middle*, *CSI* and *Channel V*. There appeared to be more parental control over the

girls TV behaviour with *Secret Life of Us*, *Ali G* and *Sex in the City* being vetoed in some households.

With the girls it was possible to get their response to some classifiable elements such as drug use or references as well as sex scenes. The girls did not seem to be bothered by drug use in films as they considered this reality.

It's everyday life so why shouldn't it be in the movies?

The girls also saw sex in films as acceptable as long as it complimented the story line rather than being included for any voyeuristic purposes.

Word of mouth, previews, advertising and the actors were key influences in choosing a film. The soundtrack was also mentioned by the boys as being influential. Going to the cinema seemed more of a planned occasion for the girls than for the boys. This is most likely attributable to parents involvement in choice of film. The boys claimed they usually decided on a film to see once they arrived at the cinema. Both boys and girls indicated they went with friends to the cinema.

When it's a slack weekend, just rock up at 7 with my mates and look at what movies are on.

(Sydney)

OFLC film classification scheme

Both the boys and the girls put forward the view that classification should be based on personal maturity. This was slightly stronger amongst the girls. Both the boys and the girls considered that 12 was sufficiently mature to see M rated films.

It should be based on the maturity of a person. Should be up to the person. If you're 18 with maturity of a seven year old you shouldn't see it.

(Bundaberg)

My brother's been desensitised. He's got a thick skin.

(Sydney)

Thirteen year olds generally watch M15+ and MA15+ films. M should be for that audience and for MA you have to be 15.

(Sydney)

They made them [classifications] ages ago so maybe they should update them. Kids in the '40s wouldn't think about what we do.

(Bundaberg)

M15+ should be back to 12 or 13. That's when I started. Leave MA15+ as it is.

(Bundaberg)

The boys in Sydney were aware that they needed to be 15 years old to see a film rated MA15+. Most were able to recount at least one occasion where they or a sibling had managed to gain entry when they were younger than 15. Their view was that the cinema policy was only strict in the case of R rated films.

... [cinema] Pretty lax on anything except R.
(Sydney)

Doesn't matter because cinema doesn't enforce.
(Sydney)

Classification seemed to be more of an issue with the girls in Bundaberg as parents were still very much involved in film choice. There was obvious confusion amongst the girls regarding interpretation of M15+ and MA15+.

If only M15+ you can get in. With MA15+ you can't.
(Bundaberg)

The Sydney boys perceived classification to be more relevant for parents with children aged 8 to 12 years.

Parents use them, with younger kids at primary school.
(Sydney)

Both the boys and the girls mentioned ease of access when hiring MA15+ or R18+ rated videos or DVDs.

OFLC classification categories and consumer advice

Both the boys and the girls were quite familiar with the symbols used by the OFLC. Misunderstanding however existed amongst the girls in Bundaberg with the M15+ and MA15+ classifications.

G rated films were described as being animated, from Disney, with mostly happy endings and definitely for children.

G is more Mum, Dad and the toddlers.
(Sydney)

It's a cartoon for little kids.
(Bundaberg)

PG was correctly interpreted as parental guidance. Overall the girls were more positive towards PG films and mentioned several that they particularly liked. The boys described PG films as containing no swearing and quite predictable story lines.

G is to distract the child. PG you need to explain.
(Sydney)

When exposed to the M15+ symbol the girls in Bundaberg tended to think the inclusion of the 15+ indicated a person needed to be 15 years to gain entry at the cinema. This confusion was attributable to the use of only M and not M15+ at cinemas in Bundaberg. This also created confusion with the MA15+ symbol.

Both boys and girls believed that they were the targets for M15+ rated films.

Usually our sort of stuff. We end up watching them anyway.
(Bundaberg)

Aimed at teenagers.

(Sydney)

Expectations for films with an M classification were that they would contain swearing, sexual references, some violence and potential drug usage, more likely alcohol than other drugs.

You know what's going on but you don't see it.

(Bundaberg)

See them go down but then it blacks out.

(Sydney)

...[violence] Just a punch up, wouldn't be a full massacre.

(Bundaberg)

Both the boys and the girls were aware that you needed to be 15 years of age to see MA15+ rated films at the cinema and typically some kind of ID was needed. The 'A' component of the symbol was interpreted as 'audience' rather than 'accompanied'.

There were however some girls in Bundaberg who felt that there was no difference between M15+ and MA15+ films.

Exactly the same.

Both the same age group, just a different symbol with an 'A'.

Films with an MA classification were expected to contain more explicit classifiable elements

Like *Training Day*, lots of violence, drugs and sex scenes.

(Bundaberg)

More explicit, less censorship.

(Sydney)

MA15+ are the full on ones that everybody is shocked at.

(Sydney)

After exposure to the various examples of M15+ and MA15+ films, both the boys and the girls agreed that the main difference between M15+ and MA15+ films was that films with an M15+ classification were likely to be based on real life.

M15+ ... more like everyday life.

(Sydney)

MA15+ everything is exaggerated. *American Beauty*, you would not find that story. M is more like everyday reality.

(Bundaberg)

Both the boys and the girls were aware that you needed to be 18 to see films classified R18+. Most had seen R films at home on video or DVD with parental permission.

Mum and Dad let me watch them all the time.

(Bundaberg)

Watch with my Dad.

(Sydney)

The boys however seemed to have a clearer idea on the nature of films with an R classification.

Sex scenes are more in your face.

More playing with your mind like *Fight Club*.

There was more familiarity with consumer advice amongst the girls. Early in the discussion there was spontaneous mention of noticing on video/DVD boxes and on TV. As a result they were more responsive and believed that if this information was more readily available it would assist in gaining parental permission to see particular films.

Exposure of examples of consumer advice attracted some criticism. The use of medium level was questioned both in terms of its meaning and that it was used across classification categories. Adult themes was also largely misunderstood by both the girls and the boys.

I don't really know what 'medium' is.

(Bundaberg)

There is the same consumer advice for each with the same rating?

(Bundaberg)

No idea what 'adult themes' is.

(Sydney)

Should have brackets after 'adult themes' with drug use etc.

(Bundaberg)

TV classification system

Both the boys and the girls were familiar with most of the TV classification symbols, with the exception of AV. There was also awareness that shows with an M15+ classification were only likely to be aired after 8.30 pm.

TV ratings were generally seen as less relevant than those used by the OFLC.

I don't really care about the ratings.

(Bundaberg)

They can't stop young people watching ... [shows on TV].

(Sydney)

Both the boys and girls were aware of the audio and visual announcements prior to the airing of certain programs. However neither sex considered that these announcements were targeted at them but more for parents with younger children.

... shoved in your face in that awful voice.

(Sydney)

Not many people take much notice.

(Sydney)

I just tune out while this is on.

(Bundaberg)

Go get a drink with this comes on.

(Bundaberg)

There were mixed responses to the use of some violence and strong violence.

Doesn't mean anything to me.

(Sydney)

Some more descriptive.

(Sydney)

Strong means a fight scene every couple of minutes.

(Bundaberg)

Consumer advice was also considered to be targeted at parents to prevent exposure of inappropriate elements to younger children.

If parents looking at it for younger kids ... if it's got drugs etc.

(Bundaberg)

Comparison of OFLC and TV classification systems

Neither the boys nor girls were aware of any of the differences between the OFLC and TV rating systems. The general response when this was revealed was that it was confusing and complicated. There was common agreement that a single system should be used and this should be kept as simple as possible.

It gets too confusing and complicated.

(Bundaberg)

Should be just one.

(Sydney)

Consumer advice should be specific but you don't want a whole paragraph.

(Bundaberg)

Computer games classification

The boys and some girls were aware that computer games were classified with boys seeming to have more knowledge of the different ratings. Neither group was very familiar with consumer advice on computer games. Both the boys and girls believed that the system was for the benefit of parents. There was also some scepticism amongst the boys as to how strictly the system was adhered to at retail level.

Parents would probably check it.

(Sydney)

Parents paying for the games so they would use it.
(Bundaberg)

Don't enforce MA15+ at all, they try to sell it to you.

(Sydney)

9. Exemption slide

Overview

Respondents were exposed individually to the existing yellow yet to be classified slide as well as a new version on A3 sized boards (refer to appendix for examples). The order of exposure of each board was rotated from group to group.

Existing slide

The existing yellow slide was presented to check awareness, understanding and impressions of the OFLC. In general, people in Bundaberg were less familiar with the current exemption slide, more so amongst the 14 to 15 year old girls and 55+ age group. The slide was recognised by most of the participants in each group.

However, as evidenced in earlier quantitative research, this slide communicates mixed messages. These range from: perceived indecision or non-agreement amongst classifiers as to the appropriate rating; the OFLC having inadequate resources to classify films before screening; and consumers not really having any idea of the intended purpose of this slide. There were several respondents, mostly parents, who mentioned that the use of the slide was merely to provide a back up in case the classification changed at a later date.

Yellow one looks like they can't keep up with the classifications.
(Hobart Parent 3 to 9)

Haven't looked at it yet.
(Western Sydney Parent 3 to 9 years)

They haven't sat down to decide yet?
(Bundaberg Parent 10 to 15)

I've been going to the movies for 30 and never understood it.
(Bundaberg Parent 10 to 15)

Suggests the OFLC is slack and they have a backlog.
(Hobart 20 to 29)

Why do they need it at all?
(Bundaberg 55+)

They haven't seen it yet so they don't know.
(Bundaberg 55+)
They haven't reached a decision.
(Western Sydney, 55+)

- They can't quite decide on which classification. (Western Sydney 55+)
- The yellow one says they are disorganised. (Bundaberg 14 to 15)
- One half think this, one half think that. (Bundaberg 14 to 15)
- OFLC is slow. (Sydney 14 to 15)

Some parents also expressed having some concerns when this slide appeared in the cinema, as they were not always confident that the trailer to be shown would be appropriate for the session.

- I cringe in my seat when the yellow slide comes on because I don't know what to expect. (Western Sydney Parent 3 to 9)
- Worry that they're gonna show an M15+ rated film. (Bundaberg Parent 10 to 15)
- I panic when I see this because I don't know what they're gonna say. They usually show an MA15+ clip with an MA15+ film and a PG ad with a PG film. (Bundaberg Parent 10 to 15)

New version

There were mixed reactions in most groups when the alternate exemption slide was exposed. The new slide was recognised as being more modern but its intended meaning for some was not any clearer.

- The new one suggests OFLC is doing a good and worthwhile job. (Hobart Parent 3 to 9)
- Makes them look one step ahead. (Bundaberg 55+)
- What does it mean?
(Hobart Parent 3 to 9)
- If I see this I might think maybe we will never see the movie.
(Western Sydney Parent 3 to 9)
- It should have, 'This trailer has advertising approval'.
(Western Sydney Parent 3 to 9)
- It's misleading. They are trying to attract a market that isn't appropriate for the film. (Hobart Parent 10 to 15)
- Less clear. You have to read it a couple of times. (Hobart 20 to 29)
- Makes the OFLC look unprofessional. (Hobart 20 to 29)

Some respondents in each group also criticised the quantity of text.

Too many words.

(Bundaberg Parent 10 to 15 years:

Chuck the first line. We don't care about the first one. Second line is good.

(Bundaberg 14 to 15)

These mixed reactions were largely associated with two factors. First, there was a high degree of comfort with the existing slide. The second, and probably more important, factor is that respondents were generally unclear why the OFLC needed to use a slide of this nature and were therefore unable to judge which one was clearer in its communication. As a result, most tended to opt for the more familiar yellow slide and could not really understand why it needed to be changed.

Yellow one suggests caution because it hasn't been classified yet.

(Hobart Parent 3 to 9)

With the new one, people will be scratching their heads.

(Hobart Parent 10 to 15)

People go bam when the yellow one comes out.

(Bundaberg 14 to 15)

There were however some participants in each group who preferred the newer version.

New one looks more gentle.

(Hobart Parent 3 to 9)

New one is much more clear.

(Bundaberg Parent 10 to 15)

Much better. At least the government has looked at it.

(Sydney City 20 to 29)

I feel more comfortable with the new one. At least someone has had a look at it and allowed it to be released to be advertised.

(Bundaberg 55+)

The old one leaves you guessing. You don't know why.

(Western Sydney 55+)

That is clearer. More information is better than less information.

(Western Sydney 55+)

Explanation of exemption slide usage

Participants were provided with an explanation of the purpose of the exemption slide and why it was necessary to use. With this knowledge, they were in a better position to comment on the two slides and opinions tended to slightly favour the new version, primarily for its modernity.

This used to annoy me but now you'd said why they do it I can understand that.

(Western Sydney Parent 3 to 9)

There were, however, several positive suggestions for improvement. The word film was considered confusing because film in this instance referred to the trailer rather than the film. A Bundaberg parent suggested this sentence be changed to, 'This preview has approval for advertising purposes'.

Along with the explanation of the exemption slide participants were also given the choice of the current practice of showing trailers before film classification, or delaying screening until the film had been classified. Parents and seniors were generally more likely to opt for waiting until the film had been classified. The use of nonclassified trailers did not really have any effect on the other demographic groups.

I think they shouldn't be advertised before they are classified.
(Hobart Parent 3 to 9)

They should be classified before they show us a trailer.
(Western Sydney Parent 3 to 9)

It annoys me. They should wait until the film is classified.
(Hobart Parent 10 to 15)

Why do they advertise it before they've rated it?
(Bundaberg Parent 10 to 15)

Basically the OFLC is covering its back. If anyone comes back at them they can say they showed the sign.
(Bundaberg Parent 10 to 15)

The exemption message tag is a cop out.
(Hobart 20 to 29)

It raises an interesting question. Should they be rating a trailer at PG and then it comes out as MA.
(Hobart 20 to 29)

Doesn't bother me.
(Sydney 14 to 15)

I can't see why they can't wait until it's rated. The trailer shouldn't be shown till it's rated.
(Western Sydney 55+)

10. Conclusions

It is clear that the film, TV and computer games classification systems are at different stages of evolution and adoption. Of the three systems, bearing in mind that each consists of both rating classifications and supporting consumer advice, the system used by TV is the most evolved. This is largely attributed to the frequency of consumer exposure to it. However usage/adoption of the TV classification system is only apparent amongst parents in attempting to regulate their child's TV viewing. The other issue that needs to be highlighted is that program scheduling appears to be a stronger determinant of suitability with classification information being used as a support.

The film classification system has been well adopted by the Australian community however not to the maximum potential. Whilst the classification ratings are quite familiar to most, the existence of consumer advice to accompany a film's rating is virtually unknown. Some participants were aware that this advice appears on video/DVD cases but most have only noticed the rating classification.

One of the key objectives of this study was to better understand consumer response to existing consumer advice. This has only been possible at a cursory level due to lack of awareness and more importantly usage. Consumers are able to offer informative opinions on the rating classifications but can only offer superficial feedback on consumer advice as for most this is their first exposure. There are several problem areas that stand out. These are the use of the term 'medium level' across classifications as well as lack of understanding as to what the term medium actually describes. The term 'adult themes' is also largely misunderstood.

Parents in particular welcomed the knowledge that consumer advice was in fact available to assist in their choice of film for their children and wanted more ready access to this information.

These findings present several challenges for the OFLC. Consumers need to be made aware of the existence of consumer advice through leaflets at cinemas and stronger enforcement of industry to include consumer advice in any advertising in a font size that consumers are able to read.

The other issue in relation to the film classification system for the OFLC to tackle is to clearly demonstrate to consumers the differences between M15+ and MA15+. There is obvious confusion due to the inclusion of 15+ in both classifications. In most of the sessions, there were one or two respondents who took on the role of educating the remainder of the group as to the correct interpretations of these two symbols, i.e. one was recommended for 15 years and over and the other you actually needed to be 15 and have ID to gain entry. The use of MA by television broadcasters also contributed to confusion.

The computer games classification system is in the early stages of its evolution and shows very little evidence of adoption, even amongst parents. Parents readily express their concerns about computer games and the potential effects on their children. There is the potential for the computer games classification system to be positioned to assist parents to control access to games. The first task, however, is to create stronger awareness of the system and the basis for the different classifications to enable parents to better understand how it can help them in their choices and monitoring their child's game playing behaviour.

Once aware of the existence of the three classification systems, demand for a simple universal system rating classification and consumer advice was consistently voiced across all consumer segments.

Parents in particular wanted to be more informed and it is this segment that needs to be considered as the primary target market for educational and marketing activities.

Appendixes

Appendix 1

Screening questionnaire

- 1. Have you participated in any kind of market research during the last 6 months, that is, since (month) this year?**

Yes	1
No	2

- 2. Do you or any of your family work in the any of the following industries?**

Banking/finance	1
Advertising	2
TV/Film	3
Journalism	4
Retail	5

- 3.**

Male	1
Female	2

4.

Under 14 years	1
14 to 15 years	2
16 to 19 years	3
20 to 29 years	4
30 to 39 years	5
40 to 54 years	6
55+ years	7

5. And are you ...

Single	1
Married/de facto	2

ANSWER IF MARRIED/DE FACTO

6. And how many children aged under 15 years do you have?

WRITE IN _____

ANSWER IF 55 YEARS & OVER

7. And how many grandchildren if any do you have aged under 15years?

WRITE IN _____

ANSWER IF PARENT OR GRANDPARENT

And what are their ages?

0 to 4	1
5 to 9	2
10 to 14	3

8. Are you working

Full-time	1
Part-time	2
Non working	3
Student	4

9. And what is occupation and position of the main income earner in your household?

WRITE IN _____

10. And how often do you usually go to the movies?**11. How often, if at all, do you watch videos/DVDs at home?**

	Q.11 Movies	Q.12 Video/ DVD
Once a week or more often - heavy	1	1
2 to 3 times per month - regular	2	2
Once a month or less often – light	3	3
Don't go/watch	4	4

12. And on average how many hours do you typically watch free to air TV each week?

Under 5 hours	1
5 to 7 hours	2
8 to 10	3
Over 10 hours	4
Don't watch TV	5

ANSWER IF AGED 14 TO 15 OR 20 to 29 YEARS

13. How often, if at all, do you play computer games?

Several times per week – heavy	1
2 to 3 times per month – regular	2
Once a month or less often – light	3
Don't play computer games	4

14. Are you from a non-English speaking background?

Yes	1
No	2

Appendix 2

Discussion guide

Warm up and introduction (10 minutes)

- Purpose of group explained, no right or wrong answers, everyone's opinion is important, video/audio taping
- Introductions – single/married, children (grandchildren) job, favourite leisure activities or hobbies

Attitudes to films (15 minutes)

- How would you generally describe the movies that are being made these days? What are the most common types of movies that are being made? How do you feel/what do you think about these different kinds of films? Which ones do you like/dislike? Why is that?
- When choosing a film for yourself what are the main things you are concerned about? What other things concern you about movies these days? What kind of films, if any, would you avoid seeing? And why is that?
- And what is it about (TYPE) of film that concerns you? (If not mentioned spontaneously, probe for Themes – supernatural, horror, adult themes, drug use/references, sex, nudity, coarse language)
- PARENTS/GRANDPARENTS ONLY – And what about choosing films for your children? What kind of things are you concerned about? What kind of films would you avoid?

Usage and attitudes towards classification (10 minutes)

- What do you know about the current system that provides rating information on movies that are shown at the cinema?
- What is your general opinion of this system? Why do you say that?
- And how appropriate do you feel the current system is in limiting children's access to unsuitable movies or computer games? And why do you say that?
- How often do you use the classification system to help you decide whether a film is suitable for your own viewing? And what about your family? Why is that?

- How much information would you like to see to help you decide on movies to see for yourself? And for your family? What kind of information do you want?

Recent cinema behaviour (15 to 20 minutes)

- What was the last movie you saw at the cinema? And how would you describe that movie .. comedy, romance etc. And who did you go with?
- And how did you decide to see that film? What influenced you? (Note: mention of trailers and check TV versus cinema)
- And was the film what you expected? Why/why not? (Note mention of any disturbing elements and probe environmental influences)
- And can you recall the classification or rating of that film? Was this something you considered when deciding to see the last film you saw? The last film your children saw? Why/why not?
- Thinking back to the last movie you saw at the cinema, can you recall noticing people who were younger than the recommended viewing age? Why do you think that was?
- Thinking about movies at the cinema, at what point do you need classification information to decide on a film suitable for you or your family? Probe alternatives – newspaper, TV trailers, magazine advertising.
- ASK PARENTS WITH 10 TO 12 YEAR OLDS: Some other parents have told us that the rating classification is a strong influence in deciding on films for their children aged 10 to 12 years. Can you offer any comments as to why the rating classification would be important to these parents?

Classification categories (20 minutes)

- What are the all the different classification categories you know of? How do you feel about the different classifications for films? How useful are they to you? What do they tell you about the film? What kind of things do you expect to see in a film that is rated G, PG, M 15+, MA 15+?
- EXPOSE OF FLC SYMBOLS – Which of these have you seen before? Where have you seen them before? What meaning do they convey to you? Which, if any, are not clear to you? (Note mentions of MA 15+) How could they be improved?
- Apart from these symbols have you noticed any other descriptions that accompany the symbol for example in magazine or newspaper advertising for a film, or on a video or DVD box? Tell me about the things you remember seeing?
- EXPOSE EXAMPLES OF CURRENT CONSUMER ADVICE RELEVANT FOR EACH TARGET – Have you seen something like this before? What are your expectations when you see a description like this? How could this description be improved to give you a better idea of the film content?

- **INTRODUCE RELEVANT VCR/DVD EXAMPLES** Here are some recent films. Please have a look at the classification and consumer advice descriptions. Can you recall noticing these before on any other VCR/DVD cases? What do you think of this classification advice?

TV film behaviour (15 to 20 minutes)

- What kind of programs do you generally watch on TV? Which ones are your favourites?
- Can you recall any symbols or audio announcements that are used by television broadcasters to classify or rate movies and shows? Please tell me what you can remember. How do you feel about these audio announcements? Some people have told us these are not necessary. What is your opinion?
- **EXPOSE TV SYMBOLS AND CHECK AWARENESS AND INTERPRETATION.**
- **EXPOSE EXAMPLES OF TV CLASSIFICATION AND CONSUMER ADVICE.** Have you noticed something like this on TV before a movie or show? Which of these descriptions are you most concerned about? And why is that? Explore response to use of adjectives – some, frequent, strong.

Comparison of film and TV classifications and consumer language (10 minutes)

- Slightly different systems are used to categorise films at the cinema compared to those on TV. Had you noticed this before today? Some people have told us it is not necessary to use the same system to classify films at the movies and those on TV. How do you feel about this? What is your opinion? Why do you say this?
- What do you think about changing a classification for a movie depending upon whether it is on at the cinema or if its on TV where a modified version of the movie is being aired? Why do you say that?
- **ASK PARENTS:** Now thinking about the cinema environment for young children - the big screen and surround sound systems. What kind of effects do these generally have on film viewing? Thinking particularly about children's movies, given the impact of the cinema environment, do you think this should this change the classification? e.g. a PG at the cinema to a G on video watched at home?
- For movies shown at the cinema rated G or PG, there is also usually a consumer advice description. For TV programs with this classification, it is not necessary to include any consumer advice. How do you feel about this? What is your opinion? Why do you say this?

Computer games (10 minutes)

- What symbols are currently used to classify computer games? How do you feel about these classifications for computer games? How useful are they? What do they tell you about a computer game?
- EXPOSE COMPUTER GAMES SYMBOLS – Which of these have you seen before today? What meaning do they convey? How could they be improved?
- EXPOSE CONSUMER ADVICE – What does this description suggest to you about the game? What are your expectations? In what way if any could these descriptions be improved to give a better idea of the content?
- What information do you need to help you decide about purchasing/hiring computer games?
- ASK PARENTS/GRANDPARENTS – What concerns, if any, do you have about children and computer games? Contains violence and contains animated violence are both used as forms of consumer advice. How do you feel about these terms?

Exemption slide (5 minutes)

- Expose current yellow slide. Have you seen this before today? I'd like to show you an alternative version? What are your first impressions? What does this slide say about the Office of Film & Literature Classification? How does it compare to the existing version? NOTE: focus is on text NOT graphics

Sum up

- Any other points you'd like to make in relation to classification system.

Appendix 3

Stimulus material for focus group

FORMAT	TITLE	CLASS- IFICATION	CONSUMER ADVICE 1	CONSUMER ADVICE 2	CONSUMER ADVICE 3	CONSUMER ADVICE 4	CONSUMER ADVICE 5
Film	Babe - Pig In The City	G	Some scenes may be unsuitable for very young children				
Film	Monsters, Inc	G	Some scenes may frighten young children				
Film	Elmo In Grouchland	G					
Film	Erin Brockovich	M15+	Adult themes	Medium level coarse language			
Film	Chocolat	M15+	Low level sex scene	Low level violence			
Film	Mexican, The	M15+	Frequent violence and coarse language				
Film	Fast And The Furious, The	M15+	Medium level violence	Adult themes	Low level coarse language		
Film	Gladiator	M15+	Medium level violence	Adult themes			
Film	Sixth Sense, The	M15+	Medium level violence	Supernatural themes			
Film	Austin Powers	M15+	Sexual references				
Film	Lord Of The Rings, The	M15+	Supernatural themes	Medium level violence			
Film	American Beauty	MA15+	Adult themes	Medium level violence	Drug use		
Film	Captain Corelli's Mandolin	MA15+	Adult themes	Occasional strong violence			
Film	Saving Private Ryan	MA15+	Graphic war scenes				
Film	Two Hands	MA15+	Medium level coarse language	Medium level violence			
Film	American History X	MA15+	Medium level violence	Adult themes	Medium level coarse language		
Film	Scream 3	MA15+	Medium level violence	Horror theme			

Community Attitudes Towards Media Classification and Consumer Advice

FORMAT	TITLE	CLASS-IFICATION	CONSUMER ADVICE 1	CONSUMER ADVICE 2	CONSUMER ADVICE 3	CONSUMER ADVICE 4	CONSUMER ADVICE 5
Film	Get Carter	MA15+	Medium level violence	Medium level coarse language			
Film	Braveheart	MA15+	Medium level violence				
Film	Ali G In Da House	MA15+	Sexual references	Drug use	Medium level sex scenes		
Film	Scary Movie	MA15+	Sexual references	Medium level violence	Drug use		
Film	Dinosaur	PG	Low level violence				
Film	E.T.	PG	Medium level coarse language	Supernatural themes			
Film	Legally Blonde	PG	Sexual references	Low level coarse language			
Film	Hannibal	R18+	High impact violence				
Film	Seven	R18+	Medium level violence	Medium level coarse language			
Game	Hydro Thunder	G					
Game	Tony Hawks Pro-Skater 3	G8+	Adult themes				
Game	Magic The Gathering - Battle Mage	G8+	Fantasy elements unsuitable for young children				
Game	Super Smash Bros	G8+	Low level animated violence				
Game	Star Wars Force Commander	G8+	Medium level animated violence				
Game	Luigi's Mansion	G8+	Mild comic horror				
Game	Smugglers Run	M15+	Adult themes	Low level animated violence			
Game	Burnout	M15+	Adult themes				
Game	Austin Powers: Operation Trivia	M15+	Low level sexual references				
Game	Conkers Bad Fur Day	M15+	Medium level animated violence	Sexual references			
Game	Urban Chaos	MA15+	Adult themes				
Game	Duke Nukem Kill-A-Ton Collection	MA15+	High level animate violence	Sexual references			
Game	Command And Conquer - Renegade	MA15+	Medium level animated violence				
Game	Goldeneye 007	MA15+	Realistic horror				

Community Attitudes Towards Media Classification and Consumer Advice

FORMAT	TITLE	CLASS-IFIFICATION	CONSUMER ADVICE 1	CONSUMER ADVICE 2	CONSUMER ADVICE 3	CONSUMER ADVICE 4	CONSUMER ADVICE 5
TV	Sopranos	AV	Frequent very coarse language	Strong violence	Sex scenes	Nudity	Drug usage
TV	All Saints	M	Some coarse language				
TV	Boston Public	M	Some violence	Adult themes			
TV	24	M	Some violence				
TV	Dark Angel	M	Some violence				
TV	Band Of Brothers	M	Strong violence	Coarse language			
TV	Young Lions	M	Strong violence	Sex scenes			
TV	Sex And The City	MA15+	Adult themes	Nudity	Coarse language		
TV	Rage	MA15+	Adult themes	Some violence and horror	Sex scenes	Nudity	Drug references
TV	Arliiss	MA15+	Frequent coarse language				
TV	Six Feet Under	MA15+	Frequent very coarse language	Strong sex scenes	Drug use	Nudity	Adult theme
TV	Secret Life Of Us, The	MA15+	Some coarse language	Adult themes	Drug use		
TV	RPA	PG	Medical procedures				

Appendix 4

Geographic comparison

The table below compares key demographic details for the three locations. Anecdotal information collect during the focus groups indicates that residents of Hobart are more likely to be born in Hobart rather than moving from elsewhere in Australia. By comparison, residents of Bundaberg are more likely to have moved there from other parts of the countries.

	Sydney	Hobart	Bundaberg
Population*	3,997,321	191,169	43,549
Age Profile*	%	%	%
Under 14	18.70	18.94	20.47
14 to 19	8.07	9.25	8.48
20 to 29	14.82	12.79	11.5
30 to 54	36.76	35.77	31.63
55+	21.65	23.25	27.92
Average household size*	%	%	%
1 to 2	53.12	61.54	62.47
3 to 4	34.67	30.28	28.40
Over 4	12.21	8.18	9.13
Average annual household income*	\$58,123.32	\$43,190.63	\$35,831.93
No. of cinema complexes	42	5	2

* ABS Data

Appendix 5

Classification of film and computer games

The National Classification Scheme

The National Classification Scheme is a cooperative arrangement between the Commonwealth, States and Territories. The scheme was established by the Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act 1995.

The Classification Act commenced on 1 January 1996 and establishes the Classification Board and the Classification Review Board. The Classification Act requires that, in appointing members of the Classification Board and the Classification Review Board, they should broadly represent the Australian community.

The Classification Act provides that the Classification Board classifies films (including videos and DVDs) and computer games into suitable categories. The symbol for each category is used to indicate the most suitable audience for the film or computer game.

The symbols are a guide to the age-appropriateness of the material.

If the Board classifies a film PG, M15+, MA15+, R18+ or X18+ or classifies a computer game G8+, M15+ or MA15+, it must determine consumer advice, giving information about the content of the film or game. For the G classification, the Board has the option whether to provide consumer advice.

Consumer advice lines are phrases next to the classification symbol that provide extra information about the film or game. The phrases indicate the strongest classifiable elements contained in the film or game and the intensity and/or the frequency of the elements. This information helps consumers make informed choices.

The G, PG and M15+ categories are ‘advisory’ categories, and they do not legally restrict anyone from seeing or hiring the film. The MA15+, R18+ and X18+ categories are ‘legally restricted’ and age restrictions apply.

Film and Computer Game Classification

Films (including videos and DVDs), with some limited exceptions, and computer games must be classified in Australia before they can be exhibited, sold, hired or advertised. It is the role of the Classification Board to decide what a film or computer game should be classified within the framework of the National Classification Scheme.

There are six classification categories for film:



GENERAL

G films are considered suitable for a general audience.



PARENTAL GUIDANCE

PG films may contain material that is confusing or upsetting to children, and therefore parental guidance is recommended for children under 15 years.



MATURE

The M15+ category is recommended for children who are 15 years and over. There are no legal restrictions on access



MATURE ACCOMPANIED

This is a legally restricted category. The MA15+ category is a legally restricted category. Content in these films is considered to be unsuitable for persons under 15 years of age. A person under the age of 15 years can see a film that has an MA15+ classification, but it is not recommended and a parent or adult guardian must accompany them.



RESTRICTED

The R18+ classification is legally restricted to adults. A person must be 18 years or over to see these films. Some material in this category may be offensive to some sections of the adult community.



RESTRICTED

The X18+ classification is a special category that contains sexually explicit material and is also restricted to adults 18 years and over. These films can only be legally sold or hired in the ACT and Northern Territory and cannot be publicly exhibited.

Films that exceed the R18+ and X18+ classification categories will be Refused Classification (RC). A film that is RC cannot legally be shown, sold or hired in Australia.

There are four classification categories for computer games:



GENERAL

G films are considered suitable for a general audience.



GENERAL

G8+ computer games may contain material which some children find confusing and upsetting, and may require the guidance of parents or guardians.



MATURE

M15+ computer games are considered to be suitable for persons 15 years and over.



MATURE RESTRICTED

MA15+ computer games are considered unsuitable for persons under 15 years of age. It is a legally restricted category. Parents may decide to allow their children to play these games if they are under 15 years of age.

There is no R18+ or X18+ classification for computer games.

Computer games that exceed the MA15+ classification category will be Refused Classification (RC). A computer game that is RC cannot legally be shown, sold or hired in Australia.

Appendix 6

Classification of television programs

Section 2 of the Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice is applied by commercial television broadcasters when classifying programs and determining their suitability for broadcast in a particular time zone. Sections 2.25 to 2.29 set out requirements in relation to the provision of consumer advice.

The ABC system of television program classification, set out in its Code of Practice, applies the *Guidelines for the Classification of Films and Videotapes* issued by the Office of Film and Literature Classification, together with appropriate consumer advice for programs classified M and MA. Programs having a particular classification under the Office of Film and Literature Classification Guidelines may be modified by the ABC so that they are suitable for broadcast or suitable for broadcast at particular times.

The SBS system of television program classification is also set out in its Code of Practice. For programs broadcast from 11 August 2003, SBS applies the *2003 Guidelines for the Classification of Films and Computer Games* issued by the Office of Film and Literature Classification. Consumer advice is given for programs classified M, MA and MAV (for programs classified MA for strong violence). The SBS schedules programs or modifies programs in accordance with the Guidelines to ensure they are suitable for broadcast or suitable for broadcast at particular times.

Subscription television broadcasters classify films and drama programs, applying the program classification system contained in the *Guidelines for the Classification of Films and Computer Games* issued by the Office of Film and Literature Classification, together with appropriate consumer advice for programs classified M or MA.

Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice

Section 2: Classification

Objectives

- 2.1 This Section is intended to ensure, since commercial television is a freely-accessible medium, open to all Australians, and providing a very diverse range of entertainment and information to a wide range of viewers, that:
 - 2.1.1 each broadcast day is divided into classification zones which are based on the majority audience normally viewing at that time, with particular regard to the child component of the audience
 - 2.1.2 only material which is suitable for a particular classification zone is broadcast in that zone

- 2.1.3 The most stringent restrictions apply to the G classification zone, with gradually reducing restrictions applying in each successive zone
- 2.1.4 In the least restrictive classification zones (MA and AV), nothing is permitted which was not permitted by the former AO television classification
- 2.1.5 viewers are provided with appropriate information about the classification and nature of material to be broadcast
- 2.1.6 for the purpose of classifying films, a licensee must apply the film classification system administered by the Office of Film and Literature Classification, and make any necessary modifications to films classified under that system to ensure that they are suitable for broadcast, or for broadcast at particular times. In particular, any film classified R, MA or M by the Office of Film and Literature Classification must be suitably modified for television before it is given television classifications
- 2.1.7 news, commentary on current events, and serious presentations of moral or social issues are permitted in lower classification zones, but must be presented with appropriate sensitivity to the classification zone.

Scope

- 2.2 This Section applies to all programs and to all non-program matter, namely commercials, program promotions, program listings, community service announcements and station identifications. Section 3: Program Promotions and Section 6: Classification and Placement of Commercials apply more stringent restrictions to certain program promotions and commercials, and those Sections take precedence over this Section wherever the requirements differ.
 - 2.2.1 In this Section:
 - 2.2.1.1 words have the normal dictionary meaning suggested by their context
 - 2.2.1.2 material means visual or aural material.

Classification of Material

- 2.3 **All Material to be Classified:** Except for material specified in Clause 2.3.1, all material for broadcast must be classified according to Clauses 2.10 - 2.20 or, where applicable, the stricter requirements of Section 3: Program Promotions and Section 6: Classification and Placement of Commercials.
 - 2.3.1 **Exception for News, Current Affairs and Live or Near-live Sporting Programs:** these programs do not require classification, provided that the licensee exercises care in selecting material for broadcast having regard to:
 - 2.3.1.1 the likely audience of the program and
 - 2.3.1.2 any identifiable public interest reason for presenting the program material.
- 2.4 **Not to be Broadcast:** Material which does not meet the requirements of any of the television classifications must not be broadcast.
- 2.5 **Classification Considerations:** The suitability of material for telecast will depend on the frequency and intensity of key elements such as violence, sexual behaviour, nudity and coarse language, and on the time of day at which it is broadcast. It will also depend on such factors as the merit of the production, the purpose of a sequence, the tone, the camera work, the relevance of the material, and the treatment. These factors must be all taken into account and carefully weighed. This means that some actions, depictions, themes, subject matter, treatments or language may meet current community standards of acceptability in one program, but in another program may

require a higher classification, or be unsuitable for television. Contextual factors do not permit the inclusion of material which exceeds a program's classification, except in the limited circumstances set out in Clause 2.7.2.

- 2.6 ***Non-Program Material Dealing in a Responsible Way with Important Moral or Social Issues:*** A commercial or community service announcement which would normally require an M or PG classification may be classified PG or G, respectively, in the following circumstances:
- 2.6.1 if it deals in a responsible way with important moral or social issues and
 - 2.6.2 if its target audience is unlikely to be available in the classification zone suited to its content and
 - 2.6.3 if it is in the public interest that it reach that target audience.

Broadcasting of Material

- 2.7 Material may only be broadcast in the classification zone corresponding to its classification, except in the following circumstances:
- 2.7.1 **News, current affairs and live or near-live sporting programs**, while not required to be classified, may be broadcast in the G classification zone, provided that care is exercised in the selection and broadcast of all material.
 - 2.7.1.1 News material broadcast in the G classification zone outside regular bulletins must be compiled with special care.
 - 2.7.2 **Program Material Dealing in a Responsible Way with Important Moral or Social Issues:** A program may be broadcast outside the times appropriate to its classification only if:
 - 2.7.2.1 it deals in a responsible way with important moral or social issues and
 - 2.7.2.2 its scheduling is justified by the availability of its target audience and
 - 2.7.2.3 clear advice of its nature and content is given both in promotions for, and at the start of, the program, and that advice avoids detail which may in itself seriously distress or seriously offend viewers;
 - 2.7.3 A licensee need not adjust classification zone transition times to comply with this clause (except as required in Clause 2.16.3 for the school day afternoon M zone) if it is:
 - 2.7.3.1 a remote area licensee serving a part of its licence area which falls in a different time zone
 - 2.7.3.2 the only licensee serving a part of its licence area which falls in a different time zone.
- 2.8 ***Material Which May Distress or Offend Viewers:*** Only if there is an identifiable public interest reason may a licensee broadcast a news or current affairs program containing material which, in the licensee's reasonable opinion, is likely to distress or offend a substantial number of viewers.
- 2.8.1 If such material is likely, in the licensee's reasonable opinion, to seriously distress or seriously offend a substantial number of viewers, then the licensee must provide the adequate prior warning required by Clause 2.30.
- 2.9 ***Excerpts from Certain Feature Films:*** Provided that they are suitable for the time of broadcast, excerpts from feature films classified MA (cinema or television), AV (television) or R (cinema) may be broadcast in a news or current affairs program, in a film review program or a film review segment, in conjunction with an interview

directed at a predominantly adult audience, or in a program which deals in a responsible manner with serious moral or social issues.

- 2.9.1 Where a locally-produced program or segment contains such an excerpt, the classification of the film from which it is drawn must be shown if that film is in current cinema release locally
- 2.9.2 If such excerpts are also used in promoting any news, current affairs or other program specified in this clause, the promotion must comply with the additional restrictions in Clause 3.8 - 3.12 of the Code.

The Children's (C) and Preschool Children's (P) Classifications

- 2.10 Material classified C or P must satisfy the requirements of the Australian Broadcasting Authority's Children's Television Standards. C and P classification zones are movable within bands laid down in the Children's Television Standards. These zones overlap other classification zones, and have precedence over them.

The General (G) Classification

- 2.11 Material classified G is not necessarily intended for children but it must be very mild in impact and must not contain any matter likely to be unsuitable for children to watch without supervision.
 - 2.11.1 **Violence:** Visual depiction of physical and psychological violence must be very restrained. The use of weapons, threatening language, sounds or special effects must have a very low sense of threat or menace, must be strictly limited to the story line or program context, must be infrequent and must not show violent behaviour to be acceptable or desirable.
 - 2.11.2 **Sex and Nudity:** Visual depiction of, and verbal references to, sexual behaviour must be brief, infrequent, contain little or no detail and be strictly limited to the story line or program context. Restrained, brief and infrequent visual depiction of nudity only when absolutely necessary to the story line or program context.
 - 2.11.3 **Language:** Mild expletives or language which may be considered socially offensive or discriminatory may only be used in exceptional circumstances when absolutely justified by the story line or program context.
 - 2.11.4 **Drugs:** Visual depiction of, or verbal reference to illegal drugs must be absolutely justified by the story line or program context, contain very little detail and be handled with care. The program must not promote or encourage drug use in any way. The use of legal drugs must also be handled with care.
 - 2.11.5 **Suicide:** Only limited and careful verbal reference to suicide is acceptable, when absolutely justified by the story line or program context, and provided that it is not presented as romantic, heroic, alluring or normal.
 - 2.11.6 **Social or Domestic Conflict:** Themes dealing with social or domestic conflict must have a very low sense of threat or menace to children.
 - 2.11.7 **Imitable and Dangerous Behaviour:** Imitable and dangerous behaviour should only be shown when absolutely justified by the story line or program context, and then only in ways which do not encourage dangerous imitation.
 - 2.11.8 **Other:** Where music, special effects and camera work are used to create an atmosphere of tension or fear, care must be taken to minimise distress to children.

- 2.12 General (G) classification zones

Weekdays 6.00am - 8.30am

4.00pm - 7.30pm
Weekends 6.00am - 7.30pm

- 2.12.1 In G zones, only material classified G, C and P may be broadcast (though note limited exemptions in Clause 2.7.1 and 2.7.2).

The Parental Guidance Recommended (PG) Classification

- 2.13 Material classified PG may contain careful presentations of adult themes or concepts but must be mild in impact and remain suitable for children to watch with supervision.
- 2.13.1 **Violence:** Visual depiction of violence must be inexplicit, restrained, and justified by the story line or program context. More leeway is permitted when the depiction is stylised rather than realistic, but all violence shown must be mild in impact, taking into account also the language, sounds and special effects used.
- 2.13.2 **Sex and Nudity:** Visual depiction of and verbal reference to sexual behaviour must be restrained, mild in impact and justified by the story line or program context. Restrained visual depiction of nudity is permitted, but only where justified by the story line or program context.
- 2.13.3 **Language:** Low-level coarse language may only be used infrequently, when justified by the story line or program context.
- 2.13.4 **Drugs:** Mild visual depiction of and restrained verbal reference to illegal drug use, if justified by the story line or program context, but the program must not promote or encourage illegal drug use. The use of legal drugs must be handled with care.
- 2.13.5 **Suicide:** Visual depiction of and verbal reference to suicide or attempted suicide must be inexplicit and restrained, and be mild in impact. It must not be presented as the means of achieving a desired result or as an appropriate response to stress, depression or other problems.
- 2.13.6 **Adult Themes:** The treatment of social and domestic conflict and other themes directed to a more adult audience should be carefully handled and mild in impact.
- 2.13.7 **Other:** Supernatural or mild horror themes may be included.

- 2.14 Parental Guidance Recommended (PG) classification zones

Weekdays (schooldays)	5.00am	-	6.00am
	8.30am	-	12.00 noon
	3.00pm	-	4.00pm
	7.30pm	-	8.30pm
Weekdays (school holidays)	5.00am	-	6.00am
	8.30am	-	4.00pm
	7.30pm	-	8.30pm
Weekends	5.00am	-	6.00am
	7.30pm	-	8.30pm

- 2.14.1 In PG zones, only material classified PG, G, C and P may be broadcast (though note exemptions in Clause 2.7.2).

- 2.14.2 School holidays mean Government primary school holidays in the State or Territory in which the service originates.

The Mature (M) Classification

- 2.15 Material classified M is recommended for viewing only by persons aged 15 years or over because of the matter it contains, or of the way this matter is treated.
- 2.15.1 **Violence:** May be realistically shown only if it is not frequent or of high impact, and is justified by the story line or program context. Violence should not be presented as desirable in its own right. Any visual depiction of or verbal reference to violence occurring in a sexual context must be infrequent and restrained, and strictly justified by the storyline or program context.
- 2.15.2 **Sex and Nudity:** Visual depiction of intimate sexual behaviour may only be implied or simulated in a restrained way. It must be justified by the story line or program context. Verbal references to sexual activity should not be detailed. Visual depiction of nudity must be justified by the story line or program context, and must not be detailed if in a sexual context.
- 2.15.3 **Language:** The use of coarse language must be appropriate to the story line or program context, infrequent and neither detailed nor very aggressive. It may be used more than infrequently only in exceptional circumstances when it is particularly important to the story line or program context.
- 2.15.4 **Drugs:** Intravenous use of illegal drugs may not be shown in detail. The program must not promote or encourage the use of illegal drugs.
- 2.15.5 **Suicide:** Suicide must not be promoted or encouraged by the program, and methods of suicide must not be shown in realistic detail.
- 2.15.6 **Adult Themes:** Most themes can be dealt with, but intense themes should be handled with care.

- 2.16 Mature (M) classification zones

Weekdays (schooldays)	12.00 midnight - 5.00am
	12.00 noon - 3.00pm (see clause 2.16.3)
	8.30pm - 12.00 midnight
Weekdays (school holidays)	8.30pm - 5.00am
& Weekends	

- 2.16.1 In M zones, any material which qualifies for a television classification may be broadcast, except that material classified MA and AV is restricted to the times set out in Clauses 2.18 and 2.20 respectively.
- 2.16.2 School holidays mean Government primary school holidays in the State or Territory in which the service originates.
- 2.16.3 When the time of reception anywhere in a licence area is more than one hour in advance of the time of origin of the service, the M classification zone on schooldays extends between noon and 2.30pm, rather than 3.00pm.

The Mature Audience (MA) Classification

- 2.17 Material classified MA is suitable for viewing only by persons aged 15 years or over because of the intensity and/or frequency of sexual depictions, or coarse language, adult themes or drug use.
- 2.17.1 **Violence:** The requirements are those set out in 2.15.1 for the M classification.

- 2.17.2 **Sex and Nudity:** Visual depiction of intimate sexual behaviour (which may only be discreetly implied or discreetly simulated) or of nudity only where relevant to the storyline or program context. However, a program or program segment will not be acceptable where the subject matter serves largely or wholly as a vehicle for gratuitous, exploitative or demeaning portrayal of sexual behaviour or nudity. Exploitative or non-consenting sexual relations must not be depicted as desirable.
- 2.17.3 **Language:** The use of very coarse language must be appropriate to the story line or program context and not overly frequent or impactful.
- 2.17.4 **Drugs:** No detailed depiction of intravenous use of illegal drugs. The program must not promote or encourage the use of illegal drugs.
- 2.17.5 **Adult Themes:** Exceptionally intense themes should be carefully handled.
- 2.17.6 **Suicide:** Methods of suicide should not be shown in realistic detail. The program must not promote or encourage suicide.
- 2.18 **Mature Audience (MA) classification zones.** All days between 9.00pm and 5.00am. In MA zones, any material which qualifies for a television classification may be broadcast, except that material classified AV may only be broadcast after 9.30pm.

The Adult Violent (AV) Classification

- 2.19 Material classified AV is suitable for viewing only by persons aged 15 years or over. It is unsuitable for MA classification because of the intensity and/or frequency of violence, or because violence is central to the theme. In other respects, the classification's requirements are identical to the MA classification.
- 2.19.1 **Violence:** Realistic depictions may contain some detail, but should not be prolonged and should not be unduly bloody or horrific. Such depictions must be justified by the story. Violence occurring in a sexual context must not be detailed, and must be brief and infrequent, justified by the story line and not exploitative.
- 2.19.2 **Sex and Nudity:** The requirements are those set out in 2.17.2 for the MA classification.
- 2.19.3 **Language:** The requirements are those set out in 2.17.3 for the MA classification.
- 2.19.4 **Drugs:** The requirements are those set out in 2.17.4 for the MA classification.
- 2.19.5 **Adult Themes:** The requirements are those set out in 2.17.5 for the MA classification.
- 2.19.6 **Suicide:** The requirements are those set out in 2.17.6 for the MA classification.
- 2.20 **Adult Violent (AV) classification zones:** All days between 9.30pm and 5.00am. In AV zones, any material which satisfies a television classification may be broadcast.

Material Not Suitable for Television

- 2.21 Material which cannot appropriately be classified AV or any lower television classification, because of the matter it contains, or the way that matter is treated, is unsuitable for television, and must not be broadcast. In accordance with the *Broadcasting Services Act*, television licensees may not broadcast a program that has been refused classification, or has been classified as X, by the Office of Film and Literature Classification.

- 2.22 The following categories indicate material which will invariably be unsuitable for television:
- 2.22.1 **Violence:** Sustained, relished or excessively detailed acts of violence, unduly bloody or horrific depictions, strong violence that has high impact or which is gratuitous or exploitative or depiction of exploitative or non-consensual sexual relations as desirable
 - 2.22.2 **Sex and Nudity:** Detailed genital nudity in a sexual context, or explicit depiction of sexual acts;
 - 2.22.3 **Language:** Very coarse language which is aggressive and very frequent;
 - 2.22.4 **Drugs:** Detailed depiction of intravenous drug use, or instruction or encouragement in illegal drug use;
 - 2.22.5 **Suicide:** Realistic depiction of methods of suicide, or promotion or encouragement of suicide.

Display of Classification Symbols

- 2.23 For any program required by Clause 2.3 to be classified, an appropriate classification symbol of at least 32 television lines in height, in a readily legible typeface, must be displayed for at least 3 seconds at the following times:
- 2.23.1 as close as practicable to the program's start
 - 2.23.2 as soon as practicable after each break
 - 2.23.3 in any promotion for the program.
- 2.24 Clearly visible classification symbols must accompany all press advertising of programs on behalf of a licensee, and all program listings in program guides produced by a licensee.
- 2.24.1 Program classification advice is not required in radio or outdoor advertising by a licensee.

Consumer Advice for Certain Programs

- 2.25 Consumer advice provides viewers with information about the principal elements which contribute to a program's classification, and indicates their intensity and/or frequency. It is intended to help people to make informed choices about the programs they choose.
- 2.25.1 Consumer advice is mandatory for all MA and AV programs and for one-off programs classified M and very short series classified M - that is, feature films, telemovies, mini-series, series episodes presented in a feature film format, documentaries and specials.
 - 2.25.2 A licensee should also supply consumer advice with any other program which contains material of a strength or intensity which the licensee reasonably believe viewers may not expect.
- 2.26 Consumer advice must be broadcast at the start of programs covered by clause 2.25. It must be both spoken and written. The consumer advice must be in a readily legible typeface, and must remain visible for at least five seconds. It must take the following form:
- 2.26.1 **Classification Text:** The M symbol must be accompanied by the text: 'Recommended for mature audiences'. The MA and AV symbol must be accompanied by the text: 'Suitable only for adult audiences'.
 - 2.26.2 **Consumer Advice Text:** The advice must specify one or more of the classification elements set out below. Where the frequency of classification

elements is not indicated in the listed terms, the adjective ‘some’ or ‘frequent’ should be used (e.g. ‘some nudity’).

2.26.2.1 Language

- some coarse language
- frequent coarse language
- very coarse language
- frequent very coarse language

2.26.2.2 Violence

- some violence
- frequent violence
- strong violence

2.26.2.3 Sex

- sexual references
- sex scenes
- strong sex scenes

2.26.2.4 Drugs

- drug references
- drug use

2.26.2.5 Other

- adult themes
- medical procedures
- horror
- nudity

2.26.3 Classification and Consumer Advice Voice-over:

2.26.3.1 for required M programs, the voice-over must say: ‘The following program [or film or movie] is classified M. It contains [consumer advice corresponding to the graphic]. [This channel] recommends viewing by mature audiences’.

2.26.3.2 for all MA and AV programs, the voice-over must say: ‘The following program [or film or movie] is classified [insert classification]. It contains [consumer advice corresponding to the graphic]. [This channel] advises that it is suitable only for adult audiences’.

2.26.4 Except for programs which now require an AV classification, programs classified before this revised Code came into effect may use the consumer advice required at the time of the original classification.

2.27 Consumer Advice After Breaks: Briefer written consumer advice must be broadcast as soon as is practicable after the resumption of the program at each break. A lower frame graphic or graphics must show (in addition to any station/network logo) the title plus the classification symbol and the consumer advice, abbreviated in letter form, beside the symbol. The letters to be used are one or more of:

- | | | |
|----------|---|------------------------------------|
| A | = | adult themes or medical procedures |
| D | = | drug use/references |
| H | = | horror |
| L | = | coarse language |
| N | = | nudity |
| S | = | sexual references/sex scenes |
| V | = | violence |

- 2.28 **Press Advertising and Program Guides:** Clearly visible consumer advice must accompany:
- 2.28.1 all press advertising of programs placed by the licensee. This must be spelt out (e.g. 'some coarse language') in all advertisements of one quarter page by four columns or larger. In smaller press advertisements, it may be abbreviated, as set out in Clause 2.27
 - 2.28.2 relevant program listings in any program guides produced by a licensee.
- 2.29 **Radio Advertising:** Consumer advice is not required in radio advertising by a licensee.

Warnings Before Certain News, Current Affairs and Other Programs

- 2.30 A licensee must provide prior warning to viewers when a news, current affairs, or other program which does not carry consumer advice includes, for an identifiable public interest reason, material which in the licensee's reasonable opinion is likely to seriously distress or seriously offend a substantial number of viewers. The warning must precede the relevant item in a news and current affairs program and precede the program in other cases.
- 2.31 Warnings before the broadcast of material of this nature must be spoken, and may also be written. They must provide an adequate indication of the nature of the material, while avoiding detail which may itself seriously distress or seriously offend viewers.
- 2.32 If, in a promotion for a program, a licensee includes advice that the program contains material which may seriously distress or seriously offend viewers, that advice must comply with every requirement for program promotions in the period in which it is broadcast.