

**“QUALITATIVE REPORT –
M AND A15+ EVALUATION”**

**CONSUMER MARKET
RESEARCH FINDINGS
JULY 2003**

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‘QUALITATIVE REPORT’ M and A15+ EVALUATION

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Film and Literature Classification (OFLC) conducted a small scale qualitative consumer research project to explore consumer understanding of the M15+ and MA15+¹ classification categories as well as gather feedback on a number of alternative symbols and descriptions for these two categories.

The study was conducted with two key target groups – 13 to 14 year old boys and girls and parents of children aged 7 to 14 years. Five focus groups (two sessions with 13 to 14 year olds and three sessions with parents) were conducted across the cities of Sydney, Adelaide and Perth during the period 20 to 23 May 2003.

A specialist recruitment agency was engaged to recruit participants to required specifications. The focus groups were moderated by an independent market researcher who also prepared this report. All groups were observed by OFLC as well as a staff member from each State's Attorney-Generals Department.

Awareness, sources and usage of classification information

- Classification information is one of the means that parents use to help decide on the suitability of films for themselves and their families. To most people classification information is primarily the rating symbol. There is very limited awareness of the existence of consumer advice for films.
- Currently, the MA15+ classification rating is not a top of mind category for parents or 13 to 14 year olds. G, PG, M and R classifications are much more likely to be mentioned spontaneously. However in the case of M, depth of understanding is limited with many respondents believing that the classification denoted a minimum age of 15 years required to view M rated films.
- The main sources of classification information cited by respondents were trailers, newspapers, TV ads, websites and reviews. Word of mouth from friends and other parents about films they had seen was a significant influence on parents' decision about what was appropriate for their children to see.

¹ M15+ and MA15+ are the representations in the *Determination of Markings for Films 2000* of the M and MA classifications. M15+ and MA15+ are the markings seen by the public on classified films and videos/DVDs. M15+ and MA15+ are also used for the classification of computer games. However the shape within which the letters are contained and the classification descriptions differ for computer games. To facilitate respondents' understanding of M15+ and MA15+, this study was restricted to the shapes and descriptions used for films.

Understanding of M15+ and MA15+

- As evidenced in previous research, there is widespread confusion between the M15+ and MA15+ categories primarily due to their similarity with both containing “M” and “15+”.
- Even when presented with the current M15+ symbol and its description², it was not readily apparent to all that this was an advisory category with reference to age. This was largely due to the 15+ being part of the symbol.
- When exposed to the MA15+ symbol there was general recognition however, no respondent was able to give the correct interpretation. It was commonly interpreted as “mature audience” or “mature adult”. The 13 to 14 year olds were more likely to be aware there was an age restriction for films with this classification. Some parents also had a vague awareness regarding an age restriction but had demonstrated a lack of full understanding of the restriction with mention of occasions when they had bought tickets for their child aged under 15 to see an MA15+ rated film but had not watched the film with them.
- For most parents the classification description of the MA15+ symbol was new information³. Of those who had thought that it was an advisory category, it clarified that children under 15 years were restricted from seeing these films if not accompanied. And for those parents who had thought MA15+ was restricted to over 15 year olds, it clarified that children under 15 years could see the film if they were accompanied.
- Amongst both target groups there was a general sense that MA15+ films usually contained higher level content. Sex was initially mentioned as the key classifiable element that differentiated M15+ and MA15+ films and as the discussion progressed this was expanded to include violence, drugs, language and adult themes.
- Some parents volunteered comments about the shape surrounding the letter(s) for each symbol⁴ with suggestions that the hexagon in the MA symbol was like a stop sign indicating that caution was required with this classification category.
- After exposure to clips of scenes from M15+ and MA15+ films, parents strongly concurred on the distinct and hierarchical differences between the two classification categories. The 13 and 14 year olds also had a clearer understanding of the differences after viewing posters and video boxes of the films shown to the parents.
- Given few parents had understood the significance of the difference between the categories at the beginning of the session, after viewing the clips they were highly motivated to look at changes to improve the symbols.

² The classification description for M15+ is: “Recommended for mature audiences 15 years and over”.

³ The classification description for MA15+ is: “Persons under 15 years must be accompanied by a parent or adult guardian”.

⁴ The M for M15+ is contained within a circle. The MA for MA15+ is contained within a hexagon.

Response to alternative symbols and descriptions

- Of the four alternatives that were evaluated⁵, there was almost unanimous preference amongst both target groups for M to replace M15+ and A15+ to replace MA15+. This option was considered to differentiate the two classifications categories more clearly and also to reinforce the age restriction for the MA15+ classification.
- Although it was explained to respondents early in the session that the correct meaning of MA15+ was Mature Accompanied, most continued to interpret A15+ as “adult” rather than “accompanied”. However, this did not diminish the meaning of the category for them. When shown in conjunction with the description, most parents interpreted the meaning of the A15+ symbol as “accompanied”.
- Alternative wording of the classification descriptions for M15+ and MA15+ were also evaluated with the views differing between parents and 13 to 14 year olds. Parents tended to prefer the use of the word “unsuitable” in the description as it clearly indicated the likely nature of the content of films with an A15+ classification. They also indicated that including this word would provide stronger reinforcement to their decision not to allow their children to see these films. The 13 and 14 year olds were more likely to opt for the use of “not recommended” as they believed it could provide some leverage to gain parental permission to see films with an A15+ classification. There were varying views as to whether “children” or “people” should be used, with a slight preference overall for “people”.
- The suggestion of any change to M15+ and MA15+ being applicable to other forms of media such as DVDs and videos, computer games and TV programmes was seen as advantageous, particularly by parents. They believed that consistency of classification categories across various media would greatly enhance their ability to make appropriate viewing decisions for their families.

Industry feedback

- Concerns about the community’s lack of understanding between M15+ and MA15+ have been strongly expressed by the cinema industry. To complement the focus groups, interviews were held with cinema operators who had extensive experience over many years, including prior to the introduction of MA15+ in 1993.
- During discussions, the industry representatives volunteered changes to the categories, very similar to those being proposed in this report.

⁵ The four alternatives were (in random order): M and A; M15+ and A15+; M and A15-; M and A15+. The M and other corresponding alternatives were contained within a circle and the A and other corresponding alternatives were contained within a hexagon.



- The industry representatives were highly supportive of the proposed changes and believed that they would contribute significantly to a better understanding by their patrons of the classification categories. In particular, they were of the view that the changes would assist them when explaining to patrons the restrictive nature of the MA15+ category.
- The cinema operators consulted did not believe that the proposed changes would be detrimental to their ticket sales.

PART I. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

1. Research Background

- In 2002 the OFLC conducted a number of projects to better understand the level of knowledge that existed in the Australian community regarding the classification categories and consumer advice. Quantitative nationwide research conducted in February 2002 identified that there was a high level of consumer confusion between the M15+ and MA15+ symbols and also a general lack of understanding of their intended meanings. This was further substantiated in a qualitative project on consumer advice conducted in December 2002.
- In order to improve consumer knowledge, understanding and decision-making ability in this area, alternatives to replace the current symbols and their descriptions were developed by the OFLC. It was decided that these alternatives should be tested amongst consumer groups most affected by these categories to ensure the optimal combination of symbols and descriptions were implemented.
- Based on learnings from previous research⁶, the target groups selected were parents of children aged 7 to 14 years as the highest users of classification information, and boys and girls aged 13 to 14 years as the age group most impacted by the legally restrictive nature of the MA15+ classification. A qualitative research design in the form of focus group discussions was adopted as the most appropriate means of evaluating the alternatives and gathering consumer feedback.

2. Research Objectives

- The primary objective of the study was to explore consumer response to a range of alternative symbols and descriptions to replace the current M15+ and MA15+ classification categories.
- Specific research objectives were as follows:
 - Awareness, sources and usage of classification information
 - Understanding of M15+ and MA15+
 - Response to current descriptions for M15+ and MA15+
 - Response to films classified M15+ and MA15+ (parents were shown clips whilst 13 to 14 year olds were shown posters and video boxes)
 - Response to alternative symbols for M15+ and MA15+
 - Response to alternative descriptions for M15+ and MA15+
 - Response to usage of new symbols in other media
 - Response to the new exemption message.

⁶ OFLC: Classification Usage and Attitude Study – Consumer Research Findings November 2002.

3. Research Design and Methodology

3.1 Overview

- A qualitative approach in the form of focus group discussions was implemented. This environment allowed for free flow and rich discussion as well as intensive probing to provide the required understanding and insights.
- A total of five focus groups were conducted across 3 cities – Sydney, Adelaide and Perth. The groups were conducted during the period 20 to 23 May 2003. Observation facilities were available for all 5 groups.
- 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 supply respondents. A screening questionnaire was used to ensure respondents were recruited to specifications. A copy is included in Appendix A.
- Each focus group consisted of approximately 8 individuals with the discussion running for around 1 hour for the 13 and 14 year olds and 1.5 hours for parents. Copies of the discussion guides are included in Appendix B. The discussion guides were developed in conjunction with the OFLC to ensure all the relevant areas were covered. A list of the stimulus used during discussions is included in Appendix C.

3.2 Sample Design

- The two target segments were:
 - Youth – 13 to 14 year old boys and girls (2 groups).
 - Parents with child/children aged 7 to 10 and 11 to 14 (3 groups).
- Specific recruitment criteria included:
 - Mixture of regular (2+ times per month) and light (once a month) movie/video/DVD frequency.
 - Minimum of 5 to 7 hours TV viewing per week.
- Respondents were recruited from a cross-section of socio-economic backgrounds.
- Three geographic areas were included – Sydney, Adelaide and Perth.
- Breakdown of the different segments across the three locations was as follows:

Segment	Sydney	Adelaide	Perth
Males 13 to 14 years		X	
Females 13 to 14 years			X
Parents - child/children 7 to 14 years	X	X	X
Total	1	2	2

4. Main Findings

4.1 Awareness, sources and usage of classification information

- Awareness of classification symbols amongst both target groups was high. Spontaneous mentions included G, PG, M and R. MA was a little more likely to be mentioned by the 13 to 14s but was not a classification category that immediately came to mind for either group.
- The main sources of classification information cited by respondents were cinema trailers, newspapers, TV ads, websites, reviews and markings on videos and DVDs.

“I see trailer to decide if its suitable”. (Parent)

“I look at Sydney Child Magazine – they review movies”. (Parent)

- A common informal decision influencer was talking to other parents and friends who had seen the film and who had some understanding of the maturity of their child or children. However, most parents were of the view that it was ultimately their responsibility to monitor exposure to unsuitable content.

“I talk to other people to decide, if they have been to see it ... if there’s any sex scenes and over the top behaviour.”

“Movies are classified and the rest is up to us.”

“It comes down to what you teach them at home, to stand up for themselves as to what to watch.”

“Talk to them about the movie and how it’s effected them. It’s the response from them.”

- While there was some acknowledgment of consumer advice on videos/DVDs, there was a general lack of awareness of consumer advice for films showing at cinemas. When shown examples of cinema ads in newspapers that had the consumer advice, parents were particularly interested in having this information available.

“The descriptions at the end of the movie advert are good because it gives you an idea of what is in the film.”

“If you don’t read the paper, you don’t get the consumer advice.”

“Parents are not getting this information.”

- Both parents and 13 and 14 year olds were aware of the existence of consumer advice for TV programmes. Parents were particularly positive about the classification information provided on TV and were using it as a means to monitor their children's viewing.

"TV is very good. If violence they tell you why. Especially if you have teenage boys that want to see M.

"The guide on TV about sex, violence and so on in the film could also be provided with films as well because it would help."

- Parents in all two cities talked about the problem of selecting videos/DVDs for their children's sleepover parties.

"I don't condone violence or too much sex but you should gradually bring it into them as sooner or later they will see it and it's better to have some of it at home so we can control it. It's hard to choose video for sleepovers so as not to upset other parents. You have to watch all the video first almost."

4.2 Understanding of M15+ and MA15+

- As evidenced in previous research, there is widespread misunderstanding with the M15+ and MA15+ classification categories. For some parents all "M" films were perceived as one category while some 13 to 14 year olds believed that the two different classifications were M and M15+.

"There are two Ms – some just have M and some have M15+ ". (13 to 14 year old)

*"Need to be 15 and over to watch but it's up to the parents to choose if they can watch it."
(Parent)*

- A range of interpretations were offered when parents were presented with the M15+ symbol.

"I thought M15 was mature audience."

"Mature, 15 and over."

"M, is that when you're supposed to have an adult with you?"

- Younger respondents were generally no better informed and were just as likely to be confused about M15+.

“You have to be mature and 15 years or over to watch the film.”

“I think M and MA are the same.”

- When exposed to the MA15+ symbol there was general recognition however neither parents or 13 to 14 year olds, were able to give the correct interpretation. It was commonly interpreted as “mature audience” or “mature adult”. There was some mention of ID being needed but this was seen as a requirement for M15+ films as well.

“The kids have to produce identification to see M or MA15+.”

- There was however agreement amongst parents that the “stop sign” shape of the MA15+ symbol suggested caution and differentiated it from the M15+ symbol.

“Looks more serious than the M15+.”

“It’s a harder sign than the M sign.”

“The symbol is a stop sign and it makes you stop and think.”

- The 13 to 14 year olds were more likely to be aware there was an age restriction on MA15+ films and some had managed to find ways to see these films.

“Generally I watch MA films and I just get a parent to buy us the ticket to the film.”

“No problem to get in because we change our birth dates on our concession cards and that’s how we get in.”

“You don’t have to be 15 to get in. It depends on whether people check your ID.”

4. 3 Response to current descriptions for M15+ and MA15+

- Even when presented with the current M15+ symbol and description, it was not readily apparent to all that 15 years was only the recommended age. This misunderstanding was largely driven by the inclusion of the 15+ as part of the description and more strongly voiced when the two symbols were compared.

“I always thought the 15+ meant kids under 15 can’t go.” (Parent)

- Parents in particular expressed a desire to have greater clarity between M15+ and MA15+ and appeared to be frustrated at their similarity.

“It would be nice to know what the Ms in both mean.”

“I don’t want to have to guess, I’d like to know.”

“Why don’t they change the letters.”

“It’s a pretty fine distinction.”

- For most parents, when the classification description was exposed this was new information, however there was confusion about the meaning of “adult guardian”.

“They could go and see it with a parent?”

“I wonder if they could go with an older brother. Is 18 an adult?”

- For most parents the classification description of the MA15+ symbol was new information⁷. Of those who had thought that it was an advisory category, it clarified that children under 15 years were restricted from seeing these films if not accompanied. And for those parents who had thought MA15+ was restricted to over 15 year olds, it clarified that children under 15 years could see the film if they were accompanied. A few parents mentioned occasions where they had purchased tickets for their children to see MA15+ films and were not aware of the accompany requirement.

4.4 Response to films classified M15+ and MA15+

- With regard to content differences between M15+ and MA15+ films, there was general consensus that MA 15+ films were likely to contain higher level sex, violence and language. To ensure that parents fully understood the hierarchical differences between the two classifications, film clips were shown. Clips from *Lord of the Rings – Fellowship of the Rings* and *Mission Impossible 2* were shown as examples of M15+ films while *Blade II* and *American Beauty* or *Scream 3* were shown as examples of MA15+. Posters and video boxes of the films were used to highlight the differences for 13 to 14 year olds. *Miss Congeniality* was used rather than *Mission Impossible 2* as an example for female 13 to 14 year olds.
- Film clips and posters were included in the research process so that parents and 13 to 14 year olds had a clearer understanding of the difference between the M15+ and MA15+ to be able to assess alternative symbols for the two categories.

⁷ The classification description for MA15+ is: “Persons under 15 years must be accompanied by a parent or adult guardian”.

- After exposure to clips for each classification, parents strongly concurred on the distinct and hierarchical differences between the two classification categories.

“There seems to be a huge gulf between those.”

“I thought the classifications were pretty spot on.”

- The 13 and 14 year olds also had a much clearer understanding of the differences after viewing posters and video boxes.

“I can definitely see the difference in categories.”

“MA ... more violence, more graphical.”

4.5 Response to alternative symbols for M15+ and MA15+

- A number of paired alternatives to replace the existing M15+ and MA15+ symbols were used in the groups. These were:
 - M and A
 - M15+ and A15+
 - M and A15-
 - M and A15+
- The M and other corresponding alternatives were contained within a circle. The A and other corresponding alternatives were contained with a hexagon.
- Each pair was shown separately and rotated randomly from group to group.
- The M and A15+ alternative was almost unanimously preferred amongst both target groups. For M to replace M15+ and A15+ to replace MA15+ was considered to most clearly differentiate the two classifications and also to reinforce the age restriction for the MA15+ classification. Comments from parents were as follows:

“I think that’s clearer. No confusion with 15+.”

“A looks more serious. I like the 15+. Tells kids its clear cut and backs up parents.”

“M and MA I thought was the same thing so giving A15+ by itself could be a better idea.”

“Parents are going to be more worried with what you see because of the A, because it looks worse.” (13 to 14 year old)

“I think with MA you can get away with it but if you had A15+, they would not let you get away with it. Parents would take it more seriously.”(13 to 14 year old)

- Although it was explained to respondents early in the session that the correct meaning of MA15+ was Mature Accompanied, most continued to interpret A15+ as “adult” rather than “accompanied”.

“I think people have seen MA as mature adult and you see A and you think adult.” (Parent)

“Easier to understand ... adults 15+.” (Parent)

“A says no to kids.” (Parent)

“I think A would stand for adult. I think people would be stricter.” (13 to 14 year old)

- The M and A alternative was generally viewed as confusing because no age description was included.

If you don't have the 15+, people might think they are the same.” (13 to 14 year old)

“People think with the 15+ that you have to be fifteen or older.” (13 to 14 year old)

“Can 15 year olds see A?” (Parent)

“They are trying to simplify it but now A says just adults and full stop.” (Parent)

- The M and A15- alternative was criticised as not being very clear and most did not understand the 15-.

“What is the minus?” (Parent)

“It doesn't matter what age you are if it says 15-“.” (13 to 14 year old)

- The M15+ and A15+ alternative was seen to have similar problems to the existing symbols due to the inclusion of 15+ in both categories.

“It means the same thing. They're both the same thing.”(Parent)

“You tend to look at the 15+. I think that's confusing. You only see the 15+. What's the difference?”(Parent)

“Pretty much the same, can't see the difference.” (13 to 14 year old)

4.6 Response to alternative descriptions for M15+ and MA15+

- Different versions of descriptions for M15+ and the new MA15+ symbol were evaluated. The wording was altered between “not recommended” and “unsuitable”, and between “children” and “persons” with different views emerging between parents and 13 to 14 year olds.
- Parents tended to prefer the use of the word “unsuitable” in the description as it clearly indicated the likely nature of the content of films with an MA15+. They also indicated that including this word would provide stronger reinforcement to their decision not to allow their children to see these films. A couple of respondents expressed the view that “children” was a reminder that under 15 year olds are not adults, however, overall there was a slight preference for the use of “people”.

“Unsuitable to me says you shouldn’t take your child.”

“It should be clear. It should say unsuitable. Then you could say to your child look at what it says. You can’t watch that film.”

“I like unsuitable better because it gives parents a better idea of what it means.”

“Children – emphasizes the seriousness of it.”

- The 13 and 14 year olds were more likely to opt for the use of “not recommended” as they believed it could provide some leverage to gain parental permission to see films with an MA15+ classification. They also preferred “people” over “children”.

“Unsuitable would work better for parents but not recommended would work better for me to see it.”

“Parents would prefer unsuitable but I’d prefer not recommended. Not recommended says you can still go.”

“Children are not teenagers and at our age we are teenagers.”

4.7 Response to usage of new symbols in other media

- The proposal that any change to M15+ and MA15+ being applicable to other forms of media such as DVDs and videos, computer games and TV programmes was seen as strongly advantageous, particularly by parents. They believed that consistency of classification across various media would greatly enhance their ability to make appropriate viewing decisions for their families.



“Whatever you do, it should be simple. Keep in simple so that everyone can understand.”

“Should be one system, standardised”.

4.8 Response to the new exemption message

- Most respondents recalled the previous yellow exemption message but very few had seen the new version of the message. Generally, there was a high level of comprehension by parents of the meaning of the message.

“It means check it before you decide to watch it.”

“Check the classification in the paper.”

5. Conclusions

- This study confirms findings from earlier research that there is a strong need for clearer differentiation between the M15+ and MA15+ classifications. Both parents and 13 to 14 year olds understand that there is a distinct hierarchical difference between the two categories when exposed to relevant content in the research. The current symbols however are not communicating these differences and are contributing to misunderstanding and confusion.
- Of the four alternatives, the combination of M and A15+ was preferred by both parents and 13 to 14 year olds. This combination represented a strong improvement and highlighted the differences between the two categories both in terms of content and age restriction.

PART II. INDUSTRY FEEDBACK

1. Research Background

- Concerns about the community's lack of understanding between M15+ and MA15+ have been strongly expressed by the cinema industry. Cinema operators are the final checkpoint of access to MA15+ films and therefore their opinion is valuable in assessing the likely impact of a change in marking to the M15+ and MA15+ categories. Under classification enforcement legislation, the exhibitors are liable for non-compliance with the requirement that under 15 years olds need to be accompanied to see MA15+ films.
- To complement the focus groups conducted, interviews were held with cinema operators who had extensive experience over many years, including prior to the introduction of MA15+ in 1993.

2. Research Design

- Interviews were held with four industry representatives whose experience ranged from 10 to 46 years in the cinema industry. The interviewees included major and independent operators, as well as country and metropolitan. These experts had experience operating cinemas in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory. A discussion guide used during the interviews in Appendix D.

3. Main Findings

- The cinema operators described how there was a general confusion amongst parents about the meaning of the two categories and how some parents and teenagers had deliberately tried to exploit this confusion and had placed the operators, and their staff, in a difficult position.

“Parents coming in saying, I have given consent, they don't want, or don't want to know, that they are required to accompany the child.”

“I just think people don't understand it (MA) enough, and the onus so much seems to be on the cinema operator.”

- During discussions, the industry representatives volunteered changes to the categories, very similar to those being proposed in this report. Some of the comments were:

“The 15+ in both is causing confusion.”

“People are not looking at the A in MA. It needs to be made clearer what it means.”

“People don’t necessarily understand the subtlety that of one is effectively a choice, one is not necessarily a choice.”

“Need to include the fact that A means accompanied and not audience.”

- There was agreement amongst industry representatives that there was a great deal of confusion and misunderstanding by patrons about the meaning of “guardian”. This had repercussions for cinema operators and their staff.

“People are reading it to be anybody who’s over 18... and that’s very hard for box office person to push back against”.

“I have a common occurrence where a parent will try and pass off the elder brother or sister as the guardian.”

- The industry representatives believed that the change to M and A15+ would contribute significantly to a better understanding by their patrons of these two categories. In particular, they were of the view that the changes would assist them when explaining to patrons the restrictive nature of the MA15+ category.
- The cinema operators consulted did not believe that the proposed changes would be detrimental to their ticket sales.
- There was support for a consistent classification system across all media. This was seen as important in raising the community’s understanding of the classification categories.

“Having the same system on TV, this would better educate the public”.

4. Conclusions

- The cinema industry representatives were highly supportive of the proposed changes to the M15+ and MA15+ classification categories to M and A15+ respectively. They were also of the view that this change would greatly assist them and their staff in explaining the restrictive nature of the MA15+ classification. Further, the change would not have a negative effect on business.



APPENDIX

- A. Screening Questionnaires** -Parents
- 13 to 14 year olds
- B. Discussion Guides** - Parents
- 13 to 14 year olds
- C. Stimulus Material**
- D. Interview Guide for Cinema**



SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRES

CONSUMER RESEARCH – MAY 2003

Questionnaire – PARENTS

Please tick the appropriate box

1. Have you done any kind of market research during the last 6 months?

Yes	
No	

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

Banking/finance	
Advertising	
TV/Film	
Journalism	
Retail	

3. What is your sex

Male	
Female	

4. What is your age?

Under 13	
13 to 14 years	
16 to 24 years	
25 to 29 years	
30 to 39 years	
40 to 49 years	
50 years and over	

5. What is your status

Single	
Married/de facto	

6. Children



How many children aged 7 to 10 do you have?

How many children aged 10 to 14 do you have?

7. Which describes your current situation

Full-time	
Part-time	
Non working	
Student	

8. What is occupation and position of the main income earner in your household?

9. How often do you usually go to the movies? (tick table below)

10. How often, if at all, do you or your children watch videos/DVDs at home? (tick table below)

	Movies Question 9	Video/ DVD Question 10
Once a week or more often		
2 to 3 times per month		
Once a month		
Less often		
Don't go/watch		

11. On average how many hours do you watch free to air TV each week?

Under 4 hours	
4 to 9 hours	
10 or more hours	
Don't watch TV	

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

13. And how often does your child/do your children play computer games?

Several times per week		
2 to 3 times per month		
Once a month or less often		
Don't play computer games		

14. And apart from English, what other languages are spoken in your household?



CONSUMER RESEARCH – MAY 2003

Questionnaire – 13 TO 14 YEAR OLDS

Please tick the appropriate box

1. Have you done any kind of market research during the last 6 months?

Yes	
No	

2. Do any of your family work in any of the following industries?

Banking/finance	
Advertising	
TV/Film	
Journalism	
Retail	

3. What is your sex?

Male	
Female	

4. What is your age?

Under 13	
13 to 14 years	
16 to 24 years	
25 to 29 years	
30 to 39 years	
40 to 49 years	
50 years and over	

5. What is occupation and position of the main income earner in your household?



6. How often do you usually go to the movies? (tick table below)

7. How often do you watch videos/DVDs at home? (tick table below)

	Movies Question 6	Video/ DVD Question 7
Once a week or more often		
2 to 3 times per month		
Once a month		
Less often		
Don't go/watch		

8. On average, how many hours do you watch free to air TV each week?

Under 4 hours	
4 to 9 hours	
10 or more hours	
Don't watch TV	

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

10. And apart from English, what other languages are spoken in your household?



DISCUSSION GUIDES

PROJECT MIRROR – PARENTS

Warm up and introduction (10 minutes)

- Purpose of group explained, no right or wrong answers, everyone's opinion is important, video/audio taping
- Introductions – number of children and ages, hobbies/interests, last movie experience with or without children.

Usage and attitudes towards classification (15 minutes)

- PARENTS - How do you go about deciding whether a film is suitable for your child/children? What sources do you typically use? Probe for usage of newspaper advertisements, billboards, trailers.
- What was the last movie your son/daughter saw at the cinema? And how did you decide on that film? What influenced you? And did you also see the movie?
- And can you recall the classification or rating of that film? Was this something you considered when deciding whether the film was suitable? Why/why not?
- What do you know about the current classification 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? Have you experienced any problems or difficulties with this system?

Classification Categories (15 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?
- Introduce M15+ and MA 15+ symbols - what kind of things do you expect to see in a film that is rated M 15+. And what about MA 15+? How similar or dissimilar are these two categories?
- Introduce descriptions for each classification category – how do you feel about these? In what way could these be improved to make the differences clearer? Probe on specific wording in descriptions



Alternative Symbols for M15+ and MA15+ (30 minutes)

- PARENTS – show clips for each classification category along with relevant classification information
- Now how similar or different do you feel these two classifications are? Why do you say? How do you feel about the classification symbols that are currently being used for the two categories?
- Expose alternative pairs of symbols. What do you understand by these symbols? What is the intended meaning? What in particular do you like about this combination? Any improvements that could be made to make their meaning clearer for you?
- Which of the 4 combinations is working best for you? And why is that?
- Introduce descriptions for each pair. How do you feel about the descriptions for each symbol? Does that help or hinder your understanding? Any improvements that could be made to make it clearer? Probe specific wording in description.
- Which of the 4 combinations is working best for you and best reflects the two classification categories? And why is that combination working better?

Other issues – 5 minutes

- **Video/DVD/Computer Games**
- If these new classification symbols are introduced they will also apply to video/DVD, computer games as well as TV programmes. How appropriate is this? Why do you feel that way?
- **Exemption Slide - expose**
- Have you noticed this in the cinema or on TV? What are your impressions? What meaning does it convey to you?
- **Newspaper advertising**
- Do you look at newspaper advertising to check classification information? Why/why not? Expose examples. Have you noticed this kind of classification information before? Have you used to help you decide on films either for yourself or your children?

Sum up

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



PROJECT MIRROR – 13 TO 14 YEAR OLDS

Warm up and introduction (10 minutes)

- Purpose of group explained, no right or wrong answers, everyone's opinion is important, video/audio taping
- Introductions – number of children in family and ages, hobbies/interests, last movie experience and who with

Usage and attitudes towards classification (10 minutes)

- What do you know about the current classification system that provides rating information on movies that are shown at the cinema? And what do your parents know about the classification system?
- What are all the different classification categories you know of? How do you feel about the different classifications for films? How useful are they to you? Do you use the classification rating to get permission from your parents to see films

M15+ & MA15+ (15 minutes)

- Introduce M15+ symbol – what does this mean to you? What kind of things would you expect to see in a film with this rating? Do your parents allow you to see these films either at the cinema or at home? What are the most films you have seen?
- Introduce MA15+ symbol – what does this mean to you? What kind of things would you see expect to see in a film with this rating? Which films rated M15+ have you seen recently? Where was this and who was this with?
- How similar or dissimilar are these two categories? Do you think your parents understand the differences between these two classifications?
- Introduce descriptions for each classification category – how do you feel about these? In what way could these be improved to make the differences clearer? Probe on specific wording in descriptions

Alternative Symbols for M15+ and MA15+ (20 minutes)

- Expose posters and video boxes for each classification - now how similar or different do you feel these two classifications are? How do you feel about the classification symbols that are currently being used for the two categories?
- Expose alternative pairs of symbols. What do you understand by these symbols? What is the intended meaning? What in particular do you like about this combination? Any improvements that could be made to make their meaning clearer for you?
- Which of the 4 combinations is working best for you? And why is that?
- Introduce descriptions for each pair. How do you feel about the descriptions for each symbol? Does that help or hinder your understanding? Any improvements that could be made to make it clearer? Probe specific wording in description.
- Which of the 4 combinations is working best for you and best reflects the two classification categories? And why is that combination working better?



Video/DVD/Computer Games (5 minutes)

- If these new classification symbols are introduced they will also apply to video/DVD, computer games as well as TV programmes. How appropriate is this? Why do you feel that way?

Sum up

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

STIMULUS MATERIAL

1) VISUALS

1. 2 boards - one each of M and MA with symbol and age
2. 2 boards - one each of M and MA with symbol, age and description
3. 4 boards - one each of the M/A options on a board (symbols only)
4. 2 boards - one each of the alternative description for M15+ and MA15+
5. 1 board of the new exemption message
6. Newspapers - 2 copies of local newspaper

Current wording for M15+ and MA15+ classification descriptions

M15+ - “Recommended for mature audiences 15 years and over”.

MA15+ - “Persons under 15 years must be accompanied by a parent or adult guardian”.

Alternative wording for classification descriptions

Option 1

“Recommended for mature audiences 15 years and over”.

“Not recommended for children under 15 years. Children under 15 years must be accompanied by a parent or adult guardian”.

Option 2

“Recommended for mature audiences 15 years and over”.

“Unsuitable for children under 15 years. Children under 15 years must be accompanied by a parent or adult guardian”.

Option 3

“Suitable for mature audiences 15 years and over”.

“Unsuitable for people under 15 years. People under 15 years must be accompanied by a parent or adult guardian”.

2) FILM CLIPS/POSTERS/VIDEO BOXES

Films classified M15+

Lord of the Rings – Fellowship of the Ring

This epic of good versus evil is the first of three films based on Tolkein’s books about a hobbit called Frodo whose mission is to save Middle-earth by destroying the evil One Ring.

Scene: Saruman and Gandalf are engaged in a battle in a tower.



Mission Impossible 2

This action sequel has secret agent Ethan Hunt whose mission is to stop terrorists from unleashing a deadly virus on the world.

Scene: A fight between agent Hunt and a number of villains.

Miss Congeniality

FBI agent Gracie Hart who goes undercover at the Miss USA pageant to uncover who is targeting government agencies.

Scene: Agent Hart is grabbed by a suspect during a FBI sting.

Films classified MA15

Blade II

This is the sequel to the action vampire movie *Blade* is a half human, half vampire action hero whose desire is to save the human race from a new breed of super enemies and from destruction.

Scene: Blade is placed on a table and spikes are inserted through his body.

Scream 3

A sequel horror movie about a police officer who is trying to stop someone who is killing off, one by one, the cast for a movie called *Scream 3*.

Scene: Its towards the end of the movie and Sidney confronts the killer.

American Beauty

This film is about Lester, a man who is going through a mid life crisis.

Scene: Lester undresses a young girl.



INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CINEMA

Date:
Name:
Position:
Experience:
Cinema:
No of screens:
Contact no:

QUESTIONS:

1. From your experience, where do people find out about the classification of a film?
2. Do you think people understand the difference between M15+ and MA15+? If not, why do you think the confusion arises?
3. What could be done to the symbols to improve the public's understanding of these two categories?
4. How would these changes affect your business?
5. Do you think people understand the meaning of "guardian"? If not, what do you think they take it to mean?
6. What are some of your experiences about teenagers under 15 trying to see MA15+ films?
7. What are your views about classification information offered across different media?
8. Anything else you would like to raise in relation to the classification system?