

## **Appendix 1**

**Extract from the**

# **Guidelines for the Classification of Films and Videotapes**

**(Office of Film and Literature Classification)**

# GENERAL

*(Suitable for all ages)*

This is a category which is considered suitable for all viewers.

The G classification symbol does not necessarily indicate that the film is one that children will enjoy. Some G films contain themes or story-lines that are of no interest to children.

Parents should feel confident that children can watch material in this classification without supervision. Material classified G will not be harmful or disturbing to children. Whether or not the film is intended for children, the treatment of themes and other classifiable elements will be careful and discreet.

*Violence:* Violence may be very discreetly implied, but should:

- have a light tone, or
- have a very low sense of threat or menace, and
- be infrequent, and
- not be gratuitous

*Sex:* Sexual activity should:

- only be suggested in very discreet visual or verbal references, and
- be infrequent, and
- not be gratuitous

*Coarse Language:* Coarse language should:

- be very mild and infrequent, and
- not be gratuitous

# **PG** PARENTAL GUIDANCE

*(Parental guidance recommended for persons under 15 years)*

The PG classification signals to parents that material in this category contains depictions or references which could be confusing or upsetting, to children without adult guidance. Material classified PG will not be harmful or disturbing to children.

Parents may choose to preview the material for their children; some may choose to watch the material with their children. Others might find it sufficient to be accessible during or after the viewing to discuss the content.

**Violence:** Violence may be discreetly implied or stylised, and should also be:

- mild in impact, and
- not shown in detail

**Sex:** Sexual activity may be suggested, but should:

- be discreet, and
- be infrequent, and
- not be gratuitous

Verbal references to sexual activity should be discreet.

**Coarse Language:** Coarse language should be mild and infrequent.

**Adult Themes:** Supernatural or mild horror themes may be included. The treatment of adult themes should be discreet and mild in impact. More disturbing themes are not generally dealt with at PG level.

**Drug Use:** Discreet verbal references and mild, incidental visuals of drug use may be included, but these should not promote or encourage drug use.

**Nudity:** Nudity outside of a sexual context should not be detailed or gratuitous.

# **M** 15+ MATURE

*(Recommended for mature audiences 15 years and over)*

The Mature category is advisory and not legally restricted. However, material in this category cannot be recommended for those under 15 years.

Films classified M contain material that is considered to be potentially harmful or disturbing to those under 15 years. Depictions and references to classifiable elements may contain detail. However, the impact will not be so strong as to require restriction.

## *Violence:*

Generally, depictions of violence should:

- not contain a lot of detail and
- not be prolonged

In realistic treatments, depictions of violence that contain detail should:

- be infrequent and
- not have a high impact and/or
- not be gratuitous

In stylised treatments, depictions of violence may contain more detail and be more frequent if this does not increase the impact.

Verbal and indirect visual references to sexual violence may only be included if they are:

- discreet and infrequent, and
- strongly justified by the narrative or a documentary context.

## *Sex:*

Sexual activity may be discreetly implied.

Nudity in a sexual context should not contain a lot of detail, or be prolonged.

Verbal references to sexual activity may be more detailed than depictions if this does not increase the impact.

*Coarse Language:* Coarse language may be used.

Generally, coarse language that is stronger, detailed or very aggressive should:

- be infrequent and
- not be gratuitous

*Adult Themes:* Most themes can be dealt with, but the treatment should be discreet, and the impact should not be high.

*Drug Use:* Drug use may be discreetly shown.  
Drug use should not be promoted or encouraged.

*Nudity:* Nudity outside of a sexual context may be shown but depictions that contain any detail should not be gratuitous.



## 15+ MATURE ACCOMPANIED

*(Restrictions apply to persons under the age of 15\*)*

\*The MA category is legally restricted. Children under fifteen will not be allowed to see MA films in the cinema or hire them on video unless in the company of a parent or adult guardian.

Material classified MA deals with issues or contains depictions which require a mature perspective. This is because the impact of individual elements or a combination of elements is considered likely to be harmful or disturbing to viewers under 15 years of age.

**Violence:** Generally, depictions of violence should not have a high impact. Depictions with a high impact should be infrequent, and should not be prolonged or gratuitous.

Realistic treatments may contain detailed depictions, but these should not be prolonged.

Depictions of violence in stylised treatments may be more detailed and more frequent than depictions of violence in close to real life situations or in realistic treatments if this does not increase the impact.

Visual suggestions of sexual violence are permitted only if they are not frequent, prolonged, gratuitous or exploitative.

**Sex:** Sexual activity may be implied.

Depictions of nudity in a sexual context which contain detail should not be exploitative.

Verbal references may be more detailed than depictions, if this does not increase the impact.

**Coarse Language:** Coarse language may be used.

Coarse language that is very strong, aggressive or detailed should not be gratuitous.

**Adult Themes:** The treatment of themes with a high degree of intensity should be discreet.

**Drug Use:** Drug use may be shown, but should not be promoted or encouraged.

More detailed depictions should not have a high degree of impact.



## 18+ RESTRICTED

*(Restricted to adults 18 years and over)*

The R category is legally restricted to adults. Material which is given a restricted classification is unsuitable for those under 18 years of age. Material classified R deals with issues or contains depictions which require an adult perspective.

The classification is not intended as a comment on the quality of the material. Some material may be offensive to some sections of the adult community. Material which promotes or incites or instructs in matters of crime and/or violence is not permitted.

**Violence:** Depictions of violence which are excessive will not be permitted.

Strong depictions of realistic violence may be shown but depictions with a high degree of impact should not be gratuitous or exploitative.

Sexual violence may only be implied and should not be detailed.

Depictions must not be frequent, gratuitous or exploitative.

Gratuitous, exploitative or offensive depictions of cruelty or real violence will not be permitted.

**Sex:** Sexual activity may be realistically simulated; the general rule is "simulation, yes - the real thing, no."

Nudity in a sexual context should not include obvious genital contact.

Verbal references may be more detailed than depictions.

**Coarse Language:** There are virtually no restrictions on coarse language at R level.

**Adult Themes:** The treatment of any themes with a very high degree of intensity should not be exploitative.

**Drug Use:** Drug use may be shown but not gratuitously detailed.  
Drug use should not be promoted or encouraged.  
Detailed instruction in drug misuse is not permitted.

**X** 18+ **CONTAINS SEXUALLY  
EXPLICIT MATERIAL**

*(Restricted to adults 18 years and over\*)*

\* Available only on video; available only in the ACT and Northern Territory

This classification is a special and legally restricted category which only contains sexually explicit material. That is material which contains real depictions of actual sexual intercourse and other sexual activity between consenting adults, including mild fetishes.

No depiction of sexual violence, sexualised violence or coercion, offensive fetishes, or depictions which purposefully debase or abuse for the enjoyment of viewers is permitted in this classification.



# RC REFUSED CLASSIFICATION

As pointed out in the introduction, films and videos must be classified. A film or video which does not have the authorised classification symbols or the consumer advice is either an unclassified film or video, or it has been refused classification.

Films or videos which contain elements beyond those set out in the above classification categories are refused classification.

Films or videos which fall within the criteria for refused classification cannot be legally brought into Australia.

The Classification Code sets out the criteria for refusing to classify a film or video. The criteria fall into three categories. These include films that:

- depict, express or otherwise deal with matters of sex, drug misuse or addiction, crime, cruelty, violence or revolting or abhorrent phenomena in such a way that they offend against the standards of morality, decency and propriety generally accepted by reasonable adults to the extent that they should be classified RC.
- depict in a way that is likely to cause offence to a reasonable adult a person who is or who looks like a child under 16 (whether or not engaged in sexual activity), or;
- promote, incite or instruct in matters of crime or violence.

Films and videos will be refused classification if they appear to purposefully debase or abuse for the enjoyment of viewers, and which lack moral, artistic or other values, to the extent that they offend against generally accepted standards of morality, decency and propriety.

Films and videos will be refused classification if they contain:

- (a) depictions of child sexual abuse or any other exploitative or offensive depictions involving a person who is or who looks like a child under 16;
- (b) detailed instruction in:
  - (i) matters of crime or violence,
  - (ii) the use of proscribed drugs;
- (c) depictions of practices such as bestiality.

Films and videos will be refused classification if they contain gratuitous, exploitative or offensive depictions of:

- (d) violence with a very high degree of impact or which are excessively frequent, prolonged or detailed;
- (e) cruelty or real violence which are very detailed or which have a high impact;
- (f) sexual violence;
- (g) sexual activity accompanied by fetishes or practices which are offensive or abhorrent;
- (h) incest fantasies or other fantasies which are offensive or abhorrent.

## Appendix 2

Extract from the

### RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON VIOLENCE

#### Media Organisations

*Recommendation 112.* The media generally, and the television industry in particular, should demonstrate a commitment to programming which promotes pro-social conduct and non-violent values.

*Recommendation 113.* Media organisations should develop a code of conduct aimed at reducing gratuitous intrusions upon victims' and alleged offenders' privacy and dignity; avoiding glorification of violence; and avoiding portrayals which may encourage the commission of similar offences.

*Recommendation 114.* Media coverage of sporting events should avoid the gratuitous re-play of violent incidents.

*Recommendation 115.* Media commentators on sporting events should avoid glorification of violence and should forcefully condemn violence when it occurs, and should shame the perpetrators of violence.

*Recommendation 116.* Media advertising of sporting events should avoid metaphors of violence and should emphasise themes of fair play.

## Appendix 3

### LIST OF SEMINAR PARTICIPANTS

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**MRS PHILLIPA BALLARD**

New Zealand Broadcasting Standards Authority

**MS BARBARA BIGGINS**

Young Media Australia

**MR JOHN BOOTH**

Australian Video Retailers Association

**PROFESSOR JULIE JAMES BAILEY**

**PROFESSOR PIERRE BAUME**

Australian Institute for Suicide Research & Prevention

**PROFESSOR DI BRETHERTON**

Director, International Conflict Resolution Centre, University of Melbourne

**MRS P CASLEY-SMITH**

**MR JOHN DICKIE**

Office of Film and Literature Classification

**MR BARRY EBEDES**

**MS PENNY EDMUND**

Catholic Women's League

**MR TERRY FLEW**

Australian Key Centre for Cultural and Media Policy, Griffith University

**FATHER CHRISTOPHER GLEESON**

Association of Heads of Independent Schools of Australia

**MR ALASDAIR GRANT**

Communications Law Centre

**MRS LINLEY GRANT**

National Council of Women of Tasmania

**DR ADAM GRAYCAR**

Australian Institute of Criminology

**MS HEATHER GRIDLEY**

The Australian Psychological Association

**MS JENNY HARVEY**  
South Australia Child Health Council

**MS ROBYN KERR**  
Australian Association of Social Workers WA Branch

**MRS KAREN KOOMEN**  
Australian Broadcasting Authority

**MR CHRIS LAMING**  
Men's Shed Project

**MR ANTHONY LARME**  
Moorooka, Queensland

**MR HARRY MACDONALD**  
Association of Heads of Independent Schools of Australia

**FR PETER MALONE**  
Australian Catholic Film Office

**MR KEN MARSLEW**  
Enough is Enough Anti-Violence Movement

**MS ROSLYN PHILLIPS**  
Festival of Light (SA)

**MRS ELIZABETH SHARP**

**MS J TILLEY**  
Hobart, Tasmania

**MRS MARY UHLMANN**  
Canberra, ACT

**MRS BERYL VAN LUYN**  
National Viewers and Listeners Association of Australia

**CR. WARREN WOODLEY**  
Tamworth City Council

**Appendix 4**

**MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE INQUIRY  
INTO THE  
PORTRAYAL OF VIOLENCE IN THE ELECTRONIC MEDIA**

**IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS  
AS AT 7 FEBRUARY 1997**

**This document was prepared by Officers of the Department of Communication and the Arts. The Senate Committee thanks them for their cooperation during this inquiry and the preparation of this report.**

**MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE INQUIRY INTO  
THE PORTRAYAL OF VIOLENCE IN THE ELECTRONIC MEDIA**

**IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS AS AT 7 FEBRUARY 1997**

**Decision**

(a) Commission specific research to identify and investigate ways of assisting groups most at risk from the portrayal of violence.

(b) Continue public education campaigns by industry and in schools.

(c) Introduce an industry code of practice for video and interactive software retailers.

(d) Technical blocking devices (eg the V-chip) should be built into all new television sets and should be made available for existing sets.

(e) Prohibitions should be introduced on the export of all refused classification material ensuring export regulations are consistent with import regulations.

(f) Consideration of arrangements to make it an offence to possess films, videos, video and computer games that have been or would be refused classification because of violent content.

**Implementation**

This matter was referred to the Ministers for Health and Family Services. The report on research commissioned by the sub-committee is expected to be considered by the Government shortly.

The Minister for Schools, Vocational Education and Training is to promote school education programs.

These matters were referred to the Attorney-General. The Australian Visual Software Distributors Association and The Australian Video Retailers Association have commenced discussion on the development of codes of practice. AVRA has circulated a draft code to its Board, industry stakeholders and members of the Association and expects to submit the code to the Attorney-General's Department by the end of May 1997.

The Department of Industry, Science and Tourism and the Department of Communications and the Arts have commenced consultation with the broadcasting and electronics industries on the form and timing of implementation.

These matters were referred to the Attorney-General and the Minister for Small Business and Consumer Affairs.

The Australian Customs Service, in consultation with the Attorney-General's Department, has issued drafting instructions to the Office of Legislative Drafting in order to implement the necessary legislative changes. A draft has been received and is currently being settled between the relevant agencies.

This issue is under consideration by Commonwealth, State and Territory Censorship Ministers. It is understood that this matter will be discussed further at a meeting scheduled for March 1997.

(g) Expand Community Liaison Officer (CLO) scheme.

Victoria, South Australia, the Northern Territory, and the Australian Capital Territory had previously agreed to participate in a trialing of the scheme for one year. At the October meeting of the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General, Tasmania also agreed to join the scheme. NSW, Queensland and Western Australia will reconsider their position at the end of the trial period.

(h) Amend classification guidelines for films and videos to remove the high level violence material from the 'R' classification; and reclassify films classified high 'M' prior to 1993.

On 11 July 1996, the Attorney-General and State and Territory Censorship Ministers amended classification guidelines for films and videos to remove high level violence material from the R classification. Such material would now be classified as RC (Refused Classification). Implemented by the Office of Film and Literature Classification.

The Ministers have decided to institute a complaints based approach which provided for reclassification on a case by case basis after an audit of video titles classified M between July 1991 and May 1993 (when the MA category was introduced) was conducted. It revealed that only 0.9% of total titles classified during that period contain high level violence. These titles had been the subject of little or no complaint and are not currently in high demand.

(i) Free to air broadcasters to modify films for broadcast in accordance with Office of Film and Literature Classification Guidelines.

These are matters for national and commercial broadcasters to implement through their respective codes of practice. The revised draft Federation of Australian Commercial Television Stations Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice contains a clear reference to the need to modify films in this way.

(j) The broadcast of 'MA' programmes carrying a consumer advice V symbol to be restricted to between 9.30am and 5.00pm.

FACTS has released a revised draft code which proposes a new AV classification with a 9.30pm to 5.00am time zone.

(k) Broadcasters should review complaints mechanisms to as to ensure that they are effective and responsive to community concerns.

As for (i).



(i) Review the composition of, and the terms of appointment to, the Classification Board and the Classification Review Board.

Review has been completed. The Attorney-General has since announced that he has requested his Department to review the selection process for appointments to the Classification Board.

(m) Matters arising from submissions to the Ministerial Committee to be referred to the Senate Select Committee on Community Standards Relevant to the Supply of Services Utilising Electronic Technologies.

The Committee is expected to report by the end of the second sitting week in February 1997.