

Polly Seidler

31 May 2011

Committee Secretary  
Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee  
PO Box 6100.  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600



**Re: Classification inquiry**

Dear Committee,

I went to a talk on censorship on 19 May 2011 at City of Sydney Surry Hills library and Lesley O'Brien, Deputy Director of the Classification Board encouraged me to make a submission about my concerns to the enquiry into classification.

I would like to make a submission to the classification scheme, on 3 counts:

**h) the possibility of including outdoor advertising, such as billboards, in the National Classification Scheme;**

The current system of complaining about billboards to Advertising Standards Bureau allows ads to remain if considered short-term ie less than 2 weeks, and offended me and many school children walking nearby. I should not have to be confronted with such images in a highly public place for such a long time frame.

For example, in October 2010, a very prominent billboard at 197 William St Darlinghurst/Woolloomooloo I note that the location of the ad was in full view of the local supermarket exit (Coles is beneath the Coca Cola sign), and is on route from Kings Cross to local schools SCEGGS, Darlinghurst and Darlinghurst Public, and also on view from those travelling by train to St Vincents Hospital.

The ad for Marc Jacobs male perfume "Bang" had a huge naked male perhaps lying on his back (because his legs are in the air), all greased up, with his legs apart in the air, with a mirror prism in skin colour over his groin area.

Reason for my complaint to ASB: The greased body and stance with legs apart (and facing the viewer) is highly erotic - and is overly sexual for a such a prominent public place. It stands out to me when I drive or walk by the billboard - normally I don't react to billboards but this is like a huge porn photo glaring down at me. It should not be allowed to be displayed in public.

Even the *Sydney Morning Herald Essential supplement* Thurs 28 Oct 2010 - "fashion police style" (Essential Supplement p11) editorial by Kellie Hush noted ""Those who are easily offended should steer clear of William St, Kings Cross. A billboard of advertising the new Marc Jacobs fragrance, Bang, has gone up this week..." (and the page reproduces the image). Even a fashion editor noted that the ad will offend.

The current system allows sexualised images to be imposed upon members of the public for too long.

**l) the interaction between the National Classification Scheme and the role of the Australian Communications and Media Authority in supervising broadcast standards for television and Internet content;**

I note that the New Years Eve radio broadcast of 31 December 2008 at approximately 8.53pm before the "family fireworks" simulcast with Radio 104.1FM had the word "cock" spoken of. I had children at my place and was horrified that a radio broadcast for such an event would allow such language to be heard by children.

Alas ACMA confused radio 2Day FM's evidence of 2Day FM's "usual" and "target" audience from the Code's reference to "anticipated audience" of children for the event and so condoned the conduct. See report link (which includes a 2 page transcript of the night - see Attachment A). [http://www.acma.gov.au/webwr/\\_assets/main/lib310804/2day-fm\\_report\\_2132.pdf](http://www.acma.gov.au/webwr/_assets/main/lib310804/2day-fm_report_2132.pdf)

ACMA cannot be trusted to ensure that children have proper language for radio simulcast broadcasts intended for families - such as radio simulcast for family fireworks on New Year's Eve.

**0) any other matter,**

Finally, I subscribe the theatre - to theatre companies who get Government eg Australia Council funding, (Sydney Theatre Company and Belvoir St) and I am often paying to see plays, which the subscription programs (or script) do not at all suggest such gratuitous sexualised actions. There should be a classification system for theatre with government funding.

eg Sydney Theatre Company - January 2009 - Shakespeare "The War of the Roses" where I had seen a schoolgirl, daughter of friend, in lobby (proud she had secured a ticket to see Cate Blanchett) had enacted posturings of homosexual oral sex and then one man wiping the sperm all over his face. the script of Faust (the original play) did not suggest anything like this scene. I had not way to prevent being confronted by such an image. while since late 2009 and 2010 subscription brochures for the Sydney theatre Company for the following calendar year's subscription lists a "profane meter" and "raunch indicator" they are just put onto a non-scaled curve and is meaningless as there is no reference point.

eg Belvoir/Company B - 2010 production of "Measure for Measure" had actor Toby Schmitz masturbating to a flower between scenes. again, as a subscriber there is no way I could have known that this would be in the performance as it is not in the script. When I asked Belvoir about any possible such scenes fo 2011 subscription, they suggested that I read reviews at the time the play is on - but alas that means I have to loose my money to pay for plays that are not disclosed to me to contain sexualised images.

eg "FAME" - I recall a mother seeing a production of "fame" in Sydney (sometime in 2009-2010) and being horrified by the sexualised language (she wrote a letter to Sydney Morning Herald) and was told that there was no regulation about any content on live stage, and there was nothing she could do about it.

I'm all for artistic freedom, but it is unfair that I hand over my money in good faith to subscribe to see a play(s) where I will be confronted with highly sexualised activity which is not at all suggested by the content in the subscription brochure or play script. Surely for major theatre companies who get government funding a system of classification can be arranged so that consumers can be for-warned before spending money - and have such things disclosed in

the subscription brochure or other PR so that consumers can avoid images that will be offensive to them (and parents not allow children to be exposed to unsuitable content). Perhaps a classification at the time and those consumers who wish to be notified of MA 15+ ratings can be told and have their money refunded for such plays.

Yours sincerely

Polly Seidler