

PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

**Senate Select Committee on Community Standards
Relevant to the Supply of Services
Utilising Electronic Technologies**

REPORT

ON

**CLASSIFICATION (PUBLICATIONS, FILMS
AND COMPUTER GAMES**

STATUTORY RULES 1995 NO. 401

AUGUST 1996

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RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That the Senate not disallow the Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Regulations as contained in Statutory Rules 1995 No. 401;
- (2) That the Government engage in close consultation with all relevant elements of the industry in relation to the review of the operations of the Office of Film and Literature Classification currently underway and release the review report to industry and to this Committee upon its completion;
- (3) That the Minister appoint a temporary member to the Classification Board to provide commercial expertise to the Board during the review process;
- (4) That the practice of applying a double charge when application is made simultaneously for the classification of a title for both film and video release be discontinued;
- (5) That the reviewers of the operations of the Office of Film and Literature Classification should examine whether the system of fee concessions could be extended to assist the release of films and videos of a community interest or educational nature;
- (6) That the current range of statutory exemptions not be extended; and
- (7) That the Standing Committee on Regulations and Ordinances give notice within the prescribed period for disallowance in relation to the Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Regulations containing the second tranche of fee increases for the classification activities of the Office of Film and Literature Classification, in order to allow the Select Committee on Community Standards Relevant to the Supply of Services Utilising Electronic Technologies to inquire into the Regulations and report to the Senate about their acceptability.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

- a) whether a code of conduct reflecting community standards should be observed by providers and carriers of commercial information or observed by providers and carriers of commercial information or entertainment services utilising electronic technologies and if so, its content, monitoring and enforcement;
- b) whether it is appropriate to control the provision of certain commercial information or entertainment services utilising electronic technologies, or to control access to such services, or both, and, if so, how control would best be achieved;
- c) the suitability of the continued provision of commercial recorded information or entertainment services carried by Telecom Australia including 0055 and Discovery Services;
- d) whether the content of pay TV, were such a service to be introduced, should include material which would be classified in the "R" or "X" categories, under existing legislation relating to classifications;
- e) the quality and adequacy of the extensive, Australia-wide qualitative and quantitative research conducted, and to be conducted, by the Australian Broadcasting Authority, on:
 - (i) community standards of taste and decency in relation to classifications for pay television;
 - (ii) what levels of violence and depictions of sex should be allowed; and
 - (iii) what other matters should be included for viewing for adults and children in the various classifications; and
- f) whether, considering the existing regulatory arrangements, at both State and Commonwealth levels, used to regulate all film, video, literature and other publications, similar arrangements are, or should be, applicable to regulating the provision of commercial information or entertainment services utilising electronic technologies.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

- Chairman: Senator J W Tierney (LP, New South Wales)
- Deputy Chair: Senator the Hon. M Reynolds (ALP, Queensland)
- Members: Senator K J Denman (ALP, Tasmania)
- Senator B Harradine (IND, Tasmania)
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- Senator J J J McGauran (LP, Victoria)
- Senator J M Troeth (LP, Victoria)
- Senator J Woodley (AD, Queensland)
-
- Secretary: Mr M McLean
The Senate
Parliament House
Canberra A.C.T. 2600
- Telephone (06) 277 3646
Facsimile (06) 277 5829

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