



THE HON BRENDAN O'CONNOR MP
Minister for Home Affairs

10/8687, MC10/5973

Senator Trish Crossin
Chair
Senate Standing Committee on
Legal and Constitutional Affairs
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

22 JUN 2010

Dear Senator Crossin

I refer to your letter dated 21 April 2010 about the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee's ongoing interest in the 'call in' notice procedure and in the National Classification Scheme generally. I acknowledge the Committee's continuing interest in the effectiveness of the scheme.

You refer to the Director of the Classification Board, Mr Donald McDonald AC, advising at the February 2010 Estimates hearings that 440 adult films and 36 adult magazines had been called in since July 2009.

Mr McDonald's evidence at the hearings in May 2010 confirmed that the Classification Board continues to audit publications with serial classifications and he continues to call in unclassified publications which are monitored by the Classification Liaison Scheme.

Measures to improve compliance and enforcement of Australia's classification laws were discussed by Ministers at the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General (SCAG) meeting on 7 May 2010. Ministers received an update on initiatives under consideration by the SCAG Compliance and Enforcement Working Party, which is chaired by the Commonwealth. The initiatives to improve compliance and enforcement include:

- reforms to the declarations scheme for publications published on a regular basis that need to be classified because of their content
- wrapping requirements for publications (principally adult magazines)
- labelling requirements
- staged penalties for selling publications that must be submitted for classification depending upon how they are later classified
- reviewing the cost and availability of enforcement applications
- prosecution strategies, and
- alternative penalties.

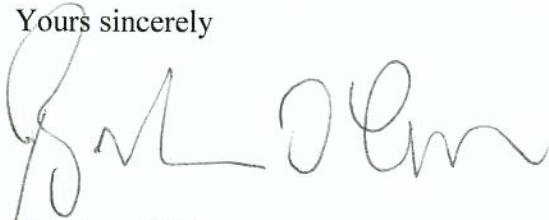
Most of these proposed reforms would involve changes to State and Territory laws. Ministers requested that officers report back with final recommendations at a future meeting.

The Attorney-General's Department also hosted a productive Classification Enforcement Contacts Forum on 21 April 2010. The Forum provided participants from the Commonwealth and all States and Territories with a greater understanding of the National Classification Scheme and the opportunity to share their enforcement experiences. It is hoped this Forum will result in greater sharing of relevant information between law enforcement agencies as we go forward.

Improving compliance with, and enforcement of, current classification laws is a Commonwealth priority. My Department will continue work closely with States and Territories in achieving this aim.

The officer responsible for this matter in my office is Yvette Nash who can be contacted on (02) 6277 7290.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brendan O'Connor', written in a cursive style.

Brendan O'Connor