



15 May 2008

**Dr. Ian Holland
Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts.**

Response to the submission from the Australian Christian Lobby (ACL) in the matter of an examination into the effectiveness of the broadcasting codes of practice operating within the radio and the television industry.

Dear Sir,

I wish to address some points of possible confusion in relation to remarks attributed to me in the ACL submission.

In relation to the use of ‘fuck’ language in the series “Ramsey’s Kitchen Nightmares”, my explanation that Chef Ramsay ‘often does not use it as swearing necessarily, just as another word and sometimes even as praise.’ would have been a little clearer in full context when I explained that he often uses it as an amplifier like ‘very’ or ‘really’ and can, and often does, use it in praise or as a positive comment.

This slight misinterpretation, however, is then used to claim that I have blatantly ignored ‘the clear meaning of the Classification Codes and is an ‘attempt at obfuscation’ when my explanation of the “M” language guidelines:

“The use of coarse language must be appropriate to the story line or program context, infrequent and must not be very aggressive. It may be used more than infrequently only in certain justifiable circumstances when it is particularly important to the story line or program context.”

(As they themselves ponder: “one sometimes wonders whether Ramsey would be capable of expressing himself if this word were removed from his vocabulary?” and the answer to that is that when he’s in the pressure of a commercial kitchen, ‘No!’, hence the use of the terms ‘justifiable circumstances’ and ‘particularly important to the program context.’ to allow his language.)

However, regardless of their whimsical quote from “Alice in Wonderland”, there is a very important distinction to be made between coarse words and coarse language. While coarse language may often include coarse words, it is also possible to have coarse language that contains only mild coarse words or even no coarse words. For example, this from a former (and nameless) school football coach: “Lyle, you useless grub! If you don’t move you backside, I’ll kick you and your lazy date into the middle of next week!”)

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Hence my comments that Ramsey doesn't so much use coarse language as one coarse word, but that one over and over again, in many variations, throughout his show.

And it is also worth remembering that the show itself is all about helping people, people that need to escape from out-dated work practices, petty squabbles, poor communications and turn failing business around, saving jobs, face and self-respect. Ignore the 'fuck' language and the above is quite possible to see:

"There's no use trying' Alice said: 'one can't believe impossible things." "I dare say you haven't had much practice" said the Queen. "When I was your age, I always did it for half an hour a day. Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast." ("Alice through the Looking-Glass" by Lewis Carroll)