

To: Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts
Committee
Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

Re: Inquiry into the effectiveness of the broadcasting codes of practice

I hope some good can come from this inquiry, although by no means would I advocate any move to *increase* the level of censorship on free-to-air television. I have never found explicit coarse language (or sex/nudity, or violence for that matter) on free-to-air television to be inadequately forewarned by means of classification and consumer advice.

The use of language such ‘fuck’ and ‘cunt’, particularly in the context of a program such as the *Gordon Ramsey’s Kitchen Nightmares*, as with all other cases I have seen (other examples include the MA programmed *The Sopranos* and the M programmed movie *Primary Colors*, amongst many others), have been used in context, and further does not offend the standards of the majority of adults.

Self-regulation has not lead to the programming of offensive content on free-to-air television. The vast majority of strong coarse language appears in M and MA programming after 8:30PM and has been appropriately addressed with consumer advice.

The argument about parental responsibility over a child’s viewing habits is often countered by the ‘what-if’ argument that some parents may not always be able to self-censor their child’s viewing habit; allowing the child access to inappropriate material. A similar case could ‘logically’ be followed that all MA, R and X rated videos should be banned on the incidental chances a child may view one ‘lying around’. Such suggestions are impractical, far outweigh the liberties and freedoms of others, and seem to be based on loose ‘research’ on the effects of strong content on minors, mostly commissioned by conservative moral groups.

However, I think the regulation of free-to-air television can be improved, both in the enforcement of content and the notification of consumer advice, particularly as it pertains to those who may be offended by coarse language. Here are some considerations I believe would help strike a good balance between the rights and responsibilities of broadcasters:

- Streamline the classification code by aligning TV classifications to those of the OFLC, similar to how computer games and film/video share the same set of guidelines. i.e. a program rated MA for film/video may be shown uncut as a TV-MA at the appropriate late timeslot. Alternatively, streamline with the content restrictions of basic pay-TV stations such as *Showtime*.
- After every advertisement break, the station must display the full classification (including the colour coded classification symbol) with *full detailed*

classification advice at the bottom of the screen, perhaps over a black bar with no more intrusion than that required for the advertising of upcoming cinema releases or computer games on television.

- ALL television guides in newspapers and similar publications should be required to publish the full classification advice of M and MA rated programs in television guides (and perhaps reviews)

I believe those proposals 'pull in both directions', giving greater transparency to consumers and balancing it with the responsibilities of broadcasters. This may in fact 'liberate', to a mild degree, the content allowed in M and MA on television, but would also allow for consumers to make well-informed viewer decisions irrespective of what time they tune in.

In the meantime, please don't take Gordon's profanity from us.

Kind Regards,
Nick Green.