

To the Secretary, Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts,

Re: Inquiry into the effectiveness of the Broadcasting Codes of Practice.

We would like to submit the following:

- A. The frequency and use of coarse and foul language in programs is unacceptable.
- B. The effectiveness of the current classification standards is not an accurate reflection of the content contained in the program. For instance, there are problems concerning classification of some of the newer breed of forensic crime television, in which there have been frequent instances of gruesome scenes and narratives involving extreme brutality and suffering. Most of this programming is classified M but it is arguable that an MA15+ rating may have been more appropriate. Also, increasingly sexualised content has featured in early evening "family" viewing in program genres such as the dancing competition shows (in which the provocativeness of sexually suggestive dance moves are rewarded over dance skills and technique), and fashion model competitions (in one program, America's Top Model, competitors had to devise and star in a sexy-in-death scene in which violence, cruelty and sexual violence were intertwined).
- C. The operation and effectiveness of the complaints process currently available to members of the public is seriously flawed and lacking in any real transparency or accountability. The system is structured to suit the interests of broadcasters. Presently, any complaint in writing must be submitted to the broadcaster and complainants have to wait 60 days for an answer before being able to take up their issue with ACMA! Broadcasters are most unlikely to encounter any obvious criticism or penalty from ACMA. In a recent case, SBS was reprimanded for screening illegal pornographic content **12 MONTHS** after the screening. With the lapse of 12 months, SBS has been able to further cement its practice of screening sexually explicit content so that precedents and standards are lowered.
- D. The crowding out of children's and child friendly family viewing time is an issue for many. There is a huge potential to return to a concept of family viewing. Presently, however, even the humour in home improvement shows, game shows or general dialogue in cooking shows are not safe from the creeping sexualisation of the media. Broadcasters must act with social responsibility and take much greater precautions against the exposure of young people to violent, disturbing or sexual content with programming and also with advertising.

Yours sincerely,
Mr L. and Mrs I. Voesenek