

I note the Committee's terms of reference:

"The Senate has referred the following matter to the Committee for inquiry and report by the 9 June 2008:

An examination into the effectiveness of the broadcasting codes of practice operating within the radio and television industry, with particular reference to:

- a. the frequency and use of coarse and foul language (swearing) in programs;
- b. the effectiveness of the current classification standards as an accurate reflection of the content contained in the program;
- c. the operation and effectiveness of the complaints process currently available to members of the public; and
- d. any other related matters."

Specifically I wish to address item a. and item d.

Item a. the frequency and use of coarse and foul language (swearing) in programs

- There appears to be a significant increase in coarse language in television shows - not just the Gordon Ramsay shows, but also others such as Underbelly. Indeed, in shows such as Underbelly, there is a greater level of violence and sex scenes. It appears that this is increasing.

- I think it would be useful for the Committee to examine whether there is any correlation between shows that have appeared to increase coarse language (and violence and sex scenes) and the ratings for those shows.

This could be considered as a quasi measure of public approval as presumably, the public would not watch if they were overly offended.

- My point would be that if the general public had such distaste for coarse language (and violence and sex scenes), then perhaps they would not watch - therefore the show would not rate well. Interestingly, the Gordon Ramsay shows and Underbelly have rated very well.

Item d. any other related matters

- I would urge the Committee to carefully consider the need to amend or tighten broadcasting codes of practice - I would not wish to see "over censorship" in our homeland which is meant to adopt free speech and expression as a fundamental freedom that we enjoy.

- Whilst I do not seek to offend other individuals, there is an "off" button on televisions and there are warnings before two shows to ensure that people are made aware of possibly distressing scenes. Alternatively, one could change channel.

- Rather than censorship, perhaps viewers should "vote with their feet".

Thank you for your consideration.

Barney Lee