

## HOW TO MAKE A SUBMISSION

To participate in this consultation, you need to answer the question:

**Should the Australian National Classification Scheme include an R 18+ classification category for computer games?**

Submissions can be sent by email in Word format without embedded images. Submissions can also be posted or faxed. You are also encouraged to keep any commentary short and succinct.

Unless you clearly request confidentiality, **submissions are public documents** and may be accessed by any member of the public, may be published on a website and quoted in further review papers. If you do not want your submission to be published, or you would like to request anonymity, you must clearly request this in your submission.

Submissions must be received by **28 February 2010**. Submissions received after this date may not be able to be considered.

Submissions should be sent to:

Email: classificationreview@ag.gov.au  
Fax: 02 6141 3488  
Post: Classification Review  
Attorney-General's Department  
3 -5 National Circuit  
BARTON ACT 2600

## TEMPLATE FOR MAKING SUBMISSIONS

### PERSONAL INFORMATION<sup>1</sup>:

*Name:* Mark Newton

*Email address\*:* newton@atdot.dotat.org

*Gender:* Male

*Street Address\*:* PO Box 8138, Station Arcade

*State/Postcode\*:* SA 5000

*Country of Residence\*:* Australia

*Age range:* 35-44

*Do you play computer or video games?:* yes

*How frequently do you play?*

*Monthly*

*How long do you play in an average session?*

*1-2 hours*

*Confidentiality requested?:* no

(Note: fields marked \* are mandatory fields)

### THE QUESTION

*Should the Australian National Classification Scheme include an R18+ classification category for computer games?*

**NO**

**YES**

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## ARGUMENTS

To help us understand your reasons for your answer, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following arguments:

- ***Adults should not be prevented from playing R 18+ level computer games simply because they are unsuitable for minors***  
5) strongly agree
- ***The R 18+ classification category sends a clear, unambiguous message to parents that the game material is unsuitable for minors***  
5) strongly agree
- ***Consistent classification categories for films and computer games are easier to understand***  
4) agree
- ***A new classification will supplement technological controls on minors' access to age-inappropriate computer games***  
2) disagree
- ***Comparable classification systems internationally have an adult rating for computer games - international parity is desirable***  
5) strongly agree
- ***Consumers access games which would be R 18+ illegally – it would be better if they were legally available with appropriate restrictions***  
5) strongly agree
- ***Computer games should be treated differently from films given the specific, negative effects of interactivity on players, particularly their participation in violent and aggressive content.***  
1) strongly disagree
- ***It would be difficult for parents to enforce age restrictions for computer games.***  
1) strongly disagree
- ***Minors would be more likely to be exposed to computer games that are unsuitable for them.***  
2) disagree

- ***An R 18+ for computer games would exacerbate problems associated with access to high level material in Indigenous communities and by other non-English speaking people***

1) strongly disagree

- ***There is no demonstrated need to change existing restrictions.***

1) strongly disagree

Comments (Optional - up to 250 words)

Regulators appear to live in a bubble universe where their restrictions are actually effective. Classification/censorship systems generally are failing, computer games are merely the first and most obvious example of the demise.

An R18+ classification is unlikely to assist parents in controlling access to content for minors because *parents already know which content they wish to restrict*. At best classification merely provides one datapoint in an informed, complex and sophisticated parental control landscape. There is nothing to be gained by the Government attempting to control access over and above parents' wishes, other than to cement the public's strengthening view that the Government believes Australian adults are too stupid to be trusted to make their own decisions about use of media.

Allusions to “risks” of the availability of adult computer games rest on an assumption that adult computer games aren't already widely available and well-used by Australians. The Classification system has negligible impact on the practical accessibility of RC games. If portrayals of risks are accurate then we're realizing them right now, and seem no poorer for it.

The Classification Board's job ought to be limited to affixing accurate labels to classifiable articles, and leaving the interpretation of the labels up to citizens. The Refused Classification concept ought to be abolished: Within the context of Australian classification law, it makes no sense to have a category of legal-to-consume content which comes with no Classification Board guidance. What purpose is the continued existence of the RC category serving, other than as an enabler for social discord by moralizing busybodies fulminating about legal content they don't like?