

## 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: Marilyn Beaumont, Executive Director, Women's Health Victoria*

*Women's Health Victoria is a statewide women's health promotion, information and advocacy service. We are a non government organisation with most of our funding coming from various parts of the Victorian Department of Human Services. We work with health professionals and policy makers to influence and inform health policy and service delivery for women.*

*Women's Health Victoria's vision is for a society that takes a proactive approach to health and wellbeing, is empowering and respectful of women and girls and takes into account the diversity of their life circumstances.*

*Email address\*: [whv@whv.org.au](mailto:whv@whv.org.au)*

*Gender\*: Female*

*Street Address\*: Level 1, 123 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne*

*State/Postcode\*: 3000*

*Country of Residence\*: Australia*

*Age range\*: under 18/18-24/25-34/35-44/ 45-54/55-64/ 65+*

*Do you play computer or video games?\* No*

*How frequently do you play?*

*Daily Weekly Fortnightly Monthly Other.....*

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

*0-15minutes 15-30 minutes 30-60mins 1-2 hours 2+ hours*

(Note: fields marked \* are mandatory fields)

### THE QUESTION

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

**NO**

---

<sup>1</sup> Unless you clearly request confidentiality, **submissions are public documents** and may be accessed by any member of the public, may be published on the 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 is your submission.

## **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***

2) disagree

- ***The R 18+ classification category sends a clear, unambiguous message to parents that the game material is unsuitable for minors***

4) agree

- ***Consistent classification categories for films and computer games are easier to understand***

2) disagree

- ***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***

2) disagree

- ***Consumers access games which would be R 18+ illegally – it would be better if they were legally available with appropriate restrictions***

2) disagree

- ***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.***

5) strongly agree

- ***It would be difficult for parents to enforce age restrictions for computer games.***

5) strongly agree

- ***Minors would be more likely to be exposed to computer games that are unsuitable for them.***

5) strongly agree

- ***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***

4) agree

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

5) strongly agree

Comments (Optional - up to 250 words)

Women's Health Victoria is concerned that wider accessibility to R18+ computer games will serve to perpetuate violence-supportive attitudes within our community, and desensitise gamers to the impact and consequences of violence. This will have a damaging effect on the work that the government is doing elsewhere in preventing violence against women at both state and federal level. Both adherence to rigid gender stereotypes and broader cultures of violence are widely regarded as among the key drivers of violence against women (See *A Right to Respect: Victoria's Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women 2010-2020*). R18+ computer games by their very nature contain violent, offensive and sexualised content that reinforces violence supportive attitudes and behaviours. Making these games more widely available, where they can easily be accessed by those under 18, means that more people are exposed to interactive games and images that support the objectification of women and violence against women.

The arguments and research that are set out in the Discussion Paper show clearly why there should not be an R18+ classification for computer games. This is in the public interest. Ensuring that children and young people are not able to gain access to these images is made easier when R18+ games are unable to be sold or rented in Australia. Arguments relating to the interactivity of computer games as opposed to film, the difficulty of parents monitoring children's usage and the fact that minors would be more likely to access these games, are powerful. They far outweigh industry concerns about the need for change to the classification system.