

FUTURE DIRECTIONS IN FILM AND VIDEO CLASSIFICATION

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When I contemplated the title of this seminar, I looked at it with the somewhat sceptical eye of someone who once wrote for newspapers. It seemed to me that if you could just add to the title of the seminar, 'Shark' and 'Nude Models', you could probably double the number of those who read the proceedings. However, the three that are left in are not a bad start.

I no longer have the luxury of looking at those three topics and all of their connotations from a reporter's perspective. My present position requires a more measured and fitting approach. In Sir Humphrey's immortal words, above all else, I should have a 'sound' approach to them.

At the outset I should point out the parameters of this paper. The Office of Film and Literature Classification, which includes the Film Censorship Board, has enough sins of its own in the eyes of some sections of the community without bearing the perceived sins of others.

The Office which I head up has sex, violence and censorship as its staple diet. I speak in figurative terms, of course. The Office deals with the classification of films, videos and literature on a national basis. It also supervises the labelling of videos and cinema and video advertising. What we no longer do, and what we seem to be beaten around the head most unjustly for, is the classification of television programs or of films which appear on it. That function, which was confined to imported programs, disappeared from the Film Censorship Board in 1986 when television stations became wholly self-regulatory within the context of their responsibility to the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal. Perhaps if I outline what functions we do perform it can be more easily understood how the organisation responds to the matters up for discussion.

The Role of the Office

Last year the Attorney-General decided that all of the classification functions in his portfolio should be amalgamated into one organisation. Previously, the Film Censorship Board had dealt with the classification of films and videos; the literature classification scheme had been administered by his Department in Canberra which had regional offices in each of the State capitals and the policy advice given to the Attorney-General about what changes should be made to the law came from an amalgam of the Board, the office in Canberra and other branches of the Department. That has now been superseded by the Office of Film and Literature Classification which performs all of those functions.

Another matter which needs some clarification, and this has a particular bearing on the third topic for discussion, is that the Office no longer "censors"

material. Our task is to "classify" material. I regret to say therefore that the image of the censor, particularly the Chief Censor, as someone in a white coat standing in a cutting room knee deep in film offcuts is now sadly out of date. When films and videos are brought to us, they are viewed by the Board and assigned the appropriate classification. These are clearly defined in all State and Territory legislation.

Classification

As there is some confusion about what these categories are, I shall spell them out, summarizing the contents of each. For those who wish a fuller exposition and a breakdown of the category components, I attach a fuller explanation at the end of this paper (Appendix A).

The five categories are:

- 'G' for General This category contains material which is not only suitable for children's viewing but also suitable for all audiences. The Board has deliberately kept this section squeaky clean so that, particularly with videos, parents can leave their children alone with the material without supervision. It does not follow, of course, that a 'G' program is a children's program.

- 'PG' This is the Parental Guidance category and it applies to children under the age of 15. It differs from the 'G' classification because the film or video contains elements or concepts which we think may need further explanation from a parent or older person present.

- 'M' This category is perhaps the most misunderstood of all. It contains material which in our view requires a mature approach and which we recommend as suitable for audiences 15 years and over. A great many of the films and videos which will be under discussion at this seminar are in the 'M' category.

- 'R' This category applies to films which are legally restricted to people aged 18 years and over. Films which contain elements or themes which we think may be offensive to some adults or harmful to people under the age of 18 years are put into this category. The great majority of 'R' rated films have some component of sex, violence, drug use or horror.

'X' This is a category which is also widely misunderstood in the community. The confusion is compounded by the fact that while there are 'X' rated videos, there are no 'X' rated films. I shall deal in more detail with the question of the content of 'X' rated videos later in the paper. The content, however, can be summed up as films which are sexually explicit, between consenting adults with no coercion or violence.

Apart from these classifications, there are some films and videos which the Board refuses to classify because they do not meet the criteria set out in the legislation. I shall deal with this in more detail later. After the Board has classified a film, it may well be that the distributor, usually for economic reasons, requires a lower classification. There are two options open to the distributor. One is to delete stronger elements - for example, those elements which justified an 'R' classification. The second is to appeal to the Films Board of Review.

The appeal mechanism is built into the Commonwealth and Territory legislation and also into all of the State legislations. That body is the Cinematograph Films Board of Review, more commonly just known as the Board of Review. Those who apply for classification and who are dissatisfied with the Board's ruling, can apply to have it reviewed by the Board of Review. The Board is part-time and meets as required to deliberate on these appeals, usually about ten to fifteen times each year.

Another matter which I should deal with is the Federal nature of the censorship system. The Commonwealth has the legislative power to regulate the importation of films and videos with the Customs Act. There has also been agreement with the States that the Commonwealth shall classify all films and videos under a uniform classification system. Each State has its own censorship legislation and its own enforcement mechanism. There had been ongoing co-operation with the States since at least the 1940's. The watershed of the present system was 1971 when the then Minister for Customs, Mr Don Chipp, brought some realism into the system and established the 'R' classification. This period of co-operation with the States was further extended by Senator Murphy as Attorney-General and it was further built upon by Senator Gareth Evans in 1984 when the national scheme for the classification of videos came into effect.

The essence of the national classification scheme is that the Film Censorship Board classifies films and videos and all States and Territories adopt those classifications. There are different appeal mechanisms from those decisions in some States, for instance, Queensland has a Board of Review, Western Australia and South Australia can vary the decision, and Tasmania is in the process of establishing a review tribunal.

It means that while the Board has classification powers and the power to deal with advertising and labelling of films and videos in the A.C.T., each of the States has passed mirror legislation so that the scheme can be effective and uniform throughout Australia. As you can imagine, the scheme embodies all the richness, individualism, confusion and capacity to go haywire which are inherent when nine autonomous jurisdictions attempt to reach uniformity. In Senator Gareth Evans' immortal words, "It's a real doozy of a system".

The Composition of the Board

The Film Censorship Board is part of the Office of Film and Literature Classifications which was created in April last year. It is established under the Customs Regulations as a statutory body giving it a degree of independence in its decision-making process. Apart from myself, it comprises the Deputy Chief Censor and the other Board members. There is provision in the legislation for there to be ten members of the Board and at the moment we have nine. The positions are full time. Board members are appointed after the positions have been advertised nationally and a series of interviews held. You may be interested in the selection criteria applied by the Interviewing Committee when the last round of appointments to the Board were being made. I shall attach those at the end of the paper, but I should indicate that a sense of humour was high on the list (Appendix B).

When selecting members of the Board, the Government attempts to obtain a representation of community views so that when decisions are made about classification, they should reflect as closely as possible the views of most people in the community at the time.

Members of the Board are appointed normally for a three-year period and many members serve a second three-year term. Information about the composition of the Board is freely available from the Board.

Any film submitted to the Board is viewed by a panel of Board members, usually three, though one may suffice for non-controversial videos. If the panel is in total agreement, the film is released. Should there be a difference of opinion or if the panel believes other Board members may hold a different view, the film will be re-screened by another panel. The full Board would normally screen controversial films. Decisions are made at the weekly Board meeting on a majority vote after sometimes lengthy debates.

Once the classification decision is made, the Board deliberates on the code reasons for the making of the classification. These deal with matters such as language and its frequency and intensity, the level of violence in the film and its justification or otherwise, the intensity of sexual activity, scenes of drug abuse and so on. These code reasons are set out in the Gazette. After 1 May 1989 this specific consumer advice will be required on all advertising relating to films and videos. The consumer advice will be as simple and as non-judgmental as we can make it but will draw the attention

of those going to watch a film or those hiring a video to the strongest elements in the film which the Board considers may cause concern.

Attitude of the Board to Sex and Violence

In making decisions on what classifications to give to films where sex and where violence is involved, either together or separately, the Board does not have to start from scratch. The Customs Regulations spell out specifically what films can and cannot be allowed into the country and what criteria should be applied in making that decision. Once that hurdle has been overcome, the Board classifies according to guidelines drawn up by the Film Censorship Board, the Films Board of Review with input from all of the States before being ratified by State and Commonwealth. I have attached to this paper a copy of these guidelines which has a preamble setting the context for the guidelines and the general principles on which they are based (see Appendix A).

In addition to this the Board discusses from time to time issues which arise in films and videos which may have a much wider effect than in a particular film in which it is raised. Last year the Board collectively discussed the issue of violence in films and video and its attitude towards it when making a submission to the Social Development Committee of the Victorian Parliament. This Committee was established to enquire into community violence following the terrible loss of human life in the Hoddle Street and Queen Street shootings. The collective view of the Board, in relation to violence in films and videos was:

The depiction of violence has always been accepted as having a legitimate place in literature, drama and film, whether documentary, news or fiction. The progressive development of sophisticated film techniques and conventions and the subsequent development of cinematic "literacy" in viewers, has resulted in a change in the degree of realistic portrayals of violence that film audiences are currently prepared to accept. Distinctions, however, are made among the following:

- (a) films containing integral and justifiable depictions of realistic violence;
- (b) films which use realistic violence for legitimate ends, such as in the suspense, thriller, horror or even comedy genres;
- (c) films which contain detailed and gratuitous depictions of acts of considerable violence or cruelty.

Films containing integral and justifiable depiction of realistic violence could be acceptable in the 'PG', 'M' and 'R' classifications, with the particular classification depending on, for example, the level of explicitness of the violence as well as its context and purpose. Films which realistically exploit considerable violence or cruelty gratuitously, that is, which present violence for its own sake, are not considered acceptable and are refused classification. There is little agreement and much debate today, however, over at least some of the genre films which use realistic violence for legitimate ends, for example, that which

might be considered to be a film of merit to the "horror" film buffs, might be considered to be a gratuitous exercise in violence exploitation to others.

It is therefore difficult to reach general agreement on the level of violence acceptable in films as so many variables enter into any consideration of the effect or impact of any depictions of violent acts. These include such factors as the context, purpose, explicitness, quantity of blood, duration of depiction, camera angles, closeness or distance of shots, darkness or brightness of scene, held shots and quick inter-cuts.

The Board sees classification guidelines as a workable approach to the resolution of some of the difficulties inherent in the classification process. The guidelines attempt to objectify what, in many ways, must ultimately be a subjective process by describing general levels of impact, explicitness and contextual justification considered acceptable in the different classification.

What are we going to do with sex?

The question of how best to classify sexual material in films and videos ranging from an innocent kiss under the apple tree, to the cavorting of adolescents in swimming pools to scenes which are measured by the number of orgasmic sounds per minutes has been a perennial problem for the Board.

What we have tried to do with films and videos is to look at the sexual content, its place in the film, its justification, the degree of offence it may cause and the discretion with which it is used as the general indicators of what the classification should be. While the guidelines set out the parameters, the Board has a degree of flexibility in the 'PG' and 'M' categories; often there might be an incidental scene which, while normally appropriate in the 'M' category, could be accommodated in the 'PG' category because of the particular context of the film.

The sexual activity allowed in the 'R' category is somewhat different. There are broadly two categories - the "legitimate" film where sexual activity is part of the plot but is too strong for and unrestricted classification and the other broad category - the softer version of 'X' rated material.

The Board does not consider explicit sexual material appropriate for the 'R' category. It is conscious that although the 'R' category is restricted to people over 18 years, there are significant sections of the community which would take offence at explicit sexual activity.

The 'X' Factor

For the amount of angst and confusion it causes, the 'X' category is, pound for pound, the Board's perennial headache. Despite all that is written about it, and all the evils attributed to it and its alleged availability to wide cross-sections of our community, 'X'-rated videos are a very specific category.

As I said earlier, there are no 'X' rated films. It is a classification which applies to videos only. It is also a classification which does not have any standing in any of the six States. 'X'-rated videos can be obtained legally only in the Australian Capital Territory and in the Northern Territory although, of course, they can be obtained in most of the States by mail order. Videos which are classified in this category feature sexually explicit activity between consenting adults in which there is no coercion or violence. The frolics and unlikely encounters in the fantasy world of the 'X'-rated videos are lovingly and carefully filmed from afar and from very close up.

The arguments for and against this material have been canvassed many times and are never resolved. Many people feel passionately for or against them; many of those in support feel the issue of basic freedoms is involved.

About fifteen percent of all of the video material that we receive at the Board receives an 'X' classification. It is also legal to obtain this material from the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory by mail order. There is a widespread belief, and one hears anecdotal evidence from time to time, that 'X'-rated material is available in other States, even dare I say it, in New South Wales.

Although the issue 'X'-rated videos occupies considerable debating time in the national and in the State parliaments, letters to the editor column, debates over talkback radio and endless concern on the part of some clergymen, I doubt whether the issue stirs most Australian citizens. Whether this would change if they actually saw and 'X'-rated movie is a matter for some debate as I suspect the great bulk of the Australian population remains in blissful ignorance of what the 'X'-rated material actually contains.

Sexual Violence

The matter that I have not dealt with yet is the question of the linking of the two topics sex and violence and the question of how we deal with matters involving sexual violence. There have been many inquiries and studies made seeking to establish a causal connection between violence in the media and the violent behaviour of those who watch it. We try to keep abreast of all those inquiries and their recommendations. It appears to us that, so far, none of the inquiries has established a causal link between watching violent behaviour on films and videos and consequent violent action committed as a result of watching that material. That does not mean that we are not concerned about the impact that violent material may have upon some people in society. Nor does it mean we are not aware of the view that violent films and videos may tend to have a detrimental effect on those who are already predisposed towards violence or that there are confessions or pleas in mitigation of sexual offenders that have reached their present condition because of watching pornographic video material.

It may be that research will never be able to show directly those causal links in this matter and that conclusions may have to be drawn across that unattainable gap. However, if there is one area of violence at the Board which has caused us great concern, it is that of sexual violence. It seems to us that of all the areas where violence may have some bearing on subsequent conduct, the one which may show some link is that of sexual violence. In these circumstances, we have applied very strict criteria in relation to films showing sexual violence and have been very rigorous in our application. As I have already said, there is no violence in the 'X' category. The only sexual violence we will permit in a film is that which is justified by the storyline.

We will not classify films or videos where there are scenes involving any unnecessary lingering over the pain or indignity of the victim of depictions indicating that women will submit to sexual demands after prolonged intimidating behaviour. In 'X'-rated videos, where there is often some pretence of resistance, it is enough for the woman to indicate that she does not wish to participate or that she is being hurt for the video to be refused. A common perception seems to be that if the sexual violence in a film is too graphic for the 'R' classification then it goes into the 'X' classification. This is not so. Any sexual violence which is too graphic for the 'R' classification is automatically refused classification.

An indication of the Board's concern about these matters is that the Attorney-General has given to the Board the power to recall videotapes presently on the market where the classifications may not be in accord with the current guidelines. We have already recalled thirteen of these and the issue which is causing concern in many of them is that of sexual violence.

Refused Classification

I have spoken briefly before about the refused classification category. The guidelines are quite clear on material which is to be refused classification. The guidelines perhaps sum it up succinctly. Any film or video which includes any of the following will be refused classification:

- (a) Depictions of child sexual abuse, bestiality, sexual acts accompanied by offensive fetishes or exploitative incest fantasies;
- (b) Unduly detailed and/or relished acts of extreme violence or cruelty. Explicit or unjustifiable depictions of sexual violence against non-consenting persons; and
- (c) Detailed instruction or promotion of drug abuse or incitement to other criminal activity.

While very few 35mm films are refused registration, about three percent of all videos received are refused. Most that are refused are on the grounds of sexual violence, even though some of these may be acting out fantasies of sexual violence, and the remainder are generally for violence which, in the opinion of the Board, is extreme.

Literature Classification

I have dealt in considerable detail with the questions of sex, violence and sexual violence as these elements occur in films and videos. An important part of the work of the Office involves the classification of written and pictorial material. The literature classification scheme differs fundamentally from the film and video scheme in that literature classification is completely voluntary.

What makes it attractive for those that participate in it is that once the Office has given a publication a classification, and the person selling the publication complies with the conditions attached to those categories, it provides an immediate defence against any prosecution.

There are three categories in literature classification:

- **Unrestricted** - which as you would expect contains material which the Board considers will not be offensive to the great majority of the population. Material in the Unrestricted category includes most of the Australian versions of the glossy magazines with centrefolds as well as some of the specialised imported material. For those of you who are concerned with the parameters I have attached a copy of the literature guidelines as well (Appendix A). In general terms, the material in the Unrestricted category corresponds with material which is classified for mature audiences in films and videos.
- **Category 1** - Afficionados of this material will readily be able to distinguish between Unrestricted and Category 1 material. Category 1 material is placed in a plastic envelope when displayed at newsagencies and news stands. It is only available to people aged 18 years and over. It usually contains more explicit sexual material and while some local publications occasionally make Category 1, the vast bulk of the material is imported. In general, at least as far as pictorial content is concerned, the material in Category 1 generally corresponds to material found in the 'R' category for films and videos.
- **Category 2** - Practically all of this material is imported. The pictorial material deals with explicit sexual activity and feature pictorial representations of some fetishes. Category 2 publications can only be sold on restricted premises which in practice means adult bookshops or other premises where people have to be 18 years or over before they can be admitted to the premises. There are further safeguards to prevent offence being given to those who do not even wish to see the material being taken from the shop.
- **Refused** - Material which is refused includes any pictorial content which has bestiality, child pornography or representations of sexual violence. It sometimes seems that there is no limit to the fervid imagination of photographers to produce material which portrays the gross disfigurement and grotesque distortion of the human body and its various organs and orifices - all supposedly

to bring about sexual gratification. Material which therefore features extreme cruelty, mutilation or degradation, of both men and women, and also pictorial material which we think promotes dangerous practices, for example nooses around necks, is normally refused.

Drugs and Violence

There are two other issues in literature classification which cause a great deal of concern. These are drugs and material which may encourage crime or violence.

On the surface, judgments in this area seem to be relatively simple. It is relatively easy to understand why a publication with the title of "How to Make Your Own Atomic Bomb" should be refused. The same could be said for a publication which indicates how to make home-made explosives for the purpose of terrorist activities.

What about, however, an instruction manual on how to assemble and maintain a machine gun? What about a book which goes into great detail about the use of knives in combat and in survival, and which describes in great detail how these weapons can be used to kill people in the course of a military exercise or in the jungle or in the streets if it is a matter of personal survival? What about military magazines which include drawings, detailed descriptions and pictorial representations of how to become an expert sniper? What about manuals for gunsmiths, swordsmiths and *bona fide* sports shooters?

Drugs

A similar problem exists in magazines devoted to the production and refining of drugs and drug use. While it might be easy to take a decision to refuse classification to an instruction manual which deals with the cultivation and harvesting of large crops of marijuana, does the same apply to books which deal with the cultivation of marijuana plants in pot plants in the back garden? It is often put to us by importers of these magazines that these are manuals which are needed for forensic purposes. They claim people may wish to read about drugs and drug use for any number of purposes and that merely obtaining knowledge of the operation and extent of drug use and taking, does not necessarily mean that it will be used to produce or administer drugs.

Steps for the Future

Nobody who works in the Office and who is involved in film or literature classification believes he or she can accurately represent the views of the community all of the time. We try to make an assessment of the views of the community and try to keep in touch with any changes in those views.

It is sometimes easy when classifying films in the isolation of a theatre at the Board with only the other Board members present, to lose sight of the impact a film might have in a cinema in the suburbs on a Saturday night. What we have started to do is to send Board members to observe the screening of films in cinemas, to report back to the Board on audience reaction, to comment on reaction to scenes which we may have found difficult to classify so that when we strike similar scenes in the future we can make a more informed judgment.

Board members are also talking to schools and to community organisations to explain the work we are doing to obtain feedback about the decisions that the Board has taken and to take these into account when we make future decisions.

We are currently thinking about the possibility of holding seminars for the general public and special interest groups. While the Board has to make classifications for the whole community, it also pays particular attention to those who actually go to the theatre to watch films as distinct from those who stay at home and never go to a film but still feel free to offer 'informed' pronouncements. We have also sought information from visiting producers and commentators who speak with authority about developments in the industry and about trends and about particular films. We have also had professionals addressing the Board on the questions of how children are affected by films and the medical aspects of some of the activities that we occasionally see in the films from time to time.

We have also made submissions to different Parliamentary inquiries which take in specific aspects of our work. The Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry and the Joint Select Committee into Video Material are the major committees so far. One of the senior members of the Board has been seconded to assist the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal's Inquiry into Violence on Television. The Board is at present filing its submission to that Inquiry.

Labelling and Advertising

One of the major recommendations of the Joint Select Committee was that the Board should provide more advice to those going to see films and to those hiring videos, particularly parents, so that they could make more informed choices about the kind of film they wished to see and what material they could expect to see once they went to the theatre or put the video in the machine.

That recommendation has been acted upon in consultation with the States and with the film and video industry. From 1 May 1989, a whole new regime will come into place. All films and videos classified after that date will carry new markings. All videos, for instance, will have a 20mm strip across the bottom dedicated solely to delineating the category, the age limitation, a verbal description of the category, for instance, recommended for mature audiences 15 years and over, and consumer advice for all films and videos classified above the 'G' classification.

All advertisements for films including posters, day bills and newspaper advertisements will be required to carry more information more prominently displayed to assist the consumer make a more informed choice. The Federal and State Ministers hope that this will be the first step in a more active campaign to make people aware of what different categories mean and what kinds of material they are likely to see in those categories.

These new provisions are not likely to change old habits quickly nor to mollify those 13 year olds in the community who we all know would not be seen dead watching a 'PG' movie. But we think it will be a start and in particular we think it will be something to give parents a chance to make decisions about appropriate viewing material which they have not been able to do in the past because of lack of information.

Conclusion

The Board does not make decisions because of inspirational flashes of brilliance or because, if you turn to page xyz, you will find the correct answer at the bottom of the page. In the classification business, there is no page you can turn to for the right answer. Nor are the Board members bleary-eyed and desensitized as appears to be the perception in some quarters.

Watching films all day, writing up reports about them, making judgments about what categories they fall into, assessing whether or not someone who is 15 can or can't cope with a concept which has all sorts of implications, makes life interesting but also makes for difficult decisions. It is often difficult to determine whether a correct assessment has been made or whether the community in general agrees or does not agree with our assessment. What we try to do is make the better decision. In the end it is up to you to tell us whether it was right or wrong.

That is why it is a pleasure to come to this seminar to listen to the views of those who are obviously interested in the topic because it will provide for us a particularly valuable sounding board about how we are proceeding in our work.

APPENDIX A

GUIDELINES FOR THE CLASSIFICATION OF FILMS, VIDEOTAPES AND PRINTED MATTER

PREAMBLE

Adults in a free society should be allowed as far as possible to see what they wish, and creative artists, including filmmakers, to depict what they please without fear of intervention by the State.

It is generally accepted, however, that the exercise of these rights carries certain responsibilities and must be subject to a number of constraints for the good of society as a whole.

Our right to see what we please cannot be allowed to infringe the rights of others. Children and young people, in particular, must be adequately protected by certain material likely to harm or disturb them, and people who may be offended by certain material have a right to expect that it will not be thrust upon them against their will or without warning.

Equally, the community has the right to ban material considered likely to endanger public health or safety, or grossly to offend accepted standards of public decency. Thus, films depicting child sexual abuse or bestiality, for example, or offering guidance or instruction in methods or terrorism, military subversion or drug abuse will be refused classification.

The attention given to acts of violence in modern society, especially sexual violence, has created a justifiable concern among many people that the depiction of violence in popular entertainment will encourage acts of imitation. Even if it could be shown that this was unlikely to occur, the feelings of those who abhor violence of any kind and consider its depiction in extreme forms degrading deserve respect. Any depiction of violence in films and videos must therefore be subject to careful scrutiny, and reserved, where appropriate, for mature and/or adult audiences.

The primary responsibility for protecting children and young people from harmful material rests with their parents or guardians. In discharging that responsibility they have a right to expect assistance from the State, especially as films and videos are so readily accessible. They must be confident that material to which children may be exposed has been carefully examined and appropriately classified.

The classification of films and videos is intended, therefore, both to protect children and young people, and to respect the sensibilities of adults who are concerned about violence and its effect on the community, and would consider certain kinds of material personally offensive.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES APPLYING TO THE GUIDELINES INCLUDE

- Adults should be free to see what they wish provided there is sufficient protection for young people, and those people who do not wish to see certain material should not have it thrust upon them.
- The classification should reflect what a reasonable adult person would consider within the acceptable limits of community standards for that age group.
- The closest attention is paid to the portrayal of violence and, in particular, sexual violence.
- Certain classes of activity, such as child sexual abuse, bestiality, and the incitement or encouragement of terrorism are refused classification.

ADDITIONAL CONSUMER INFORMATION

Films and videos in the upper limits of the 'PG', 'M' and 'R' categories will carry, in addition to the classification symbols, consumer advice and, where necessary, a warning as to possibly offensive content.

This advice will appear prominently on the cover of each video, on the cassette itself and in all advertising material.

GUIDELINES FOR FILMS AND VIDEOTAPES

G General (suitable for all ages)

Parents should feel confident that children may view material in this classification without supervision, knowing that no distress or harm is likely to be caused.

The following are permissible -

Language: The mildest expletives, but only if infrequent and used in exceptional and justifiable circumstances.

Sex: Very discreet verbal references or implications, provided they are justified by the narrative or other context.

Violence: Minimal, mild and incidental depictions, provided they are justified by the context.

PG Parental Guidance (parental guidance recommended for persons under 15)

Films in this classification may contain adult themes or concepts which, when viewed by those under 15 years, require the guidance of a parent or guardian.

The following are permissible -

Language: Low level coarse language is acceptable, provided its use is not excessive.

Sex: Discreet verbal and/or visual depictions, and references to sexual matters.

Violence: Depictions of violence must be mild in their impact, and/or presented in a stylized or theatrical fashion, or in an historical context.

Other: Discreet informational and anti-drug references
Mild supernatural or "horror" themes may warrant 'PG'.
Minimal nudity if in a justifiable context.

M Mature (suitable only for persons 15 years and over)

Material which is considered likely to disturb, harm or offend those under the age of 15 years will be classified 'M'. While most adult themes may be dealt with, the degree of explicitness and intensity of treatment will determine what can be accommodated in this classification.

Language: Crude language may be used, but not when it is excessive, unduly assaultive, or sexually explicit.

Sex: Sexual intercourse or other sexual activity may be discreetly implied or simulated.

Violence: Realistic violence of medium intensity may be depicted, but violent depictions with a high degree of realism or impact are acceptable only if contextually justified.

Other: Drug use may be depicted, but not in an advocatory manner.
Supernatural and "horror" special effects usually warrant an 'M' classification.

R Restricted (18 years and over)

Material considered likely to be harmful to those under 18 years and possibly offensive to some sections of the adult community warrants an 'R' classification.

Language: There are virtually no restrictions on language in 'R' films.

Sex: Sexual intercourse or other sexual activity may be realistically implied or simulated. Depictions of sexual violence are acceptable only to the extent that they are necessary to the narrative and not exploitative.

Violence: Highly realistic and explicit depictions of violence may be shown, but not if unduly detailed, relished or cruel.

Other: Drug abuse may be depicted, but not in an advocatory manner.
Extreme "horror" special effects usually warrant an 'R'.

X Non Violent Erotica (18 years and over)

No depiction of sexual violence, coercion or non-consent of any kind is permitted in this classification. Material which can be accommodated in this classification includes explicit depictions of sexual acts between consenting adults and mild non-violent fetishes.

Refused Classification

Any film or video which includes any of the following will be refused classification:

- (a) depictions of child sexual abuse, bestiality, sexual acts accompanied by offensive fetishes, or exploitative incest fantasies
- (b) unduly detailed and/or relished acts of extreme violence or cruelty; explicit or unjustifiable depictions of sexual violence against non-consenting persons

- (c) detailed instruction or encouragement in:
- (i) the use of terrorist-type weapons and terrorist acts
 - (ii) the abuse of prescribed drugs.

GUIDELINES FOR THE CLASSIFICATION OF PRINTED MATTER

These guidelines are applied in accordance with the principles set out in the A.C.T. Classification of Publications Ordinance 1983. They are also applied to printed matter available in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and the Northern Territory. The arrangement follows agreement between the Commonwealth and the Northern Territory, Victorian, South Australian and New South Wales governments that there should be a voluntary and uniform classification scheme for printed matter. Other States operate their own schemes.

A classification officer and the Review Boards shall, in deciding whether an item is suitable for classification or should be refused classification, have regard to the general character of the item and any literary, artistic or educational merit it may possess.

Unrestricted

- **Contents**

Pictorial representations:

- * discreet nudity
- * implied and discreet depictions of sexual acts
- * artwork, cartoons etc. depicting non-realistic nudity or sexual activity.

Written descriptions:

- * some descriptions of sexual activity involving adults in a publication not overwhelmingly dedicated to sexual matters

- **Covers**

- * no offensive wording
- * discreet nudity (no genitalia)
- * no pictorial depictions of sexual acts

Restricted - Category 1

(18 years and over, to be displayed in a sealed wrapper)

- **Contents**

Pictorial representations:

- * explicit nudity
- * implied depictions of sexual acts
- * obscured depictions of sexual acts
- * mild fetishes
- * artwork, cartoons etc. depicting nudity and sexual activity

Written descriptions:

- * realistic and gratuitous descriptions of violence

- Covers
 - * relished descriptions of sexual activity involving adults
 - * no offensive wording
 - * discreet nudity (no genitalia)
 - * no pictorial depictions of sexual acts

Restricted - Category 2

(18 years and over, to be sold only on restricted premises)

- Contents
 - Pictorial representations:*
 - * explicit sexual acts
 - * fetishes including sado-masochism and bondage if not extreme
 - Written descriptions:*
 - * descriptions of sexual activity including activity between humans and animals or sexual cruelty
- Covers
 - * no proscription as material confined to restricted area.

Refused classification

(Not to be sold or hired)

Pictorial representations:

- * bestiality
- * child pornography
- * extreme cruelty and dangerous practices

Written descriptions:

- * promotion, incitement or encouragement to drug abuse including 'do it yourself' and growers manuals
- * gratuitous description of sexual activity involving persons under 16 years of age
- * promotion, incitement or instruction in matters of crime or violence

APPENDIX B

DESIRABLE ATTRIBUTES IN A CENSOR

- sense of humour
- balanced personality
- open minded
- tolerant of others' views
- lucid and concise communication (both oral and written)
- ability to assimilate different points of view
- degree of flexibility without undue vacillation
- no vested interests
- interest in film
- wide social contacts
- interest in people/degree of social concern
- ability to work in a group
- representative of age/sex/marital groups
- previous experience not necessarily relevant
- other strengths which may enhance input to Board (e.g. psychology training)