

Classification Consultation Response

By Alan S.

I believe the classification system should add more ratings rather than replacing any of the current ones to allow more flexibility not just for parents but also for the classifiers themselves

As such I advise to keep the MA15+ while adding the ratings MA14+, MA16+ and MA17+. This expansion of the MA rating gives parents and classifiers more options while also retaining the idea that parents know what is suitable for their specific teenager. There are films that are clearly appropriate for 16 or 17 year olds but legally they can't access them.

For example, films like *"Hellboy (2019)"*, *"Mortal Kombat (2021)"* and *"Renfield (2023)"* are unfairly rated R18+. I strongly believe these films should not be restricted to 18 year olds as, while gory, has a clear fantasy context that greatly mitigates the impact. In comparison, all 3 of these films are rated 15 in UK, 16 in New Zealand and 17 in the USA, the latter with parental accompaniment. Said films also should not be sharing the same category as the *"Terrifier"* series which are rightfully rated R18+ with their sadistic tone and lack of mitigating factors.

The M rating and PG13 should not coexist as they are for all intents and purposes function the same; unrestricted categories that isn't recommended for children. Rather than introduce a PG13 rating, simply alter the description of the M rating to specifically mention it as not being recommended for under 13s. And with the addition of a MA14+ rating, tighten was is allowable at the M rating.

In addition, I like to point out the videogame *"Blue Prince"*, a critically acclaimed family game rated R18+ in Australia. In comparison the game is rated 7+ in Europe and E10+ in USA. It's a beautiful game restricted to adults solely for the inclusion of a game room which includes card games and a slot machine that fake in-game gold coins can be used on. Before this game room was added in an update, the game was rated G.

Simulated Gambling should be at most MA15+ as nothing is actually lost while loot boxes, actual gambling, should be R18+ as real money is being spent. It's ludicrous that the older *"Pokémon"* games from the 90s, which were rated G, would now be R18+ if rated today because of mini-games like slots. Any child can simply walk into an actual gaming arcade and spend hundreds of dollars attempting to win at a claw machine to no avail, yet they can't play inoffensive video games that feature simulated gambling.

Currently, games that depict sexual violence are automatically refused classification, even if said depictions are of artistic intent. This restriction means games must hold back or censor taboo topics that film and TV are allowed to explore, sometimes without restrictions. As long as a game doesn't glorify such acts, there's no reason that adults shouldn't be able to play.

Even satire isn't safe from Australia's strict rules. *"South Park: The Stick of Truth"* was banned and censored for depicting a highly comedic and outlandish scene involving aliens anal probing the player's child character. Yet in the very first episode of the *"South Park"* series, Cartman is depicted as getting anal probed with the season it was featured in having been given an unrestricted M rating. If a child of any age can watch that episode, why shouldn't an adult be able to play the video game version?

Thank you.