

From the desk of

NUCLEAR STUDIOS

TheKrustyKoop
Founder/President
Nuclear Studios

Re: Review of Australian classification regulation

18.02.2020

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1. Introduction

1.1 ABOUT NUCLEAR STUDIOS AND THEKRUSTYKOOPA

Established in early 2020, Nuclear Studios is an Australian games studio that creates high-quality fan-made content for Nintendo Switch titles, specifically *Super Smash Bros. Ultimate* and *Super Mario Maker 2*. The studio is also planning to release its first original, self-funded game as well as a game on online game-creation platform *Roblox* and the first in a series of fan-made content for *Trials Rising* by the end of 2020.

TheKrustyKoopas is the founder and current CEO of Nuclear Studios. In addition to gaming, Koopa also enjoys animation, specifically claymation (e.g. *Shaun the Sheep*), music and literature.

1.2 FOREWORD

For years, the Australian Classification Board's video game regulation has been considered unfair by many members of the gaming community. As a result, I am writing about how to bring regulation for video games in line with the rest of the world. I will also write a small section about the Netflix tool and how to improve and expand it.

As a small disclaimer before starting, I understand that these ideas may or may not be used, and I understand that this will be made public and agree to any Terms and Conditions that may apply.

With that out of the way, let's do this.

2. Gaming concerns

2.1 LOOTBOXES

Lootboxes are a gaming mechanic where a player spends virtual or real cash to get at least one randomised item (citation 1). Sometimes, limited edition items will be advertised to generate FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) among a game's community, in turn

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generating more revenue for a corporation. One example is Mario Kart Tour, released in 2019, where the developer releases special variants of characters, karts and gliders for a period of 1-2 weeks.

It goes without saying that this has caused a ruckus amongst the gaming community. In 2017, a Reddit AMA (Ask Me Anything) by game publisher Electronic Arts featured a reply from the company regarding the lootboxes and grinding mechanics in Star Wars Battlefront II which quickly became the most-downvoted comment in the history of Reddit, ironically being featured in the Guinness World Records 2020 book (citation 2).

In April 2018, lootboxes were declared illegal in Belgium, with the Belgium Gaming Commission stating that they were in violation of gambling legislation (citation 3). In November 2017, US politician Chris Lee called lootboxes "predatory practises" (citation 4).

To bring Australia in line with countries such as Belgium, I propose this idea:

If a game has lootboxes, there must be consumer advice saying so. Developers also must tell players the chance of getting a certain item through lootboxes.

2.2 MICROTRANSACTIONS

Microtransactions are items in video games purchased with real money. They may include virtual currency, cosmetic items, XP boosts, etc. (citation 5)

As there is already consumer advice for in-game purchases, no further action is needed.

2.3 DRUG USE

As it stands, games with drug use relating to incentives/rewards get an immediate ban. This is something that has been lamented by many members of the Australian gaming community. (citation 6) To fix this, I propose the following:

Instead of being given an immediate ban, games that feature drug use relating to incentives and rewards will now get an immediate R18+ restriction.

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3. Netflix Tool

3.1 Movies/Shows with an existing classification

If a movie or TV show already has a classification for either a theatrical release or a home media release, the same rating should apply to the Netflix release. This should not need apply for Netflix originals.

4. Summary

4.1 Summary for 1. Gaming concerns

- Lootboxes should be given consumer advice, with developers/publishers being required to tell players the odds of getting a certain item
- Microtransactions already have consumer advice and as such should not need further action
- Drug use related to incentives and rewards should be given an immediate R18+ classification

4.2 Summary for 3. Netflix Tool

- If a movie or TV show already has a classification it should have the same rating on Netflix

5. Further reading

- *Mario Kart Tour's Diddy Kong Pack Costs £39, The Same Price As Mario Kart 8 Deluxe On Switch* <https://bit.ly/2P5Vz74>

6. Citations

1. <https://bit.ly/39FzFPS>
2. <https://bit.ly/39FzQL2>
3. <https://bbc.in/39KrMc0>
4. <https://bbc.in/38F9I35>
5. <https://bit.ly/39HYIHv>
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