



Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

9th March 2012

Dear Ms Dennett,

Re: Inquiry into the Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Amendment (R 18+ Computer Games) Bill 2012

Electronic Frontiers Australia (EFA) appreciates the opportunity to make this submission to the Committee's Inquiry into the Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Amendment (R 18+ Computer Games) Bill 2012

Established in January 1994, EFA is a national, membership-based non-profit organisation representing Internet users concerned with on-line freedoms and rights.

EFA has been an outspoken supporter of the need for Australia's National Classification Scheme (NCS) to be amended to include an R18+ classification and therefore welcomes the introduction of the Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Amendment (R18+ Computer Games) Bill 2012.

EFA's support for the introduction of an R18+ classification is based on the following reasons, as have been outlined in previous submissions:

1. the arguments against introducing an R18+ rating are premised primarily on incorrect assumptions about games and their effects;
2. introducing an R18+ classification to bring games in line with films will better empower Australian adults to make more informed decisions for themselves and on behalf of the children for whom they are responsible; and
3. Australian adults should not be prevented from engaging with interactive entertainment that deals with complex adult themes and material and imagery that is unsuitable for children.

EFA therefore strongly supports the Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Amendment (R18+ Computer Games) Bill 2012 as an important step in bringing Australia into line with classification schemes in comparable jurisdictions such as the EU, US and New Zealand.

EFA would however like to highlight to the Committee that the passage of this Bill into law is necessary but not sufficient to ensure meaningful reform.

It is critical that the new R18+ classification for games be implemented in such a manner to allow for the consideration for classification of games that would be deemed appropriate for adult use, but would be Refused Classification under the current arrangements.

Were the new R18+ classification to be implemented as merely a replacement for the current MA15 classification, that would completely undermine the intention of this Bill, and would, in EFA's opinion, make a travesty of this entire reform process.

EFA therefore urges the Committee to also consider issues relating to the implementation to this Bill to ensure that meaningful reform is actually achieved.

Yours sincerely,

Jon Lawrence, Board Member
For, and on behalf of the Board of Electronic Frontiers Australia