



THE HON PAUL FLETCHER MP
Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts

MEDIA RELEASE

16 December 2019

Review of Australian classification regulation

The Morrison Government has announced a review of Australian classification regulation to develop a framework that reflects changing technologies and meets community needs.

Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts, the Hon Paul Fletcher MP, said the current National Classification Scheme was established in 1995 and it is timely for review.

“Australians and their families rely on classification ratings to inform their entertainment choices and they expect the advice to accurately reflect community standards,” said Minister Fletcher.

“The current framework was established in the age of dial-up internet – well before the rise of the online streaming or gaming services we now use daily – so we will be looking at how to modernise it for different content and delivery platforms.”

“I encourage all interested parties to make a submission when the consultation period commences early next year to help us develop a contemporary framework that meets the needs of industry while providing appropriate information and protections for consumers.”

The Government has appointed Mr Neville Stevens AO as the independent expert to lead the review. Mr Stevens, former Secretary of the Department of Communications and the Arts and current Chair of the Press Council, will provide a report on the review of Australian classification regulation to Government in April 2020.

The review forms part of the Government’s response to the ACCC Digital Platforms Inquiry to develop a platform-neutral media regulatory framework, including harmonising classification across delivery formats.

The Terms of Reference for the review are available at:
www.communications.gov.au/classificationreview

A discussion paper will be released in early 2020 on the Department of Communications and the Arts’ website.

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Media contact:

Brad Hatch | 0448 162 679 | Brad.Hatch@communications.gov.au

Rebecca Papillo | 0439 892 771 | Rebecca.Papillo@communications.gov.au

Background:

The review will encompass the National Classification Code, the Guidelines for the Classification of Films and the Guidelines for the Classification of Computer Games.

Mr Stevens' 30 year career in the Australian Public Service included terms as Secretary of the then Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts and the Department of Industry.

Mr Stevens is currently the Chair of the Australian Press Council, the NSW Government's Innovation and Productivity Council and the NSW Cyber Security Innovation Node.