

Submission to the Inquiry into the effectiveness of the broadcasting codes of practice

by Peter Murray

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a. the frequency and use of coarse and foul language (swearing) in programs;

It has been my experience that there has been an escalating frequency of such language on both radio and television over recent years. For example our local commercial radio station carries an advertisement put to air frequently during daytime around premature ejaculation and a recommended treatment, which in my opinion is intrusive and over explicit.

TV Video clips are a common example of programs aimed at the young that contain over explicit content which are played in prime time.

The TV program featuring Gordon Ramsay and the Channel Nine (Thursday) football show, although in later time slots, feature crudeness of a type that has only become common in recent years. (Although in later time slots, the more extreme moments/features in these shows have an adverse effect on teenagers and society generally).

b. the effectiveness of the current classification standards as an accurate reflection of the content contained in the program;

The current standards should be maintained as it is essential safeguards are in place to protect children against violent and pornographic content, whilst maintaining acceptable standards of decency generally.

There is no valid case for amending the current standards to widen the range of content that to date has been seen to be unacceptable. However, a wider understanding of the actual standards and their role is desirable, whilst promoting a more pro-active policing of content that is seen to be offensive.

c. the operation and effectiveness of the complaints process currently available to members of the public;

It is in this area that there is serious weakness in the system. There is a widespread perception, that it is a waste of time reporting to the authorities incidences of offensive content that are considered to be outside the standards. I think this view has validity, as I seem to recall that this type of complaint invariably fails, whilst other complaints, such as unfair advertising etc are more likely to attract sanctions.

d. any other related matters.

Our society has cause to be concerned with the growth of the “sex for sale” and pornography promoting industries, which are highly profitable and have a pervasive and detrimental effect on our well being. The weight of funds these organizations and groups have available enables them to campaign widely in ways that individuals and most organizations find extremely difficult to combat. There is a vital role for governments to maintain standards and not be influenced by the constant thrust of campaigns pushing individual freedom, over the well-being of the community and society generally.