



Australian Government

Classification Review Board

Our ref: 07/9099

Ms Jackie Morris
Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs
Department of the Senate
By email: legcon.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Ms Morris

The Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs last week heard my submission on the *Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Amendment (Terrorist Material) Bill 2007*. Please find below the answers to questions I took on notice.

The Attorney-General's Department sent me a copy of their Discussion Paper on 15 May 2007. This was the first formal notification of the proposed changes to the classification scheme given to the Classification Review Board. As the Committee knows, the Review Board made a submission on this Paper. I understand the Attorney-General announced his intention to seek to proscribe material that advocates terrorist acts in mid-2006, and I may have noted his comments reported in the media, but I do not recall receiving any specific briefing on the matter at that time. More recently (I think from April 2007), the Attorney-General was again quoted in the media discussing these changes, and I remember noting those media reports.

As well as making a submission on the Discussion Paper, I wrote to the Attorney-General concerning this matter on 20 June 2007. I have attached a copy of this letter and the Attorney-General's reply.

The Committee asked about how the Review Board was consulted regarding the Bill. The Attorney-General's Department first sent me a copy of the Bill and the Explanatory Memorandum on the morning the Bill was tabled – 21 June 2007. I did not see early drafts of the Bill, however in the days leading up to its introduction (I do not recall the precise dates), I spoke with staff of the Department and the Attorney-General's Office and was advised that the Bill would be drafted and introduced to Parliament.

There is one other point I wish to clarify. At the hearing I said there have been no changes to the Classification Board or Classification Review Board. By this I meant that there has been no change to the function or independence of the boards. The members, of course, change reasonably regularly. Recently a new Director, Deputy Director and Senior Classifier were appointed to the Classification Board, and within the last 12 months the Hon Trevor Griffin was reappointed as Deputy Convenor and Mr Robert Shilkin as a member of the Classification Review Board.

Again, thank you for considering the Review Board's submission.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maureen Shelley'.

Maureen Shelley
Convenor
26 July 2007