

Modernising and Harmonising Classification Standards April 2026

The Alannah & Madeline Foundation (the Foundation) welcomes the opportunity to participate in the review to support the modernisation of Australia's National Classification Scheme.

The Foundation is a leading national not-for-profit charity dedicated to keeping children and young people free from violence and trauma. We support young Australians to recover and heal from trauma; we empower them to become positive digital citizens and change the culture of bullying; and we advocate for their rights in digital environments.

Research we commissioned last year with primary students and their parents and carers found that gaming and use of streaming services is very common. For example, 34% of Prep / Foundation students used gaming consoles; by Year 6, it was 60%. When we held workshops with 324 lower primary students in four schools, we found all Years 1-3 students had played a game online and 77% of Prep / Foundation students knew how to download games. At a recent consultation in a Melbourne primary school, Years 3-5 students made an extensive list of games played in a typical week: Minecraft, Roblox, Clash Royale, Zelda, Blockaduku, Sonic, Mario Kart and Pokémon. Meanwhile, the most popular [TV channels](#) watched by Australian children are streaming ones like ABC iView, Disney+ and Netflix.

Children's prolific engagement with gaming and streaming content makes it very important for their families to have easy access to appropriate, relevant classification information. Unfortunately, as the consultation document notes, it is common for children to be exposed to age-inappropriate material. A [recent survey](#) found that only 44% of parents limited their children to playing video games classified as suitable for their age.

The Foundation is proud to work with the Australian Government to make our eSmart digital literacy products available for free to all schools. However, as children's online experiences are shaped by design and operational aspects of digital technologies, we maintain that systems change is needed, too.

Recommendation 1: We support the review's push to make the classification system more accessible and relevant to the public, including through introduction of PG13 and MA16+ ratings; clearer information for consumers about sensitive themes such as suicide, discrimination (including bullying), scariness and sexual violence; improvements to the Classifications website, including information from related bodies like Children & Media Australia and Common Sense Media; and quick links from media to classification information eg. through QR codes.

Such measures resonate with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, [General Comment 25](#) ('On children's rights in relation to the digital environment'), which states that governments should encourage providers of digital services used by children to apply concise, intelligible content labelling, for example concerning the age-appropriateness of content, as well as encouraging provision of accessible guidance to children, parents and carers.

Recommendation 2: Children, parents and carers should have access to clear, prominent, accurate information about issues of contact in games, not just content. At present, a parent who searches for



information about the age ratings of (for example) Minecraft or Roblox would likely return search results 'PG', which to many parents implies a product suitable for over-13s and with mild content risks for primary students. This does not address the very serious concerns raised by the [eSafety Commissioner](#) about grooming and other contact risks via some functionalities of the games and some game-adjacent platforms.

Recommendation 3: We welcome the review's support for the classification system recognising the seriousness of simulated gambling in games. We have concerns about children being exploited via exposure to simulated gambling and gambling-like elements in games. (Some elements like loot boxes are not associated with traditional gambling and may not register as a concern for parents.) There is [evidence](#) that young people who play gambling-like games in their teens are much more likely than their peers to gamble with money as adults, with a statistically significant pathway between the two activities.

Recommendation 4: We welcome the review's call for the introduction of a Classification Advisory Council of community representatives (not industry stakeholders) as a structured mechanism to provide feedback on policy updates and classification decisions by government and industry and to help ensure classification practices continue to evolve with social standards. However, we urge that this initiative should also include meaningful, age-appropriate roles for children and young people, to share their unique insights into their own experiences and exercise their right to express their views freely on matters affecting them.

Recommendation 5: We support the review's call for a public education campaign to inform Australians about the purpose and functionality of the classification system 'so that individuals can make informed decisions for themselves and their children'. We urge that this campaign should address children's viewing specifically, given that children consume vast amounts of content but, according to the review, are less likely than adults to check product classifications or view classifications as helpful. Appropriate resources should be made available to educators and the campaign should align with existing high-quality digital literacy education inside and outside of school settings.

Recommendation 6: Unfortunately, we are not well-placed to comment in depth on other recommendations of the review, including adopting self-classification as the default industry standard (with Board classification only in rare circumstances); grounding classification decisions in 'established evidence on potential harms'; and potentially lowering classification of some violent content and nudity content in games. However, we do urge policy leads to recognise children's unique needs and vulnerabilities and treat the best interests of the child as a priority in all decisions that affect children.

In line with General Comment 25, we maintain that children have a right to safely access age-appropriate, diverse content while being protected from harmful content, and that government should implement regulatory frameworks that adhere to the highest standards of ethics, safety and accountability.

We would be delighted to discuss any of these matters further with you.

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