



# Australian Democrats National Policy

Title	<b>A Simplified Classification System</b>
Policy type	Complete policy
Policy Working Group	Special – under National Policy Coordinator, residual responsibility with Communication in consultation with Technology with regards to classification of internet content
Policy history	Replaces Access to Information and Censorship Policy balloted 1 July 2001
Status	Final Draft – to be circulated for comment
Date	20/1/2010
Feedback	Informal discussion welcome at <a href="http://www.nointernetcensorship.com.au">www.nointernetcensorship.com.au</a> Formal submissions and comment should be emailed to <a href="mailto:policy@democrats.org.au">policy@democrats.org.au</a>

## Overview

The Australian Democrats believe that all Australians should be able to access, view and read any material they wish. We recognise that the provision and receipt of information is a fundamental human right according to the United Nations' International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. We support a classification program that has as its core purpose empowering consumers to make informed decisions, and oppose any censorship that suppresses access to information and the acquisition of knowledge.

## The Issue

The current classification system has not adapted well to the rapid introduction of new media online, on mobile phones and in gaming, nor the easier flow of media around the world due to the ease of online shopping with suppliers around the world. Additionally classification systems are increasingly being used as a mechanism for censoring materials rather than informing consumers on what the content is likely to include.

## The Proposal

The Australian Democrats will seek the introduction of a simplified classification system that can be applied to all media, including new media forms as they are developed. This consistent classification scheme will enable consumers, in particular parents of young adolescents, to be able to identify what kind of content they can expect to see regardless of whether the media is a magazine, movie, television program, game or website.

The Classification Board will be asked to review and standardise the classification categories so there is no differentiation between media. As part of the review the Australian Democrats will require the removal of the 'refused classification' category, replacing this blanket category with informative categories that allow informed decisions or simply extending the existing R18+ and X18+ categories to cover all legal material currently refused classification.



# Australian Democrats National Policy

This revision will not affect illegal material, such as child pornography, which is defined as illegal by specific legislation or judicial decision. The Australian Democrats will seek a provision in the legislation to ensure that no political influence is exerted on the review of classification categories.

The revised classification system will also include acceptance of alternate classification systems, such as those used in other countries, without the need for additional classification by the Classification Board. Alternate classification systems must be meaningful, consistently applied, suitable and not affix seemingly valid classifications to illegal content.

A public awareness program to explain the changes should be conducted on implementation of the simplified classification system.

## The Goal

The goal of the revised classification system is to:

- enable content for new forms of media to be classified as they are developed if deemed necessary
- streamline classification of new material
- return the classification system to being a tool for consumer empowerment, not a censorship tool
- enable all Australian adults to be able to see, hear and read what they want

## Timeline

The Classification Board will be given 12 months to complete the review and standardisation of classification categories.

It is expected that either new categories or the extension of R18+ and X18+ categories to replace RC (refused classification) will be expedited to rapidly allow access to currently censored materials. The existing R18+ category will be extended to games immediately.