

Your Name

Address

Address

Date

The Secretary

(Name of publisher's guild)

Address

Dear sir/madam

Suitability ratings for books for children and teenagers:

As parents, we have often taken advantage of the excellent film classification ratings guide (<http://www.classification.gov.au/resource.html?resource=866&filename=866.pdf>).

This guide allows parents to decide if a movie is likely to be suitable for viewing by individual children taking into account their age and maturity. The guide is much more convenient, to parents, than watching the movie first.

Some of the same concerns that apply to movies also apply to books. Unfortunately, in the case of books, the classification code does not apply, leaving parents with the more difficult task of trying to decide if a book is appropriate by reading it or trying to ascertain its contents through a cursory examination.

Research has indicated a link between violent entertainment content and aggressive behaviour in children. Children are influenced by role models both real and fictional. We believe that books and the role models in them also have the potential to influence the behaviour of children in both healthy and unhealthy ways.

Applying the same code as for movies would be an inexpensive way for publishers to indicate the content of the book without the parents needing to read the book first.

The code could be legislated by government but applied by the industry (i.e. be self regulating) and would simply allow for the classification symbol on the cover for newly published children's and teenage books (and perhaps magazines targeted at children and teenagers).

Such a ratings guide would allow parents and other interested people to be confident when giving books that the reading material is age and maturity appropriate. It is in all our interests to help our children deal appropriately with our complex world. One of the keys to this process is to help ensure children deal with violence and adult appropriate issues when they have the maturity to do so.

The movie rating guide is already well understood by most people so would not require education of the public prior to launch.

We request the publishing industry assist us in this important cause by arranging to print the appropriate classification code symbol on books and magazines intended for children and teenagers.

Yours sincerely

Signed