**Media Regulation**

[](http://www.google.com/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&frm=1&source=images&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&docid=9SHLx01Tpl3U6M&tbnid=739a1vfnfA4_QM:&ved=0CAUQjRw&url=http://www.worldtvpc.com/blog/violent-tv-keeps-children-up-at-night-says-study/&ei=gyIHVP_GIoG68gWkp4LQDg&bvm=bv.74115972,d.dGc&psig=AFQjCNEIz6NW4HQcTNmPr9tg49uQol_9rA&ust=1409840065677411)Many people agree that children need to be protected from harmful and offensive media content, and most people believe that regulation upholds community values of decency and fairness. Regulation is not censorship and it does not attempt to be; but regulating what certain people have access to means that parts of the community are not exposed to what is deemed by the government and society to be inappropriate.

The Australian media governed by the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) and is self-regulated. There is a range of different regulatory requirements that media organisations must adhere to. If a member of the public finds something in the media offensive, they have the right to make a complaint for the ACMA to investigate and enforce disciplinary action if a breach in the relevant regulatory code is identified.

**What arguments are there for the regulation of the media and what form does it take?** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MDHt8Kzf7ls>

As we know there are two strands that media communication theories fall into:

• That the media has a great deal of power

• That the media does not have a great deal of power.

Each of these strands has an inevitable consequence. If you believe that the media has a great deal of power then it follows that this power could be misused, therefore the media needs to be regulated. If you believe that watching violence makes people act violently or copycat acts of aggression then you will want to regulate what sort of violence can be shown, when it can be shown and how often it can be shown. On the other hand if you believe that the media has very little power then you probably believe that there is little point in regulating a toothless tiger.

This is also tied to how audiences are regarded: if audiences are passive receivers who will act on media messages then you may believe that the content of the media that reaches these people needs to be controlled or monitored.

If you believe that audiences are active then you may believe that they will not be unduly influenced by the media and it there is no need to regulate or even monitor media content.

**In what ways is media content regulated in Australia?**

The Australian government supports diversity of content in the media, but the industry also operates within strict guidelines or ‘codes of practice’. Australia’s media is regulated for the purpose of protecting certain audiences from harmful and offensive content.

**Regulating authorities in Australia**

Official regulators of the media are organisations appointed by parliament to administer communication laws.

**Australian Communications and Media Authority:**

Read the ACMA Story via the link

**http://www.acma.gov.au/theACMA/About/The-ACMA-story/Communicating/the-acma-story**

**ACMA**

The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) are responsible for the regulation of broadcasting, the internet, radio communications and telecommunications. A range of matters is dealt with, **including ownership issues and complaints about advertising or political interfer­ence**.

The desirability of program diversity, limits on concentration of ownership and foreign control of the mass media and the need for media to help foster an Australian cultural identity, report news fairly and respect community standards.

The ACMA sets down operation guidelines and regulates what can be screened, broadcast and put online. It also manages radio and television licences and who will get them. The ACMA has overall control of the number of radio and television stations in any one area. It also regulates and provides licences to any community groups who want to start up their own community radio or television stations.

The ACMA has developed codes of practice for television and radio in conjunction with the industry Free TV Australia and Commercial Radio Australia. Among other things, they lay down a rating system and dictate what can be broadcast during at particular times.

The ACMA also regulates the ownership of commercial media organisations in Australia. Under current media ownership laws, there needs to be no fewer than five independent media groups in metropolitan markets, to stop one company buying up all of our media organisations. •

In Australia, there are minimum requirements for the amount of Australian content on television and radio, a reflection of the belief that overseas content may erode our cultural identity. The Australian Content Standard (2005) mandates a 55% quota of Australian content on television between 6 am and midnight. Similarly, commercial radio stations must broadcast minimum quotas of Australian music

Australia allows foreign investment but the media is considered a ‘sensitive sector’ and foreign purchases must be approved by the Federal Treasurer

<http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/Publications_Archive/archive/mediaregulation>

**Links to the many comments ACMA investigate**

<http://www.acma.gov.au/theACMA/ACMAi/Investigation-reports/Television-investigations/2013-television-investigations>

<http://www.acma.gov.au/theACMA/ACMAi/Investigation-reports/Radio-investigations/2014-radio-investigations>

<http://www.acma.gov.au/theACMA/ACMAi/Investigation-reports>

<http://www.thepowerindex.com.au/power-fail/acma-investigates-kyle-sandilands-for-spider-baby-comments/201205291397>

<http://www.tvtonight.com.au/2012/02/acma-investigates-730-sketch.html>

**The Classification Board:**[**http://www.classification.gov.au/Public/Resources/Pages/Media-and-Student Resources.aspx**](http://www.classification.gov.au/Public/Resources/Pages/Media-and-Student%20Resources.aspx)

• classifies cinema films, home videos, computer games and publications

• The Classification Review Board reviews individual classifications, on request.

[](http://www.google.com.au/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&frm=1&source=images&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&docid=7_v-QsTg7Zc5zM&tbnid=re-LQYBSwFBnrM:&ved=0CAUQjRw&url=http://www.gamepolitics.com/2013/09/20/south-australian-attorney-general-wants-scrutinize-ratings-classification-board&ei=RyQHVJbLD8ql8AXbhIHQBw&bvm=bv.74115972,d.dGc&psig=AFQjCNHhjdRScgddRRStC50L4C4jRfafNg&ust=1409840558866004)The Classification Board carries out the classification of all films, videos and computer games. All films must be submitted to the office; however, the submission of printed matter for classification is voluntary.

Every film, video and computer game that is legally available in Australia has to be classified by the Classification Board before it can be made available to the public. The guidelines are provided by the federal government. The Classification Board also provides classifications to the Australian Broadcasting Authority (ABA) on internet content, advice to enforcement agencies such as the police, and advises the Australian Customs Service.

As it says on the OFLC website, the classifications given to materials (represented by symbols such as G, MA15+ or R18+, which you see on posters and video or computer game covers), are designed to help the public make informed decisions about what adults and children, watch, read or play.

It is possible for a film or video to be classified 'RC' (Refused Classification: in other words, banned from hire, sale, distribution or viewing. The board does not classify TV programs or films for television.

**CLASSIFICATION CONTROVERSIES**

The classification of films and video games often attracts controversy. In 2003, movie critic and anti-censorship campaigner Margaret Pomeranz was detained and questioned by police for attempting to screen the film Ken Park, which was refused classification. “Where does it stop?” she asked the audience before police stormed the stage. “I hate what is happening as far as censorship in this country is concerned. We are not allowed to see a film that millions of people around the world have seen.” The tension between classification and freedom of speech means that there will always be disagreements over how media texts are classified. The board voted six to one and said that Ken Park dealt with sexual matters, 'in such a way that they offend against the standards of morality, decency and propriety generally accepted by reasonable adults'.

The decision sparked a row about the right of a small selection of people deciding what anybody over the age of 18 can or cannot watch, with many declaring that censorship had gone too far.

The irony of this decision was that within days of the film being banned, Australians began downloading the film on their computers and passing it around to people who probably wouldn't have been interested in the film if not for the controversy it had caused. The ease with which it was downloaded also raises the question of the relevance of censorship and the OFLC in the digital age.

In 2012, there was controversy of the classification of Ridley Scott’s Prometheus. Despite the fact that the film featured graphic science fiction violence, it was given an M classification which meant that children under the age of fifteen could watch the film.

In 2013, actor James Franco weighed into the classification debate when the film I want your love was refused classification by the Classification Board for its depiction of homosexual sex. “Because films have been banned because of sex, sex and films hasn’t had a chance to grow and become a sophisticated storytelling device,” he said. “And frankly adults should be able to choose. They’re not going in blind. I don’t know why in this day and age, something like this — a film that is using sex not for titillation but to talk about being human — is being banned. It’s just embarrassing.”

[](https://www.google.com.au/imgres?imgurl&imgrefurl=http://steamcommunity.com/app/550&h=0&w=0&tbnid=hJ_8a7JB68kgfM&zoom=1&tbnh=153&tbnw=329&docid=QiobC56-uy19sM&tbm=isch&ei=vCQHVOCRKIfk8AXqn4LYBw&ved=0CAUQsCUoAQ)In Australia, the classification of video games was a source of considerable controversy. Until 2011, when the Attorney Generals agreed to introduce an R18+ category for video games, games that exceeded the MA15+ classification were deemed unsuitable for an Australian audience. Games like Left 4 Dead 2 and Manhunt were refused classification by the Classification Board. In 2010, the Attorney General’s Department conducted a public consultation on the proposed introduction of an R18+ classification. The results were overwhelmingly in favour of its introduction. “More than 58,400 people responded to the call for submissions on the proposed new adult only category,” said Minister for Home Affairs Brendan O’Connor. “That’s an enormous response and I thank everyone who gave their views. Of those who responded, 98.4% voiced support for an R18+ computer game classification.”

Check out some of their recent classifications: <http://www.classification.gov.au/Pages/Recent.aspx>

Saints Row IV refused classification:  
<http://www.gamespot.com/articles/saints-row-iv-banned-in-australia/1100-6410671/> <http://www.lifehacker.com.au/2013/06/is-the-australian-video-game-classification-system-still-broken/>

State of Decay refused classification in Australia  
<http://www.theage.com.au/digital-life/games/state-of-decay-refused-classification-in-australia-20130627-2ozku.html>  
Prometheus classification controversy: rating drops from MA to M, doors open for the kids:  
<http://blogs.crikey.com.au/cinetology/2012/06/06/prometheus-classification-controversy-rating-drops-from-ma-to-m-doors-open-for-the-kids/>

**Industry associations and codes of** **practice**

Each sector of the broadcasting industry has a code of practice developed by its industry association.

The codes of practice in each industry relate to key areas developed by the (ACMA) these include:

• protecting children from harmful material. ;

• Accuracy and fairness in news

• A ban on alarming simulations of news

• A ban on hypnosis and subliminal perception

• preventing programs that incite or perpetrate hatred and vilification on the bases of ethnicity, nationality, race, gender, sexual preference, religion or disability. The media industry has established self-regulatory bodies to investigate complaints from the public.

**INDUSTRY BODIES AND SELF REGULATION**

**[Free TV Australia](http://www.freetvaust.com.au" \t "_blank)** (formerly CTVA - Commercial TV Australia, formerly FACTS - Federation of Australian Commercial TV Stations)

* the industry body representing the interests of commercial television stations
* responsible for the **[Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice](http://www.freetvaust.com.au/Content_Common/pg-Code-of-Practice.seo" \t "_blank)**
* conducts three yearly reviews

**Advertising   
[Advertising Standards Bureau (ASB)](http://www.adstandards.com.au" \t "_blank)**

The Advertising Standards Board provides a free public complaint service about advertising in the mainstream media, which people find offensive on the basis of:

* discrimination (race, nationality, sex, age, sexual preference, religion, disability, political belief)
* violence
* language
* portrayal of sex, sexuality or nudity;
* health and safety
* Alarm or distress to children.

***The Advertising Standards Bureau*** *adjudicates* public complaints. The ASB accepts complaints about the content of advertisements across all media. Women's groups in particular have criticised the ASB, saying it is out of touch with community con­cerns about gender stereotyping.

**RADIO  
[Commercial Radio Australia (CRA)](http://www.commercialradio.com.au/" \t "_blank)**   
(formerly FARB - Federation of Australian Broadcasters) **the** industry body representing the interests of commercial radio stations

**[Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (CBAA)](http://www.cbaa.org.au/" \t "_blank)**  
 represents the interests of community radio and TV stations across Australia.

**GAMES  
[Interactive Games & Entertainment Association (iGEA)](http://www.igea.net/" \t "_blank)**iGEA is a trade association for the interactive entertainment industry in Australia and New Zealand

Members are companies that are responsible for the sales, marketing, distribution and development of computer and video games software, hardware and accessories.

**INTERNET  
[Communications](http://www.commsalliance.com.au/Activities/ispi" \t "_blank)** [Alliance LTD](http://www.commsalliance.com.au/Activities/ispi" \t "_blank)

The industry body representing the interests of Internet Service Providers responsible for the **[IIA Codes of Practice](http://www.iia.net.au/index.php?option=com_content&task=section&id=3&Itemid=33" \t "_blank)**, and reviews.

**[Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA)](http://www.alliance.org.au/" \t "_blank)**  
the body representing the interests of those employed in those industries   
responsible for the **[Journalists’ Code of Ethics](http://www.alliance.org.au/code-of-ethics.html" \t "_blank)**.

**THE PRESS -Newspapers**

**[Australian Press Council](http://www.presscouncil.org.au/" \t "_blank)**  
a self-regulatory body set up by the print media, and acts as a forum for complaints concerning the press.

The Australian Press Council is a voluntary industry body set up by the newspaper proprietors in 1976, after threats from the Whitlam government to legislate. The council investigates complaints from the public. The proprietors' representatives, members of the public, journalists.

<http://www.abc.net.au/mediawatch/> recent attack by News Corp on The Press Council

**Arguments for regulation in Australia**

There are audiences in Australian society that should be protected from inappropriate content, such as children.

The protection of the vulnerable is held in the highest regard in Australian society.

It is easier for government and industry bodies to regulate the media and protect vulnerable groups in society

Many parents claim they cannot physically monitor all the media their children have access to. Regulation should be in place to prevent content that encourages racial, religious and sexual discrimination. Australians want to live in a society that promotes and is tolerant of diversity.

In Australia, media ownership is highly concentrated. Any regulation of the industry is positive as it can help to prevent media owners from setting agendas through their content.

**Arguments against regulation in Australia**

Self-regulation means that the government provides only advisory information to media organisations, so harmful content may still be shown or become available to susceptible audiences. Printing warnings on the packaging of video games, or screening a warning before a television program is not enough of a deterrent to prevent vulnerable audiences from being exposed to harmful content.

It is not the government’s responsibility to protect children from inappropriate media.

Parents must take an active role in monitoring how their children use the media and influencing their consumption choices, rather than remaining ignorant about its impact.

Australia is a democratic country that prides itself on diverse media. Regulation threatens this variety as whoever regulates the media has the potential to limit an audience’s exposure to new and **progressive content.**

Regulation threatens to create a ‘nanny state’ where the media becomes so controlled that

There is little opportunity for varied content, differing opinions and democratic speech.

**So should we have Media Regulation ???**

Arguments concerning the role of media regulation are essentially governed by the media effects debate

Where some view the media as powerful ,

Whereas others view the media as having little power on the community.

**What does the government think ?**

Governments have essentially adopted the view that the media has the power to influence and feel that regulation of the media should be adopted in terms of

**Censorship**- A government believes certain types of information should be restricted because they could lead to ant social behaviour

**Information**- Governments sometimes believe the information provided by the media could bias or otherwise adversely affect public opinion

**Competition Issues**- A government believes that undue concentration of the media could restrict the diversity of views , opinions or information

It is therefore argued that there is a public interest imperative to regulate for the collective good of society and that regulation is considered necessary to deal with concerns about the influence of broadcasting on society. It is also argued that the media have a unique capacity for to influence the agenda for public debate and shape our culture. Many would also agree that governments should protect the interests of children and Australian culture from commercial pressures

An argument in favour of media regulation would be based on the notion that the media influences audiences to some extent. The example of violent video games and their influence on children is often used to call for tighter control of these games .A range of studies have been completed that demonstrate a link between violent video games and violent behaviour. A study by Anderson and Dill, used games such as Doom and Mortal Combat on two sets of college students .One study revealed that brief exposure to violent video games temporarily increased aggressive behaviour .Other studies have suggested violent video games may effect some children more than others.

See recent classifications of violent video games <http://www.theage.com.au/digital-life/games/saints-row-4-refused-classification-in-australia-20130626-2oydx.html>

TV Violence : <http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/previous%20series/vt/1-9/vt06.html>

Proponents of media regulation believe that the increase in more violent and realistically graphic games is fostering adolescent violence .These people argue that tighter control is necessary to protect both the individual and the society from increases in violent behaviour and that the media should be controlled to deliver positive messages They argue that exposure to violent video games increases: aggressive thoughts, emotions and actions and that these games are marketed towards children

**What do others argue**

**On the opposing side of the debate others argue**  that Government media regulation in Australia like much of the media regulation around the world is designed to protect governments. They believe that Governments often parade it as a protection of the people against misleading views , but argue it is really an attempt to entrench government power Such regulation does not benefit the population . only those who wish to protect it. It is seen as antithetical to the true role of censorship and the notion of providing diversity of views and opinions in the media

They would further argue that even if the media does have affects on audiences it remains an open question as to whether the effects are necessarily bad . It is conceivable that media effects might be positive for societal development and that regulation might effectively inhibit these positive effects , just as it intended to inhibit the negative effects

The debate of the media’s effects and regulation is fraught with difficulties in context to the type of audiences that should be protected. Children , defined by the ACMA code of practice as being 14 years or younger are clearly perceived as more vulnerable due to their lack of development.

Therefore the code reflects this where no program, advertisement or other material broadcast during a C period or P Period may : present images or events in a way which is unduly frightening or unduly distressing to children: present images or events which depict unsafe uses of a product or unsafe situations which may encourage children to engage in activities dangerous to them. This therefore assumes the position that the media has the power to influence children and they therefore need to be protected.

Some critics would argue that from the 3000 studies into the effects of violence on children. Despite decades of research there is division between commentators as to whether the evidence on television violence is clear or inconclusive. The difference of opinion amongst commentators is due to the difficulty of proving direct cause and effect , isolating the effect of television violence and excluding psychological , social environmental and economic influences. In addition broadcasters and scientists continue to debate the degree to which the viewing of television violence contributes to aggressive behaviour. Some commentators believe that there is not enough evidence to prove that TV violence is harmful in the long term , and evaluate its effect as minor beside psychological and socio-economic factors.

Opponents of media regulation believe that everyone should have the freedom to decide what they wish to consume . Using the example of video game violence they argue that it is not proven that violent video games are linked to violent behaviour. They believe the studies to be inconclusive and argue that a range of other factors lead to the increases in adolescent violence .They argue that no studies have been completed over a sustained period of time . Opponents believe users to be active decision makers who make their own choices regarding the media they consume and that individual differences mean that not all people are influence by violent games the same way.

An additional problem is the lack of Australian based research,. Associate Professor Carr- Gregg states.

The ACMA did its own [study](http://www.aba.gov.au/newspubs/news_releases/archive/2003/27nr03.shtml) on community attitudes to violence on Australian free-to-air TV in 1989 and 2003. The surveys examined whether a relationship existed between concerns about violence on TV and whether people changed their behaviour to avoid violent content. Its research showed community levels of concern about television violence had decreased in the intervening 14 years. In 1989 25% of adults spontaneously mentioned violence as a concern. This had reduced to 14% by 2002. The later survey showed a strong agreement that Australian adults should be able to watch whatever they like.

However whilst the protection of children is viewed as an integral component of media regulation, the arguments for less regulation predominately concern adults. Some commentators argue that adults should have the right in a democracy to view whatever they desire without the impingement of censorship.

This position assumes that audience reception plays a key role in regard to media effects. It is argued that adults are generally perceived as active audiences, where their use of the media reinforces existing values.

One of the more controversial issues of censorship occurred with the banning of the film Ken Park due attention to a small group of people ( classifiers) making decisions on what Australians can and can’t see.

.The Classification Board refused to classify it saying it offended against “the standards of morality, decency and propriety generally accepted by reasonable adults” The Classification Review Board backed them up and the film had to be withdrawn from Melbourne and Sydney film festivals

Almost immediately afterwards the ban was announced people around Australia began downloading the film on their computers and passed copies to their friends- many of whom no doubt wouldn’t have bothered seeing it if it had been cleared for release. Ironically there was nothing to stop it from being screened at the Melbourne and Sydney film festivals as festivals are exempt from the classification process. The problem was that a local distributor had submitted the film for general release first and once it had been refused classification by the OLFC, the festivals weren’t allowed to show it.

The ease to which a banned film can be downloaded and viewed raises the questions of censorships relevance in the age of the internet. But strangely enough , in the few years since Australians have had access to the net and been able to download anything from Ken Park to the Anarchists Cookbook to explicit pornography , censorship guidelines in Australia have tightened

A court order in Victoria prevented the screening of “ Underbelly “. Whilst the rest of Australia began to watch the series. This resulted in thousands of downloads of the program from the internet .The same occurred with ‘A Serbian Film a psychosexual thriller which was green-lit for release in Australia in every state and territory other than South Australia, the only state with its own classification board. Backed by Collective Shout and a South Australian DVD shop owner, SA Attorney-General John Rau urged the government to review the film’s classification. The Classification Review Board ruled in favour of Rau and co’s stance and threw the film into the banned bucket, slapping it with an RC (Refused Classification) rating and ordering its recall from vendors.

The same fate befell Norwegian director Tom Six’s black and white horror film *The Human Centipede II*, which depicts the exploits of an obese social misfit who stitches 12 victims together. Melbourne’s Cinema Nova advertised it with the prophetic slogan “see it before it’s banned”. A review of the film’s classification was requested by NSW Attorney General Greg Smith, again backed by Reist and Collective Shout, and Christian ministry Family Voice Australia.

*The Human Centipede II* was subsequently handed an RC classification on Tuesday, making 2011 the first year in Australian history in which two feature films have been approved for release then banned.

IT would appear form the outset that lobby group Collective Shout’s achievements in 2011 would be from the belief that they’ve made the world a better place.

But in a debate widely framed in terms of accessibility, where media convergence and online distribution have irrevocably altered the landscape, the fact remains that banning films isn’t what it used to be. The film industry has forever changed and will continue to move further and further away from the grasp of censors, whether conservative viewers — or anybody, for that matter — like it or not.

They are now emblazoned in the annals of film history alongside titles like *Ken Park* (2002), *Salo* (1975) and *Cannibal Holocaust* (1980). These films are common talking points in university campuses, on the must-see list for many viewers who wouldn’t have heard of them if they hadn’t created classification controversy.

Apart from the cause and effect of censorship critics also point to the inconsistencies that surround the banning of offensive material

Certainly in some areas, such as the use of coarse language in Television restrictions have eased. In the late 1990s , TV networks began allowing the F word to go to air, particularly where it was seen as vital to the storyline of a movie. Next came the memorable episode of Sex in the City where C was broadcast, although not in regional areas. The producers of the program defended much of the controversy, by claiming the show targeted a specific adult audience.

Next came the Osborne’s were the F word appeared frequently throughout the reality series on channel 10, with barely a word bleeped out

It’s a far cry from 1975 when Graham Kennedy was taken off air for his mischievous crow call of “Faaa..r..” By way of contrast however some episodes of popular 70s drama No 96, wouldn’t be allowed to screen uncut today, as the full frontal nudity would be considered gratuitous.

Others argue that at the height of Australia’s system of censorship lies an enormous disparity and inconsistency. Episodes of Big Brother were accused by Politicians as being little more than soft porn. Liberal MP Trish Draper claimed she had been swamped with calls and had commissioned the ABA to investigate whether the show had breached the Code of Practice. Most of the shows viewers aged between 16-39 said that they “don’t need protection from elders or betters.” Academics who have studied the programs impact say that “no matter how sporadically offensive, the program is more real than much television fare” . All the earnest discussion about the morality of the show hides the other reality-the publicity has served Channel 9 well. This raises the further question of whether commercial television’s ability to self-regulate is clouded by commercial endeavours.

In 2012 an independent inquiry into Australia's media has recommended an umbrella regulatory body be immediately established with responsibility for news and current affairs across all media.

The report by Ray Finkelstein found that the current self-regulation mechanisms lack the teeth to keep media organisations in line with ethics and proper reporting standards.

The report was commissioned in the wake of widespread disgust and anger over the conduct of now-defunct Murdoch newspaper, *News of the World*, in Britain.

While no evidence of wrongdoing had been found in Australia, the review into Australia's media, and media regulatory processes, said that more needed to be done to maintain public confidence in the media.

Mr. Finkelstein found that: only ''one or two'' newspapers had appointed an Ombudsman or readers' representative (including The Sydney Morning Herald), there was no regulation of online news publications, the Australian Press Council lacked the teeth and necessary funding to carry out its functions, and legal proceedings against the media tended to be expensive, protracted and did not give complainants the opportunity to seek redress for inaccuracy or unfairness.

Mr. Finkelstein recommended a new News Media Council, which would set journalistic standards for the first time – although these would likely be ''substantially the same as those that presently apply and which all profess to embrace''.

He said this new council would apply to news and current affairs across print, online, radio and televisions – the first time an umbrella body would be responsible for the various media. And it would, for the first time, provide oversight and offer an outlet for complaints, about online news content, replacing the voluntary Australian Press Council with a new statutory body.

Media Alliance federal secretary, Christopher Warren, said: “We have made no secret of our interest in reforming the Australian Press Council into a bigger body which would cover all media platforms. In an era of rapid convergence this is no more than good sense. We would also be willing to accept some degree of government funding, although the majority of funding should be provided by the members.”   “Where the Media Alliance Parts Company with Mr. Finkelstein is this notion that a government can somehow impose self-regulation on the news industry by statute. As far as we are concerned, a government-funded body with the power to determine what newspapers should and shouldn’t publish smacks of an attempt to impose government control on a free press.”

However given the phone hacking scandal and recent online Twitter bullying and suicide of TV host Charlotte Dawson many critics and academics believe that greater regulation is necessary.

Therefore the debate surrounding media regulation assumes many complex variables. The alternative media communication theories which are adopted, the age and positioning of audiences, audience reception, economics and Government policy, self-regulation and the Media industry.

**Further links**  
<http://yourview.theage.com.au/issues/269-The-media-should-be-subject-to-tighter-government-regulation/embed/>  
<https://newmatilda.com/2012/11/30/media-regulation-answer>   
<http://ipa.org.au/news/3068/time-to-ditch-antiquated-media-regulations> <http://consumersfederation.org.au/junk-food-marketing-regulations-fail-to-protect-children/><http://www.smh.com.au/technology/technology-news/new-law-to-control-cyber-data-20120822-24mur.html>  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/News_International_phone_hacking_scandal>

Murdoch phone hacking scandal  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gqtxxREeyOY>   
Australian Media regulation  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xVMWlfdH0Q8>  
Issues   
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N8eAkCRi8xQ>

**ESSAY TASK YEAR 12**   
Those who argue for media regulation generally believe that media content has some effect on audiences ’attitudes towards racism, sexism, violence, drug use, coarse language and political values.

Outline arguments in favour and arguments against the regulation of particular media content. In your answer you may refer to any media forms and/or texts you have studied this year and the issues and arguments discussed in relation to control of their content.

**Year 11** Outline two arguments in favour and two arguments against the regulation of particular media content. In your answer you may refer to any media forms and/or texts you have studied this year and the issues and arguments discussed in relation to control of their content.