

**Te Mana
Whakaatu**
CLASSIFICATION OFFICE

Kōrero tahi.
Mātaki tahi.

PART 2

What we're watching

Views about the classification system

What we're watching:

Views about the classification system

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Introduction

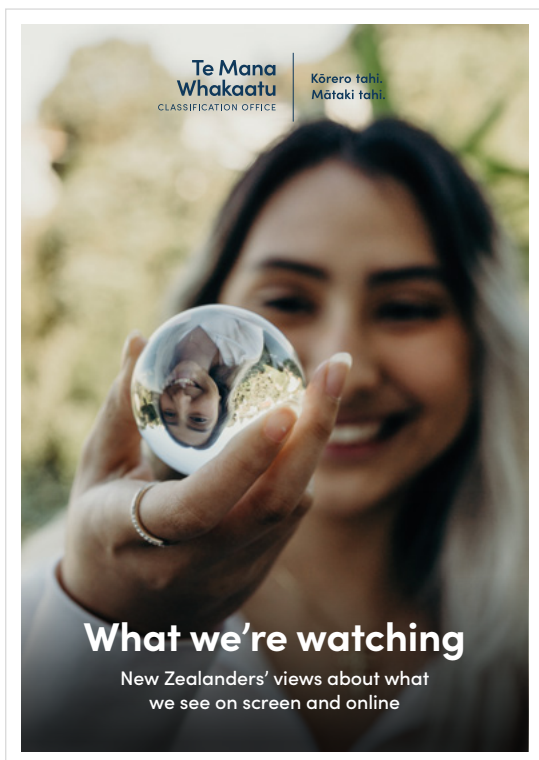
Te Mana Whakaatu – Classification Office commissioned a nationwide survey to explore New Zealanders' views about potentially harmful content on screen and online, and about age ratings and the classification system.

In June 2022 the Office published findings in the report *What we're watching: New Zealanders' views about what we see on screen and online*. This report focused on New Zealanders' views about specific types of content and the potential for harm to tamariki, rangatahi and the wider community. It also looked at ways in which people manage content to keep themselves and their families safe, and views about how to mitigate potential harms of online content.

Key findings were:

- New Zealanders are concerned about tamariki and rangatahi seeing harmful content
- Most think it's hard to protect tamariki online
- It's common for people of all ages to see harmful content online
- New Zealanders support regulation of harmful online content

The survey also included some questions about age ratings, the classification system, and the role of the Classification Office that were not included in the initial *What we're watching* report published in June. We've provided more detailed information about those findings in this report.



What we're watching: New Zealanders' views about what we see on screen and online:

classificationoffice.govt.nz/resources/research/what-were-watching/

Research methodology

A nationwide online survey was conducted from 22 February to 14 March 2022, involving 1,201 New Zealanders.

This included 1,001 adults and a 'youth booster' of 200 rangatahi aged 16 or 17. This oversampling of the youth population allowed for a more in-depth analysis and it was accounted for when weighting different demographic groups in the full sample.

A combination of pre-survey quotas and post-survey weighting was used to ensure the results are

representative of all New Zealanders by age within gender, region, ethnicity, and household income by household size. The maximum margin of error on the total group $n=1,201$ is $\pm 2.8\%$ at the 95% confidence interval. Subgroup differences noted in this report are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level unless specifically noted otherwise.

See [page 22](#) for notes on terminology.

Key findings

MOST THINK AGE RATINGS ARE IMPORTANT WHEN DECIDING WHAT TAMARIKI AND RANGATAHI SHOULD WATCH

New Zealanders think age ratings are important when deciding what tamariki and rangatahi should watch. Of those who had recently helped to choose a movie, show or video game for a child or young person, most thought age ratings (84%) and content warnings (83%) were important.

84% thought age ratings were important

MOST THINK AGE RATINGS ARE 'ABOUT RIGHT'

Most New Zealanders think that the various age ratings for movies, shows and games generally strike the right balance to provide helpful guidance for families. Asked if age ratings were too strict, too lenient or about right, 10% thought they were 'much' or 'a bit' too strict, and 20% thought they were 'much' or 'a bit' too lenient. 70% think they are 'about right'.

MOST HAVE A GOOD UNDERSTANDING OF SPECIFIC AGE RATINGS

We asked about the meaning of different New Zealand age ratings, and 78% selected the correct meaning for at least three out of five rating symbols (such as G, PG, M, R16).

Most participants selected the correct description for the M, G, and age-restricted ratings – such as R16, 16, or Restricted 16 – and a majority chose the correct meaning of the PG rating. Only around a third knew the correct meaning of the RP ratings¹.

We expect that public understanding of different age ratings will increase over time now that major streaming providers (such as Netflix and Disney+) are required to display official, consistent age-rating information.

¹ "People under the specified age (eg 13 or 16) should only watch the movie with a parent or guardian". Read more about NZ age ratings on our website: classificationoffice.govt.nz/classification-info/classification-labels

A MINORITY BELIEVE LEGAL RESTRICTIONS ON STREAMING SERVICES SHOULD APPLY TO PARENTS

Just 22% of participants thought it should be illegal for parents to let their underage child or teen watch age-restricted movies or shows on a streaming service.

By contrast, 42% thought parents should be able to decide if their child watches age-restricted content on a streaming service, either by giving permission (18%) or watching it with their child (24%). Some (26%) thought there should be no legal restriction at all, and that the ratings should offer guidance only.

NEW ZEALANDERS ARE NOTICING OFFICIAL RATINGS ON STREAMING SERVICES

Of those who use the two most popular streaming services, a majority had seen official New Zealand ratings on Netflix (57%) and Disney+ (52%). It was somewhat less common for participants using other streaming services to have noticed the age ratings (ranging from 37% to 49%).

Our survey was conducted during a period of change where various streaming services were implementing new requirements to display New Zealand age ratings on their movies and shows. We expect that awareness of age ratings will increase over time as the system is bedded in.

AWARENESS OF THE CLASSIFICATION OFFICE IS RELATIVELY LOW, BUT A MAJORITY ARE AWARE WE HAVE A ROLE IN DECIDING AGE RATINGS IN SOME WAY

When asked about what they know about the Classification Office, 43% said they know 'a little' or 'a lot', while 37% said they had not heard of us before.

We followed this question by gauging awareness of some specific work our office is responsible for. When put this way, awareness of our work was higher. The majority (56%) were aware that our office "Decides age ratings for movies and shows/TV series on DVD/Blu-ray and cinema", while just under half were aware we decide age ratings for streaming services (47%) and video games (45%). Overall, 60% were aware we have a role in deciding age ratings in some way.

OF THOSE WHO KNOW ENOUGH TO RATE OUR PERFORMANCE, MOST THINK WE DO AN 'EXCELLENT', 'VERY GOOD', OR 'GOOD' JOB

Of those who knew enough to rate our performance, 72% thought we do an 'excellent', 'very good', or 'good' job, while 5% think we do a 'poor', or 'very poor' job.

Results show that while most New Zealanders hold a positive opinion about the Office, this has declined somewhat since we asked a similar question in our 2016 survey.

MOST THINK THE ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE CLASSIFICATION OFFICE ARE USEFUL

We asked whether it is worthwhile and useful for an organisation in New Zealand to do things such as deciding age ratings, classifying potentially illegal content, and providing guidance and resources about content. Results showed strong support among New Zealanders for the work we do.

Most (89%) thought it was useful for an organisation to carry out this work, including 62% who thought it was 'very useful'. Just 6% saw it as 'not that useful' or 'not at all useful'.

Views about New Zealand age ratings

New Zealand's age rating labels have been in use since 1994. Age ratings don't apply to most online content, but they're an important tool for New Zealanders concerned about tamariki and rangatahi viewing harmful or inappropriate content in movies, shows and games.

Most think age ratings are important when deciding what tamariki and rangatahi should watch

"Age ratings are there for a reason."

FEMALE, NZ EUROPEAN, AGE 16

"A rating is a very good thing to see and it helps responsible parents make the right decision."

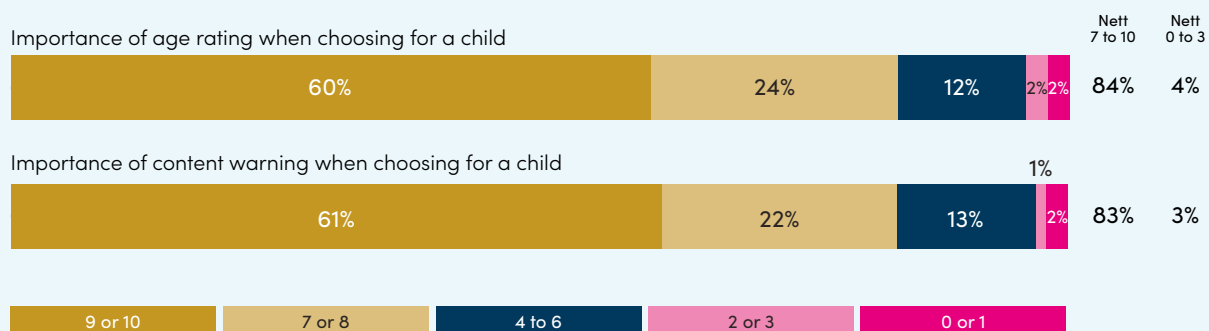
MALE, NZ MĀORI, 50-54

Participants who had chosen or helped to choose a movie, show, or video game for a child or young person in the last 12 months were asked about the importance of official age rating information. This group included 57% of all participants.

Some of these findings were covered in our initial *What we're watching* report published in June, but we've provided some further detail in this report.

Most think age ratings (84%) and content warnings (83%) are important when making choices about what tamariki and rangatahi watch, giving a score of 7 or above on a scale of 10. The majority think age ratings and content warnings are very important, giving a rating of 9 or 10 on the scale.

Importance of age rating information – choosing for children and young people



BASE: ALL INVOLVED IN CHOOSING MOVIES/SHOWS/VIDEO GAMES FOR CHILD/YOUNG PERSON (N=689).

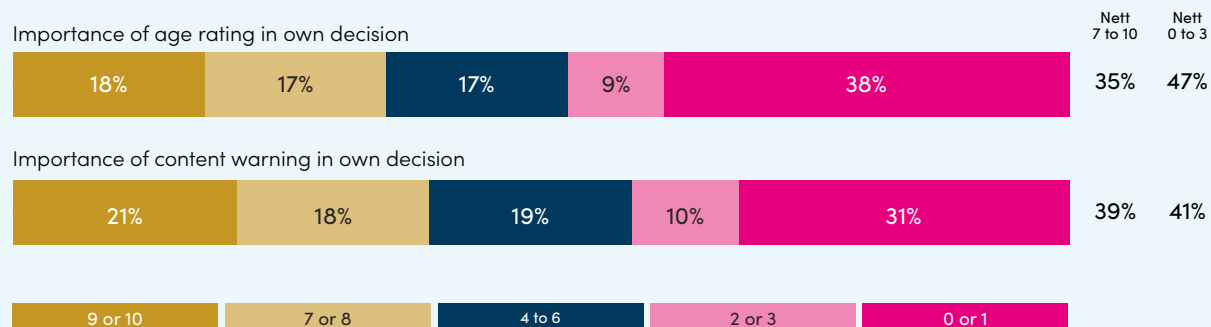
SURVEY QUESTIONS: "How important is the age rating (eg PG, M, R16), when you're choosing a movie, show/TV series or video game for a child or young person?"*

"How important is the content warning (e.g. "violence" or "offensive language"), when you're choosing a movie, show/TV series, or video game for a child or young person?"*

*"...for a child or someone younger than you?" (asked to participants aged 16-17).

Age-rating information is also important for some when choosing what to watch or play themselves. Over a third (35%) of all participants thought age ratings were important, and 39% thought this about content warnings.

Importance of age rating information – choosing for yourself



BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS (N=1,201).

SURVEY QUESTIONS: "When choosing a movie, show or video game for yourself, how important is the age rating (eg PG, M, R16) in your decision to watch or play it?"

"When choosing a movie, show or video game for yourself, how important is the content warning in your decision to watch or play it?"

Views about the importance of age-rating information when choosing content for tamariki and rangatahi has declined somewhat since we last asked similar questions in 2016². In that survey, 92% thought the age rating was important and 91% thought this about the content warning.

Reasons for this may include the large increase in the number of people viewing movies and shows on online streaming services. Another is likely to be the continued decline in use of DVD/Blu-rays over this period, as they have historically been one of the main contexts for noticing and using age-rating labels. At the time of our 2022 survey, streaming services were in the process of implementing new requirements to display official classification and rating information, and we expect people's views about the usefulness of labels to increase over time.

Interestingly, the importance of age ratings when people are choosing what to watch themselves has risen slightly over the same period (from 30% to 35%), while views about the importance of content warnings have decreased slightly (from 42% to 39%).

INSIGHTS – AGE, GENDER AND ETHNICITY

The importance of age ratings and content warnings when making personal choices about what to watch:

- People aged 18 to 29 were less likely to think age ratings (21%) and content warnings (27%) are important.
- Asian (53%) and Pacific (48%) participants were more likely than Māori (36%) and NZ Europeans (30%) to think the age rating is important.

The importance of age ratings and content warnings when choosing for tamariki and rangatahi³:

- Tends to rise with age – for example, people aged 16 to 17 were less likely to think age ratings are important (75%), and people aged 70+ are more likely (97%).
- Female participants were more likely to think age ratings (89%) and content warnings (90%) are important compared with males (79% and 77%).
- Māori participants were more likely to think age ratings are very important (giving a score of 9 or 10 on the scale provided).

² See *Understanding the Classification System: New Zealanders' Views*: classificationoffice.govt.nz/resources/research/understanding-the-classification-system-new-zealanders-views/

³ Percentage of participants who had recently helped choose a movie, show or video game for a child or young person.

MOST THINK AGE RATINGS ARE 'ABOUT RIGHT'

"They are a great guide for me to know if a movie is going to be violent, etc, or easy to watch."

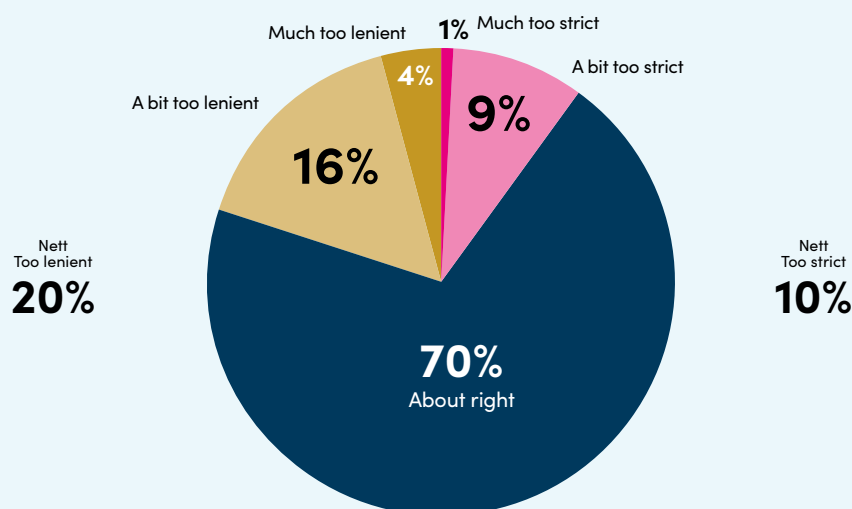
PARENT/CAREGIVER, FEMALE, NZ EUROPEAN, AGE 25-29

"I use these age ratings often. I think they are very important."

PARENT, FEMALE, PACIFIC, AGE 35-39

Most New Zealanders think the various age ratings for movies, shows and games generally strike the right balance to provide helpful guidance for families. Asked if age ratings were too strict, too lenient or about right, 10% thought they are 'much' or 'a bit' too strict, and 20% thought they are 'much' or 'a bit' too lenient. The majority (70%) thought they are 'about right'.

Views about rating decisions



BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS (N=1,201).

SURVEY QUESTION: "Overall, would you say the age ratings for movies, shows, and video games are:"

New Zealanders' perspective on age ratings has changed little since we asked this question in 2016. In that survey, 73% felt the ratings were 'about right', 16% felt they were too lenient, and 9% felt they were too strict.

Participants were given the opportunity to tell us more about why they thought age ratings are either too strict or too lenient.

Some of those who thought ratings are too lenient talked about it being too easy for rangatahi to access

restricted content online, and some expressed general concerns about the prevalence of content such as sex and violence. Some participants who thought age ratings are too strict also talked about tamariki and rangatahi's easy access to so much content online, so felt that age ratings for films and shows do not matter as much or are seen as ineffective.

The quotes below provide some examples of participants' views about the age ratings displayed on movies, shows and games, and why they think these are too lenient or too strict.

VIEWS ABOUT AGE RATINGS BEING TOO LENIENT

“There are some themes that are not appropriate for younger audiences, especially discussing sexuality, alcohol and drug use. Some PG movies have inappropriate scenes.”

PARENT/CAREGIVER, MALE, PACIFIC, AGE 35-39

“Some video games and movies have contained more violence or offensive language than I expected from the rating.”

FEMALE, NZ EUROPEAN, AGE 16

“Some content seems like it should be for older teens or adults. Mostly seeing explicit sexual content in R16 that seems more like R18 content.”

PARENT/CAREGIVER, FEMALE, NZ EUROPEAN, AGE 35-39

VIEWS ABOUT AGE RATINGS BEING TOO STRICT

“Some of the issues portrayed for the intended older audiences are things that are actively affecting rangatahi in our communities currently, so I think the censorship in movies or programmes makes it harder to normalise discussion around these topics.”

PARENT/CAREGIVER, FEMALE, NZ EUROPEAN, AGE 25-29

“Just think kids are more capable these days of separating movies from reality and shouldn't be treated as kids as much.”

PARENT/CAREGIVER, MALE, NZ EUROPEAN, AGE 40-44

“My friends and I watch movies and play games which are 18 plus, and they are fine.”

MALE, ASIAN AND NZ EUROPEAN, AGE 17

INSIGHTS – AGE, GENDER AND ETHNICITY

Are age ratings too strict, too lenient, or about right?:

- Male participants (13%) were more likely than females (7%) to think age ratings are too strict.
- Participants aged 16 to 17 were significantly more likely to think age ratings are too strict (23%), while those aged 60 to 69 (28%) and 70+ (27%) were more likely to think age ratings are too lenient.
- Pacific participants (29%) were also more likely to think ratings are too lenient, compared with Māori (22%), NZ Europeans (19%) and Asian participants (14%).

Most have a good understanding of specific age ratings

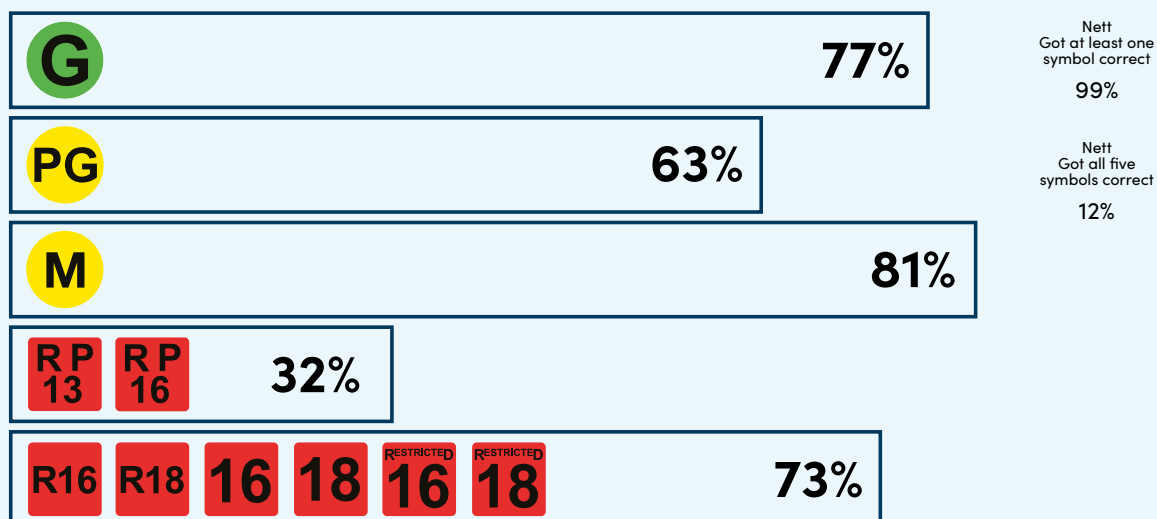
“Useful to stop younger tamariki watching things they are not ready for.”

PARENT/CAREGIVER, MALE, NZ MĀORI, AGE 25-29

To gauge New Zealanders' knowledge about the meaning of age ratings, we asked five questions about different types of rating symbols and provided multiple choice options for each.

Overall, 78% selected the correct meaning for at least three out of five rating symbols. Most participants selected the correct description for the G, M, and age-restricted ratings (such as R16, 16, or Restricted 16⁴), and a majority chose the correct meaning of the PG rating. Around only a third knew the correct meaning of the RP ratings⁵.

Understanding of rating symbols



BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS (N=1,201).

SURVEY QUESTION: "What do you think this symbol means...?"

4 Restricted ratings might be displayed in different ways depending on context, for example if they appear on a DVD or on a streaming service.

5 "People under the specified age (eg 13 or 16) should only watch the movie with a parent or guardian". Read more about NZ age ratings on our website: classificationoffice.govt.nz/classification-info/classification-labels



We cannot directly compare these results with findings from our 2016 survey⁶ as there were significant differences in how the questions were asked. This is mainly due to the recent law change that requires online streaming services (for example, Netflix or Disney+) to display official New Zealand ratings on their movies and shows. The appearance and legal definition of these age ratings can differ somewhat from those issued by the Office, and so the wording of the options we provided in the survey were changed to take this into account.

Nonetheless, the results suggest that understanding of the M rating (81%) has risen since 2016, but understanding of other ratings may have declined over this period. As previously mentioned, this may in part be due to the continued decline in use of DVD/Blu-rays, and it may also be related to the display of unofficial age ratings for movies and shows available on streaming services during this period. The recent law change mentioned above was designed in part to address this issue.

INSIGHTS – AGE, GENDER AND ETHNICITY

Understanding age ratings:

- Younger participants aged 16 to 17 were less likely to know the correct meaning of age-restricted ratings such as R16 or R18 (63%), compared with those aged 40 to 49 (82%) and 50 to 59 (81%).
- Female participants (85%) were somewhat more likely than males (77%) to identify the correct meaning of the 'M' rating.
- Asian participants were somewhat less likely to know the meaning of the 'M' rating (70%) and the 'G' rating (69%).

6 See *Understanding the Classification System: New Zealanders' Views*: classificationoffice.govt.nz/resources/research/understanding-the-classification-system-new-zealanders-views

Age ratings on commercial video on-demand services

"Good, so don't have to watch embarrassing movies with parents."

MALE, NZ EUROPEAN, AGE 17

"Have a six-year-old grandchild, so ratings really help when the child is told it's not a movie they can watch. Helps prevent meltdowns."

FEMALE, NZ EUROPEAN, AGE 65-69

"They are there for a reason! It is to ensure that tamariki are not being subjected to material which is not appropriate."

FEMALE, PACIFIC AND NZ EUROPEAN, AGE 55-59

The findings so far show that New Zealanders rely on trusted age ratings when making viewing decisions for tamariki and rangatahi. However, for a number of years this information has not been available on streaming services where most New Zealanders watch movies and shows.

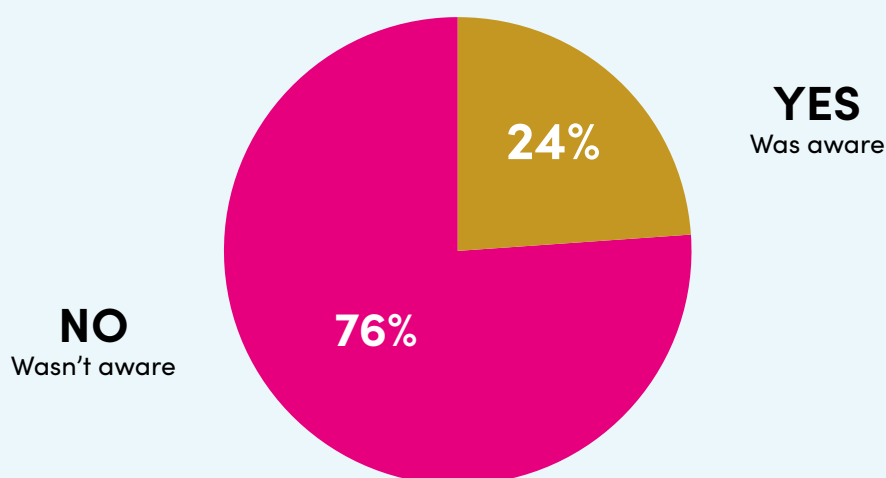
As previously mentioned, a recent law change aimed to address this by requiring major commercial online streaming companies to display official age rating information on the content they make available in New Zealand. This information looks similar to the age ratings displayed on DVDs/Blu-rays and in cinemas.

Awareness of ratings on streaming services

We found that relatively few New Zealanders (24%) were aware of these new legal requirements. However, our survey was conducted during a period of change where various streaming services were implementing these new requirements, so we did not expect a high level of public awareness.

With this in mind, it was encouraging to find that New Zealanders are already noticing the changes. Of those who use the two most popular streaming services, a majority had seen these ratings on Netflix (57%) and Disney+ (52%). It was somewhat

Awareness of rating requirements on streaming services



BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS (N=1,201).

SURVEY QUESTION: "Major subscription or pay-per-view online streaming services (like Netflix or Google Play Movies) are now legally required to show NZ age ratings. These look similar to the age ratings displayed on DVDs/Blu-rays and in the cinema. Before today, were you aware of this new requirement?"

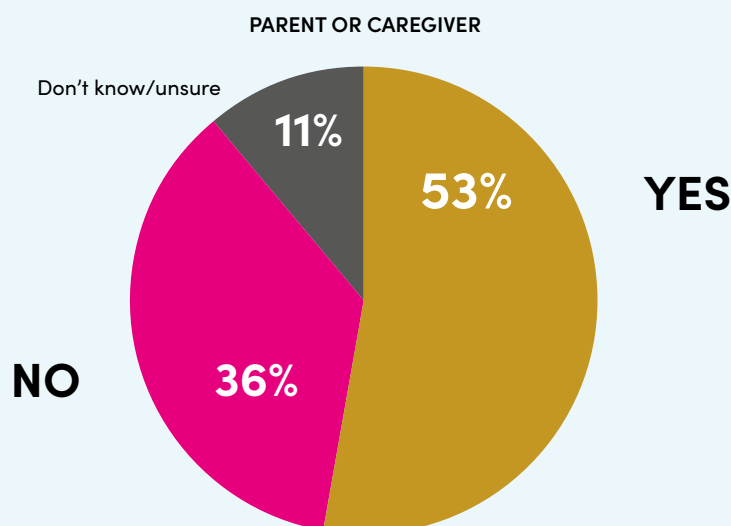
less common for participants using other streaming services to have noticed the age ratings (ranging from 37% to 49%), although we expect that awareness of age ratings will increase over time. We will continue to monitor awareness and understanding over time with further research.

Use of parental controls for streaming services

Parental controls can provide additional safeguards for parents to help ensure their tamariki aren't watching inappropriate or harmful content. New requirements to display official age ratings mean that online streaming services for movies and shows can now link official New Zealand age ratings to their parental control functions.

Parents and caregivers who use streaming services were asked about the use of parental controls in their homes. Over half of parents and caregivers with tamariki and rangatahi at home (53%) said they or someone in their household uses parental controls for streaming services. Around a third of parents said they did not use parental controls, and 11% were unsure.

Use of parental controls for streaming services



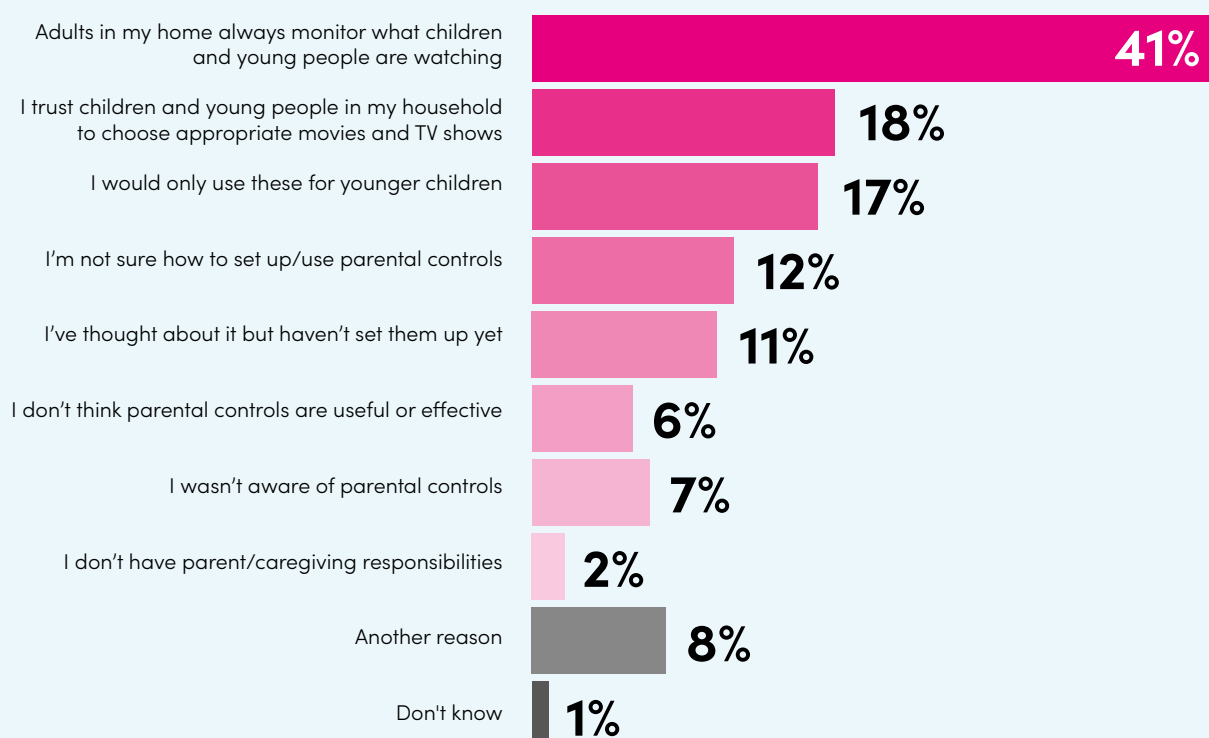
BASE: ALL WHO USE ONLINE STREAMING SERVICES - ALL PARENTS/CAREGIVERS (N=319).

SURVEY QUESTION: "Some subscription or pay-per-view online streaming services have parental control settings to prevent children and young people from watching inappropriate movies or shows. Do you or someone in your household currently use these parental controls?"

Parents and caregivers who did not use parental controls were asked to tell us more about this. Their reasons for not using controls were varied. The most common responses were that adults in the household are always monitoring what tamariki and rangatahi are watching (41%); that they trust tamariki and

rangatahi in their household to choose appropriate movies and shows (18%); and that they would use these only for younger tamariki (17%). However, some weren't sure how to set up parental controls (12%), while others don't think they're effective (6%) or weren't aware of them (7%).

Reasons why parental controls aren't used



BASE: ALL WHO DON'T USE PARENTAL CONTROLS - 16/17 (N=85), PARENT/CAREGIVER (N=115).

SURVEY QUESTION: "Please tell us more about why parental control settings aren't used in your household?"

A minority believe legal restrictions on streaming services should apply to parents

Under the current system, it's illegal to let an underage person watch a movie or show with a restricted age rating (such as R16 or R18), even if they're accompanied by a parent or guardian. This applies to content on streaming services if the Office has issued an official age rating classification for that content.

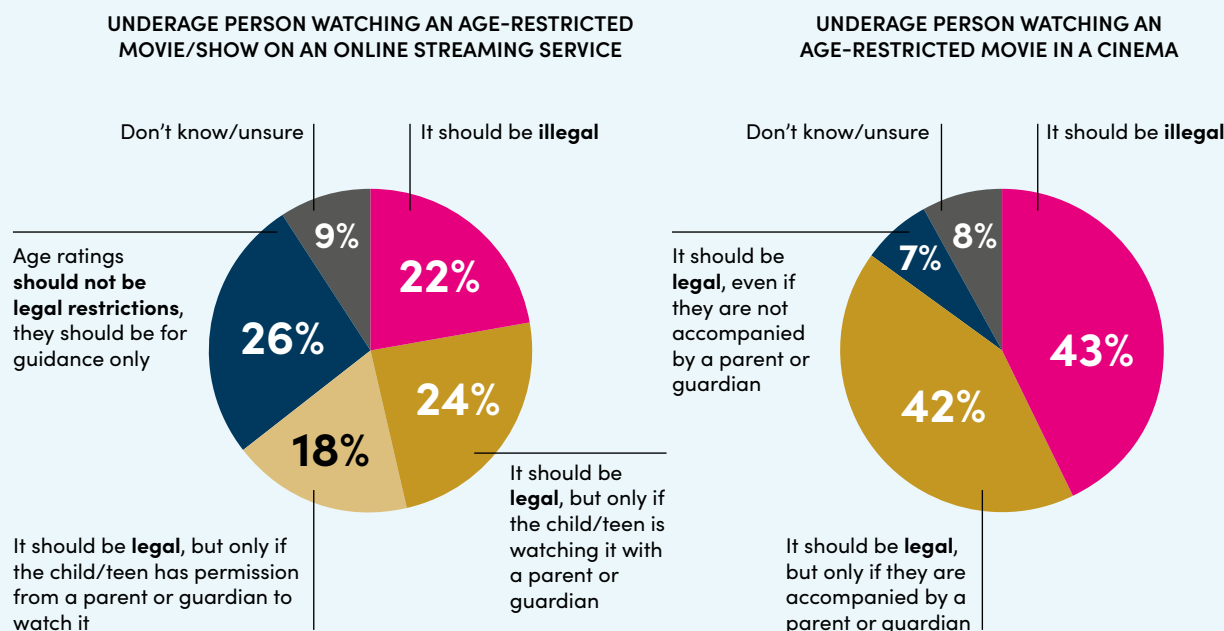
We asked participants for their views about legal restrictions that may apply in this area. Only 22% of participants thought it should simply be illegal for

parents to let their underage child or teen watch age-restricted movies or shows on a streaming service.

By contrast, 42% thought parents should be able to decide if their child watches age-restricted content on a streaming service, either by giving permission (18%) or watching it with their child (24%).

Some (26%) thought there should be no legal restriction at all, and that the ratings should offer guidance only.

Use of parental controls for streaming services



BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS (N=1,201).

SURVEY QUESTIONS: "Do you think it should be legal or illegal for parents to let their underage child or teen watch an age-restricted (eg R16 or R18) movie or show on an online streaming service?"

"Do you think it should be legal or illegal for an underage person to watch an age-restricted (eg R16 or R18) movie in a cinema?"

New Zealanders are more evenly split about whether tamariki and rangatahi should be able to watch restricted movies in cinemas. Some participants thought this should be against the law (43%) and a similar number said it should be allowed if accompanied by a parent or guardian (42%). However, just 7% believed there should be no legal restriction at all.

For both questions, parents and caregivers tended to be less supportive of full legal restrictions. Just 17% thought it should be illegal for parents to let their underage child or teen watch an age-restricted movie or show on an online streaming service, while 30% thought these age ratings should be for guidance only. Likewise, a third of parents and caregivers (33%)

thought it should be illegal for an underage person to watch an age-restricted movie in a cinema, while half (50%) thought this should be legal if a child or young person is accompanied by a parent or guardian.

We previously asked New Zealanders about their views on legal age restrictions in our 2016 survey. The questions were different and a direct comparison is not possible, however, results suggest there may be growing support for parents to have more of a say in what their child can watch. In the 2016 survey, just 29% thought an underage person should be able to watch an age-restricted movie if accompanied by a parent, while the majority (60%) thought this should be illegal⁷.

⁷ See *Understanding the Classification System: New Zealanders' Views*: classificationoffice.govt.nz/resources/research/understanding-the-classification-system-new-zealanders-views

INSIGHTS – AGE AND ETHNICITY

Views about legal restrictions:

- Participants in older age groups tended to be more supportive of full legal restrictions on streaming content, including 38% of people aged 60 to 69, and 32% of those aged 70+. People aged 18 to 29 (12%) and 30 to 39 (15%) were less likely to support this.
- People aged 60 to 69 (61%) and 70+ (67%) were also more likely to support full legal restrictions in cinemas, while those aged 16 to 17 (33%) and 18 to 29 (29%) tended to be less supportive.
- Māori participants were more likely to think age ratings on streaming services should be for guidance only (33%), and to think that underage people should be able to watch a restricted movie in a cinema if accompanied by a parent or guardian (49%).



Views about Te Mana Whakaatu – Classification Office

The importance of age ratings relies in part on trust in the Office as an organisation, and an understanding of our role.

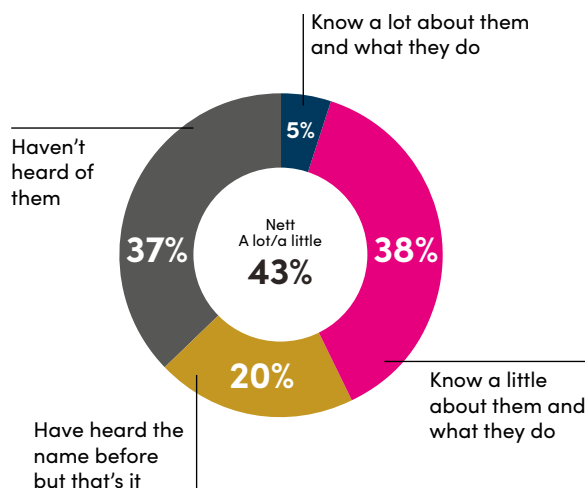
Awareness of the Office and our role

When asked about what they know about the Classification Office, 43% said they know ‘a little’ or ‘a lot’, while 37% said they had not heard of us before. As a relatively small office – often referred to by a variety of different names – name recognition has never been especially high.

We followed this question by gauging awareness of some specific work the Office is responsible for. When put this way, awareness of our work was higher.

A majority (56%) were aware that the Office “decides age ratings for movies and shows/TV series on DVD/Blu-ray and cinema”, while just under half were aware that we decide age ratings for streaming services (47%) and video games (45%). Overall, 60% were aware that we have a role in deciding age ratings in some way.

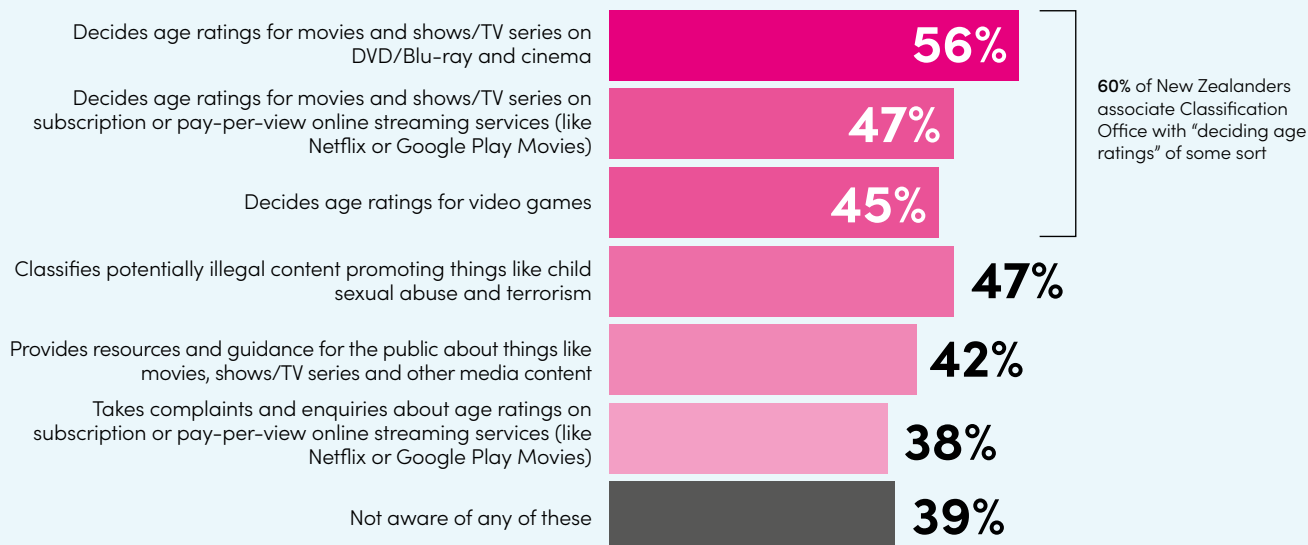
Knowledge was generally lower for other topics listed, however, just under half (47%) were aware of our role in classifying potentially illegal content – for example, child sexual abuse material and content promoting terrorism.



BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS (N=1,201).

SURVEY QUESTION: “This research is for a government agency called Te Mana Whakaatu – Classification Office. They’re sometimes referred to as the ‘film Censor’ or the ‘Chief Censor’s office’ and were previously known as the Office of Film and Literature Classification. How much do you know about them?”

Knowledge of Te Mana Whakaatu – Classification Office



BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS (N= 1,201).

SURVEY QUESTION: “Before today, were you aware that Te Mana Whakaatu – Classification Office does the following...?”

INSIGHTS – AGE, GENDER AND ETHNICITY

Awareness of the work we do:

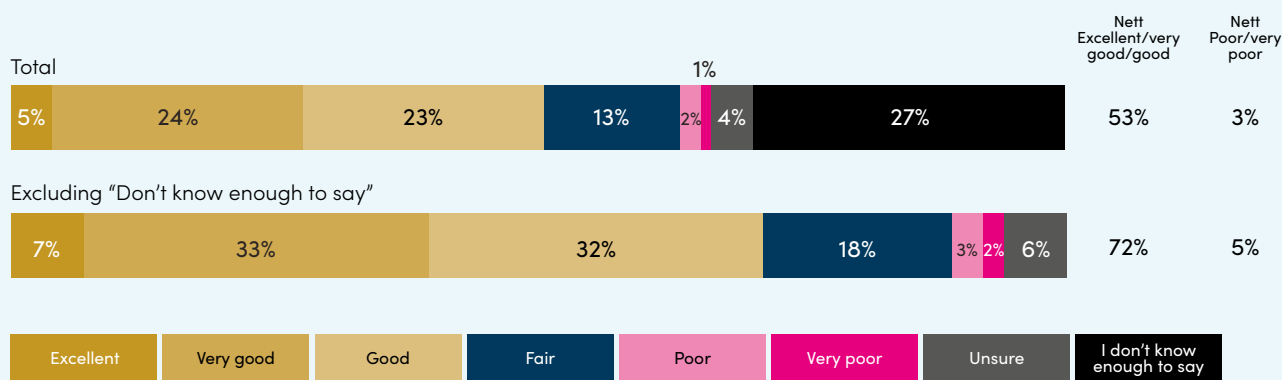
- Participants in older age groups (in particular those aged 60 to 69) were more likely to be aware of the various functions of the Office, while younger participants, 16 to 39, tended to be less knowledgeable. For example, 40% of 16 to 29 year olds were aware that we decide age ratings for movies and shows on DVD/Blu-ray and cinema, compared with 81% of 60 to 69 year olds.
- Male participants were more likely to report knowledge of our various roles. For example, 56% were aware that we classify potentially illegal content promoting things like child sexual abuse and terrorism, compared with 39% of females.
- NZ Europeans were more likely to know we decide age ratings for movies and shows on DVD/Blu-ray and cinema (59%), compared with Asian (47%) and Pacific (46%) participants. NZ Europeans were also more likely to know that we classify potentially illegal content (50%), while Pacific participants (36%) were less likely to know this.

Views about our performance

Of those who knew enough to rate our performance, 72% thought we do an 'excellent', 'very good', or 'good' job, while 5% think we do a 'poor', or 'very poor' job.

Results show that while most New Zealanders hold a positive opinion about the Office, this has declined somewhat since we asked a similar question in our 2016 survey⁸. In that survey, 82% of those who knew enough about the Office to give their view rated our performance as 'good' or 'excellent'.

Performance of Te Mana Whakaatu – Classification Office



BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS (TOTAL N=1,201; KNOW ENOUGH TO SAY N=826).

SURVEY QUESTION: "Based on what you know about Te Mana Whakaatu – Classification Office and what they're responsible for, how would you rate the job they're doing?"

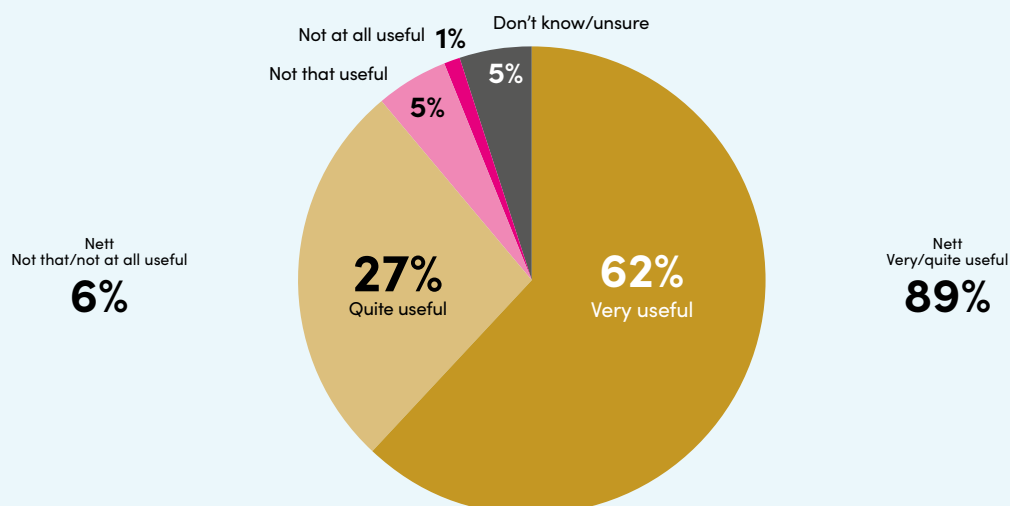
⁸ See *Understanding the Classification System: New Zealanders' Views*: classificationoffice.govt.nz/resources/research/understanding-the-classification-system-new-zealanders-views

Views about the importance of our role

In asking for participants' views about Te Mana Whakaatu – Classification Office, we asked whether it is worthwhile and useful for an organisation in New Zealand to do things such as deciding age ratings, classifying potentially illegal content, and providing guidance and resources about content.

The results revealed strong support among New Zealanders for the work we do. Most (89%) thought it is useful for an organisation to carry out this work, including 62% who thought it is 'very useful'. Just 6% saw it as 'not that useful' or 'not at all useful'.

Views about the importance of our role



BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS (N=1,201).

SURVEY QUESTION: "Overall, do you think it is worthwhile / useful that there is an organisation doing these sorts of things in New Zealand?"

INSIGHTS – AGE, GENDER AND ETHNICITY

Views about the importance of our role:

- Female participants (92%) were more likely to think it is 'very' or 'quite' useful for an organisation in New Zealand to do things such as deciding age ratings and classifying potentially illegal content, compared with 86% of males.

Views about our performance:

- Of those who knew enough to rate our performance, participants aged 18 to 29 were more likely to think we do an 'excellent', 'very good', or 'good' job (80%), while people aged 50 to 59 were more likely to think we do a 'poor', or 'very poor' job (10%).
- Māori (79%⁹) were also somewhat more likely than average to think we do an 'excellent', 'very good', or 'good' job.

9 Significant at 90% level – see "Research methodology" on page 6.

Conclusion

This research provides us with updated information about New Zealanders' understanding and views about the classification system. This is key to ensuring the services the Office provides continue to be trusted, relevant, and useful for whānau.

The survey allows us to track changes over time since our last public understanding research in 2016. It's great to see that, during a period of significant changes, New Zealanders continue to value and rely on the classification system when making choices for themselves and for their tamariki and rangatahi about what to watch.

In making decisions, the Office must ensure a level of consistency while maintaining public trust and confidence, so it's great to see that most New Zealanders think we have the balance about right. We also learned that most New Zealanders continue to think age ratings are important when deciding what tamariki and rangatahi should watch.

An amendment to our classification law means that major commercial online streaming companies are required to display official age rating information on the content they make available in New Zealand. When New Zealanders sign in to these services they can see consistent age ratings similar to the ones displayed on DVDs/Blu-rays and in cinemas.

The survey was conducted during a period when providers were still implementing changes for this new system, so we were pleased to see that New Zealanders were already noticing the age ratings, including a majority of those using the most popular streaming services. Considering the changes in how people access movies and shows, public understanding of specific age ratings has held up remarkably well. In the coming years we will continue our efforts to ensure audiences are clear about what the different ratings mean.

Name recognition of the Office isn't especially high, but most of those who felt they knew enough to give a view continue to rate our performance well, and most New Zealanders think the role and functions of the Office are useful.

Six years on from our previous survey, we're pleased to have seen significant improvements to the system, and it's great to know that the services we provide to New Zealanders continue to be worthwhile and valuable. There's more work to be done, and the Government's media content regulatory review provides a key opportunity to improve the system further while addressing concerns about harmful content online.

TERMINOLOGY

Content – This broadly refers to the following:

- Commercial entertainment, such as movies, shows/TV series and video games, regardless of where these are viewed or accessed; and
- Video, images, text and other material people see online – for example, on social media, video-sharing sites or other websites.

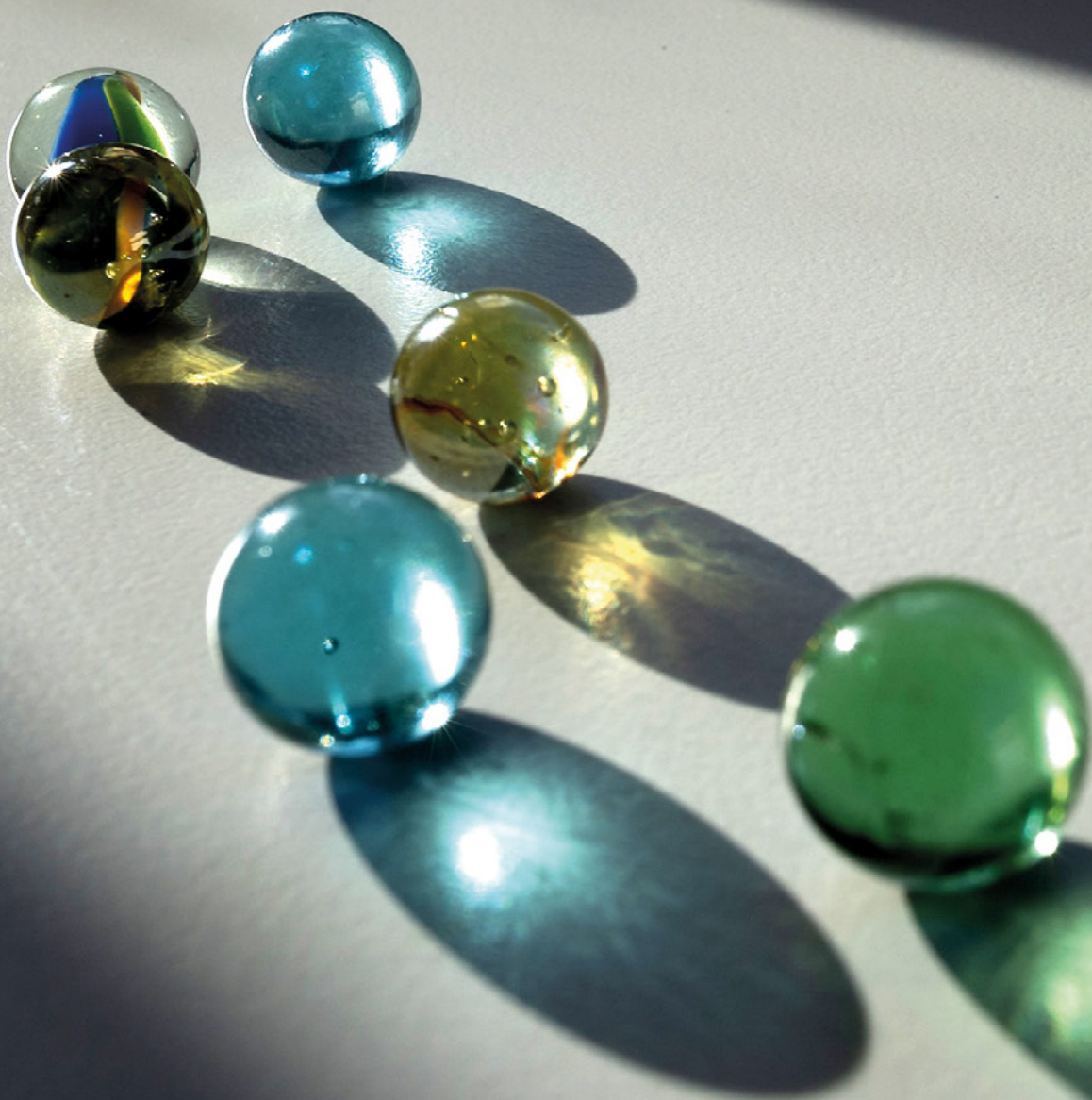
Shows – Refers to TV series or shows. This is used in a general sense or sometimes refers specifically to shows available on commercial streaming services.

Age ratings – Refers to ratings or classifications issued under New Zealand's Films, Videos and Publications Classification Act 1993. This might refer to a 'classification label' or the specific symbol on a label (such as PG, M or R16).

Content warning – Refers to the content information provided with official age ratings – for example, 'violence, offensive language' (also known as a 'descriptive note').

Youth or young people – These terms generally refer to people aged 13 to 17. In the context of youth survey participants, it refers to 16 and 17 year olds. Young people are referred to as 'rangatahi'.

Parents and caregivers – When referring to specific findings in this report, this means people who currently have parental or caregiver responsibilities for someone under the age of 18 in their household.



For further information about this
research please visit our website
classificationoffice.govt.nz

