

On Our Screens

2026 Survey Snapshot

Classification
Office

TE MANA WHAKAATU



Introduction

The Classification Office – Te Mana Whakaatu classifies content that may need to be restricted or banned. This can include entertainment content like movies, shows and video games, and forensic (potentially illegal) content submitted to us by law enforcement. We provide research and resources to help New Zealanders make informed viewing choices and stay safe online.

Our recent survey asked New Zealanders some key questions about how they use age ratings for entertainment content, and views about how the classification system functions. The results help us to identify strengths and gaps in our approach to classification. This is a summary of key findings based on a survey of 1,004 New Zealanders.

You can read the full report of findings on our website here:

classificationoffice.govt.nz/resources/research/on-our-screens-survey-snapshot-2026

Key findings

Age ratings provide useful guidance when choosing movies, shows, and video games. While there is widespread agreement that consistency across mediums is important, New Zealanders have mixed views about how and when legal age restrictions should apply to content.

Views about age ratings and legal restrictions in different scenarios

We asked if age-restricted ratings (e.g. R13 or R18) should be legal or illegal for underage people in different situations. Opinions vary based on how and where content is accessed, but people tend to favour parental choice over full legal restrictions.

51% think watching an age-restricted **movie in a cinema** should be legal if underage viewers are accompanied or have permission from a parent/guardian.

55% think this about age-restricted content on **streaming services**.

50% for age-restricted **video games**.

Views about age ratings and legal restrictions at different age levels

Support for legal age restrictions varies for **R13**, **R16**, and **R18** content:

76% agree that R18 content should be legally restricted to those aged 18 and over.

49% agree R16 and R18 should be legal restrictions, but R13 should be a recommendation only.

48% agree R18 should be a legal restriction, but R13 and R16 should be recommendations for guidance only.

The impact of legal restrictions

35% believe children and young people would be likely to see more harmful content if legal restrictions on R13 and R16 content didn't exist.

Usage of age ratings

55% of New Zealanders (and **91%** of parents or caregivers) were involved in choosing a movie, show, or video game for a child or young person in the past year.

Among those making content choices with children:

60% always or often follow official age ratings, while a further **22%** follow them sometimes.

Consistency in age ratings across different mediums

77% say online video games should display official NZ age ratings, consistent with those sold in a physical store.

76% support a single, consistent approach to age ratings across cinemas, streaming services, DVDs/Blu-rays, and video games.

Views about the 'M' rating

63% agree the current 'M' (recommended for mature audiences) rating should be replaced with more descriptive, specific age bands such as 10+, 13+, or 16+.

51% feel that the current 'M' classification lacks clarity on whether content is actually suitable for children or young teenagers.

62% agree the 'M' rating is helpful for making viewing decisions.

Resources for whānau

Age ratings play an important role in helping New Zealanders choose what to watch and play.

That's why we provide a range of resources to help you find the correct rating and content warnings, understand legal restrictions and how classification decisions are made. That way you can make confident choices for yourself, your whānau, and others.

Methodology and reporting

The question set was developed by the Classification Office with assistance from AK Research.

Results are based on questions asked in AKR's nationwide online omnibus survey of 1,004 New Zealanders aged 18+. The survey sample was sourced through the Dynata panel. Quotas based on New Zealand Census data were applied (including age, gender, and region) to ensure the sample reflects the New Zealand population.

The margin of error for a sample size of $n=1,004$ for a 50% figure at the 95% confidence level is $\pm 3.1\%$. Fieldwork was conducted from the 13th to the 18th May 2026.

Useful tools and resources

Find a Rating Browse our library of ratings and content warnings to help decide the right content for you and your whānau – use the [Find a Rating database](#) on our website.

Parental controls These can help protect tamariki from seeing unwanted content on streaming services, social media, and gaming platforms. See the [resource page](#) on our website.

Blogs, resources, and research Our website has loads of useful info about [what different age ratings mean](#), [how to talk with young people about what they're watching](#), there's a [gaming resource hub](#), fascinating [research](#), and [heaps more](#).

Seen something that doesn't seem right?

If you've seen a film, show, video game, or streaming content that doesn't seem to have the right age rating or content information, or you're unsure whether something has been classified – [get in touch with us](#).

Our complaints and enquiries team can answer questions about classifications, explain how the system works, and help if you think content may have been rated incorrectly or doesn't meet New Zealand's standards. Even if you are unsure, still contact us.

For information about reporting harmful and potentially illegal content, [visit the page](#) on our website to find out what to do.

If you see something that has upset you or someone else, we have a [guide on our website](#) that explains who to contact and how they can help.



classificationoffice.govt.nz/find-a-rating

