

# About the Classification Office

Te Mana  
Whakaatu  
CLASSIFICATION OFFICE

Kōrero tahi.  
Mātaki tahi.

## Our role

Te Mana Whakaatu – Classification Office (the Office) is an independent Crown entity and media regulator operating at arm's length from central government. The Minister of Internal Affairs is responsible for managing the government's relationship with the Office. We are focused on keeping New Zealanders safe in a fast-changing digital world by enabling them to make good choices about what they and their rangatahi and tamariki (children and young people) watch, play and read.

## Classification

The [classification process](#) involves receiving publications from a number of sources: the Film and Video Labelling Body, members of the public, streaming providers, enforcement officials and the courts. Publications submitted to the Office include commercial content (such as films and video games), and Crown material which can include child sexual abuse material, and terrorist and violent extremist content. The Chief Censor can also "call in" a publication for classification.

Once a publication is submitted, our team of classification advisors examine the material and consider it against the criteria in the [Films, Videos, and Publications Act 1993](#), balance this with the right to freedom of expression contained in the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act, and issue a decision. We may place an age restriction on the publication or if it is objectionable we ban it.

## Information

We inform and educate the public to foster confidence in New Zealand's classification system and support people to make viewing decisions that are right for them. By providing [practical advice and tools](#), we help parents, whānau, educators and frontline services to think critically about the ways content can affect them.

We consult with groups that are most affected by harmful material. Our [Youth Advisory Panel](#) is a diverse group of rangatahi aged 16 to 19 who provide a youth voice on media in Aotearoa, and their advice helps shape our approach to classification.

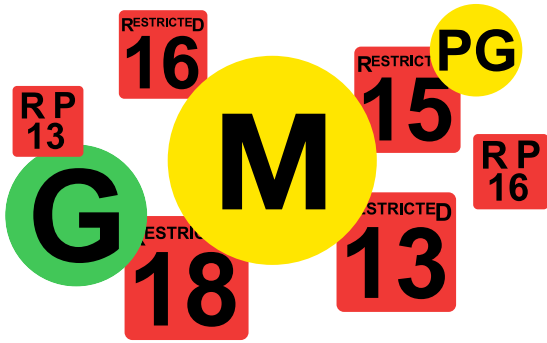
Responding to [complaints and enquiries](#) about classification decisions and Aotearoa's classification framework provides us with valuable insight into the concerns of the public.

## Research

We conduct [research](#) into issues that are important to the wellbeing of New Zealanders, informing our work and contributing to the development of cross-government policy and regulatory responses.

Our 2021 report [The Edge of the Infodemic](#) found that exposure to misinformation is common in Aotearoa, particularly online, and that New Zealanders want more to be done to counter its spread. Our most recent report [What We're Watching](#) explored the concerns New Zealanders have about harmful content they're seeing onscreen and online. Our three-part research series on young people's experience and views about pornography is internationally recognised, [having won Gold](#) at the 2022 global ESOMAR Research Effectiveness Awards.

## Recent initiatives



### COMMERCIAL VIDEO ON-DEMAND

A [recent law change](#) requires major streaming providers to show age ratings and content warnings on-screen. The Office is responsible for approving and auditing providers' self-rating systems, managing complaints and ensuring compliance with the new regime.

### PORNOGRAPHY WORKSTREAM

The interagency Porn Working Party chaired by the Office acts as a centre of knowledge for government, coordinating work and advice and advising on potential policy responses.

Our research has been used by the Ministry of Education in its curriculum guidelines and we worked with them to develop the [Ka huri i te korero – Changing the conversation about pornography](#) resource that supports teachers to talk about pornography with young people when delivering relationships and sexuality education.

We [deliver presentations](#) on how to talk to young people about pornography to parents and whānau, schools, and social workers. These presentations draw on our research and the [online resources](#) we have developed.



### CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE MATERIAL

In addition to our CSAM classification work, we work in collaboration with international partners, such as the Canadian Centre for Child Protection which runs [Project Arachnid](#), a global tool designed to decrease the availability of child sexual abuse material on the internet.

The project's web-crawling software systematically browses the internet searching for material, detecting content at a rapid pace. Our advisors then make an assessment and notices are sent to providers requesting removal. New Zealanders benefit from the increased data and reporting, and contribute to international efforts combatting the dissemination of this harmful content.



### COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Following the March 15 Mosque attacks, we established [a dedicated team](#) that proactively engages with New Zealand and overseas government agencies, academics and experts at the forefront of countering violent extremism.

With a focus on research, education and outreach, the team provides subject matter expertise to the Chief Censor and the broader sector (including Police, DPMC, DIA and Netsafe). It monitors latest developments, provides case studies on significant decisions, and represents the Office on interagency and international working groups.

The Office has banned publications relating to the [March 15 Mosque attacks](#), the [Buffalo mass shooting](#), the [Halle terror attacks](#), and the [Oslo terror attacks](#).