

Violence Portrayal of to the Department of Communications and the Arts
1996.3. Portrayal of Violence

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Responding to a call for submissions on the **Portrayal of Violence** and the linkage, if any, with violent behaviour, we made the following main points:

- * quoted findings of major inquiries on this subject in the past, e.g. from UNESCO: "Violence existed before the mass media. Although the media should not be absolved from their responsibilities, it would be misleading to regard them as the roots of violent behaviour. These are more likely to be found in the frustration engendered by such practice as inequality, social injustice, overcrowding, urbanisation and so on".
- * Other inquiries show positive association between viewing televised violence and subsequent aggressive behaviour in some children and adults, but fail to establish causal relations.
- * Modern technology now offers easy access to unclassified material and recent material show graphic depictions of torture, mutilations, rape and degrading acts.
- * We support measures to limit children's access to such material e.g. the UK "watershed" system where all graphic violence (factual and fictional) is shown after 9 p.m., making the V-chip available and affordable and greater restrictions on importation and production of such material.
- * Self-regulation and codes of practice within the mass media fail to meet community expectations.
- * Our main concern is with the underlying causes of violence which we believe to be: inadequate socialisation of children, particularly boys, in non-violent ways of resolving conflict; the acceptance of violence in sport and in domestic conflicts as the norm; social deprivations such as inequality of access to services, inadequate care in childhood overcrowding; unemployment and lack of prospects for the future.
- * Social structures should be set up for those deprived to provide meaningful involvement in and a sense of belonging to the society. Otherwise aggression and violence will continue.
- * Family planning should be fostered to ensure that every child is a wanted child. There will be fewer stressed, impoverished families with maltreated children.
- * Enculturing arbitration and conciliation in public life e.g. family or industrial conflict.
- * We strongly support proposals for intensive public and school education campaign on non-violent conflict resolution methods, positive role models in the media and discerning approach to selection of viewing material.

