

Summary of Public Consultation Responses

S/N	Date Received	Respondent	Key Comments (Full Responses in Annex B)
1.	12 May 2014	Anonymised on Request	<p>A. Expressed that MDA should ensure steps were taken to enforce the rules and regulations regarding protection of minors from unsuitable content, and ensure that fines and other penalties were in place to address arts groups that did not adhere to guidelines.</p> <p>B. Said “the Arts groups will always push the boundaries and try to circumvent the rulings. Let the ball be in their court with these changes. If they flout the rules, it is their actions that led to penalties and MDA has every right to fine them.”</p>
2.	13 May 2014	Anonymised on Request	<p>A. Was not in favour of allowing arts groups to self-classify their works as “there is a high possibility they may be less stringent in their censorship, ending up with young &amp; impressionable minds being exposed to materials unsuitable for their age.”</p> <p>B. Said that “it is still MDA's responsibility to make sure that any acts, works in the art scene send the right messages to the young &amp; not encourage immoral &amp; liberal lifestyles that do not agree with values shared by majority of us, Singaporeans.”</p>
3.	13 May 2014	Feedback sent via other channels	<p>Said that the government should not continue “to push its regulatory &amp; enforcement roles out to others (either volunteers or outsourced organisations or public),” as certain services provided by the</p>

			government are “necessary for social stability of the country.”
4.	14 May 2014	See Wai Chie	<p>A. Expressed concern about proposed changes and asked the authorities to exercise caution in introducing said changes.</p> <p>B. Said that “I as a concerned parent would like to see the authorities remain responsible and to help send the right message to the children by enforcing the rules.”</p>
5.	17 May 2014	Lai Yew Chan, letter published in the press	<p><i>“MDA should stay arbiter of arts content standards”</i>, 17 May 2014, TODAY</p> <p>A. Opined that MDA should stay arbiter of arts content standards and prevent a scenario where achievements of parental control may be undermined – as arts groups do not have any incentive aligned with their rational self-interest to make self-monitoring happen;</p> <p>B. Even if some form of self-determination by arts groups were allowed, they were in no position to determine the socially optimal level of content acceptance.</p> <p>C. Said that “the unenviable task of balancing the interests of artists and the community remains the MDA’s cross to bear.”</p>
6.	21 May 2014	Feedback sent via other channels	Expressed displeasure with MDA for allowing arts groups to self-classify content.
7.	30 May 2014	Touch Community Services	A. Expressed concern that allowing self-classification would ultimately result in proliferation of entertainment that is detrimental to

			<p>society.</p> <p>B. Commented that “community standards and expectations differ from person to person”. This is exacerbated by the fact that event organisers are conflicted in their interest to widen their audience base.</p> <p>C. Said that “MDA plays an important role in providing an independent, unbiased and objective authority on media content and acts as an important safeguard to ensure the young lives which represent the future generations of Singaporeans are brought up in a safe and secure media environment.”</p>
8.	30 May 2014	Kuo Jian Hong (Artistic Director of The Theatre Practice) on Behalf of Arts Engage, and Signatories from 45 Arts Groups	<p>A. Expressed concerns that while the intentions behind the Term Licensing scheme might be well-meaning, the mechanics of the scheme ran counter to the spirit of co-regulation, self-classification and empowerment.</p> <p>B. Expressed concerns that the Content Assessors, drawn from within the arts groups, would see artists executing MDA’s guidelines, essentially functioning as MDA officers by proxy to censor and possibly ban their colleagues’ or their own works.</p> <p>C. Expressed concerns on fairness and transparency due to the subjective nature of arts classification, penalties associated with misclassification and lack of clarity on the appeals process.</p> <p>D. Commented that there was inadequate consultation on the arts</p>

			<p>classification guidelines to be used by Content Assessors to classify works under Term Licensing</p> <p>E. Requested for the “relevant policy-makers to consider and acknowledge strong objections to the [Term Licensing] Scheme.”</p> <p>F. Recommended that:</p> <p>(i) The authorities delay the tabling of the PEMA Amendment Bill in Parliament;</p> <p>(ii) MDA openly engage both artists and the general public in a wider and more robust round of consultations before the Term Licensing Scheme is rolled out.</p>
9.	30 May 2014	Janice Koh, Nominated Member of Parliament	<p>A. Expressed that the proposed Term Licensing Scheme was problematic because the new system appeared to create a triplicate of assessments, which was counter-productive, and transferred the liability for mis-classifications from MDA to the companies and Content Assessors.</p> <p>B. Viewed that there were uncertainties about establishing the standards for fitness and propriety of the new Content Assessor profession, and the outsourcing model.</p>
10.	30 May 2014	Anonymised on Request	<p>A. Indicated being involved in raising grandsons whose parents are profoundly deaf and “who will have much difficulty in teaching their boys if no proper boundaries are put in place on media”, and expressed concerns that minors did not have the moral maturity to handle derogatory speech and violence.</p>

			<p>B. Expressed concern over proposed changes to introduce the Term Licensing scheme and said “we seem to be making policy changes to suit the wants of our young people; MDA should consider the wider community including the pioneers, or special needs people who may need handholding for lives.”</p>
11.	30 May 2014	Anonymised on Request	<p>A. Expressed the view that the proposed self-classification scheme could not be effectively enforced.</p> <p>B. Said that “with increasing challenges to Authority among the young in Singapore, MDA should increase, and not relax its vigilance to detect possible breaches of peace before they occur and remove materials of indecent, immoral, offensive, subversive and improper nature in our multi-racial and religious society. Singapore needs independent and vigilant examiners to defend itself from increasing threats to our public interest.”</p>
12.	30 May 2014	Anonymised on Request	<p>A. Opined that present proposals did not encourage confidence and that unbridled self-classification is not advisable.</p> <p>B. Suggested that civil servants continue to be the gatekeeper for all Tier 2 productions.</p> <p>C. Suggested also that mature Singaporean artists with a proven track record be the ones to evaluate which parties qualify for Tier 1 Term Licensing.</p>
13.	4 June 2014	Anonymised on Request	<p>A. Expressed the view that the arts industry could not be a “standalone, independent and self-run” industry as it has a tremendous influence on</p>

			<p>culture and is responsible to the larger society.</p> <p>B. Said that “while [the arts industry] may provide varied entertainment to all kinds of groups and even audiences of specific subcultures, it must be moderated for the protection of the rest of the society at large. This is because not every subcultural behaviours and attitudes are welcome[d] by all society to be established publicly as a social norm. MDA plays a critical role in managing such conflicting desires and to maintain the interest of public at large.”</p> <p>C. Opined that the new MDA Arts Entertainment Term Licensing Scheme was welcomed by parents as it “calls for players in the industry to own the responsibility of understanding guidelines meant for the safeguarding of public by classifying their own shows. This promotes responsibility to the entire industry and challenges individual players to live up to their own integrity according to the classification they choose their shows to fall under.”</p> <p>D. Said that MDA needed to understand how the Term Licensing scheme may be abused by the industry and to look into the implementation aspects carefully.</p> <p>E. Suggested that Content Assessors be “accredited members of the public with a respected background” for e.g. having “good track records in the community and be responsible members of their own households,” and “hold the institution of the family in high regard in tandem with</p>
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14.	10 June 2014	Professor Ang Peng Hwa, letter published in the press	<p>“Consider a panel to self-regulate arts”, 10 Jun 2014, The Straits Times</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Suggested that self-classification could be undertaken not by arts groups themselves, but by a committee constituted by representatives from the arts groups;</li> <li>B. Committee members could also include retired political leaders or business leaders known to be arts patrons;</li> <li>C. An appeal body would be needed for reviewing complaints or appeals against decisions of the committee;</li> <li>D. MDA would provide the regulatory backstop.</li> </ul>