



Collaborative advocacy for Diverse communities

Advocating for a change in the Australian Classification scheme to enable acquisition and lending of Films in languages other than English by Public Libraries for our diverse communities.

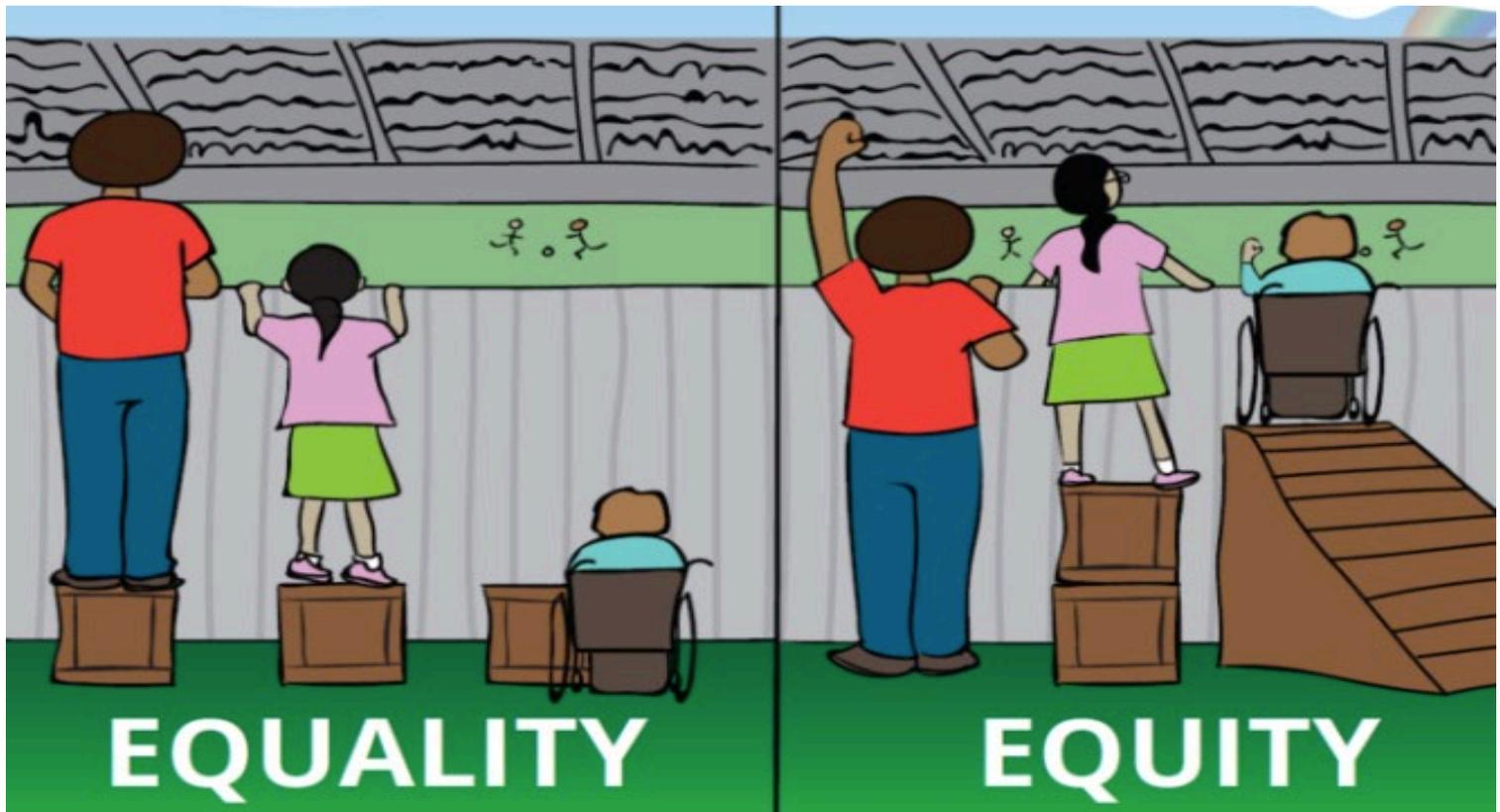
By Mare Maticovski and Oriana Acevedo



Advocacy

An activity by an individual or group which aims to influence decisions within political, economic and social systems and institutions.

The issue? Australia's discriminatory film classification scheme.



Commonwealth's Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act 1995

Public Library Manifesto

The services of the public library are provided on the basis of equality of access for all, regardless of age, race, sex, religion, nationality, language or social status. Specific services and materials must be provided for those users who cannot, for whatever reason, use the regular services and materials, for example linguistic minorities, people with disabilities or people in hospital or prison.

Collaborators in advocacy

- Oriana Acevedo from the State Library of NSW
- Narelle Stute and Mare Maticovski the Co-Convenors of the Public Libraries Victoria Network Multicultural Services and Programs Special Interest Group.
- Members of the PLVN Multicultural Group.
- Lawrence McDonnell from the Working Group of Multicultural Services in NSW
- Matthew Burless from ACT Public Libraries
- Ross Withnell from Western Australia State Library
- Colin Crosbie from State Library of QLD
- Helen Thrulow from State Library of QLD
- Christine Mackenzie IFLA President elect (she was the Executive Officer of PLVN)
- Sally Jones (who was on the Executive of the PLVN)
- Troy Watson (Executive of PLVN)
- Beth Lupino from Casey Cardinia Libraries, Victoria
- Maeva Masterson from Northern Territory Library
- Sarah Powell from SA Public Library Services
- Emily Wilson from Public Library Network SA
- Marisa King, Business support for Public Library Network SA

Complexities of the issue

That's Classified: The hypocrisy and discrimination of Australia's censorship regime, Published July 10th, 2017. accessed from

<https://www.hughrundle.net/2017/07/10/thats-classified/>

Proposed Amendments

- Public Libraries be granted an exemption under the classification scheme to be considered under the 'Cultural Institutions' definition.
- Change the terminology in the legislation eg Feature films as opposed to DVD's.
- Protections for suppliers to public libraries.

Timeline:

October 2015 to February 2017

Late 2015

- Some suppliers start notifying libraries they cannot supply non-classified DVD's
- ACB grants exemption for the screening of non-classified films during film festivals to Cultural Institutions
- PLVN Multicultural Group contacted ACB seeking clarification.

June 2016

- Many Victorian Public libraries ceased purchasing DVDs
- Assistance sought from PLVN Executive

October 2016

- Detailed letter drafted seeking support from PLVN Executive

November 2016

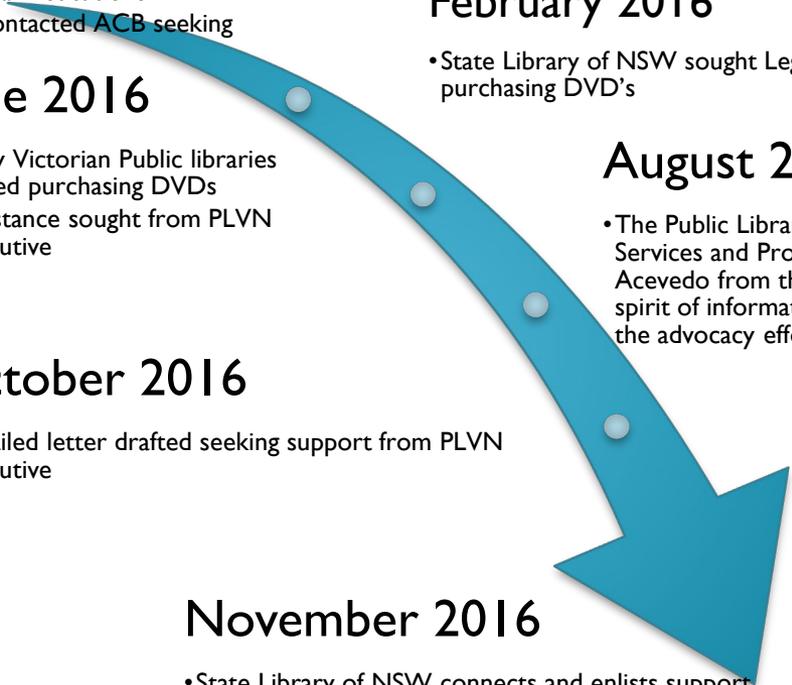
- State Library of NSW connects and enlists support from key representatives from around Australia

February 2016

- State Library of NSW sought Legal advice and ceased purchasing DVD's

August 2016

- The Public Library Victoria Network Multicultural Services and Programs Group contacted Oriana Acevedo from the State Library of NSW in the spirit of information sharing and collaboration in the advocacy efforts.



Timeline Continued

March to August 2017

- An electronic survey created and shared with all Public libraries to gather quantitative and qualitative data about impact.

August 2017

- First teleconference with ACB and all key representatives.
- Survey results shared

March 2018

- The communication received from ACB was positive and appeared that the instrument to effect change was going through the correct process. We were hopeful a change would be in place by the end of July.

July 16 2018

- Disappointing results received

Future?

Subsection 6H(5)

5. The director may by legislative instrument
 - a. Exempt a specified class of publications, films, computer games, events or organisations from any or all provisions of this Division or of the conditional cultural exemption rules; or
 - b. Declare that any or all provisions of this Division or of the conditional cultural exemption rules apply subject to such modifications as are set out in the declaration in relation to a specified class of publications, films, computer games, events or organisations; if the Director considers it appropriate to do so.

Future

Collaborative efforts make us stronger and better able to leverage our advocacy efforts in support of social justice aims.

