

Broadcasting Standards Authority: Review of Timebands and Classifications on Free-to-Air Television

Public Consultation Report and Codebook Consultation

Part 1: Introduction

About the Broadcasting Standards Authority

The Broadcasting Standards Authority (BSA) is an independent body that oversees the broadcasting standards regime in New Zealand. We do this by overseeing the development of codes of broadcasting practice, encouraging broadcasters to meet their obligations under the codes, by determining complaints that broadcasts have breached standards, by undertaking relevant research and by engaging with and educating broadcasters and the public about the broadcasting standards system.

BSA's vision is freedom in broadcasting without harm. The BSA supports a broadcasting standards regime in which New Zealanders can confidently engage with broadcast content that does not cause harm.

Free-to-Air Television Code review: Timebands and Classifications background

As a key part of its core functions, the BSA works with broadcasters to jointly develop codes of broadcasting practice that apply to all television and radio broadcasters in New Zealand. In late 2016 we commenced a review of the timebands and classification requirements in the free-to-air television Code (the **Code**) to consider whether timebands on television remained relevant given the changes in the way in which audiences watch television (from a range of devices, anytime and anywhere), and technology changes such as time-shifting and availability of filtering technology (parental locks) on all compatible free-to-air televisions. A group of free-to-air television broadcasters had asked us to consider changes to timebands given the developments in technology and audience viewing behaviour.

As part of the review we also explored whether the classification system used for free-to-air television programmes (G, PGR and AO) could be aligned with the pay television classification system (G, PG, M, 16 and 18). This would bring consistency across television platforms and more effective programme information to consumers, making it easier for them to make informed decisions about what they choose to watch as they move across the different television platforms.

An important aspect of this review has been to ensure that any changes reflect the changing media environment whilst also maintaining important community safeguards that assist audiences to manage content in their home, so that children and young people, and those vulnerable to certain content, may be protected from harm. The Code requires broadcasters to meet certain standards and to adhere to guidelines that protect viewers. It also expects audiences to exercise choice and control about what they, and children in their care, watch and listen to. Timebands and classifications are part of the suite of tools which broadcasters provide to audiences to help them make informed and appropriate viewing decisions and to manage broadcast content effectively and safely in their homes and on their devices. Our review has taken an audience and child-centred approach. An underlying principle of the review has been to ensure that the changes support the importance of freedom of expression and the value for New Zealanders in receiving and accessing a wide range of content.

Review approach

Our review included work undertaken by a working group of broadcasters and the BSA (the Working Group) to review how viewing behaviour and technology has changed, and the impact that changes might have on the community safeguards in the standards regime. We also undertook research into views, attitudes and use of timebands and classification in national and vulnerable communities. The BSA then consulted with the public on a range of possible changes (from 31 July to 31 August 2018). The purpose of the public consultation during this review was to enable all interested parties to have a say in the development of broadcasting standards, and to ensure that these standards reflect the general values and expectations of our diverse New Zealand society.

We developed some proposed changes to classification labels and timebands and sought feedback from the public about these. We received public submissions during the consultation period via a purpose-built page on our website, email, phone calls and paper mail. We also received feedback through an online survey and at public meetings.

Following public consultation, the BSA considered the feedback and consulted with broadcasters on potential changes, and how these could be implemented effectively from a consumer perspective. In particular, the BSA and broadcasters have considered ways in which they can enhance the programme information provided to audiences to assist them to make viewing decisions. The BSA also engaged with other agencies as to the proposed changes. Lastly, the BSA and broadcasters have designed a strong awareness raising campaign to ensure audiences are aware of the changes, and have information available to learn more about parental locks and other standards protections, which are designed to enable viewers to be protected from content that may harm them.

This report provides an overview of the review steps and findings and reports on the feedback received in the public consultation process. It also sets out the outcome of the review and the changes that are to be made to the timebands and classification requirements in the free-to-air television Code. In this report we also set out the steps that the BSA and broadcasters will take to support the implementation of the changes and to ensure that audiences are aware of what is happening and how it may impact them. Lastly, the BSA seeks public feedback on amendments to the Broadcasting Standards in New Zealand Codebook, which gives effect to the changes.

Part 2: Review Overview and Findings

Working Group

The Working Group identified that audience viewing behaviour and technology has changed substantially since 1989, when the timebands were included in the Code. In 1990, free-to-air television had a 99.7% share of audiences aged 5+ who watched linear television during peak viewing times (6pm – 10.30pm). Now, a growing number of people access programmes through a range of on demand / online services, and on a range of devices at a time that suits them. Some record shows to watch at another time, or pick and choose from online content at any time of the day or night. Generally, younger people are less likely to watch linear TV, preferring a range of online content channels, with the shift of younger viewers to online content continuing to increase.¹

Since the digital switchover was completed in December 2013, viewers have had to watch free-to-air television with either a digital television or digital set top box. All televisions and set top boxes sold through major appliance retailers in New Zealand are “Freeview certified”. Together Freeview and SKY cover all New Zealand households that view linear television. All Freeview and SKY devices in New

¹ NZ on Air - [Where are the Audiences 2016](#) and NZ on Air – [Where are the Audiences 2018](#)

Zealand include parental lock technology that enables the viewer to lock access to certain classifications and/or programmes on free-to-air television.

The Working Group also identified that timebands are just one of the protections against potential harm, provided by broadcasters in accordance with the Code. The broadcasting standards system recognises the principle of viewer choice and control:

The level of choice and control that viewers and listeners have over the content they expose themselves to impacts on the application of the standards. The freedom and capacity of an audience to make viewing and listening choices and to be able to prevent children and young people from viewing or listening to inappropriate material are significant factors in determining what is, and what is not, acceptable. Broadcasters are more likely to have fulfilled their responsibilities when they enable customers to regulate their own media listening and viewing behaviour.²

Broadcasters enable audiences to exercise effective choice and control and to regulate their own, and their children's viewing behaviour, to prevent harm when they:

- (a) correctly classify content
- (b) provide audience advisories about the type of content in the programme, particularly where the content has the potential to disturb, offend or distress, or is outside audience expectations
- (c) provide pre-publicity and on-screen electronic programme guides about the nature of the programme
- (d) schedule content in accordance with timeband requirements.

Other standards also provide protections against harm, requiring broadcasters to exercise care and discretion when portraying violence, and ensuring that children can be protected from broadcasts that might adversely affect them. The Working Group recognised that, while these protections are provided, in an environment where content can be timeshifted and accessed via other platforms and devices, it is not possible or practical for broadcasters to shield children from all potentially unsuitable content. The obligation on broadcasters is to take reasonable steps to protect children through adequate information for viewers and listeners, and to promote filtering technology where it is available.

The Working Group considered research undertaken by the BSA and other agencies that indicate that classifications and viewer advisories are the primary method used by parents and children to identify unsuitable content.³

Finally, the Working Group acknowledged that there are special features in New Zealand's television watching community that needed to be considered, including understanding the level of awareness and use of filtering technology in the community, literacy and language barriers, different attitudes in different cultures and different levels of access to technology in lower socio – economic communities, which may influence viewing behaviours.

² Page 7 <https://bsa.govt.nz/images/codebook/Introduction.pdf>

³ BSA/NZ On Air: [Children's Media Use Study](#), 2015, page 15 and Office of Film and Literature Classification, [Children and teen exposure to media content](#), 2016 – page 14

The Working Group identified the need to undertake community research on the issues of awareness and use of parental locks, and reliance upon timebands.

Community Research - Timebands

Two research projects were undertaken to better understand community views about timebands, parental locks and other methods of controlling and restricting content on television.

The *2017 Parental Guidance Survey*⁴ explored audiences' awareness and use of classifications, timebands and parental locks in managing television content. The research identified high awareness across all methods of controlling and restricting television viewing, but lower use. Audience advisories and classifications were identified as the most well-known and widely used methods for selecting appropriate content. Timebands were considered to provide a trusted way for parents to control content that children are exposed to, but there was limited knowledge about timebands, other than the 8.30pm watershed. 76% of people knew about the 8.30pm watershed, but fewer were aware of other time band restrictions: just under half (49%) knew that only G-rated programmes were aired between 6am-9am and 4pm-7pm and that PGR-rated programmes were restricted to between 9am-4pm and 7pm-6am. Some participants expressed frustration about the way in which timebands can interfere with viewing, such as requiring PGR movies, which are suitable for children, to start late (after 7pm), and the use of timebands in an environment where content can be timeshifted was challenged. The research indicated that the availability of parental locks is reasonably well known, but usage was low.

The BSA commissioned qualitative research with parents within lower socio economic communities to understand their awareness and use of timebands and parental locks.⁵ This research identified that, in the context of the other challenges facing these families, there was limited focus on tools available to limit access to content on television, with the exception of the 8.30pm watershed timeband. The 8.30pm timeband was unconsciously embedded in the lives and routines of some of these families, providing practical and emotive benefits: viewing times for kids, signals bedtime, provides opportunities for shared viewing, and provides comfort that content will be suitable at children's normal viewing times. Families indicated that classifications and advisories are known and understood. They indicated a preference for the combination of tools to provide layers of protection from content that may harm. The research indicated that more could be done to support the awareness of tools available to manage content and how to use them.

The analysis of this research indicated that some changes to timebands, and a consolidation of classification labels may be appropriate, subject to the views and attitudes of the community. Accordingly, the BSA consulted with the public on a range of possible options.

Part 3: Public Consultation Submissions and Feedback

In August 2018, the BSA undertook a month-long public consultation programme to seek views from the community and various stakeholders on whether changes should be made to classifications and timebands on free-to-air television.⁶

The BSA sought feedback on a proposal for the free-to-air television classification system to adopt the five Pay Television Code classifications (G, PG, M, 16 and 18).

⁴ TVNZ/BSA [Parental Guidance Survey](#), 2017.

⁵ BSA (Colmar Brunton), [Understanding timebands within vulnerable communities](#), 2018

⁶ [BSA Public Consultation on Timebands and Classifications on Free-to-Air Television](#), 2018

The BSA asked whether changes should be made to timebands and presented a range of options for consideration.

Overview

“The classifications and timebands are really useful. They give back up to parental decisions and have enabled us to have conversations about why they are in place and why things are or are not suitable.” BSA survey respondent 2018

The BSA received more than 700 comments in response to the consultation, through comments provided in an online survey, in written submissions, in community meetings and over the phone. 505 surveys were completed and 30 people gave feedback at face-to-face meetings. Written submissions were received from a variety of individuals and organisations.

Submitters commented on specific aspects of the proposals as well as generally commenting on the BSA’s role and functions, broadcasters and the broadcasting/media landscape. All submissions were thoughtful and considered and we greatly appreciate the time and effort taken by submitters to participate in the consultation. The key themes presented through the submissions are summarised below. Submissions made by organisations and individuals will be made available on the BSA’s website where possible.

Classifications

“I see it very much like a game of Jenga: you’ve got all those things – broadcasting standards, timebands, classifications – and if you pull one out you’re weakening the structure.” Interest group and parent 2018

Overall the community supports the recommendation for free-to-air television to adopt the pay television classifications. The increased granularity offered by the more detailed pay television classification system was supported by the vast majority of respondents. The community considered that the pay television classifications help by differentiating the broad AO (adults only) classification into easily understood, more meaningful, age-appropriate bands. Submitters supported consistency across the classification system with one set of labels.

In addition, the public indicated:

- a desire for greater visibility and promotion of classification labels, including on-screen, to aid their viewing choices when watching free-to-air television.
- that additional short written warnings would provide more context for the classification label and would set expectations around programme content.
- they do not rely solely on classifications when deciding what children in their care should watch, and also use their own judgement to determine what is suitable for their child.

One area of concern raised related to programming of M content and one of the proposals that, if the M classification was introduced, M content could be played at 7pm. We address this further below.

Timebands

“I rely on timebands and would not want them to be removed. They mean I can safely allow my older (8-12-year-olds) to choose their own viewing in the knowledge that the programmes are appropriate.” BSA survey respondent 2018.

“I select the content children watch based on what the content actually IS rather than how its classified. I don’t think timebands are really relevant any more –

people watch tv when they want to, not when its dictated to them.” Consultation respondent 2018.

The response to whether changes should be made to timebands was more complex. A strong theme raised by submitters was the concern about the impact that inappropriate content may have on children and young people and the need to provide effective protections. A number expressed a reluctance for change. Submitters, however, accepted that protecting children from content that may harm them is a joint responsibility between broadcasting rules and parental/caregiver oversight.

While a number of respondents indicated that no change should be made, the majority supported some change to timebands, given the changes in technology and the way we watch content on screens and limited knowledge of some of the timebands. The consultation found that timebands play an important role in viewing behaviour. They may act as an intuitive safety net and are primarily thought of in generalities. For example, it is generally known that adult content will play after 8.30pm, and child friendly content will play before and after school. However, the specific timebands were less familiar and understood, and surprising to many.

Timebands were recognised as playing an important role for children with less vigilant parents and caregivers, who do not control what children view on television. The submissions also indicated that there is low awareness of parental locks, and limited use. However, a larger number of respondents indicated that they would use them if they knew more about them. Some submitters considered that parental locks could not be relied upon in isolation, and classifications and advisories were also important tools for providing protection from content that may harm.

The submissions revealed that families want and need help to make informed viewing choices. As noted above, submitters acknowledged that safe viewing practices require joint responsibility: kids, parents, broadcasters and the state all have a role to play. Families rely on the safety net of rules (standards) applying to broadcasters and the oversight by the BSA. There was some concern expressed that content is becoming edgier and parents want to be able to trust the broadcaster to take into account the interests of audiences, particularly children. Families want viewing guidance to be simple to find and understand so that informed viewing choices can be made more easily. Submitters indicated a strong desire for more programme information, a helpful education programme of how to manage content, and a visible and readily available classification system.

Overall, while there was a clear signal that timebands remain a valued part of the protections on free-to-air television, submitters also accepted that some relaxation of the rules was justified, particularly with respect to the limitations on PGR classified content and content playing during the day, when children are at school. Others acknowledged that many children and young people primarily watch online content, and that is where the greater risk lies. Others considered that it is the responsibility of parents to monitor what children are watching. A theme was that the important information for broadcasters to provide is detail about the programme, including warnings, so that audiences can decide if the content is right for them. Others found timebands annoying, interfering with their own viewing, and requiring some movies, suitable for young people, to start later, meaning later bedtime for kids, and later start times for adult movies. A smaller number of submitters recognised that parental locks are the better alternative to timebands, leaving individual households to make the decision about what content should be controlled. Notwithstanding this, throughout the submissions there was a strong theme that the 8.30pm watershed, after which adult content can be played, is important and should be retained. A small number of submitters argued that the watershed should move to 9.30pm.

Submitters who accepted that some change to timebands may be appropriate, argued that it would need to be accompanied by effective education and support about the use of parental locks and other protections.

In summary, the submissions indicated the following:

- There is a general acceptance of the changing media environment and the need for standards to adapt to this. However, television continues to be a trusted and valued content service, where audiences ought to feel safe
- The majority of submitters accepted that some change may be justified, with many arguing that this would need to be accompanied by other effective ways to minimise harm
- Timebands provide protection for children and it is their needs that are important
- Community safeguards provided in broadcasting standards are important
- The 8.30pm watershed should be retained
- Audiences seek effective programme information, such as more frequent visible appearance of classifications and greater use of warnings
- Audiences want education about tools available to help manage content, including parental locks
- M should be played later than 7pm
- A responsible programming principle, which requires broadcasters to take into account the likely audience and children's interest, is supported

Submissions also raised a range of issues which were outside the scope of this review including: television and film labels should also be harmonised, so that there is one set of labels across all media content platforms, and concern over AO and PGR content being promoted during G classified programmes.

Part 4: Response to submissions

We have carefully considered all feedback and will respond to submissions in one or more of the following ways:

- This report provides a response to those who completed the online survey portal and addresses the themes raised in written submissions
- We have taken some of the feedback into account in the amendments to the free-to-air television code and Codebook
- We will also take these submissions into account in the next review of the full Codebook, which will include the review of all standards and the radio and pay television codes which is scheduled for 2020/21.

In general terms, our consideration of submissions included determining whether the issues raised were:

- within the scope of our review
- helped to inform our understanding of the community's attitude to whether changes were justified and appropriate; and if so
- what additional steps we ought to take to support any changes made.

Our consideration of submissions and the decision as to the changes to be made is set out in further detail below.

Our approach

Our general approach to reviewing our codes is to try to ensure a principled, consistent and flexible set of standards and guidelines. This flexibility is important to maintain, as the codes need to be able to deal with a wide variety of situations and cater to the changing way in which audiences watch television.

While they need to be specific enough to provide guidance for broadcasters and the general public, they must avoid a level of specificity that is limiting and unintentionally exclusionary. Context is critical to the appropriate application of standards. Therefore while classifications and timeband requirements reflect the more prescriptive aspect of the broadcasting standards regime, the guidelines as to how the broadcasters give effect to them need to reflect the diverse audience needs and expectations, audience understanding and ability to make their own informed choices about what to watch. Overall, the standards exist to prevent harm and provide for the provision of principles and tools that are designed to achieve this aim.

We have considered the submissions and also consulted with broadcasters on our views. Part of this consultation has been to determine what enhanced programme information, education and support may be offered to audiences, if changes are made. Our response below reflects our views on the submissions and the changes to be made, supported by enhanced programme information and consumer information for audiences.

Response

Classifications

We agree with submissions that the pay television classification system provides enhanced programme information to audiences, which will better enable audiences to choose content that is right for them and children and young people in their care. We also support the need for greater consistency of classification across media platforms, to reduce any confusion about the age suitability of content that may be viewed on a wide range of platforms. Accordingly, we agree that the free-to-air television code should adopt the pay television classification labels and advisory symbols.

We consider that the M classification is important, as it bridges content that may be suitable for more mature young people and content which may have previously been labelled AO despite low impact. We agree with submitters however that 7pm is too early, and consider that M content may only be aired after 7.30pm and should be accompanied with clear programme information. The scheduling and classification of all content, and particularly M content, must take into account all other relevant standards. This includes those standards which guide the use of audience advisories and which highlight the importance of considering children's normally accepted viewing times (defined as up to 8.30pm). A responsible programming principle will require broadcasters to carefully consider the impact and potential for harm of content on audiences, particularly children and young people.

Classifications provide important audience information. We consider that classification labels should appear on screen more frequently for stronger content (classified M, 16 and 18), including at the beginning of each programme and after each ad break. The classification label must be visible and able to be considered by the audience. The classification must also be available on electronic programme guides.

Timebands

"I use time of day as a "rule of thumb" for what content will be broadcast. Most people probably don't know all the details of timebands. But, like me, they might use time of day or classifications as a general guide to what content will be broadcast." BSA survey respondent 2018.

We received a range of views on timebands, extending from acceptance that they are outdated and meaningless, to support for no change. However, across the submissions there was acceptance that some of the timebands are not well known, and therefore not used, and seem out of step with the changing media environment. We received a clear message that some timebands (such as the 8.30pm

watershed) continue to play an important role for protecting children and young people, and this has been the focus of our consideration.

Our assessment is that some changes should be made to timebands that apply during the day and to bring into effect the new classification labels. We do not intend to change the 8.30pm watershed. The changes that are supported will be accompanied by enhanced programme information, an awareness raising campaign that will carefully signal what the changes are, and additional consumer information about parental locks and other ways that audiences can protect themselves and children and young people from harm. We respond below to some of the specific points raised.

We agree that the 8.30pm timeband should remain. This timeband plays an important role in the viewing behaviour of many New Zealand households. It is well known and valued, providing protection for children and young people. It enables parents and caregivers to have conversations about why the restriction exists and why programmes after that time might not be suitable for the younger people in their homes.

We also acknowledge the views of some submitters that adult content ought to be aired after 9.30pm. This has to be balanced against the frustration experienced by some audiences, who do not have children, where timebands interfere with their access to content suitable for a mature audience at an earlier time. Overall our primary concern is to ensure effective protection for children in the free-to-air television environment, and this has dictated our decision.

Taking into account the change in classifications, we consider that programmes classified 16 must be aired after 8.30pm and programmes classified 18 must be aired after 9.30pm. We acknowledge that children often rise early, and therefore this timeband will end at 5am, rather than 6am.

M content is a broader category, and M programmes may contain low impact content more suitable for viewers with a mature outlook. As outlined above, M content may play from 7.30pm – where the impact is at the lower end of the spectrum. Children's normally accepted viewing times will also be relevant to the scheduling of M content. Examples of an M programme that might play at 7.30pm, with suitable advisories include *The Rookie*, *Grey's Anatomy*, *Viceland* or *Somebody's Gotta Do it*.

M content may also be played during the day (9am-3pm) when children are at school. Programmes classified 16 and 18 may not be aired during the day.

G and PG content may be played at any time. Decisions about programming PG content before and after school, will be guided by other standards such as the children's interests standard and responsible programming principle. Broadcasters will also consider contextual factors such as target audience, and children's normally accepted viewing times.

The details of the changes to be made are set out in section 5 below.

Part 5: Consultation outcome

Below we set out the changes which are to be made:

Classification labels

The free-to-air television classification labels (currently G, PGR and AO) will be replaced with the classification labels G, PG, M, 16 and 18 (aligned with the Pay Television Code).

The scheduling and classification of all content, and particularly M content, must take into account all other relevant standards. This includes those standards which guide the use of audience advisories and which highlight the importance of considering children's normally accepted viewing times (defined

as up to 8.30pm). The amended Codebook includes a new **responsible programming principle** which highlights the importance of considering the impact of content on audiences, particularly children and young people. This principle is reflected in the Codebook Commentary to the Programme Information Standard and in Guideline 2d to the Programme Information Standard.

Timebands

The following changes will be made to timebands:

- a. PG content may be played at any time (subject to compliance with other standards such as the programme information standard and the children's interests standard).
- b. M content may be aired between 7.30pm – 5am on any day and between 9am – 3pm on weekdays, except during school and public holidays, as designated by the Ministry of Education.
- c. Content classified 16 and 18 may not be aired during the day.
- d. 8.30pm watershed will be retained.
- e. Programmes classified 16 may only be played after 8.30pm, until 5am.
- f. Programmes classified 18 may only be played after 9.30pm, until 5am.

Appendix A illustrates the changes to the timebands.

Programme information

All classified content must carry a classification label (as currently required under the programme information standard) with the following requirements:

- a. All PG content must show the classification at the beginning of the programme.
- b. All M, 16 and 18 content must show the classification at the beginning of the programme and after each ad break.
- c. The classification label must be visible and able to be considered by the audience.
- d. The classification must be available through electronic programme guides (eg SKY, Freeview, Vodafone TV), and in print guides where possible.

Audience Advisories

Free-to-air television broadcasters may use the letter advisories currently used in the Pay Television Code: C – content may offend, L – language may offend, V - contains violence, and S – sexual content may offend. However, an on-screen audience advisory will be used if content is outside audience expectations or is otherwise justified for the episode or programme. Voiceover warnings should be used if justified by the context of the programme, taking into account the likely audience and interests of children who may be watching.

The guidelines for use of audience advisories, set out in existing guidelines, will continue to apply.

Advisories should also be available through electronic programme guides (eg Freeview, SKY, Vodafone TV), and in print guides where possible.

Additional programme information required during a six-month transition period

To ensure that audiences are supported during the transition to the new classifications and timebands, we have agreed with broadcasters that a baseline or pop up advisory, which indicates the type of content in the programme, must be aired during the times when the changes to the PG and M timebands

take effect. The electronic programme guide show page will also direct viewers to safeviewing.co.nz for more information. These advisories should appear:

- a. at the beginning of a PG programme broadcast between 6-9am (previously G timeband); and 4-7pm (previously G timeband); and
- b. at the beginning of a M programme broadcast between 9-12pm (previously G/PG timeband) and 7.30-8.30pm (previously G/PG timeband).

These baseline advisories are intended to assist audiences to adapt to changes in timebands during the transition period. These requirements are designed to ensure the right information is communicated effectively to audiences to enable them to make informed decisions about the content they choose to watch.

These requirements will apply for six months from the date the changes are implemented in 2020. This is the *transition period*.

Awareness raising

The outcome of this review will see changes to broadcasting standards that have been in place for more than 30 years. Ensuring that audiences are aware of the changes and are supported to increase use of parental locks is another important aspect of the outcome of this review. The changes may impact consumers and viewing expectations in households. The BSA and broadcasters understand that we have a responsibility to ensure that the changes do not result in harm. Accordingly, the BSA and broadcasters will run a **four week long awareness raising campaign** to notify the public about the changes and when and how they will take effect. The campaign is designed to advise audiences of the changes and also promote the safeguard tools available to free-to-air television audiences to manage content in their home (such as parental locks, classification labels and warnings).

The campaign will be run across television, radio, and online and will be supported by media messages. In addition, the BSA and broadcasters will launch a website which will contain important consumer information about the classifications, timebands changes and about steps viewers can take to use parental locks and other standards tools to help them manage content in the home and protect people in their homes from content that may harm them.

Part 6: Implementation

Subject to any issues that may be raised during the consultation on the draft code, we are working towards the implementation of the changes in early May 2020, with the awareness raising campaign commencing in mid-April 2020.

Part 7: Draft Code - Consultation

The focus of this review has been on the free-to-air television code. We have harmonised this code with the pay television code on those aspects where appropriate. Our review of the full Codebook and all standards under the three codes for radio, pay television and free-to-air television is scheduled for 2020/21. We have therefore not made substantial changes to the pay television code, other than to harmonise the classification definitions to support the overarching intent of consistency of classification across television platforms. No change has been made to the Radio Code.

The amendments predominantly relate to the timebands and classifications and reflect the additional programming information to be provided to audiences. The responsible programming principle is reflected in the Commentary and Guideline 2d to the Programme Information Standard.

We have also taken the opportunity to update the Codebook with respect to the following:

- The importance of broadcasters exercising care and discretion when dealing with sensitive issues such as rape, sexual violence or suicide. We acknowledge this is not an exhaustive list. The new guideline appears in standards 1, 2, 4 and 5 in the free-to-air television code. We expect to review this with all broadcasters in the 2020/21 Codebook review.
- We have referred to decisions issued by the Authority regarding media coverage of the March 15 Mosque attacks and our work with broadcasters to produce a guidance note.
- We have updated guidance material noting our ongoing work on the application of the existing law under the Broadcasting Act to certain categories of online content.
- We have updated the guidance materials at the end of the Codebook to reflect our approach to name suppression and the power to decline to determine a complaint under section 11 of the Broadcasting Act.

The amended Codebook is now available on our website for public consultation. We welcome any feedback on the amendments to the Codebook. In particular we invite comments on the clarity and consistency of the guidelines that have been amended.

Please note that we are only seeking feedback on the changes made, we are not reviewing other standards in this consultation. We ask that any feedback refer to the Codebook page, and also the Standard and guideline referred to.

Feedback may be sent to us using the following:

- **Email** to info@bsa.govt.nz
- **Post** to Broadcasting Standards Authority, PO Box 9213, Wellington, 6141
- **Phone** to our BSA team on 0800 366 996

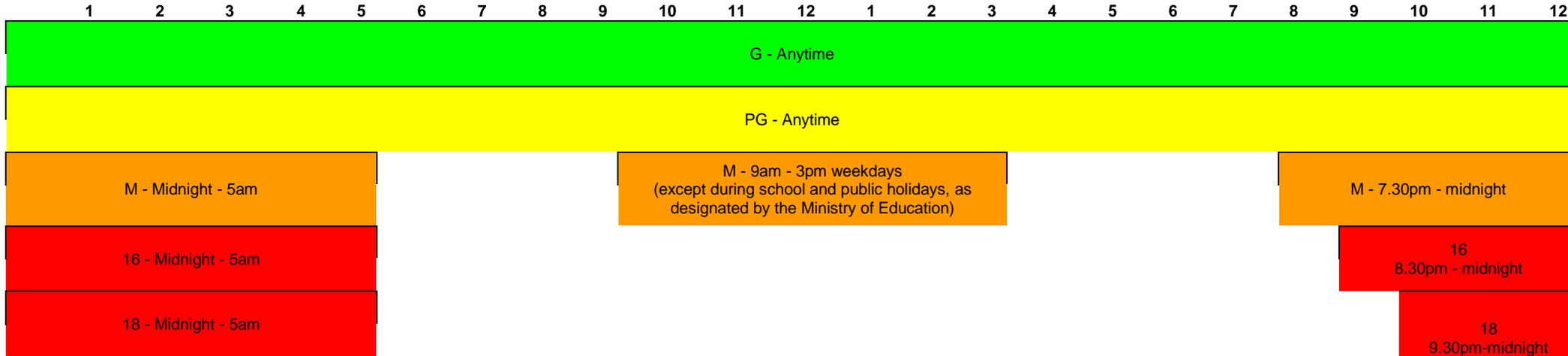
The consultation is open from **10 February 2020 until 6 March 2020**.

Broadcasting Standards Authority

February 2020

Appendix A – Timebands changes - illustration

New Timebands



Current Timebands

