



Australian Government

Classification Board

Media release—Sydney Underground Film Festival—*Playground* and *Kuso*

The article *Classification Board permits Sydney festival to show movie depicting children killing a toddler* on page 8 of the Sydney Morning Herald on 13 September 2017 implies that the film *Playground* was included in the Sydney Underground Film Festival after it was approved by the Classification Board. The article also discusses *Kuso*, another film being screened at the festival.

The Classification Board has not viewed *Playground* or *Kuso* and was not previously made aware of the content in these films. Under the *Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) (Conditional Cultural Exemption Rules) Instrument 2015* that came into effect on 11 September 2015, film festival organisers are able to exhibit unclassified films if they register their event and meet a range of conditions, including:

- Films likely to be classified M or MA 15+ cannot be exhibited to people under 15 years unless they are accompanied by an adult.
- Films likely to be classified R 18+ can only be exhibited to people aged 18 years and over.
- Films that would likely be classified X 18+ or RC cannot be exhibited.
- A clear and legible notice about the age conditions must be prominently and publicly displayed at the relevant screening.
- Each unclassified film can be screened no more than four times per state or territory during the course of an event (unless varied by the Director of the Classification Board).

The 2015 changes arose from the Australian Law Reform Commission's report, *Classification-Content Regulation and Convergent Media* and sought to reduce the regulatory burden on Australian film and game festival operators. Prior to 11 September 2015, organisations holding film festival events needed to apply to the Director of the Classification Board (the Director) for an exemption to be granted for these films. Festival organisers were required to provide a detailed synopsis of each unclassified film, along with details of any classifiable elements (themes, violence, coarse language, sex, drug use and nudity) to the Director.

I understand that both *Playground* and *Kuso* were assessed by the Sydney Underground Film Festival as being likely to be classified R 18+, and hence can only be exhibited to adults. Organisations registering film festivals must apply the *Guidelines for the Classification of Films* (the Guidelines) when making assessments about the suitability of content and age restrictions. The consideration of impact and context are essential principles in the use of the Guidelines. The Code and the Guidelines are available at www.classification.gov.au.

Margaret Anderson
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Classification Board