



Australian Government
Classification Review Board

14 July 2005

23-33 MARY STREET
SURRY HILLS, NSW

- MEMBERS:** Ms Maureen Shelley (Convenor)
Mr Rob Shilkin
Ms Kathryn Smith
- APPLICANT:** Roadshow Films, original applicant for classification,
represented by: Mr Brett Rosengarten (National Sales
Manager).
- BUSINESS:** To review the Classification Board's decision to classify the
film *Wedding Crashers* (the film) MA 15+ with the consumer
advice 'Strong sex scene, Frequent sexual references, Coarse
language'.

DECISION AND REASONS FOR DECISION

1. Decision

The Classification Review Board (the Review Board) classified the film M, with the consumer advice 'Frequent sexual references, Frequent coarse language'.

2. Legislative provisions

The *Classification (Publications, Film and Computer Games) Act 1995* (the Act) governs the classification of films and the review of classification decisions. Section 9 of the Act provides that films are to be classified in accordance with the National Classification Code (the Code) and the classification guidelines.

Relevantly, the Code in paragraph 5 of the Table under the heading 'Films' provides that:

Films (except RC films, X18+ films, R18+ films and MA15+ films) that cannot be recommended for viewing by persons who are under 15

are to be classified 'M'. The Code also sets out various principles to which classification decisions should give effect, as far as possible.

Section 11 of the Classification Act requires that the matters to be taken into account in making a decision on the classification of a film include:

- (a) the standards of morality, decency and propriety generally accepted by reasonable adults; and
- (b) the literary, artistic or educational merit (if any) of the film; and
- (c) the general character of the film, including whether it is of a medical, legal or scientific character; and
- (d) the persons or class of persons to or amongst whom it is published or is intended or likely to be published.

Three essential principles underlie the use of the *2005 Guidelines for the Classification of Films and Computer Games* (the Guidelines), determined under s.12 of the Act:

- The importance of context
- Assessing impact
- Six classifiable elements – themes, violence, sex, language, drug use and nudity.

3. Procedure

The Review Board met on 14 July 2005 in response to the receipt of a valid application from the applicant, Roadshow Films, on 11 July 2005.

Three members of the Review Board viewed the film *Wedding Crashers* at the Board's meeting on 14 July 2005.

The Review Board then received an oral submission from Mr Brett Rosengarten representing the Applicant. This was provided in addition to a written submission.

The Review Board then considered the matter.

4. Evidence and other material taken into account

In reaching its decision the Review Board had regard to the following:

- (i) Roadshow Film's application for review;
- (ii) Roadshow Film's written and oral submissions;
- (iii) The film;
- (iv) The relevant provisions in the Act;
- (v) The relevant provisions in the Code, as amended in accordance with s.6 of the Act
- (vi) The Classification Board's report; and
- (vii) The *Guidelines for the Classification of Films and Computer Games*.

5 Synopsis

The film concerns two close friends who crash weddings in order to meet women. When they crash the wedding of treasury secretary Cleary's eldest daughter they each fall in love with her younger sisters and their deceptions are exposed.

The theme of the film is "oh what a tangled web we weave when first we practice to deceive". The two friends assume personas and play a part as wedding crashers with the object of meeting women. They aren't searching for true love but fun and adventure at the expense of the women who become – temporarily – their unwitting partners.

Their lies and deceptions catch up with them when they do meet two sisters with whom they each want a more serious relationship. Whilst the young men are deceitful and shallow, their actions are sited in the context of a comedy.

6 Findings on material questions of fact

The Review Board found that the film contains aspects or scenes of importance, under various classifiable elements:

(a) **Themes** –The theme of the film, the shallowness of casual sexual encounters and the damage done by shallow men whose sole aim is to obtain pleasure at the expense of others, contains no menace or threat and is handled in a comedic manner.

(b) **Violence** – there is very little violence in the film. That which is depicted is moderate in impact (punches thrown by self-righteous individuals) and justified by context.

(b) **Sex** – there are numerous sexual references throughout the film, with some scenes with more detail. Most are discreetly implied and moderate in impact. Two scenes contain more detail and have a stronger impact, which is justified by the context of the very humorous setting. Specifically, at approximately 50 minutes a dinner table scene is shown. A simulated sex scene takes place where a girl rubs the crotch area of Jeremy under the table, through his pants. Her hand isn't seen and conversation continues as she apparently stimulates him to climax. Further, at 58 minutes Jeremy awakes to find himself gagged and bound hand and foot to the bed with the naked Gloria on top of him (she is depicted from the rear with only her back visible). She makes sexual advances to him that he rejects. The scene is light and comic in tone and becomes farcical as, after Gloria leaves, first her brother enters the room and makes advances and then Gloria's father enters the room to converse with Jeremy. Jeremy is still bound hand and foot but the father Secretary Cleary makes no reference to the ties.

(c) **Drug use** – there is some moderate drug references in the film. They are justified by context.

(d) **Language** – There is frequent moderate coarse language in the film, with some infrequent use of strong coarse language. However, there is no aggressive coarse language. The coarse language is justified by context.

(e) **Nudity** – There are a number of scenes of nudity or partial nudity in the film. They are infrequent and fleeting in nature. Most are of side detail or obscured detail. The scenes are moderate in impact and justified by context.

7 Reasons for the decision

The film is very light in tone, the depictions are “over the top” and the acting is farcical. Whilst there is some coarse language of strong impact it is justified by the context and mitigated by the general character of the film. There are several sexual references in the film but only two contain detail. These are justified by the context. Whilst the film is not intended for children, and cannot be recommended to those under 15 years, it does not require a legally restrictive rating.

8 Summary

Wedding Crashers is a farcical comedy of two hapless, shallow young men who pursue a self-destructive course that ends in trouble when they seek serious relationships. Whilst it does contain frequent coarse language and frequent sexual references, these elements are justified by the context and the comic nature of the film. The Review Board unanimously determined that the film could not be recommended for those under 15 years and classified the film M frequent coarse language, frequent sexual references.