



Australian Government

Classification Review Board

CLASSIFICATION REVIEW BOARD

19 July 2004

**23-33 MARY STREET
SURRY HILLS, NSW**

MEMBERS: The Hon Trevor Griffin (Deputy Convenor)
Dr Robin Harvey
Mr Rob Shilkin

APPLICANT: Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment

BUSINESS: To review the Classification Board's decision to classify the film *Bratz – Starrin' & Stylin'* PG under the *Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act 1995*.

DECISION AND REASONS FOR DECISION

1. Decision

The Classification Review Board (Review Board) unanimously determined that the DVD version of the film *Bratz – Starrin' & Stylin'* be classified PG with the consumer advice 'Peer group themes'.

2. Legislative provisions

The *Classification (Publications, Film and Computer Games) Act 1995* (the Classification Act) governs the classification of films and the review of classification decisions. Section 9 of the Classification Act provides that films are to be classified in accordance with the National Classification Code (the Code) and the *Guidelines for the Classification of Films and Computer Games 2003* (Guidelines).

3. Procedure

The Review Board viewed the DVD version of the film *Bratz – Starrin’ & Stylin’* and heard a submission from Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment represented by Mr Jason Dann, its Production Manager and Mr John Dickie of John Dickie Communications, its representative.

4. Evidence and other material taken into account

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

- (i) the applicant’s application for review (including written and oral submissions);
- (ii) the report of the Classification Board relating to *Bratz – Starrin’ & Stylin’*;
- (iii) the DVD version of the film *Bratz – Starrin’ & Stylin’*;
- (iv) the relevant provisions in the Classification Act;
- (v) the relevant provisions in the Code, as amended in accordance with section 6 of the Classification Act; and
- (vi) the Guidelines.

5. Synopsis

The film is an animated film about the *Bratz* dolls, in this instance, the Formal Funk Group. They are involved in the making of a film forming a major part of their Art examination. That film is about fashion and involves activity preparing for the school prom. The girl members of the group, Cloe, Sasha, Yasmin and Jade, use mobile phones, video cameras, chat lines on the internet, intermingled with beauty treatments, facial mudpacks, a visit to the beach and involvement in a motor vehicle accident.

6. Findings on material questions of fact

The Review Board found that *Bratz – Starrin’ & Stylin’* contained the following material:

- (a) Constant and repeated reference to themes that involve relationships between members of a peer group, including peer group pressure to conform to the group norms and expectations and bullying. The consequences of non-conformity is portrayed are rejection and isolation;
- (b) It deals with issues that are likely to be highly relevant to the age group depicted in the film;
- (c) At approximately 25 minutes, 50 seconds, Sasha is alleged to be having a “breakdown”;
- (d) At approximately 33 minutes, 40 seconds, Jade is referred to as being “seriously fashion impaired,” which distresses her;
- (e) At approximately 39 minutes, 10 seconds, there is a reference to an article in the school paper about the Bratz girls’ friend Cameron that would make him the “laughing stock of the school”. Cameron is laughed at and ridiculed as he walks through the school canteen;
- (f) At approximately 42 minutes, Yasmin is isolated from the rest of the group, is sad and left lonely.

7. Reasons for the decision

The applicant was unable to provide information about the expected age group of the likely audience for this film. Without determining the matter, the Review Board considered that it was likely that young children would watch the film.

The Review Board concluded that the film contains material relating to themes which reflect pressure to conform to the peer group’s norms. If a person does not conform the film reflects consequences such as rejection and isolation, ridicule and, generally, nastiness. The Review Board found that these themes would resonate among children watching the film.

The Review Board noted that although the film is animated, the characters in the film are portrayed as humans and, therefore young children would regard the film and its themes as more realistic than if the film featured animals or other non-human characters. Although there is ultimately a positive resolution to the issues in the film, the impact of peer pressure is something that many children in the middle and upper primary grades experience and as such the impact of these realistic themes exceeds ‘very mild’. Because of these themes and, depending on their experiences with others, some young children may find the film confusing or upsetting and may require the guidance of parents or guardians.

Such a film cannot be accommodated in the G category.

8. Summary

The classifiable elements justify a PG classification as they are mild, but guidance of parents or guardians is recommended for younger children because of the impact of the themes. The consumer advice is 'Peer group themes'.