



Australian Government
Classification Review Board

3 April 2006

23-33 MARY STREET
SURRY HILLS, NSW

- MEMBERS:** Ms Maureen Shelley (Convenor)
Mrs Gillian Groom
Ms Kathryn Smith
- APPLICANT:** 20th Century Fox Film Distributors Pty Ltd (Fox), original applicant for classification, represented by Mr Russell Anderson (National Sales Manager, Fox), Ms Stephanie Leslight (National Promotions Manager, Fox) and Mr John Dickie (Consultant, Fox).
- BUSINESS:** To review the Classification Board's decision to classify the film *Ice Age: The Meltdown* 'PG' (Parental Guidance) with the consumer advice 'Mild scary scenes'.

DECISION AND REASONS FOR DECISION

1. Decision

The Classification Review Board (the Review Board) in a unanimous decision, classified the film *Ice Age: The Meltdown* (the film) PG (Parental Guidance), with the consumer advice 'Mild sense of menace'.

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 6 of the Table under the heading 'Films' provides that:

Films (except RC films, X 18+ films, R 18+ films, MA 15+ films and M films) that cannot be recommended for viewing by persons who are under 15 without the guidance of their parents or guardians

are to be classified 'PG'. The Code also sets out various principles to which classification decisions should give effect, as far as possible. Section 11 of the 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;
- The assessment of impact;
- And the six classifiable elements – themes, violence, sex, language, drug use and nudity.

3. Procedure

The Review Board convened on 3 April 2006 to determine the validity of the application for review from Fox, received on 23 March 2006, view the film and consider the substance of the application. Three members of the Review Board viewed *Ice Age: The Meltdown* at the Review Board's meeting on 3 April 2006.

The Review Board received an oral submission from Mr John Dickie on behalf of Fox, in addition to the written submission provided. 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) Fox's application for review;
- (ii) Fox's written and oral submissions;
- (iii) The film;
- (iv) The relevant provisions in the Act;
- (v) The relevant provisions in the Code;
- (vi) The Classification Board's report; and

(vii) The *Guidelines for the Classification of Films and Computer Games 2005*.

5 Synopsis

Ice Age: The Meltdown is the sequel to *Ice Age*. The ice age is coming to an end and the animals are delighting in the melting paradise that is their new world. Manny the woolly mammoth, Sid the sloth and Diego the saber-toothed tiger quickly learn that the warming environment has one major drawback – a huge glacial dam is about to break, threatening the entire valley. The only chance of survival lies at the other end of the valley. So the three animals, along with a mammoth named Ellie and her two ‘brothers’ – possums Crash and Eddie – embark on a mission across an increasingly dangerous landscape towards their salvation.

6 Findings on material questions of fact

The Review Board found that the film contains aspects or scenes of importance, under the classifiable elements of themes and violence. There were no notable aspects under the elements of sex, drug use, nudity and coarse language.

(a) **Themes** – a sense of threat and menace pervades the film through the theme of global warming and the impending doom of the ice melt down.

At approximately 31 minutes reptilian creatures explode out of the ice and scare the mammoth. They are an evil, threatening presence throughout the film.

At approximately 41 minutes Ellie has a flashback to the trauma of being lost and alone as a baby mammoth in the winter. The scene is very desolate and appears to be something to which children would relate and fear.

At approximately 13 minutes the menacing presence of the vultures is depicted. Their characters state: the “more you die, more we eat”. They present as scary beings.

At approximately 54 minutes the vultures are depicted overlooking the animals as they sleep. At approximately 59 minutes, the vultures are a threatening presence in the trees as animals walk underneath. They sing “food, glorious food” as rocks fall and water spurts, and the animals scream.

At approximately 64 minutes the vultures are overhead and, in a tone similar to flight attendants, say “all unattended children will be eaten”.

From approximately 66 minutes to 72 minutes the animals are all running in panic as a tsunami bears down on them. Ellie is trapped in rocks as water rises. This is a prolonged sequence about an animal to which children could have grown attached. Ellie is still stuck for some time and there is tension as the water rises and she appears to be in danger. At approximately 72 minutes a character says “we’re going to die”.

(b) **Violence** – Throughout the film there is a theme of bullying of the sloth. At approximately 4 minutes a character says: “torture the sloth” “hit him on the head”. At approximately 9 minutes the sloth is going to jump from the cliff “so you will show me respect” as the crowd calls “jump”, this scene is depicted as a possible suicide attempt, which potentially provides comic relief. Other scenes of violence

include that of the tortoise at approximately 8 minutes where his head is pushed under the water.

7 Reasons for the decision

Whilst much of the violence in the film is very mild in nature, the cumulative impact of the sense of menace, the mild impact of the theme of global warming, the distressing (albeit short) scene of the young mammoth being left as a baby and the violent and comic bullying of the sloth increase the impact of these elements to mild.

8 Summary

The Review Board determined that *Ice Age: The Meltdown* should be classified PG, with the consumer advice 'Mild sense of menace'. The Review Board's decision was unanimous.