



**Australian Government**  

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**Classification Review Board**

**4 March 2015**  
**23-33 MARY STREET**  
**SURRY HILLS, NSW**

<b>MEMBERS:</b>	Ms Fiona Jolly (Acting Convenor) Mr Peter Attard Mr Peter Price
<b>APPLICANT</b>	Becker Film Group
<b>INTERESTED PARTIES</b>	Becker Film Group
<b>BUSINESS</b>	To review the Classification Board's decision to classify the film <i>Boychoir M</i> (Mature) with the consumer advice 'Mature themes'.

**DECISION AND REASONS FOR DECISION**

**1. Decision**

The Classification Review Board (the Review Board) unanimously classified the film PG (Parental Guidance), with the consumer advice 'Mild bullying violence and themes'.

**2. Legislative provisions**

The *Classification (Publications, Film and Computer Games) Act 1995* (Cth) (the Classification Act) governs the classification of films and the review of classification decisions. Section 9 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, 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', and

Films (except RC films, X 18+ films, R 18+ films and MA 15+ 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 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 *Guidelines for the Classification of Films and Computer Games 2005* (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 met on 4 March 2015 in response to the receipt of an application from Becker Film Group on 12 February 2015 to conduct the review.

Three members of the Review Board viewed the film on 4 March 2015.

The Review Board heard oral submissions from two representatives of 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) Becker Film Group's application for review
- (ii) Becker Film Group's written and oral submissions
- (iii) the film, *Boychoir*

- (iv) the relevant provisions in the Classification Act, the Code and the Guidelines, and
- (v) the Classification Board's report

## **5. Synopsis**

Boychoir is a drama film which tells the story of Stet, a troubled and angry 11 year old, who ends up in a boychoir school after the death of his single mum.

The film depicts his journey from adversity and insecurity to success and improved self-confidence through early adolescence, discovering and developing his talent via the school's teachers, and also discovering his father.

## **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 film involves the theme of death of a parent, where the most impactful element of this theme is in the depiction of the car accident, in which Stet's mum dies. In this scene the accident is depicted in a wide shot, with no close ups and the static depiction of a body, half lying out of the upturned car, upon the ground. There is some depiction of blood upon the ground near the dead body, yet there is no injury detail. The scene is less than 20 seconds in duration, and the voice over of Stet's teacher attempting to call Stet's mum. The scene is immediately followed by the funeral of Stet's mum. This theme is justified by context and can be classified under the PG classification. Other themes such as feelings of isolation, are justified by context and can be accommodated under the PG classification.

(b) Violence – The film depicts a number of instances where peer bullying is prevalent. All instances are between Stet and his classmates. These scenes include: Stet emptying the contents of a garbage bin on a classmate, Stet having his personal clothing thrown out of his room by his room-mate, and Stet coming to blows with fellow classmate, Devon, following the distribution of photocopies depicting a mug shot of Stet's late mum. In this particular scene, the low camera angle clearly depicts Stet as the aggressor and he delivers a series of punches upon Devon. Devon is heard crying. The bullying violence is mild in impact and infrequent and justified by context.

(c) Language – The film contains very mild and very infrequent coarse language.

(d) Sex – There is no sex in the film.

(e) Drug Use – There is no drug use in the film.

(f) Nudity – There is no nudity in the film

### **7. Reasons for the decision**

The main classifiable elements are themes and violence. The Review Board noted that the film is intended for pre-teens and their parents. In relation to themes, in particular the death of a parent, the overall impact is no higher than mild. In relation to the theme of violence, the film contains mild and infrequent scenes of bullying and are justified by context. The other classifiable elements can be accommodated within the PG classification or lower.

### **8. Summary**

The film is classifiable as PG with the consumer advice of:

Mild bullying violence and themes