



OFFICE OF FILM
& LITERATURE
CLASSIFICATION

Te Tari Whakarōpū Tukuata, Tubitubinga

8 Mile Introduction

The film *Eight Mile* was submitted to the Office of Film and Literature Classification by the Film and Video Labelling Body on the behalf of United International Pictures (the distributor for the film in New Zealand). The film had been classified as restricted to people 15 years and over by the British Board of Film Classification. It was likely to require restriction and had to be classified by the Office.

Eight Mile was submitted to the Office on 35 mm film reels. It was examined by a classification officer and the classification decision was finalised on 9 December 2002. More information on the classification process is included in the NCEA resource book.

The written decision notes that the extent and degree of violent and sexual material and depictions of drug use guided the classification. While the film featured extensive use of offensive language, this was not a criterion under which a film could solely be restricted by in 2002. However, following the 2005 amendments made to the Films, Videos, and Publications Classification Act 1993, highly offensive language became a criterion under which films could be restricted.

The Office noted that the dominant effect of the film was its focus on the life of an angry young rapper played by Eminem. The decision mentions that the depiction of violence, sex and cannabis use as an acceptable part of the lifestyle of the characters could cause injury to the public good if the publication was available to a young audience, who could not understand the wider context of these factors.

The Office classified the film R16, with the descriptive note contains violence, offensive language, drug use and sex scenes.

"...we ask the Film and Literature Board of Review to reconsider the current classification of R16 and give fair consideration to the overall theme and good news message '8 Mile' is sending our youth. We believe that if this balance test is applied you will conclude that R16 is in reality too harsh and unreasonable".

*Peter T. Garner
Managing Director
United International Pictures (NZ)*

On 13 January 2003 Peter Garner, the Managing Director for United Pictures applied for a review by the Film and Literature Board of Review. The application for review was made under section 47 of the Classification Act. United Pictures noted that the Australian Office of Film and Literature Classification had classified the film as M with the descriptive note contains medium level coarse language, adult themes, medium level sex scenes, medium level violence. United Pictures set out in its submission that it believed that the R16 classification of *Eight Mile* was too high and did not take account of the 'good news story that motivated this movie to be made.'

The Office's written submission to the Board noted the sexual, violent and criminal content in the film. The Board of Review is required to classify a film using the same legal criteria as the Office.

"A R16 classification is a remedy that is sufficient to remove the injury likely to remain with a lower restriction, and is also a reasonable limitation on ...freedom of expression..."

*Office of Film and Literature Classification
Written submission to the Board of Review*



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The decision of the Board of Review on *8 Mile* summarises the submissions made by United Pictures and the Office and the legal guidelines set out in the Act that the Board must follow. In relation to sexual content the Board's decision noted that:

“the sexual activity in “8 Mile” is perhaps no more graphic than some television programmes which are freely available by even pre-teen children.... however(it) is explicit enough to be unacceptable for pre-teen children to view and process in a manner appropriate for their age”.

The Board's decision also mentions criminal and violent elements in the film. Both submissions had discussed offensive language in the film. The Board noted that the teenagers, the likely audience, would know that the language in the film is not polite social discourse.

The Film and Literature Board of Review classified the film “8 Mile” as R13 with the descriptive note contains violence, offensive language, drug use, and sex scenes.

Overseas classifications for 8 Mile

Ireland	18
British Columbia	18A
Alberta	18A
Hong Kong	IIB (not suitable for under 18)
Singapore	16
UK	15
Norway	15
Finland	15
Ontario	14A
Quebec	13
Portugal	12
Germany	12
Netherlands	12
Switzerland	12
Sweden	11
Australia	M

Questions

1. What matters (sex, horror, crime, cruelty, violence) under Section 3 of the Films, Videos, and Publications Classification Act 1993 are discussed in the Office's written decision?
2. What matters are discussed in the Board of Review's decision?
3. Since a 2005 law change, the Office has been able to restrict films solely for highly offensive language. Do you think that the offensive language in this film would change the classification? Do you think that there are particular words in the film that make a difference?
4. What would be your classification and descriptive note for this film? Why?