AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL ON CHILDREN AND THE MEDIA

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The Convenor

Classification Review Board

By email: crb@classification.gov.au; paul.tenison@classification.gov.au

Subject: Review of the film X-Men: Apocalypse (MA15+) 2016

ACCM understands that the CRB is to conduct a review of the classification assigned to the 2016 film *X-Men: Apocalypse.* This film was classified MA15+ the Classification Board on 11 May, with the consumer advice "Strong science fiction themes and violence".

ACCM understands that the applicant for review is seeking to have the film reclassified M.

In the normal course of events, ACCM would have reviewed this film by now in order to provide one of our *Know before you Go* reviews. This would have put us in a strong position to make a firm statement as to what the outcome of this review should be. However the distributor did not give us the opportunity to attend any previews. Although both the late date of classification and haste with which the review has been held (due to the proximity of release date) make it difficult for ACCM to support one classification over another, ACCM requests that the CRB accept its submission below as from an interested party.

ACCM is an interested party by virtue of its long and active involvement in classification issues as they relate to children. ACCM's views are well informed by virtue of its 12 years of providing reviews related to the age –appropriateness of current films, and through its ongoing study of the research relating to the impact of the content of films on children, especially in early childhood.

ACCM has studied the Classification Board's report on the movie and we believe that the scenes described in the Board report have significant potential to cause harm and to disturb children under the age of 15 years.

ACCM reminds the CRB that the Classification Act requires that:

- 1. Classification decisions are to give effect, as far as possible, to the following principles:...
 - (b) minors should be protected from material likely to harm or disturb them;

If the CRB lowers the classification of this film to M, many young children will undoubtedly see it. Those children need the protection from harm or distress that only the MA15+ classification can provide.

In ACCM's view, the scenes described by the Classification Board would put young children at significant risk of harm or distress.

We ask that you take these views into account in making your decision.

Yours sincerely Baban Bygin

Barbara Biggins OAM

Hon CEO