



Ms Fiona Jolly
Convenor
Classification Review Board
Sydney NSW

Dear Ms Jolly,

I write to express ACCM's dismay that the CRB chose to lower the classification of the film *Nut Job 2: nutty by nature* from PG to G, with consumer advice lines "some scenes may scare young children".

The media release which accompanied this decision yesterday evening appears to contain an overview of the CRB reasons.

- *There are numerous scenes of unrealistic, animated violence which are all resolved with positive outcomes for the animals and are interspersed with humour and are relevant to the context. The theme of the park being destroyed for greed is overall a positive story about animals protecting their habitat and has a very mild sense of threat which is at all times relevant to the context.*

The overall impact of the classifiable elements in the film was no higher than very mild.

As you know, ACCM put in a submission to the CRB review. ACCM had seen the film and reviewed it for our *Know Before You Go* service, and our review is available at <https://childrenandmedia.org.au/movie-reviews/movies/nut-job-2-nutty-by-nature>

ACCM's main concern is that the decision by the CRB shows a lack of understanding of how children in early childhood are impacted by scary and violent scenes. Young children can be badly affected (and with ongoing fears and anxieties) by individual scary and violent scenes. Images and sounds are what take their attention and stick with them: the fact that everything turns out all right in the end does not undo the effects of the scary content. The fact that some violence is relevant to the context also does not change the impact on young children.

The CRB has given the film G with consumer advice "some scenes may scare young children". There are several reasons why this advice will not help parents.

- 1) consumer advice lines are intended to give the main reason why a film got its classification
- 2) parents assume, and are entitled to assume, that G means content is suitable for all children, but in this case the advice line contradicts this by explaining why the film is not really suitable for all children.
- 3) consumer advice lines rarely appear in the mostly small ads for cinema films.

Surely if a film is not suitable for all children, and therefore not clearly a G, the decision should err on the side of caution, and PG should be assigned.

ACCM is not alone in its view that this film warrants a PG.

Kijkwijzer (Netherlands system that is based on child development research) gave it a 6+ for scary stuff; the Commonsense Media (US) reviewer says 6+, their parents say 10+, and their children said 7+.

<https://www.common sense media.org/movie-reviews/the-nut-job-2-nutty-by-nature/user-reviews/adult>

ACCM is of the view that where a film under review is marketed to, and/or likely to attract, a significant child audience, the CRB should seek input from advisers with child development expertise and experience (when this expertise is lacking within its own numbers).

Additionally, ACCM could provide in-service training in the impacts of media representations on children from a child development perspective, which would inform future decisions of this nature. We would be happy to discuss this.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barbara Biggins". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Barbara Biggins OAM
Hon CEO