



Australian Government

Classification Review Board

1 December 2009
23-33 MARY STREET
SURRY HILLS, NSW

MEMBERS: Ms Victoria Rubensohn (Convenor)
The Hon Trevor Griffin (Deputy Convenor)
Dr Melissa de Zwart
Mr Alan Wu

APPLICANT The Minister for Home Affairs

INTERESTED PARTIES The publisher of *Hydro Lord – the Game*

BUSINESS To review the Classification Board’s decision to classify the publication *Hydro Lord – the Game* Unrestricted with the consumer advice ‘M – Not recommended for readers under 15 years’.

DECISION AND REASONS FOR DECISION

1. Decision

The Classification Review Board (the Review Board) classified the publication Unrestricted with the consumer advice ‘M – Not recommended for readers under 15 years’.

2. Legislative provisions

The *Classification (Publications, Film and Computer Games) Act 1995* (the Classification Act) governs the classification of publications and the review of classification decisions. Section 9 provides that publications are to be classified in accordance with the National Classification Code (the Code) and the *Guidelines for the Classification of Publications 2005* (the Publications Guidelines).

Section 11 of the Act requires that the matters to be taken into account in making a decision on the classification of a publication 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 publication, film or computer game; and
- (c) the general character of the publication, film or computer game, 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.

3. Procedure

The Review Board met on 1 December 2009 in response to the receipt of an application from the Minister for Home Affairs on 19 November 2009 to conduct a review.

Four members of the Review Board viewed the material on 1 December 2009.

The Review Board received a written submission from the publisher of *Hydro Lord – the Game*, prior to the meeting.

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) the Minister for Home Affairs' application for review
- (ii) the written submission from the publisher of *Hydro Lord – the Game*
- (iii) the publication, *Hydro Lord – the Game*
- (iv) the relevant provisions in the Classification Act, the Code and the Publications Guidelines, and
- (v) the Classification Board's report

5. Synopsis

The publication consists of a board game title *Hydro Lord – the Game*. It is played with 2-6 players with each player moving around the board on the throw of a dice and buying a business 'set-up' (impliedly a marijuana crop).

The essence of the way the game is played is set out in the report of the Classification Board. The Review Board considered the game's packaging, the playing board, playing cards, tiles and rules in making its decision.

6. Findings on material questions of fact

Although *Hydro Lord – the Game* contains drug references, these do not amount to encouragement or promotion of drug use. The references can be accommodated within the Unrestricted category.

Part of the game play requires the use of random cards which provide certain consequences. A minimal number of cards make references to violence and sex and these elements can be accommodated within the Unrestricted category.

The tone of *Hydro Lord – the Game* is irreverent and the Review Board has taken this into consideration in assessing the overall impact of the game.

References to adult themes are discreet and low in impact.

The depictions on the *Hydro Lord – the Game* box contain stylised material which is low in impact and suitable for public display, and therefore falls under the Unrestricted category.

The Review Board was of the view that as a whole, the board game *Hydro Lord – the Game* is not appropriate for those under 15 years of age.

7. Summary

Hydro Lord – the Game is classified Unrestricted with the consumer advice ‘M – Not recommended for readers under 15 years’.