

The Films Censorship Board of Review

Mr A. B. Beatson, D.J. (Chairman);
 Mrs M. Cole;
 Mr W. Colgan;
 Mrs U. M. Ewert;
 Prof. E. M. Dalziel;
 Mr B. S. G. Lambert; and
 Mr R. Tanner (deputising for Mrs V. Forbes).

Date of Review: 29 February 1980.

DECISION OF THE FILMS CENSORSHIP BOARD OF REVIEW ON
 THE FEATURE FILM "MAD MAX"

THE Board conducted a review of the film *Mad Max* on the 29th day of February following an application by the distributor, Twentieth Century Fox, for a review of the Chief Censor's decision pursuant to the powers vested in it by section 84 of the Cinematograph Films Act 1976.

Pursuant to its powers under section 84 (4) of the Act the Board invited the applicant and the Chief Censor of Films to make submissions. It also consulted the Department of Maori Affairs and the Police Department. Crown counsel was also invited to attend.

The applicant and the two government departments accepted the invitation and presented written and oral submissions. In recognition of its existing policy, the hearing of oral submissions was opened to the public and the news media. After hearing the submissions the Board retired and considered its decision in private.

The Board decided that the film was likely to be injurious to the public good, accordingly, pursuant to section 26 (2) of the Act, the film was rejected because of its dominant effect and the extent and degree to which and the manner in which the film depicts anti-social behaviour and violence.

In reaching its decision the Board took careful notice of the views of the director, Mr George Miller, who attended the review. In brief, he told us of his experience in film making, which we were satisfied was extensive, and his motive in making the film.

While acknowledging that the film was a commercial venture, he satisfied us of his good faith and in particular that the film had a message. He said that it had been released in many countries in the world, in particular Australia, where it was made, the United States of America, Japan, Great Britain, Spain, France, amongst many others. He also indicated that it has been released with a restricted certificate in at least some of those countries. New Zealand was the only country so far where it had been rejected for exhibition. He acknowledged that the film had a simple message and that the story was not particularly subtle.

In brief, the film which was set some time in the future told the story of the confrontation between a motor cycle gang and the Police Force. It depicted in graphic detail the build-up in the confrontation to the point where one of the Police officers was hideously burnt in his truck by the gang. The "hero", Max then took a spell of leave from the Force having been sickened by the violence and took his wife and baby on holiday. The gang terrorized them, ultimately leading to their riding down on their motor cycles Max's wife and child, killing the child, and seriously injuring the wife. The finale of the film showed Max carrying out a personal vendetta against the gang, killing each member during the course of his pursuit. Suffice it to say that the demise of the gang members was horrific and explicitly portrayed.

Mr Miller insisted that the message in his film, which portrayed the Police as having degenerated to a brutal dehumanised law enforcement agency, should put us all on guard against the possibility of the break down of justice and its administration.

The Police through an experienced chief inspector, told the Board of the increasing incidence of gang violence in New Zealand and expressed their serious concern at the thought of *Mad Max* being released because of this particular problem in New Zealand at the present time, but he also stated that his Department was against the release of any film which depicted gangs associated with violent behaviour.

The Board paid particular heed to the submissions of the Department of Maori Affairs. Two officers of the department gave evidence of their personal experience of the Maori gang problem. They were strongly against the release of *Mad Max* in New Zealand in view of the increasing incidence of gang violence associated with Maori youth. They said the release of the film at the present time could well exacerbate an already serious problem. They explained at some length the increasing problems which have been generated by gang activity. Reference was also made both by the Police and Maori Affairs to an incident which occurred in Northland

last year when a serious attempt was made to incinerate a Police Sergeant in a Police vehicle by a group of rampaging youths involved in a gang confrontation. This incident we were told bore an uncanny resemblance to the depiction of the death of the Police officer, in *Mad Max*.

In coming to its conclusion that the film should not be released for exhibition at the present time, the Board carefully weighed on the one hand the undoubted "artistic" merit of the film coupled with its good production, taut and controlled storyline, and good technical quality, against the extreme violence and anti-social nature of behaviour portrayed. It was well aware of the fact that the film had been widely distributed and was commercially successful in many other countries including those with a gang problem.

In the final analysis however, it was concluded having given considerable weight to the submissions of the Police Department and the Department of Maori Affairs, that there was a real likelihood if the film was released at the present time in New Zealand that it would be injurious to the public good.

Some weight was also given to the concern of the Police over the increasing difficulties they were experiencing in violent physical confrontation with gang members.

We considered that because of, and not despite the film's excellence, the impact it would have on the audiences at which it was directed, i.e. the younger viewing age group, could well encourage emulation. Neither did the Board consider that an R20 certificate, thereby limiting its audience would be appropriate in view of the nature of film.

Two members took the view that while recognising the inherent difficulties that violent films of this nature engendered, an R20 certificate would restrict the audience sufficiently to warrant its release now. After considerable discussion both of these members finally expressed the view that they did not feel strongly enough about it to wish to formally dissent from the decision of the Board.

A. B. BEATSON, Chairman.

(Cul. 2/17/10, 1980/1)

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 Mrs M. Cole;
 Mr W. Colgan;
 Mrs U. M. Ewert;
 Mrs V. Forbes; and
 Mr B. S. G. Lambert.

Date of Review: 21 March 1980.

DECISION OF THE FILMS CENSORSHIP BOARD OF REVIEW

HAVING conducted a review of the short film *Wrangler Thugs* on 21 March 1980 and in accordance with its authority under section 84 (5) of the Cinematograph Films Act 1976, The Films Censorship Board of Review approved the film and classified it as "Approved for general exhibition: recommended as more suitable for adults".

In reaching its decision as to whether or not the film is likely to be injurious to the public good, the Board received submissions from the applicant, Kerridge Odeon Promotions Limited, and the Chief Censor of Films.

The film is an advertisement for Wrangler jeans (running time approximately 1 minute) and depicts a group of young people wearing Wrangler jeans in a variety of situations.

The Board, with one member dissenting, felt the nature of the anti-social behaviour in the film rendered it unlikely to be injurious to the public good.

2 May 1980.

A. B. BEATSON, Chairman.

(Cul. 2/17/11, 1980/2)

Tongariro National Park Parking Bylaw 1980

PURSUANT to the powers vested in it by the National Parks Act 1952, the Tongariro National Park Board makes the following bylaw prescribing conditions and fixing charges for the use of parking places appropriated as such by the Board pursuant to the said Act.

BYLAW

1. This bylaw may be cited as the Tongariro National Park Parking Bylaw 1980.

2. In this bylaw, unless inconsistent with the context: "Board" means the Tongariro National Park Board;