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MEDIA RELEASE

NEW KARATE KID: TOUGHER AND MEANER AND SHOULD BE “M”

As the school holidays approach, the Australian Council on Children and the Media has urged parents and caregivers to be very cautious about taking children under 12 to the new version of the Karate Kid (1984).

Council Vice President Prof Elizabeth Handsley said ‘This film is much stronger than the version that parents might remember seeing 25 years ago, and it should have been classified M (Not recommended for those under 15 years).’ She continued, ‘in fact the film was classified M by the Classification Board, but after a recent appeal by Sony Films, the Review Board lowered it to PG. This decision means it will be seen by many young children for whom it could be quite damaging.’

Council Board member and child psychologist Dr C Glenn Cupit said “The violence is quite brutal and of an adult type. It is inflicted by children on other children. It’s young children doing the bashing up. Further, the violence inflicted does not show real life outcomes of serious kicking and punching. In the scenes of blows to the face, the blows would be enough to do serious damage, but this is not the consequence shown in the film. A young audience may not appreciate what will surely result if they copy that violence.’

Prof Handsley said, “The ACCM had made a submission to the Classification Review Board arguing that the film should remain classified M, as the violence in the film was not infrequent, nor mild in impact, as required if rated PG”. She said the Council strongly disagreed with the reasons given by the CRB for lowering the classification, viz “the violence was episodic and infrequent (given the overall length of the film) and is mainly stylized in nature and that the violence could be accommodated at PG level because “there was a lack of explicit visual detail, and some of the violence occurred in a context of bullying.”

Dr Cupit continued “The hero is a very young looking 12 year old, and most of the characters are children. The film will attract a young audience. They will see an adult instructor encouraging and urging on children to perform damaging violence on other children, saying “I want him ruined”. This same adult instructor slaps a student very hard across the face.

The ACCM advises parents to view the full review of the film posted on its website. This review (as are all of ACCM’s “Know before you go “ reviews) was conducted by a reviewer qualified in child development, and experienced in likely reactions of children at different ages.

Parents can find out more about likely impacts of media at the ACCM website.

ACCM is a unique national community which strives for a media environment that supports the health, safety and wellbeing of Australian children. It is committed to promoting healthy choices and stronger voices in children’s media. Parents, caregivers and the general community can access information and advice about the impact of the media on children by calling the Children and Media Helpline (1800 700 357, national, freecall, 24/7) or visiting the ACCM Website (www.youngmedia.org.au).

For more information or to arrange an interview, please call

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