



File No: T13/2997

Australian Government
Classification Board

Decision Report

Classification decisions are made in accordance with the Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act 1995 (the Act), the National Classification Code and the Classification Guidelines.

Production Details:

Title:	CODENAME
Alternate titles:	SOUTH PARK THE STICK OF TRUTH
Publisher:	UBISOFT
Programmer:	OBSIDIAN ENTERTAINMENT
Production Company:	NOT SHOWN
Year of Production:	2013
Duration:	VARIABLE
Version:	MODIFIED
Format:	PC
Country/ies of origin:	FRANCE
Language/s:	ENGLISH
Application type:	CG6
Applicant:	UBISOFT

Dates:

Date application received by the Classification Board: 05 November 2013
Date of decision: 07 November 2013

Decision:

Classification: RC
Consumer advice:

Synopsis:

A modified version of the computer game Codename (South Park The Stick of Truth), an action adventure, role playing game for Xbox 360, PS3 and PC which features characters and storylines from the television series South Park.

Reasons for the Decision:

In making this decision, the Classification Board has applied the Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act 1995 (the Classification Act), the National Classification Code (the Code) and the Guidelines for the Classification of Computer Games 2012 (the Guidelines).

In the Board's view this game warrants an 'RC' classification in accordance with item 1(a) of the computer games table of the National Classification Code:

"1. Computer games that:

(a) depict, express or otherwise deal with matters of sex, drug misuse or addiction, crime, cruelty, violence or revolting or abhorrent phenomena in such a way that they offend against the standards of morality, decency and propriety generally accepted by reasonable adults to the extent that they should not be classified;" will be Refused Classification.

And;

"1. Computer games that:

(b) describe or depict in a way that is likely to cause offence to a reasonable adult, a person who is, or appears to be, a child under 18 (whether the person is engaged in sexual activity or not);" will be Refused Classification.

Also, pursuant to the Guidelines for the Classification of Films, films will be Refused Classification if they contain: "Descriptions or depictions of child sexual abuse or any other exploitative or offensive depictions involving a person who is, or who appears to be, a child under 18 years."

Computer games that exceed the R18+ classification category will be Refused Classification.

At the R 18+ classification, the Guidelines state:

"Implied sexual violence that is visually depicted (or) interactive (or) not justified by context or related to incentives or rewards is not permitted".

This game features an interactive sequence in the mini-game titled "Alien Probe" which visually depicts implied sexual violence involving a child character and adult characters. The player must participate in this mini-game in order to progress in the game. While the Board acknowledges that the game is satirical in tone, intent and context, is based on, and true to, the South Park television series, and that limited modifications have been made to the original game, this modified version includes visually depicted, implied sexual violence and, as such, exceeds what can be accommodated within the R18+ classification.

Examples include but are not limited to the following:

The interactive mini-game titled Alien Probe features buttock-nude male characters, captured by aliens and strapped to stylised tables, repeatedly having oversized, phallic probes thrust into their buttocks. The probes visually resemble penises and are repeatedly thrust in and out, mimicking sexual thrusting. The adult characters' voices and comments suggest that some are sedated and, while one character, Mr Slave, seems to find the probing pleasurable and says "can we try the big silver one again", no explicit or implicit consent is conveyed, the characters are secured to the tables and comments made by probed characters, including "Not that way!", "Oh God no! Shut it off! And "No no no that kills! Switch it back!", indicate both a lack of consent and pain experienced. The child character, referred to as "the new kid", never speaks, but is viewed being dragged across the ground by aliens before being placed on the table. As the probe implicitly enters his buttocks, he grimaces in pain. After the probe has been removed, the Randy Marsh character comments that "this is the kind of stuff you put up with living in a remote mountain town". While the probe is inserted, the player is given instructions to complete a series of moves on the controller which, if successfully executed, bring about a "dragonshout" which enables the new kid character to fart flames which destroy the probe. The probe breaks off in the new kid's anus.

A further interactive sequence of visually depicted sexual violence features Randy Marsh strapped to the table, bare buttocks in the air, and probed as the player, as the new kid, executes moves on the controller to destroy the probe. In both scenes, the interactivity is related to destroying or disabling the probes; the player does not interact in an act of sexual violence.

The Board notes that a scene in which characters make repeated verbal references to the character Kenny being raped can be accommodated within the R 18+ classification as the references are verbal, no visual depiction of sexual violence is viewed and the implicit sexual violence has no interactive elements.

A minority of the Board is of the view that game contains thematic content which, due to the interactive nature of the sequence, also warrants Refused Classification. The sequence is set in an abortion clinic with male characters disguised as females. The player controls the doctor's hands and repeatedly thrusts a length of wire between the patient's splayed legs (implicitly to bring about an abortion) before applying a vacuum device to the patient's genital region (below screen). A minority of the Board is of the view that, due to the interactivity of this sequence, it is very high in impact and offends against the standards of morality, decency and propriety generally accepted by reasonable adults to the extent that it should not be classified.

OTHER MATTERS CONSIDERED OR NOTED

The Board notes that the Guidelines state that "interactivity is an important consideration that the Board must take into account when classifying computer games". The Guidelines also state "due to the interactive nature of computer games and the active repetitive movement of the participant, as a general rule computer games may have a higher impact than similarly themed depictions of the classifiable elements in film".

Decision:

This game is refused classification.

