File No: T18/1708

**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:

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|---|---|
| Title: | WE HAPPY FEW |
| Alternate titles: | |
| Publisher: | GEARBOX PUBLISHING, LLC |
| Programmer: | COMPULSION GAMES INC |
| Production Company: | |
| Year of Production: | 2018 |
| Duration: | VARIABLE |
| Version: | ORIGINAL |
| Country/ies of origin: | USA |
| Language/s: | ENGLISH |
| Application type: | CG2 |
| Applicant: | GEARBOX PUBLISHING, LLC |

## Dates:

Date application received by the Classification Board: 09 May 2018

Date of decision: Draft

47F  21/5/18

## Decision:

Classification:         RC

Consumer advice:

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A senior panellist has confirmed that the application considered was valid under the Act and that this Decision Report accurately reflects the Board's decision and any minority opinions.

## Synopsis:

We Happy Few is a psychedelic, single-player, action-adventure game set in 1964 after England lost World War II, where the population of the fictional dystopian town, Wellington Wells, consume a drug called "Joy", mandated by the government, that causes memory loss. The player takes the role of three characters in an interlocking narrative: Arthur, a weedy archivist searching for his brother; Sally, a chemist who wants to escape; and Ollie, who is keen to expose the truth about the town's dwindling food supplies. The game contains no online interactivity.

## 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 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.

Computer games that exceed the R18+ classification category will be Refused Classification. Computer Games will be Refused Classification if they include or contain "drug use related to incentives and rewards".

The examples described below do not represent an exhaustive list of the content that caused the computer game to be refused classification.

Gameplay consists of exploring the fictional English town of Wellington Wells in first-person as three separate playable characters, where non-playing characters consume the government-mandated, fictional drug "Joy" in the form of pills, which include side-effects such as euphoria and memory loss. When the player consumes Joy, surreal, psychedelic sequences including butterflies and brightly-coloured street-scapes appear. In keeping with the fantasy setting, character models and environments are brightly-coloured and stylised.

Players have the option to conform with NPCs and take Joy pills when exploring the Village or Parade District areas of the game. If a player has not taken Joy, NPCs become hostile towards the player if they perform behaviours including running, jumping and staring. An NPC character called the Doctor can detect when the player has not taken Joy and will subsequently raise an alarm. A player that takes Joy can reduce gameplay difficulty, therefore receiving an incentive by progressing through the game quickly. Although there are alternative methods to complete the game, gameplay requires the player to take Joy to progress.

In one sequence, an NPC is viewed on the ground, convulsing owing to a reaction from taking a Joy pill, which has subsequently turned bad. After several NPCs encourage her to take Joy and she refuses, fearing that it will have an adverse effect, they beat her with steel pots and a shovel, until she is implicitly killed.

In another sequence, the player is seen in first-person view, entering a telephone box that contains three large pill dispensers, each holding a different flavoured Joy pill. The player consumes a Joy pill and a swarm of brightly-coloured butterflies appear as well as rainbows and coloured pathways on the ground, improving speed and visibility for the player.

In the Board's opinion, the game's drug-use mechanic making game progression less difficult constitutes an incentive or reward for drug-use and therefore, the game exceeds the R 18+ classification that states, "drug use related to incentives and rewards is not permitted". Therefore, the game warrants being Refused Classification.

## Decision:

This game is Refused Classification.

**47F**

Details of opinions (including minority views):

Unanimous

A senior panellist has confirmed that the application considered was valid under the Act.

A senior panellist has confirmed that all members constituting the Board for this decision have considered the application and that this Decision Report is a true and accurate reflection of the Board's decision and any minority opinions.

Decision signed off by a senior panellist.

Decision signed off by Director **47F** ....Date ...21./..5./..2018

(required for all enforcement applications, commercial RC decisions and non-ISP ACMA RC decisions)