

## SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR DECISION

Under the Films, Videos, and Publications Classification Act 1993 (FVPC Act)

### HEADNOTE

<b>Title of publication:</b>	Matariki
<b>Other known title(s):</b>	Not stated
<b>OFLC ref:</b>	0901679.000
<b>Medium:</b>	DVD
<b>Classification:</b>	Objectionable except if the availability of the publication is restricted to persons who have attained the age of 13 years or who are accompanied by a parent or guardian.
<b>Descriptive note:</b>	Contains violence, drug use and offensive language.
<b>Display conditions:</b>	None

*Matariki* is classified as "objectionable except if the availability of the publication is restricted to persons who have attained the age of 13 years or who are accompanied by a parent or guardian" because of its treatment of crime, cruelty and violence.

The publication is a DVD comprising a New Zealand-made feature with a running time of 92 min 14 sec.

The feature is a multi-protagonist drama set in Auckland. It involves a disparate group of people whose lives intersect following a random act of violence. Tama, a rugby league player, attempts to rescue a man, Gunge, who is being viciously attacked. Tama is badly beaten, and winds up brain-damaged in hospital. His distraught wife, Meg, bars Tama's family from seeing him, after she becomes disturbed by the family's plans to take his body back to their marae.

Simultaneously, a young Tokelauan burglar, Aleki, is questioned by police after he inadvertently steals Tama's car. Around this time, Aleki befriends a troubled Chinese girl, known as Spit, who is undergoing family problems. The pair discover an empty house where the elderly owner has died. For a while they take over the deceased woman's house, deluding themselves into thinking that they can stay there and be a family. Eventually the pair come to their senses. Aleki resigns himself to returning to Tokelau, and Spit goes back to her family.

The third concurrent storyline concerns a young couple, Jermaine and Lisa, who are about to have a baby. Jermaine has just got out of prison. Both of them use drugs. Their connection to the others is twofold: through running over Gunge's dog, and through Lisa stealing an item of jewellery that belongs to the gay partner of Tama's brother. Lisa eventually gives her baby up for adoption and leaves Jermaine.

The publication deals with matters of sex, though only by way of verbal references. When Aleki first meets Spit he asks how old she is. She replies nearly fifteen. Aleki's response is "I don't do

kids". Spit: "good, 'cause I'm not after a root". Much further on in their relationship Aleki tries to kiss Spit when they are lying in bed. Spit becomes upset and hides in a closet. Aleki makes a comment about his need for a "wank".

A further sexual reference is when Tama's brother, Rick, picks up his gay lover, Tyrone, from a netball match. In response to something Rick says, Tyrone retorts, "that's the reason I love you – that, and your big Maori cock".

The publication deals with matters of crime in terms of s3(1) of the FVPC Act, and depictions of drug use, considered under s3B. Aleki is a teenager who steals cars and commits burglary. It is during a burglary that he first meets Spit; she hits him on the head from behind with a flashlight. When he flees through a window she follows him. Much later, after the pair burgle an electronics store, he shows her how to hotwire a car.

Jermaine and Lisa, the feature's most tragic characters, smoke marijuana and steal (on different occasions both a car and a necklace). When Lisa returns home after having her baby, Jermaine offers her a "hit" of something strong – heroin or methamphetamine. He begins to prepare the drugs but she declines the offer. A short time later she leaves him.

The drug-taking and other criminal behaviour are represented in a very negative light. There is no sense that the activities are being promoted in any way.

The publication deals with matters of violence and cruelty in terms of s3(1) of the FVPC Act. These are discussed below in relation to s3(3)(a)(i), that is, the extent and degree to which, and the manner in which, the publication depicts the infliction of serious physical harm and acts of significant cruelty.

The publication does not deal with any s3(2) matters.

The strongest violence and cruelty occurs in the scene where Gunge is attacked by a drug dealer. While Gunge lies on the ground attempting to shield his pet dog from the attack, the drug dealer, whom Gunge owes money, punches and kicks his back and mid-section. Tama arrives to break up the beating, but is hit with a bottle by an associate of the drug dealer. The bottle smashes over his head; Tama falls to the ground. The drug dealer gives Tama several hard kicks to the ribs, then aims one big kick at his head. Tama's head moves sideways at an odd angle.

The storyline concerning Gunge's dog also has some impact. The dog is hit by a car and crawls away injured. It spends a night or two sheltering inside a concrete cylinder, before a young boy alerts Gunge to its plight. By this stage it is too late, and shortly thereafter the dog dies.

The publication contains frequent use of highly offensive language. The strongest language is when Lisa reprimands Jermaine for stealing a car. She calls him a "stupid cunt" and says (of the whole situation) "its fucking fucked!" The word "fuck" is widely used elsewhere.

The dominant effect of the publication as a whole is of a moving multi-protagonist drama encompassing themes to do with societal violence and the role of families in a familiar New Zealand context. The classification acknowledges the feature's likely appeal to a broad-based audience, though only if parental guidance is available for children. Weight is given to the fact that *Matariki* is a piece of New Zealand cinema featuring well-known local actors, and contains positive messages about the impact of violence on peoples' lives and the role of the family. However the pervasive use of highly offensive language and a scene of strong violence means

that availability of the publication is likely to be injurious to the public good unless it is restricted to persons who have attained the age of 13 years or who are accompanied by a parent or guardian. In this instance it is considered that parents or guardians can put the violence and offensive language into a context that younger children could understand and may benefit from.

**Note:**

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