

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Film classification inappropriate**

The Australian Psychological Society (APS) has expressed grave concerns over the classification MA given to the soon to be released movie, 'The Happening'.

"This movie, with its graphic and repeated depictions of violent suicides should receive an R classification instead of the MA rating," said APS President, Amanda Gordon. "We call on the Classification Board to urgently review this rating."

"Not only does this movie romanticise and sensationalise suicide, but it depicts many different methods of achieving that end. There is good evidence that the reporting of suicides can lead to copycat behavior, and there are many instances of increased suicide rates following media portrayals of suicide. The more detailed the descriptions or portrayals of the suicide, the greater the risk that vulnerable people, including young people or people with mental health problems, may harm themselves.

Psychologists have grave concerns that we will see a real increase in both suicide attempts and successful suicides, as a result of people viewing this movie. The most vulnerable, including young people, will be protected by a higher rating by the Classification Board", said Gordon.

"We have media guidelines for the reporting of suicide, and classification systems for films for very good reasons", says Gordon. "What better reason is there than the protection of vulnerable people in our society?"

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*The APS is the largest professional association for psychologists in Australia, representing more than 15,700 members. The APS is committed to advancing psychology as a discipline and profession. It spreads the message that psychologists make a difference to peoples' lives, through improving psychological knowledge and community wellbeing.*

**For media enquiries please contact:**

**Elaine Grant**

**Communications Manager**

**Australian Psychological Society**

**T: 03 8662 3363 | M: 0412 683 068**

**[www.psychology.org.au](http://www.psychology.org.au)**