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MEDIA RELEASE

Killing prostitutes is just “fun and games”?

“Why do so many gamers want to be able to play games with content more extremely violent than at present? What’s the appeal of being able to strangle prostitutes, gun down defenceless civilians, and murder taxi drivers?”, the Australian Council on Children and the Media asked today.

The Council was responding to reports of gamers sending thousands of petitions supporting the introduction of an R18+ classification for computer games to the Government inquiry which closes on Feb 28.

“The effect of this proposal, if agreed to by the Federal, State and Territory Minister responsible for classification, will be to allow into the sale and hire system, games with more extremely violent and more impactful depictions of sexual and drug taking activity, than is presently allowed” said Council Vice President and media law expert, Professor Elizabeth Handsley.

Psychologist Dr Wayne Warburton said “The latest research indicates that violent games increase the risk to our community of the use of violence and aggression to resolve conflict. The evidence strongly suggests that exposure to violent video games is a risk factor for increases in aggressive behaviour, aggressive beliefs and problem-solving scripts, aggressive feelings, and desensitisation to violence as well as decreased empathy and prosocial behaviour. The human brain wires up according to what we experience. It is not surprising that when people frequently play games that involve the repeated rehearsal of aggressive and violent thoughts, feelings and actions, that person is then more predisposed toward anti-social behaviour.”

Lead author of the ACCM’s survey “Kids and the scary world of video”, Dr C Glenn Cupit said “Our research showed that portable items such as videos and DVDs with extreme adult content were easily accessed by children, and often not in their own homes. The argument being used by gamers that an R18+ category will provide more protection for children is not supported. “

Professor Handsley said “This defeats one of the principles of the classification system , viz ‘minors should be protected from material likely to harm or disturb them. Parents’ job of protecting their children will become much harder.” The ACCM urges parents to express their views to the inquiry <http://www.ag.gov.au/gamesclassification>.

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,
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