
MEDIA RELEASE

IS THE NEW GAMES RATINGS SYSTEM WORKING?

The new classification system for video games, introduced in January this year, is not providing the promised better protection for Australian children, according to Elizabeth Handsley, Professor of Law at Flinders University and President of the Australian Council on Children and the Media Australia.

“Our review of the statistics for the past three months has shown that violent material that was considered too extreme for teens in the US, Canada and Europe is readily available to that group in Australia,” Professor Handsley said.

“Over two thirds of the 23 video games to receive an MA15+ rating since the introduction in January of the new classification system are rated for adults overseas. Those ratings have principally been for extreme or intense violence,” she said.

“The introduction of the new video game classifications was a response to a concern in the community that the material available at MA15+ was too strong for 15 to 17-year-olds.

“The new guidelines were supposed to be stricter, so that such material would go into the new R18+ category. However, 16 of the 23 games rated MA15+ were deemed not suitable for 15 to 17-year-olds by either the Entertainment Software Rating Board (US and Canada) or Pan European Game Information or both.

“It would appear that the new system has not resulted in a tightening-up of the classification system at all.”

While 13 titles have earned the new R18+ rating, Professor Handsley said the classification discrepancy between Australia and other parts of the world showed that the new guidelines have not achieved the intended result.

The Australian Council on Children and the Media calls on the Standing Committee on Law and Justice to review the guidelines in light of these findings, and to open the matter up for public comment.

For further information or interview:

Professor Elizabeth Handsley

Tel: (08) 8201 5256

Mobile: 0448 898 185

Thursday, 2 May, 2013