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Media Release

Children's media group challenges Minister on R18+ games proposals

'The Federal Governments proposed draft guidelines for classifying computer games will not provide better protection for children' Professor Elizabeth Handsley, President of the Australian Council on Children and the Media (ACCM), said today.

ACCM has written to the Minister for Home Affairs, Brendan O'Connor, asking him to show how his proposals will, as claimed, get the 50 most popular adult games out of the hands of children.

Professor Handsley said 'It is of great concern to the Council that children have easy access to the strong, realistic and frequent violence currently found in games at the MA15+ level. We can see no mechanism in these proposals that would improve this situation so we are asking the Minister to explain how they will'.

From the range of responses received so far from State and Territory Attorney Generals, to a ACCM letter of concern, the proposal put forward by the SA Attorney General offers the most promise of better child protection. Attorney General John Rau is calling for the MA15+ classification for games to be rolled into a new R18+ category, and to not be available via the sale and hire system to those under 18 years.

The Australian Council for Children and the Media (ACCM) urges all parents concerned about children's access to very violent games to participate in the online survey of views about the Federal Government's proposals by visiting www.classification.gov.au by July 15, 2011.

For support and advice on media and children parents can call the Children and Media Helpline on 1800 700 357 (national, freecall, 24/7).

ACCM is a unique national community organisation 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.

For more information or to arrange an interview, please call Elizabeth Handsley on 08 8201 5256 or 0448 898 185.