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Media Release

Gaming community hypocritical about media violence: there are good grounds for action

Prof Elizabeth Handsley, President of the Australian Council on Children and the Media, has today spoken out about the hypocrisy of those defending the widespread use of violent videogames in the community.

‘The gaming community can’t have it both ways’, she said. ‘On the one hand they are attacking NSW Police Commissioner Scipione for daring to suggest that playing violent videogames might be contributing to real life violence by some, but on the other they have successfully argued for the introduction of a higher impact games category on the grounds that such material should be kept out of the hands of children as it’s harmful to them’.

She continued ‘it is very difficult to have a civilised debate about the issues with gamers as they invariably descend into uncivil and abusive comments in online fora, or out of hand rejection of the body of evidence about causal influence that could usefully inform policy development and regulatory decision-making’.

ACCM Vice President and psychologist Dr C Glenn Cupit said ‘There is reliable evidence that exposure to violent media raises the risks of desensitisation and increased aggression. This may not immediately manifest itself in violent crime, but research has shown it to be a contributing factor in aggression which intensifies the impact of other factors that also contribute to violence in society. Continued exposure to media violence is a real public health risk and a contributor to real life violence that we can do something about’.

Prof Handsley said ‘action should be taken to better inform parents of the toxic content of some media, and to improve the efficacy of the classification system’.

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 email admin@youngmedia.org.au or call on (08) 8376 2111, or contact Elizabeth Handsley on 08 8201 5256, 08 82721170 or mobile 0448 898 185 OR Dr C Glenn Cupit on 08 8302 4580 or 08 8177 1990.