



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

Catholic Church Welcomes Release of Draft R18+ Computer Games Guidelines Media Release, 26 May, 2011

The release of the draft R18+ Computer Games Guidelines by Mr Brendan O'Connor, Minister for Home Affairs and Justice was welcomed today by the Catholic Church.

Fr Richard Leonard SJ, Director of the Australian Catholic Office for Film and Broadcasting said that handling issues of classification involves decisions which are not taken lightly.

“How to handle the classification of R18+ Computer Games is a difficult matter for society as well as for individuals and, especially, for parents. There are no easy solutions and we want to ensure that there is as much information available on the content of such games for parents and concerned citizens”, Fr Leonard said.

In February 2010, the Australian Catholic Bishops made a submission to the Government Inquiry about R18+ Computer Games as well as a submission to the more recent Senate Inquiry.

The submission argued that ideally, the sort of material featured in R18+ games would never be created.

“In an ideal world, the sort of material that is included in R18+ or higher classification films and computer games would never be seen in a civilised democracy. However, it is not an ideal world and, in the real world in which we live, such material unfortunately is produced and is available, sometimes legally and often illegally, within our society.”

The submission also considers carefully ways in which the material should be restricted, recognising that a complete ban of such material would be near impossible.

“Banning such material would be desirable if it could be achieved. But much such material is available either via downloads or it is already legal in some jurisdictions within Australia”, reads the submission. The preferred position of the Catholic Church is that R18+ material should not be available. But if such an outcome is not achievable then the Australian National Classification Scheme should include an R18+ classification category for computer games.”

“All concerned Australians, especially concerned parents, should carefully consider the draft Guidelines and tell the Government of their views. We all have a vision of how we would like our society to be, but we as a society need to address the world as it is, not as we would like it would be”, Fr Leonard said.

A copy of the submission from the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference is available on the ACBC Website www.catholic.org.au

Media contact: Beth Doherty 0407 081 256 to arrange an interview with Fr Richard Leonard.