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Australian Catholic Film Office welcomes R18+ legislation.

**Media Release
16 February, 2012**

The Australian Catholic Office for Film (ACOFB) and Broadcasting has cautiously welcomed the introduction of legislation which looks to create an R18+ classification for computer games.

Director of the ACOFB, Jesuit priest Fr Richard Leonard said that the submission from the Bishops was very clear that they do not condone the material contained in such games, and that their support would be qualified.

“The Bishops preferred position was that R18+ material should not be available, and that if such a category be now introduced to computer games, then their support would be very cautious”, said Fr Leonard.

There are two elements that swayed the ACOFB to take the position they did, and they highlighted that it was not taken without some discernment.

“Computer games are not classified in the same way that films are, and that the classifiers do not have at their disposal the following G; PG; M; MA15+; R18; and RC (refused classification).”

“Unfortunately, very few films and computer games are refused classification. But what is worse is that because there has been no R18+ category available until now many computer games that should have received a restricted rating ended up attracting the highest category possible: MA 15+”, said Fr Leonard

“Some parents have assumed that on seeing this classification on the cover of a computer game that these games were deemed to have less adult content. But they do not. Some of us might wonder about the decision to even allow older teenagers access to MA 15+ computer games, but, now, at least a parent can see an R18+ classification and know that it is not only illegal for their children to be playing them, it is clearly immoral. In regard to the present system for computer games, the status quo is not good enough.”

The Bishops have repeatedly argued that the Classification Act needs to be strengthened to help parents protect their children from any media that demeans humanity and does not promote human or social dignity, especially, but not exclusively, in regard to violent and sexually graphic material.

“The Bishops have also called for a genuine nation-wide approach. Until now some games have been banned in most States but have been available in one or other of the Territories. In this context, with the status quo not working and no hope of a ban, the Church opted to support parents to have as much information as possible, and so enable them work with their children make the best media decisions for their family.”

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