



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Violent Video Game Should Be Banned**

Family First NZ is calling for the latest version of the Grand Theft Auto video game series to be banned in NZ.

*Grand Theft Auto IV* is scheduled for release this week. It follows on from previous Grand Theft Auto games which included constant graphic violence and sexual situations. Players could re-enact having sex with a prostitute, beating her bloody, taking her money and running her over with a car and shooting at police officers.

Rockstar Games which produces the game says the company is going even further in its pursuit of realism with this latest game in the series and players can buy cocaine, set enemies alight, shoot a policeman, drink drive, and visit strip clubs – all with improved physics and animation which makes the game feel more real, according to reviewers.

In Australia the graphic violence contained in the game was modified to meet an MA15+ rating, yet still with warnings of strong violence, strong coarse language, drug and sexual references. The Australian censorship board warned that “as the violence is relatively frequent, causing blood spray and injury detail, the impact is strong.”

In NZ, the unmodified game has an R18 classification with a benign warning of ‘violence and offensive language’.

“It is completely naïve to believe that teenagers and young children won’t have access to and be able to play the game,” says Bob McCoskrie, National Director of Family First NZ. “It is also completely unrealistic to believe that young people will not be influenced in their attitudes and behaviours by constant exposure to this type of material.”

David Grossman, who is one of the world's foremost experts in the field of violence and violent crime, and author of *Stop Teaching Our Kids to Kill* says “Certain types of these (video) games are actually killing simulators, and they teach our kids to kill in much the same way the astronauts on *Apollo 11* learned how to fly to the moon without ever leaving the ground... The interactive quality, the intensity of the violence, the physiological reactions, all serve to connect the player’s feelings of exhilaration and accomplishment directly to the violent images of video games. And “good” feelings keep the player wanting to play more.”

Family First says that with concerns in the increasing rates of juvenile violent and sexual offending, it is time we acted to protect our young people and communities from the effects and influences of these extreme types of video games.

“So-called ‘entertainment’ and freedom of expression should never be at the expense of the safety of our community, appropriate emotional and moral development of our children, and promoting acceptable attitudes towards women, violence and law enforcement,” says Mr McCoskrie.

**For More Information and Media Interviews, contact Family First:**

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