

Game over for adult players

Ratings made for children, bemoan fans

The average age of video game players in Australia is 30. But they say governments are treating them like children because state and federal authorities are failing to agree on a ratings system.

The shooting game Aliens vs Predator, based on the film of the same name (which was rated M), was refused classification by national censors last week.



booming industry... video gamer Kane Theodore says authorities fail to understand the market.

It was the 74th video game to be banned in Australia since 1995.

Most of these games have been refused classification because they include detailed instruction or promotion of violence, or rewards for drug use or sexual violence.

Unlike the film rating system, which goes to R18+, the highest classification for games in Australia is MA15+, so games deemed inappropriate for older

teenagers are banned outright for all players.

Elsewhere in the developed world, including the US, the European Union and New Zealand, ratings can restrict games for use by "mature" or "adult" players only.

Kane Theodore, 27, a Sydney IT worker and passionate gamer, said governments were stuck in the mindset

that video games were played by children.

"They should understand that we're not kids and we are part of an industry that is growing," he said.

Aliens vs Predator is a "first-person shooter" game, with players able to choose between killing space creatures or human soldiers.

Many gamers blame South

Australian Attorney-General Michael Atkinson – a fierce opponent of adult classifications for games – for the delay in changing the laws.

But Mr Atkinson said "other attorneys-general who are opposed to introducing an R18+ classification are content to let me be the lightning rod for the gamers".

A federal discussion paper on the issue was initially touted for release in the middle of this year after the state and territory attorneys-general failed to reach agreement on the issue. That paper was still "under consideration", a spokesman for the federal Attorney-General's department said last week.

Shane Stockwell, merchandising director for retailer EB Games, said he was furious there was still no adult classification for games.

He said another shooting game, Left 4 Dead 2, had been re-edited to remove the most violent content before being released in Australia. It sold millions of copies overseas but "the numbers of games we sold you could probably count on one hand".

"That game was an unmitigated disaster for us," he said.

Source: smh.com.au

Memorial service held for Greek Cypriot president after body stolen from grave

A memorial service was held on Saturday for Tassos Papadopoulos, the former president of the Republic of Cyprus, one day after thieves stole his remains from his grave on the Mediterranean island.

Papadopoulos, who died a year ago, was buried at the Deftera cemetery on the outskirts of Nicosia, the capital. Authorities discovered the corpse was missing on Friday morning.

Tomb raiders used the cover of darkness, a heavy thunderstorm and a power cut to dig up the ex-president and steal his body without leaving any clues behind them.

Despite their outrage, the Papadopoulos family insisted the memorial service should go ahead as planned a year after the president died of lung cancer at age 74.

Archbishop Chrysostomos II, head of the Orthodox Church of Cyprus, led the service at St Nicholas church in suburban Deftera and the vandalised grave site in the same village was also blessed.

"Those who committed this folly have achieved nothing.



Tassos Papadopoulos: A witness at the graveyard said the coffin had been opened and was empty. Family members and scores of police were at the scene. Photo: AFP

Tassos has not disappeared. He is still with us," the archbishop told reporters after the service.

"I do not believe our people would ever allow such behaviour to happen... Let the axe come down hard on those

fools."

Hundreds of citizens and politicians paid their respects at other churches across the island to mark the anniversary.

Three people were questioned on Friday in connection with the incident but were later released without charge. Reports said they were questioned after an army vehicle was spotted outside the cemetery.

Although police have little to go on, Saturday's Phileletheros daily said there are two scenarios the authorities are looking at.

One involves the possibility of an extremist group having a hand in the macabre incident for the sole purpose of stirring up trouble and side-tracking the peace process.

The other is that the crime could be the work of professional tomb raiders seeking a

ransom from the family. The newspaper said a Romanian gang active in Europe is a possible suspect.

A family source also told Politis newspaper that they did not believe Greek Cypriots were to blame.

Police said the theft was "deliberate and carefully planned" as the perpetrators had taken precautions to cover their tracks.

They said it would have taken three or even four people to remove the 550 pound stone grave slab.

Papadopoulos was president from 2003 to 2008 and led Greek Cypriots in rejecting a UN plan to reunify the divided island in a 2004 referendum.

Turkish Cypriots backed the plan in a simultaneous vote, but the plan failed and a divided island joined the European Union the same year.