

## **VIDEO GAMES**

**29 April 2008**

**The Hon. D.G.E. HOOD:** Today marks the official worldwide release on Xbox 360 and Sony PlayStation 3 of the next instalment of Rockstar Games' popular console game, Grand Theft Auto IV. In the game, players, most of whom are teenagers or young adults, play a character who mainly steals vehicles, commits very violent crimes and engages in high-speed, extremely dangerous pursuits, running over pedestrians and crashing into other vehicles to avoid police capture. Indeed, almost every conceivable major crime has at some stage been depicted in these games. My questions to the police minister are:

1. Is the minister concerned that such games encourage antisocial violent and illegal activities and, if so what can he do about it?

2. Has the South Australian police force conducted any research into a link between such games and those convicted of violent and dangerous crimes involving the illegal use of motor vehicles?

**The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Police, Minister for Mineral Resources Development, Minister for Urban Development and Planning):**

In relation to the last matter, that sort of research is more a matter for the Attorney-General's Department. There has been a long-running debate in the community about what impact these various computer games and other forms of media—not just childhood games—have on people's behaviour.

Certainly, from the articles that I have read about it, even though there are these fantasy elements, provided that it is clear that it is fantasy, most researchers seem to suggest that it is not overly harmful to the vast majority of people, but that is something for the experts. It is an important question, but it is one that we as legislators ultimately have to determine ourselves as to what extent you interfere in people's behaviour and enjoyment of things such as games.

Obviously, we have classifications in relation to adult games and so on. There are limits that we apply to computer games—certainly age limits—but it is a complex question. The classification of those games is really a matter for the Attorney. I will refer the honourable member's questions to him and bring back a considered response.