

Graffiti game outrage

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31 January 2006

A COMPUTER game that glorifies graffiti has infuriated authorities and sparked a national campaign for it to be banned.

The Atari game *Getting Up: Contents Under Pressure* features tags of graffiti artists and depicts train surfing. The promotional pitch boasts: "You play Trane, a talented graffiti artist with urban street smarts, crazy athletic abilities and a drive to make your mark where no other taggers have gone before."

"Every day you live the sport of graffiti, risking your life to reach the city's dangerous sweet spots where a well-placed graf piece will bring respect and reputation," Atari promotions say.

Features include "authentic tags from more than 50 actual graffiti artists from all over the world -- six of whom are characters in the game and will teach Trane their specialties".

Anti-graffiti campaigner Steve Beardon said the game, due for release on February 17, promoted and glorified the crime.

"It educates kids that graffiti is acceptable," said Mr Beardon, a councillor at Casey in Melbourne's southeast and founder of Residents Against Graffiti Everywhere.

"They get conditioned to graffiti being the norm and that's not acceptable. It educates them to the culture of graffiti vandalism," he said.

"We're spending \$65,000 in the City of Casey educating kids in schools that it's not a victimless crime. But we're being undermined by these multinationals putting out these games sending a subliminal message it's OK to do graffiti."

Cr Beardon and Maroondah councillor Alex Makin yesterday called on the State Government to ban the game, or at least lobby federal Attorney-General Philip Ruddock to do so.

"Anything that legitimises graffiti needs to be discouraged," said Cr Makin, 25. "Graffiti is a growing problem."

Anti-graffiti campaigner Randy Campbell, president of the US-based Nograff Network, said the group had fought Atari over the game since 2004.

"Any glorification of graffiti only helps to increase the instances of graffiti," he said.

"Atari's graffiti game will cause this same effect in that kids are going to get caught up in the game and want to go out and do even more graffiti."

Mr Ruddock last week asked the Classification Review Board to review the classification of the game following an outcry from Queensland councils.

The review board could remove the game's classification, preventing it being sold in Australia.

An Atari spokesman said the game provided amusement and escape in a fantasy world where players can vicariously experience different lifestyles and mock activities. The Municipal Association of Victoria will debate the issue on Friday.