



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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# **Violent TV Undermining Family Violence Message**

Family First NZ says that a report by the Parents Television Council which documents an alarming rise in violence against women and girls on prime-time television should sound warning bells in NZ.

According to the report *Women in Peril: A Look at TV's Disturbing New Storyline Trend* which studied trends from 2004 to 2009, it found a dramatic increase in storylines depicting violence against women and girls, and the violence being more graphic than ever before.

The study also found a shocking rise in the depiction of teenage girls as victims (400% increase over the 5 years); more scenes showing intimate partner violence (81% increase); and an increase in the use of violence against women as a punch line in comedy series.

"Most of the programmes mentioned in the report are shown in NZ including *Heroes*, *Prison Break*, *C.S.I. Medium*, *Family Guy*, and *American Dad*, and this highlights the concern that our unacceptable levels of family violence are potentially being driven by a violent media culture," says Bob McCoskrie, National Director of Family First NZ.

"The increasing use of violence against women as a punch line in comedies such as *Family Guy* and *American Dad* also shows a disturbing trivialisation of the seriousness of this issue."

The report correctly concludes that '*By depicting violence against women with increasing frequency on television, or as a trivial, even humorous matter, the networks may be contributing to an atmosphere in which young people view aggression and violence against women as normative, even acceptable*'.

"There is ample evidence and research that shows that violence in our media is a significant risk factor for violence in the community and families," says Mr McCoskrie.

A Family First investigation of 15 programmes on four free-to-air channels between 6pm and 8.30pm over a period covering November 4–13 in 2008 found a saturation of foul language, sexual innuendo, and promotion of Adult Only programmes, and called in to question the so-called family watershed time.

"As NZ invests millions of dollars and resources into tackling the problem of family violence, sexual abuse and assaults, and the *It's Not OK* campaign, it may be that the media is being left uncontrolled and unaccountable as they undermine these messages and normalize unacceptable behaviour which the community is trying to tackle."

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

**Bob McCoskrie - NATIONAL DIRECTOR**

**Mob. 027 55 555 42**