



Newsletter of VIEWERS FOR TELEVISION EXCELLENCE
Incorporating Children's Media Watch

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Executive Committee Meets in Christchurch



At left is the new interim Secretary, Adrian Cooper who has an extensive background in Media issues in the UK, including work with Mary Whitehouse. Next to him, Ralph Ross, Shane Goldsmith, and at right, John Terris. Discussion centred on pending new legislation governing the Internet and Video games, and the impact of media violence on growing violent crime was noted. Expecting a heightened level of activity, the Committee resolved to meet two-monthly by telephone in future. Imelda Wood was agreed to be the newsletter editor.

Media Law Changes May Bring Major Threats To the Young and Vulnerable

By John Terris

Changes to the law in NZ currently being undertaken by the Ministry of Culture and Heritage will define what responsibility the Government will take in future for what our kids are watching on the Internet and in computer games. The Broadcasting Standards Authority (BSA) was set up 20 years ago when, in a wave of deregulatory enthusiasm kicked off by the Lange-Douglas Labour Government, we finished up with the least regulated broadcasting regime in the world. The result is a broadcasting system riddled with contradiction and compromise, where the state broadcaster is saddled with an obligation to make money and simultaneously meet standards, an obligation carried by no

other state broadcaster in the world. The statistics which currently measure the levels of violent crime involving young people continue to climb through the roof, and the Government is currently searching through the agency of a high-powered inter-governmental task force for solutions to levels of family violence in NZ, which are among the highest in the world. A set of proposals for how we should regulate the media in the next 20 years, is about to be announced by the government for public consultation and you can bet the farm that the very considerable resources of the media to influence opinion will be marshalled against further state regulation. These people – the Broadcast Council,

representing the TV station owners, the Commonwealth Press Union and the Newspaper Owners Association, representing print media, and the Producers and Journalists, all of whom have full time lobbyists – will wheel up to put their case. Interests, will be persuasively presented and will include the cry that more regulation is censorship, an offence against the Open Society and an interference with the Public Right To Know. This ignores that the Public Right To Know should include its right to read a contrary view to that of the media.

(John Terris is National President of Viewers for TV Excellence. For more information email: jterris@xtra.co.nz)

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