

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO ANNUAL MEETING

28/4/08

## **CONSTITUTION:**

It is 15 years since our organization began and since then there has been very rapid progress in the development of digital technology. While we were founded to combat violence on television, there has been recent rapid growth in new media technologies, including the Internet, video games and mobile phones.

Our objective in 1993 was to lobby parliament to act against TV Violence. Since then, however, our purpose has become more to do with promoting media responsibility and media literacy, by expressing public concern about the danger to young people represented by repetitive acts of screen violence. Our experience is that funding agencies will not support political lobby groups, and the Charities Commission Act also makes it clear that such groups will not be able to remain tax exempt.

For these reasons your executive at its most recent meeting on April 19<sup>th</sup> this year resolved to recommend a name change; They recommend we rename ourselves Media Matters in NZ, Incorporating Children's Media Watch. I especially want to thank our Honorary Solicitor Peter Morahan for his help with these changes.

They also recommend that it is appropriate after 15 years to lift the annual subscription from \$10 to \$25, except for pensioners and students, who should continue to pay \$10.

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:**

This has been a year of reorganisation and consolidation. The departure of Glenyss and Gerald Barker, our long serving Secretary and Treasurer based in Christchurch, left major gaps in every area of our activities. My own lengthy illness further interrupted our momentum. We have been fortunate in gaining the services of Adrian Cooper as Secretary and Mel Wood has stepped in to produce the newsletter and maintain our membership records.

At the executive meeting in April last year it was decided that in future such meetings should be held by telephone and this has worked out well. In October Adrian presented a paper on reorganization which was accepted. It was felt to be sensible and practical to shift the administration of the organization to Wellington and this has taken place gradually as people have made themselves available, but is now complete.

## **THE WEBSITE:**

Until recently, the latest entries dated back to 2005 but this has now been rectified. We now have a web manager and the site is being regularly updated.

**NEWSLETTER:**

We produced one last September after a lapse of a year. Now that our membership records have been brought up to date, another is planned to follow this AGM. It will also include a survey of members devised by Adrian

**FINANCE AND FUNDRAISING:**

The Executive has resolved that we should appoint a professional fundraiser.

**OTHER ACTIVITIES:**

I have had meetings with the recently appointed heads of TVNZ (Rick Ellis) , the Broadcasting Standards Authority (Brendan Sheehan) and Dr Jonathan Coleman (National spokesman on Broadcasting) I have also had useful contact on several occasions with Bob McCroskie of Family First in Auckland. This organisation conducted a campaign involving persuading major advertisers to withdraw their ads around a particularly objectionable TV3 programme called *Californication*. *Family First* held a Forum on the Family in Auckland in October which was attended on our behalf by Penny Jones

I attended a public forum organized by the Ministry of Culture and Heritage last month, and they have come up with some excellent proposals for regulation in the era of new digital media, especially the Internet, video games and mobile telephony.

**CONCLUSION:**

The government is running a major campaign against Family Violence but so far we have not been able to get assistance for our work from them, although I have had several helpful discussions with the Families Commission. The campaign against Violence in the Media (which must now include newspapers which exploit crime and violence purely for the sake of increasing revenues) is a critical one and we are the only advocacy group in NZ active in this area. Our continuing effective functioning is critical to the welfare of the young and vulnerable in NZ.

I want to thank our executive Penny Jones in Auckland and Ralph Ross and Adrian Cooper in Christchurch for their tremendous support through changing times.

**(JOHN TERRIS)**

**ELECTIONS:**

PRESIDENT: John Terris

EXECUTIVE: Adrian Cooper (Secretary) Penny Jones and Ralph Ross

HON. SOLICITOR: Peter Morahan

HON AUDITOR: John Austad

MEMBERSHIP AND NEWSLETTER COORDINATOR: Mel Jones

TREASURER: Siva Sitha