

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Preventing family violence highest priority for Ministry**

The level of violence within families is unacceptable and reducing violence is one of the highest priorities for women and for the Ministry of Women's Affairs says Ministry Chief Executive Shenagh Gleisner.

Ms Gleisner is also Deputy Chair of the Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families. The Taskforce will report to Ministers in July with strategies for medium to long term actions to prevent family violence, including a detailed programme of action for the year to June 2007.

"Violence within families has proved one of the most intractable problems impacting on women and children," said Shenagh Gleisner. "When we report to the United Nations on our international obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), as we did again in March, we can show real progress in many areas, but violence against women is proving very hard to address."

The causes of violence are complex and the solutions will need responses from individuals and institutions throughout the community. It will require a very high level of co-operation between government agencies and between government and not-for-profit organisations (NGOs) working in the area she said.

"Additional funding for NGOs announced by the government today will help provide vital support in areas like 24-hour crisis lines, counselling, social work support, safe house accommodation, advocacy and information," she said. "Improving these services is part of the solution, as is ensuring areas like policing and the justice system work effectively to reduce violence.

"Ultimately however, family violence is every New Zealander's issue. Violence will only reduce when people no longer tolerate it, and that requires attitudes and behaviour to change. Achieving that will require education, as well as excellent enforcement and support services for victims.

"The Ministry is committed to continuing to work closely with NGOs, and communities that are fighting to prevent family violence, as well as supporting a whole-of-government response through initiatives such as the Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families."

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