

**Hon Lianne Dalziel**  
**Minister of Women's Affairs**



**Hon Mark Burton**  
**Minister of Justice**

25 November 2006

## **Media Statement**

### **Govt committed to ending violence against women**

Women's Affairs Minister Lianne Dalziel and Justice Minister Mark Burton today highlighted the problem of violence against women by placing white ribbons on the pillars at the top of the steps of Parliament.

The ministers, who are both on the Family Violence Ministerial Team, asked all New Zealanders to endorse the anti-violence message through the wearing of a white ribbon on White Ribbon Day this Saturday.

"The government is committed to eliminating violence against women, but it is not something that we can do by simply legislating against it. This requires an attitudinal change. I am pleased New Zealand men are setting an example by challenging their peers on attitudes and behaviour that condone, support and tolerate violence towards women," Mark Burton said.

Lianne Dalziel acknowledged that domestic violence was a two way street, but said the hard facts showed that domestic violence remained a gender issue.

"It is women who experience the fear, it is women who are hospitalised, and it is women who die," she said.

Police statistics confirm that in 2001 85 per cent of reported family violence cases involved women as victims, and that between 2000-2004 94 per cent of family violence-related murders were perpetrated by men. In real terms, 54 women were murdered by men with whom they had a domestic relationship while, conversely, three men were murdered by women.

White Ribbon Day was started in 1991 by a men's movement in Canada, with the United Nations officially adopting 25 November as its International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

Government initiatives in New Zealand include establishing the Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families comprising representatives of government and non-government sectors, the police, the Families Commission and the judiciary; increased funding for Women's Refuge and other NGOs working in this sector; research on the causes of family violence; research on the effectiveness of protection orders; and rolling out violence intervention projects around the country.

Lianne Dalziel said the Taskforce was taking a long-term strategic approach and an associated campaign is intended to target different forms of family violence, based on good research and continuous evaluation.

"The initial focus, in line with the Taskforce's recommendations, will be on changing the attitudes and behaviour of men who are violent towards their partners," Lianne Dalziel said.

The ministers called on both men and women to wear white ribbons on Saturday to acknowledge the fact that violence occurs by acts of commission and omission.

"The wearing of the ribbon is not only symbolic of a promise never to commit or condone violence against women, it is also a promise not to remain silent in the face of such violence. We all have a responsibility to stand up and speak out against violence," Mark Burton said.

**Background information on White Ribbon Day and New Zealand domestic violence facts follow:**

## **White Ribbon Day background information**

White Ribbon Day is the international day when men and women are encouraged to wear a white ribbon to show they don't tolerate or condone men's violence towards women. 25 November has been officially adopted by the United Nations as its International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

### **How did White Ribbon Day start?**

In 1991, a group of Canadian men began a campaign to urge men to speak out against violence against women. The group adopted the wearing of a white ribbon as a symbol of men's opposition to men's violence against women. That first effort achieved the distribution of 100,000 white ribbons to men across Canada, and promoted widespread community discussion about violence in personal relationships.

### **Why wear a white ribbon?**

Wearing a white ribbon is a personal pledge that the wearer does not condone violence against women, and is committed to supporting community action to stop violence by men against women. Men who wear a white ribbon demonstrate their opposition to violence against women and their commitment to equality between women and men.

[www.whiteribbon.org.nz](http://www.whiteribbon.org.nz) has more information about the day and a calendar of White Ribbon events around the country.

## Gender-based domestic violence statistics

- The *New Zealand National Survey of Crime Victims 2001 (NZNSCV)* reported that over 25 per cent of women have been victims of violence at the hands of a male partner over a lifetime.<sup>1</sup> The same survey reported that 18 per cent of men have been victims of violence at the hands of a female partner over a lifetime.
- The *NZNSCV* also found that violent victimisation of women by a heterosexual partner is more likely to result in fear of their partner - 37.2% of women surveyed reported fear of their male partner after violent victimisation, compared to 6.5% of men toward their female partner.<sup>2</sup>
- The *NZNSCV* also showed that close to one in five (19.3%) women experienced sexual assault or sexual interference at some point in their lives; compared to one in twenty (4.9%) men.<sup>3</sup>
- The *NZNSCV* found that, in 2000, women experienced four or more incidents of violence by their male partner at a rate 10 times higher than men (by their female partner).<sup>4</sup>
- During the period 2000 to 2004 (inclusive), 54 women were murdered by a male with whom they had a domestic relationship. Three men were murdered by a woman with whom they had a domestic relationship.<sup>5</sup>
- According to New Zealand Police, in 2001 45 per cent of all reported violence occurred in family homes and 85 per cent of reported family violence cases involved women as victims.<sup>6</sup>
- In the period 2004-2005, Women's Refuge provided emergency safe-house accommodation for 2178 women.<sup>7</sup>
- In 2005 Women's Refuge supported 17,212 women and 9,904 children to rebuild their lives.<sup>8</sup>
- Recent research shows that 33 per cent of women in Auckland, and 39 per cent of women in Waikato, had experienced at least one act of physical and/or sexual violence by a heterosexual partner in their lifetime.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Morris, et al. (2003) *New Zealand National Survey of Crime Victims 2001*. Wellington: Ministry of Justice, p. 139.

<sup>2</sup>Morris, et al. p. 151.

<sup>3</sup>Morris, et al. p. 166.

<sup>4</sup> Morris, et al. p. 148. In 2000, 1% of women had experience four or more incidents of violence by their male partner, compared with 0.1 to 0.4 per cent of men (by their female partner).

<sup>5</sup>Ministry of Social Development (2006). *Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families – the First Report*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development, p. 32. Note these statistics are not official New Zealand Police statistics, they were obtained from data relating to cases investigated as homicide and as such are provisional.

<sup>6</sup>Police submission made to the New Zealand Parliamentarians' Group on Population and Development for the report *Creating a Culture of Non-Violence* (published in August 2005). The submission can be found at this site [http://www.fpaid.org.nz/SITE\\_Default/SITE\\_fpaid](http://www.fpaid.org.nz/SITE_Default/SITE_fpaid)

<sup>7</sup>National Collective of Independent Women's Refuges (2005). *Annual Report 2004-2005*. p. 20.

<sup>8</sup>National Collective of Independent Women's Refuges (2005), *Annual Report 2004-2005*. p. 20.

## **Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families**

The Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families (the Taskforce) was established in June 2005 to advise the Family Violence Ministerial Team on how to make improvements to the way family violence is addressed and how to eliminate family violence in New Zealand

The Taskforce is comprised of a number of Chief Executives of government departments, members of the judiciary and non-government representatives. The Taskforce released its first programme of action in July 2006. It has four points of action:

- **Leadership** – the Taskforce is committed to providing leadership to oversee the implementation of their programme of action. In order to provide effective advice to government, they will use the infrastructure and resources of the New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse. The Families Commission is also conducting a 3-year research programme on the nature of family violence and prevention strategies.
- **Changing Attitudes and Behaviour** - the government has provided \$11.5 million over four years for a nationwide campaign to change attitudes and behaviour toward family violence and the Families Commission is contributing \$2.5 million over three years. The changing attitudes and behaviour campaign will be long term and phased sequentially to target different forms of family violence, based on research and continuous evaluation. The Ministry of Social Development (MSD) and the Families Commission are leading this work in consultation with government and non-government agencies
- **Ensuring Safety and Accountability** – This stream of work is to ensure that victims & families are safe, that re-offending stops and perpetrators are held to account and that support services are accessible.
- **Effective Support Services** - in Budget 2006, the government announced a \$9 million investment, spread over four years, in family violence prevention services. This will go towards community services providers such as 24-hour crisis lines, counselling, social work support, safe-house accommodations, advocacy and information.

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<sup>9</sup> Fanslow and Robinson (2004), 'Violence against women in NZ: prevalence and health consequences', *NZ Medical Journal*. 117(1206), 26 November, <http://www.nzma.org.nz/journal/117-1206/1173/> (15 August 2006).