



BROADCASTING STANDARDS AUTHORITY
TE MANA WHANONGA KAIPĀHO

2020 Litmus Test of BSA Decisions on Violence in Broadcast Content

Public attitudes towards violence on TV / Radio

Final report

June 2020



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Key take outs

1

More than 75% of participants ranked the tested decisions as acceptable, good or very good on a five-point scale, as follows:

Starboy
Music video by The Weeknd
78%

DailyMail TV
Item about a murder
95%

MMA (Mixed Martial Arts): One Championship Weekly
Highlights show
78%

Checkpoint
Radio item about kidnapping/assault
90%

2

There is a general sense that the BSA's decisions are well explained and easy to understand.

- The application of the standards to the complaints is perceived to be thorough and logical.

3

Viewers acknowledge different types of violence and different emotional responses.

- Violence is more acceptable if viewers are removed from it emotionally or derive some benefit.

4

Two thirds of New Zealanders state they do not use any tools prescribed by the standards (e.g. classifications, warnings) for managing viewing, but use their own household rules and expectations and rely upon responsible programming by broadcasters.

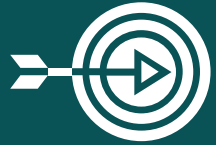
- Qualitatively, many express low efficacy in being able to use parental restriction tools.

01

Research approach

- The **Broadcasting Standard Authority (BSA)** oversees the broadcasting standards regime in New Zealand. It provides the public with a free and independent complaints service with respect to broadcasting standards with which broadcasters must comply.
- Every year, members of the public are invited to 'litmus test' up to five BSA decisions on a chosen topic or standard as specified in the BSA's Statement of Performance Expectation.
- The BSA's target for performance is that 75% or more of the participants rate the tested decisions as acceptable, good or very good on a five-point scale.





The overall objective of this research is to determine whether BSA decisions reflect community standards and are understood by members of the public.

SPECIFICALLY, BSA WANTS TO:

- 1 Understand current community attitudes towards the particular issue or standard(s) chosen for testing; and
- 2 Evaluate the BSA's:
 - approach to the relevant standard and/or issue
 - clarity of reasoning; and
 - decision outcome.

The topic for this year's litmus testing focussed on decisions related to violence. Two programmes screened on New Zealand free-to-air TV, one programme screened on Pay TV, along with one radio clip and the subsequent BSA decisions on complaints made against those programmes provided a basis for discussion.

- ➔ **Starboy** – Music video by The Weeknd
- ➔ **DailyMail TV** – Item about a murder
- ➔ **MMA (Mixed Martial Arts): One Championship Weekly** – Highlights show
- ➔ **Checkpoint** – Radio item about a kidnapping/assault

The research approach incorporated qualitative and quantitative methodologies.

FOUR MINI-GROUPS WERE UNDERTAKEN

1. Females 18–39 years Porirua

2. Males 18–39 years South Auckland

3. Females 40–65 years Gisborne

4. Males 40–65 years Nelson

ACROSS ALL GROUPS

- 1 Spread of ethnicity
 - NZ European, NZ Māori, Asian, Pasifika
- 2 Spread of life stage and household type
 - Sole parents, two-parent households, multi-generational households, empty nesters
- 3 Spread of income

Participants completed a pre-task, which included watching/listening to the clips and completing a self-completion sheet prior to the group.

Fieldwork completed during **April/May 2020**





We spoke to a total of 572 people online. Each person was given the option to review three out of the four clips we tested. Respondents were sourced from Colmar Brunton's online consumer panel.



The main fieldwork was conducted from Thursday 9th to Monday 20th April 2020.

An additional 72 interviews with Māori, Pasifika and Asian New Zealanders were conducted from Monday 29th June to Thursday 2nd July 2020. The purpose of these additional interviews was to ensure the final sample reflected the ethnic make-up of New Zealand's adult population.



The questionnaire was structured to present a short video clip to each person and then ask for their feedback. We asked for feedback in two ways – first we asked for a gut reaction to the complaint – after viewing the clip each person was immediately asked if they would have upheld the complaint, or not. We then outlined the BSA decision and the relevant standards before asking people to rate the decision on a five point scale. It is this latter rating that reflects the KPI requirement for the BSA.



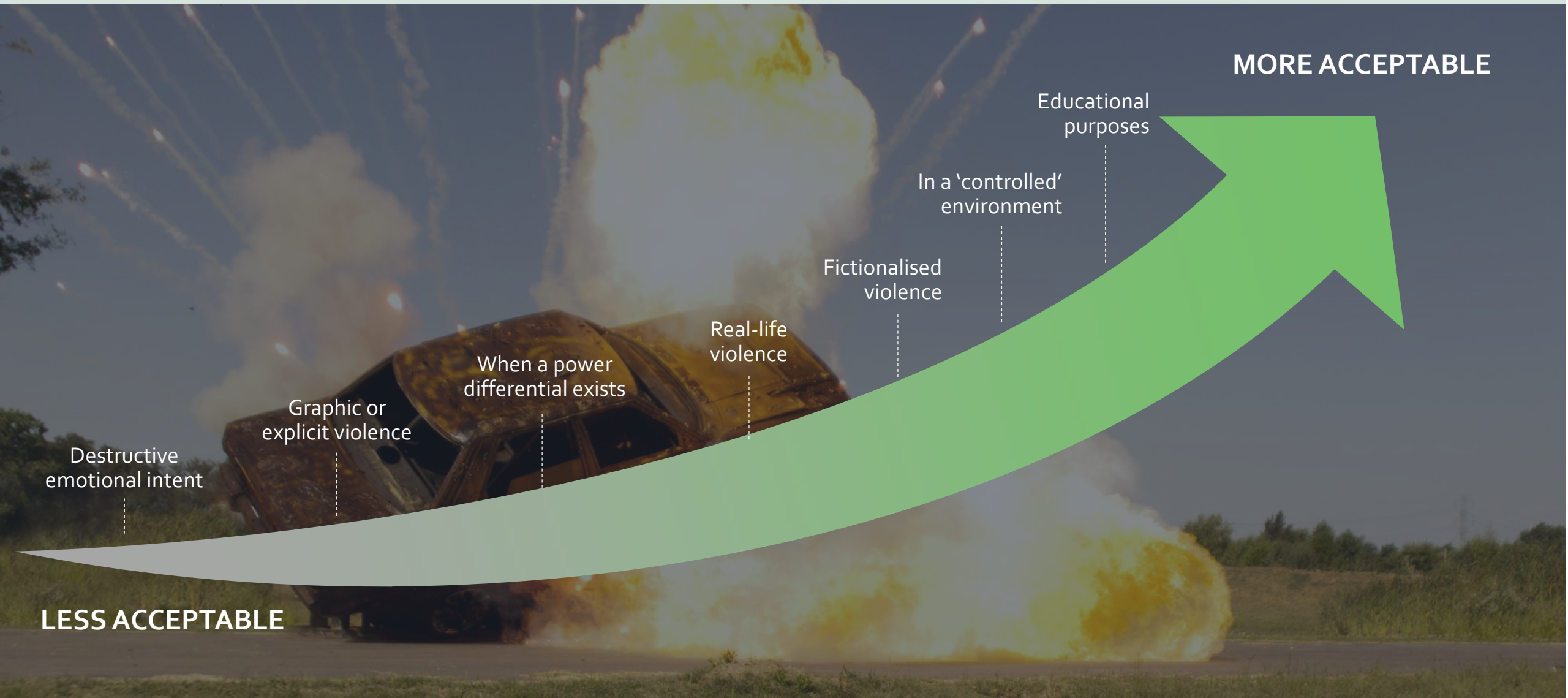
The maximum margin of error on a sample size of $n=572$ is $\pm 4.1\%$.

We post-weighted the data to ensure it is representative of the New Zealand adult population by age, gender, region and ethnicity.

02

Setting the scene – attitudes towards violent content

Viewers acknowledge different types of violence with different emotional responses.



Less acceptable depictions of violence have a negative emotional impact.

● Destructive emotional intent

- When the intent behind depicting violence is inherently negative or seeks to cause harm or derives some personal gratification
 - *For example, involves racism and hate, is sadistic in nature, use of torture, intended to hurt others, random, anti-social*

● Violence that is overly graphic or explicit in nature

- Extreme close ups or detail when it is not required to tell the story
- Particularly if it glorifies violence or seeks to provide 'shock-value' or continues for an extended period of time

● When a power differential exists and the violence is targeted towards those who are vulnerable

- For example, violence against women and children, someone who is defenceless/not in a position to protect themselves

● Real-life violence

- Violence in the news which is a reflection of society
- Violence that they or those close to them can relate to
- Tendency to empathise more

“

"Generally, my reaction to it depends on whether it's justified, done tastefully or just for cheap shock value."

(Male (B), 42 years, NZ European, Nelson)

"I think for me it's a male nature of trying to protect women and children, I suppose. It's uglier. And they're less likely to be able to protect themselves as opposed to a full-blown male."

(Male, 39 years, NZ European, South Auckland)

"Real life gets me more because I feel compassionate towards people. I feel their empathy and their pain. Versus if it's just a movie that's got violence in it, it doesn't affect me emotionally as much because I think I'm a bit numb to it."

(Female, 47 years, NZ European, Gisborne)

”



Violence is more acceptable if viewers are removed from it emotionally or derive some benefit.

● Fictionalised violence – with particular reference to action/adventure genres

- Where it has become almost an expectation
- Sometimes required as an artistic expression or to paint a scenario
- Viewers inherently know it's not real and no one is getting hurt

● In a 'controlled' environment

- For example, sports

● Educational purposes

- In the public's interest – there is an opportunity for society to learn something, highlight an issue or evolve in some way

“

"If I'm watching someone in Iraq getting blown to smithereens it probably has more effect on me than watching a Die-Hard movie where exactly the same thing happens. You consciously know that no one's died in the making of it."

(Male, 39 years, NZ European, South Auckland)

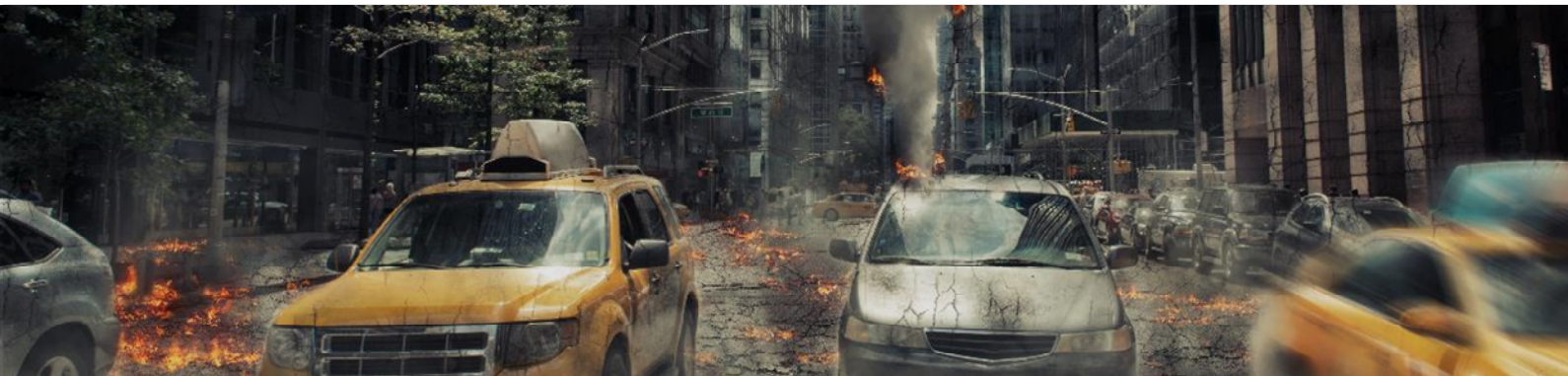
"If the violence is measured and performed as sport, then I am more accepting of it."

(Male (A), 46 years, NZ European, Nelson)

"It is ok for educational purposes, so that if someone is in a situation where they encounter violence, that they would know what to do."

(Female, 27 years, Pasifika, Porirua)

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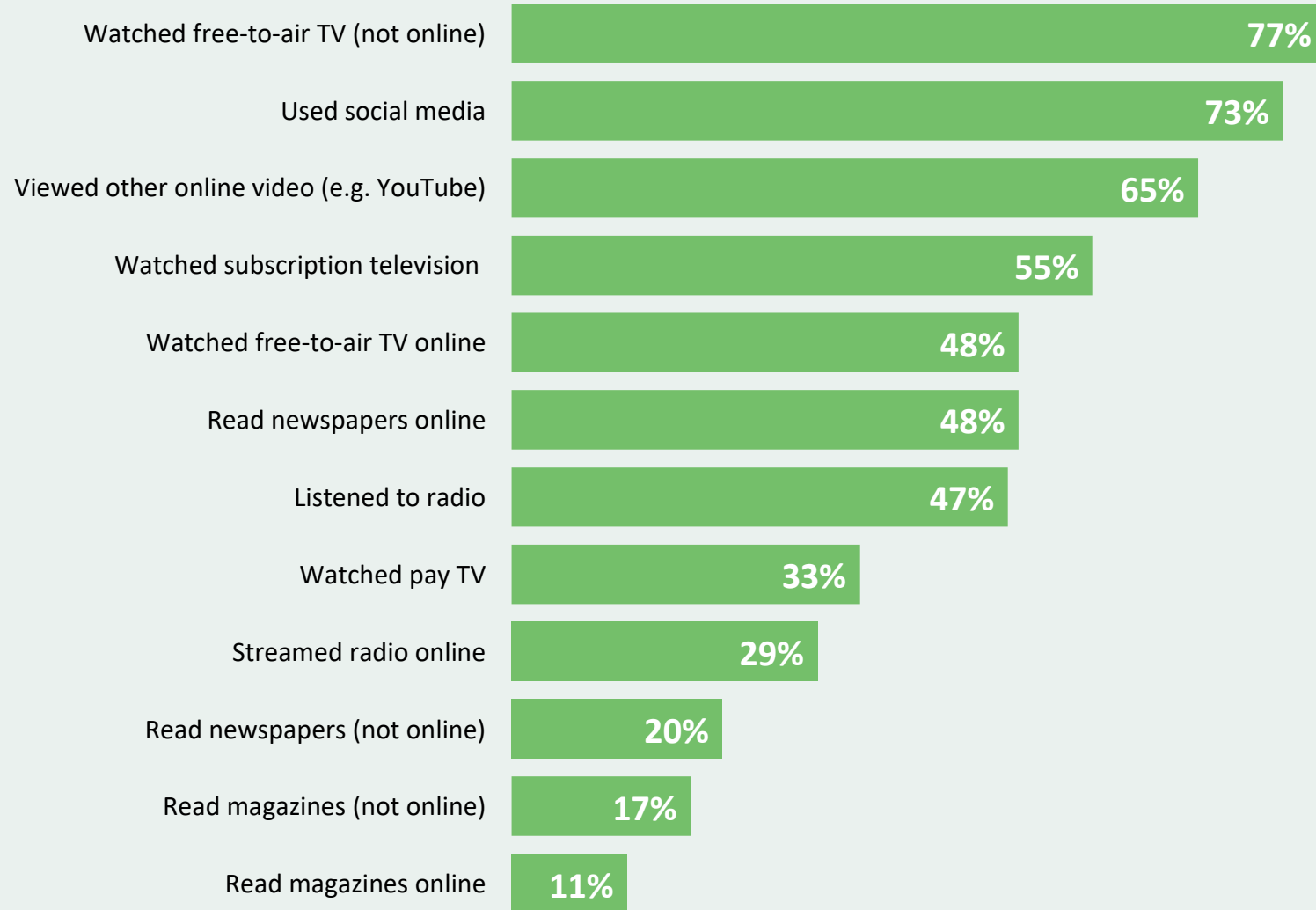


03

**Setting the scene – media use /
consumption**



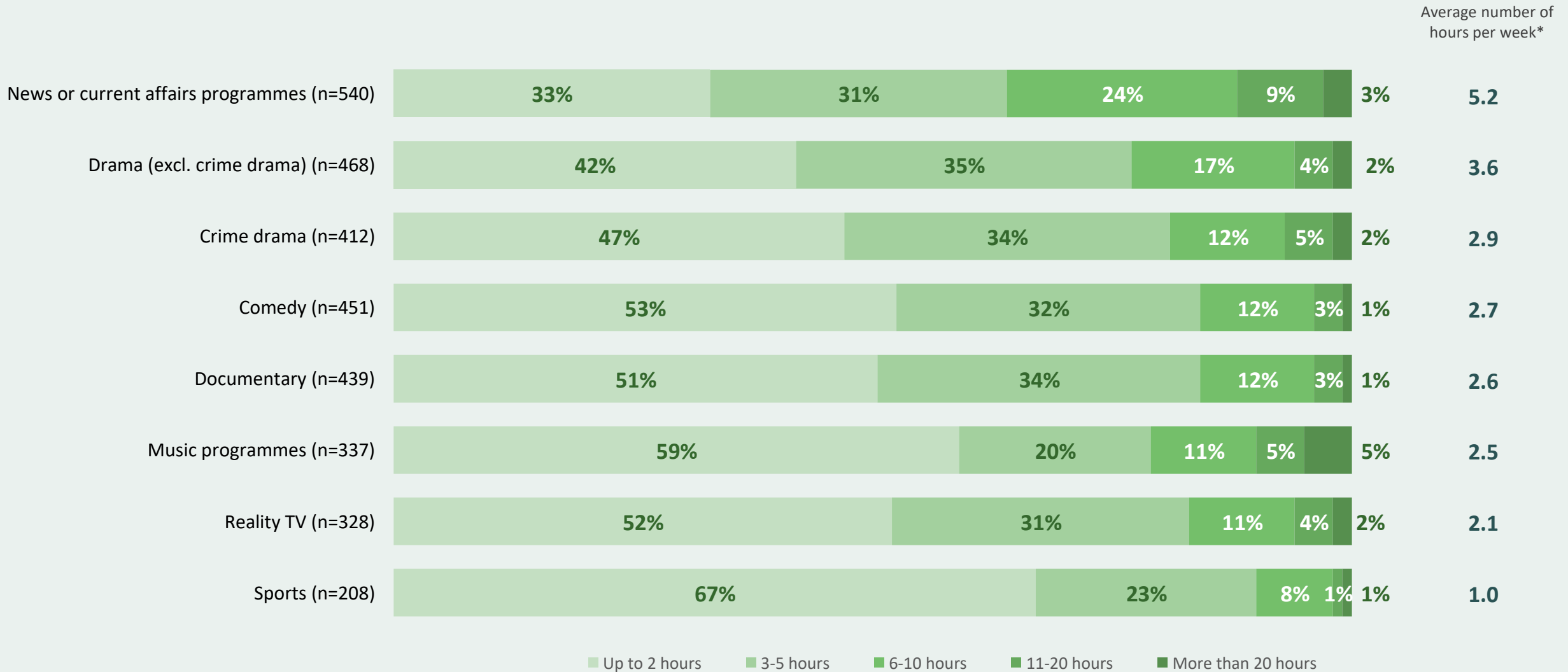
Free-to-air TV is the most watched media, followed by interaction with social media.



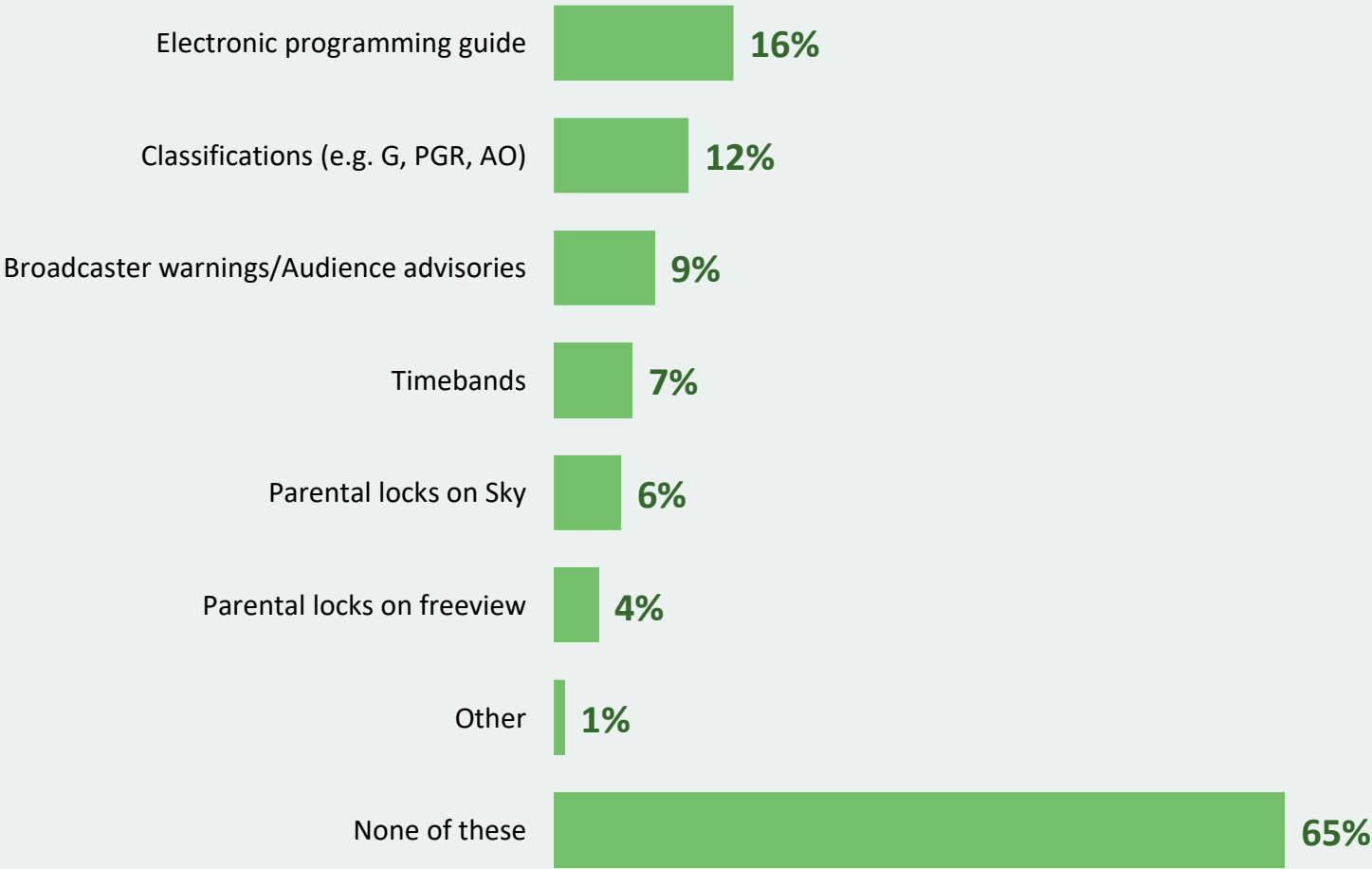
Q1. In the last week which of the following did you do?

Base: Q1 All respondents n=572

New Zealanders spend the most time watching news or current affairs, and drama shows. They spend the least amount of time watching reality TV and sports.



Two thirds of New Zealanders do not use any of the tools we asked about to manage viewing in their household.



Q3. Do you currently use any of the below tools to manage viewing in your household?
Base: All respondents n=572

How do parents/caregivers manage children's exposure?

It is interesting to note that while many do not reference using 'tools', there are 'expectations' that certain programmes [classifications] will only be shown at certain times [timebands].

Parents/caregivers are mindful that violence is accessible on any number of platforms, from free to air tv, internet sites through to video games.

Sometimes tensions exist as the acceptability of violence on TV doesn't always align with the acceptability of violence in video games.

Most strategies to limit exposure to violence centre around:

- Establishing clear boundaries with children
 - What's appropriate vs. not appropriate to watch
 - Although, sometimes the children 'police' themselves
- Having devices located in areas/rooms where content can be easily seen by others
- Avoidance – sending kids from the room
- 'Expectations' – knowing that something inappropriate will not be screened when children are likely to be watching

“

"It's weird because there's some things I won't let my kids watch on TV or go to a certain movie, but they play games, they're gamers. My boys are all gamers and they play things like the war games. I never know what they're called, but they're really full of violence. They're so violent when I think about it. I don't know that I like it, but I certainly don't banish it from our house."

(Female, 48 years, NZ Māori, Gisborne)

"So having real clear boundaries for my children about what they can and can't watch, and the consequences of what will happen if they do choose to watch things on like YouTube, that randomly pop up."

(Female, 38 years, Asian, Porirua)

"We generally send them out [of] the room if we're watching something that we don't want them to watch. Half the time we don't see them anyway. Gone are the days of everyone sitting around and watching a television show."

(Male, 39 years, NZ European, South Auckland)

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Viewers express low efficacy in using tools.

- While many viewers are aware of the availability of parental locks to manage/restrict viewing behaviour, many express low self-efficacy in terms of being able to implement such measures.

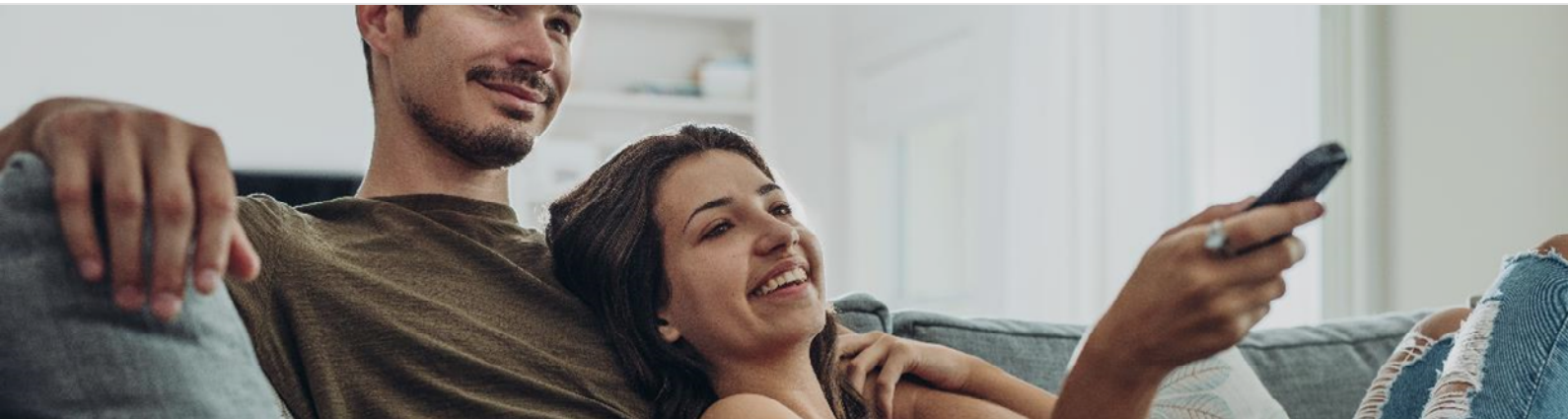
Some suggest a useful starting point would be a default of everything blocked, requiring the need to 'unblock'.

“

"I just think maybe there should be more education about how you have the ability to block certain stuff. A lot of people don't really know that if you're not techno savvy, but there should be some sort of instructions to say if you feel that this is not acceptable, how to block it."

(Female, 43 years, NZ Māori, Gisborne)

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04

BSA and the Standards



Perceptions of BSA and Standards overall

Broadcasters in New Zealand have codes of practice and are responsible for maintaining standards in their programmes.

The Broadcasting Standards Authority (BSA) is an independent crown entity that oversees New Zealand's broadcasting standards and provides the public with a free, independent complaints service.

The way the complaints process works is that, generally, a person must complain to the broadcaster first, and then if they're not happy with the broadcaster's decision they can have it reviewed by the BSA.



- Viewers generally have some awareness of BSA and are familiar with the TV ads about the complaint process. When presented with a definition of BSA, some are surprised of the need to complain to the broadcaster in the first instance.
- Overall, viewers perceive the standards as comprehensive with a strong focus on common sense.
"When it comes to broadcasting standards, it's just basically a set of rules that everyone has to abide by to ensure that people aren't going way off track and putting things out at inappropriate times, and for inappropriate audiences."
(Male (B), 42 Years, NZ European, Nelson)
- There was spontaneous mention of a number of contextual factors, for example, ratings [classification], time of broadcast and audience advisories.
- A few feel the guidelines seem too broad with a lot of grey areas.
"If anything it covers so much I'm surprised if they dismiss any complaints really, you'd think they'd always have an excuse."
(Female, 26 years, NZ European, Porirua)

Perceptions of the good taste and decency standard

Current norms of good taste and decency should be maintained, consistent with the context of the programme and the wider context of the broadcast.

GUIDELINES

1a The **context** in which content occurs and the wider context of the broadcast is **relevant** to assessing whether a broadcast has breached this standard, including:

- the nature of the programme and the channel
- the programme's classification and scheduling
- whether the broadcast was live or pre-recorded
- the use of audience advisories, if any
- the target and likely audience
- audience expectations of the channel and the programme
- the availability of filtering technology
- the level of the broadcaster's editorial control over the content
- the public interest in the broadcast.

1b Where broadcasters take effective steps **to inform their audiences** of the nature of their programmes and enable viewers to regulate their own and their children's viewing behaviour, they are **less likely to breach this standard**.

1c If content is **likely to offend or disturb a significant section of the audience**, an **appropriate audience advisory** should be broadcast prior to the content.

When considering how the good taste and decency standard may be applied, participants identify two key themes:

1. Broadcaster responsibility
2. Informed consent

Firstly, it is the broadcaster's responsibility to know the framework [contextual factors], to know their audience and ensure the two align.

"I guess it's the responsibility of broadcasters to know their audience, know the demographic they're targeting, and make sure that what they're putting out there is fitting to that."

(Male (B), 42 years, NZ European, Nelson)

Secondly, participants acknowledge the role of informed consent, and ensuring viewers have the necessary information to make a decision.

For example, ensuring content is appropriate for the time it is screened and providing warnings for content that may be upsetting or is out of the norm.

"It is a person (or parents) responsibility to control what they watch. Info for an informed decision is all that is needed."

(Female, 26 years, NZ European, Porirua)

Perceptions of children's interests standard

Broadcasters should ensure children can be protected from broadcasts which might adversely affect them.

GUIDELINES

3a Material likely to be considered under this standard includes:

- sexual material or themes
- violent content or themes
- offensive language
- social or domestic friction
- dangerous, antisocial or illegal behaviour
- material in which children or animals are humiliated or badly treated
- graphic descriptions of people in extreme pain or distress which are outside the expectations of the programme's classification.

3b **Context** is an important consideration when assessing complaints under this standard, **including** the **programme's classification**, the **time** of broadcast, the target and likely **audience**, **audience expectations**, the **public interest** in the broadcast and any **factors that mitigate the likely harm** to children, such as humour or educational benefit.

3c When programmes broadcast during children's normally accepted viewing times contain material which is **outside audience expectations** and **likely to disturb children**, an **audience advisory** should be broadcast. The **advisory should be specific** in nature to **allow** parents or guardians to make an **informed choice** about their children's exposure to the content, while avoiding detail which itself may disturb or alarm children.

3d In **news, current affairs and factual programmes**, disturbing or alarming **material should be justified in the public interest**. Broadcasters must **use judgement** and discretion when deciding the degree of graphic material to be included in news programmes, and should **broadcast an audience advisory** when appropriate, particularly when children are likely to be viewing.

Overall, participants feel the children's interests standard is comprehensive – seeking to protect children and provide reassurance for parents and caregivers.

"It protects the audience by having these guidelines that broadcasters have to adhere to, so I know that I can put a television programme on at 4pm, and I don't have to monitor my child. He can just watch it and know that it's more than likely going to be safe for him to watch, because there's something holding broadcasters to account."

(Female, 31 years, NZ European, Porirua)

Perceptions of the violence standard

Broadcasters should exercise care and discretion when referencing violence (on radio) / portraying violence (on TV). Violent content should be appropriate to the context of the programme, and classified carefully.

GUIDELINES

- a) Any depiction of, or reference to, violence should be **justified by context**.
- b) Broadcasters should be mindful of the **cumulative effect** of violence or violent incidents and themes, within programmes, and across programme line-ups.
- c) Broadcasters should exercise caution with content likely to **incite or encourage** violence or brutality.
- d) In news, current affairs and factual programmes, where disturbing or alarming material is often shown to reflect a world in which violence occurs, the material should be justified in the **public interest**.
 - Judgement and discretion must be used in deciding the degree of graphic detail to be included in news programmes, particularly when children are likely to be watching.
 - An **audience advisory** should be used when appropriate.
- e) Programmes in which rape or sexual violence feature should be treated with care, and broadcasters should use an audience advisory if the content is likely to disturb.
- f) Content should not include any combination of violence and sex designed to titillate, beyond current socially acceptable community norms.

Viewers note the role context plays in determining whether the depiction of violence is appropriate.

"The thing that's like jumping out at me the most is the word justified. It comes up quite a few times, so justified by context, justified in the public interest. So, I think that broadcasters would need, if they were going to show violent content at any time, to be able to justify that and have a reason for why that was being presented, whether it's part of a storyline or information on the news or what have you. They do have to have a reason. They can't just show violence, or talk about violence."

(Female, 31 years, NZ European, Porirua)

Perceptions of freedom of expression and public interest

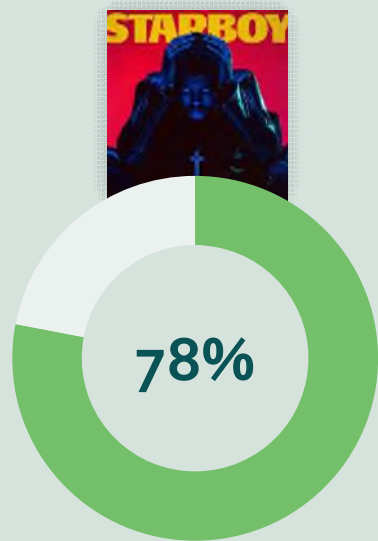
HARM	FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION/ PUBLIC INTEREST	
<p>Actual or potential harm to society</p> <p>e.g. harm to child viewers in New Zealand, undermining community standards, undue widespread offence or distress caused to general audience</p>	<p>The Broadcaster’s right to offer ideas and information through programmes</p>	<p>There is general agreement that balancing freedom of expression/public interest and potential harm would be a difficult undertaking.</p>
<p>Actual or potential harm to individuals</p> <p>Actual or potential harm to individuals, e.g. serious distress or harm to individuals, damage to dignity/reputation of programme participants</p>	<p>The public’s right to hear ideas and information through programmes and to receive a diverse range of programmes</p>	<p><i>"I suppose when it comes to freedom of expression, the BSA are kind of damned if they do and damned if they don't."</i></p> <p>(Male (C), 45 years, NZ European, Nelson)</p>
	<p>Public interest, i.e. content is of legitimate value to society or legitimate public concern</p>	<p><i>"It makes sense... the only thing I would think is where do they draw that line? Because obviously they sound quite like opposites don't they, like we don't want to harm anyone, but it's also our right to put things on the TV. So, where's the line there. You could read it kind of contradictory in a way."</i></p> <p>(Female, 26 years, NZ European, Porirua)</p>

05

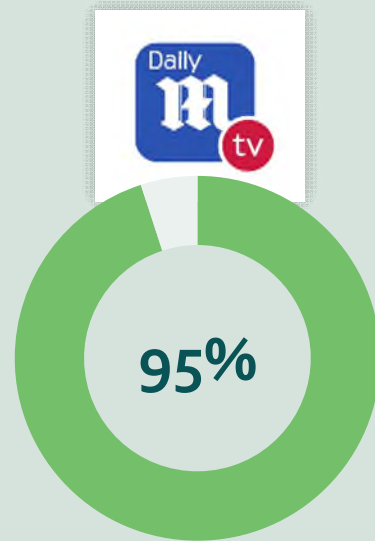
Evaluation of BSA's decisions

All BSA's decisions achieve BSA Performance Measure

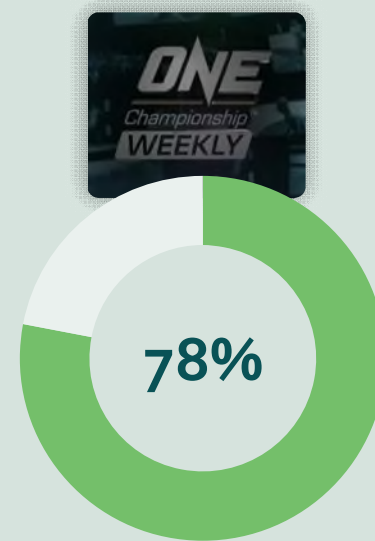
More than 75% of the participants ranked the tested BSA decisions as acceptable, good or very good on a five-point scale, as follows:



Starboy



DailyMail TV



MMA (Mixed Martial Arts):
One Championship Weekly



Checkpoint

CLICK HERE

CLICK HERE

Starboy

- The music video for 'Starboy' by The Weeknd was screened on pay television on SKY TV between 9pm-10pm on MTV's Top 20 Hits.
- The introduction to the music video shows the singer tied up in a chair and being suffocated.
- The video was classified as 16C (people under 16 years should not view; C = content may offend some viewers).
- The BSA did not uphold the complaint that the video was offensive and disturbing (given the depiction of graphic violence).

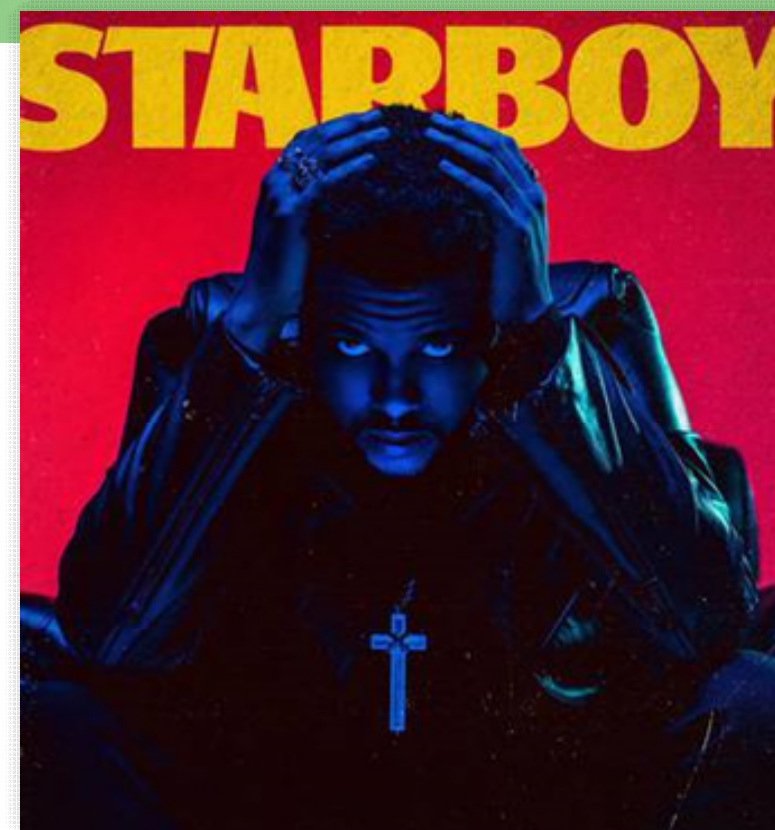


Image sourced: <https://realgroovy.co.nz/product/602557227512/starboy-vinyl>

CLICK HERE

Decision summary

The BSA did not uphold the complaint for the following reasons:

- The time of broadcast was 9pm-10pm, on pay television.
- The broadcaster took effective steps to inform viewers of the programme's likely content so they could make an informed viewing choice, including the 16 classification and 'C' audience advisory for content that may offend.
- The content was not outside audience expectations for the music videos featured.
- The availability of parental locks on SKY means parents had the option to block content classified 16 and above.

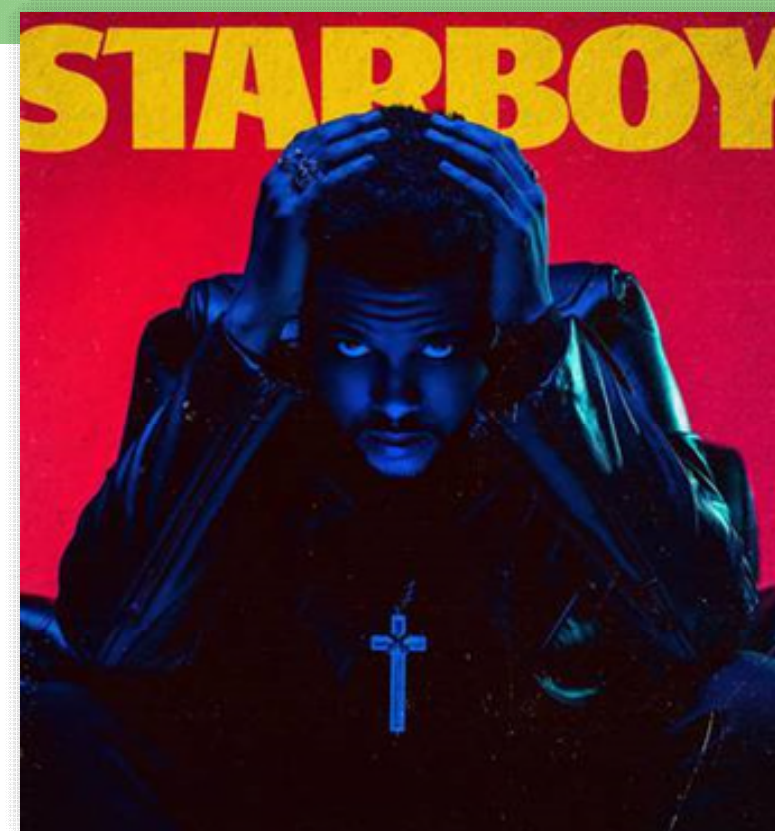


Image sourced: <https://realgroovy.co.nz/product/602557227512/starboy-vinyl>

'Starboy' music video

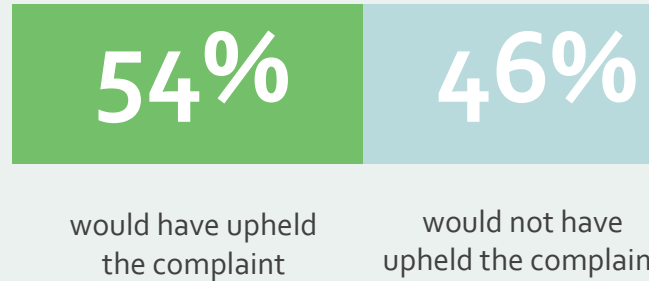
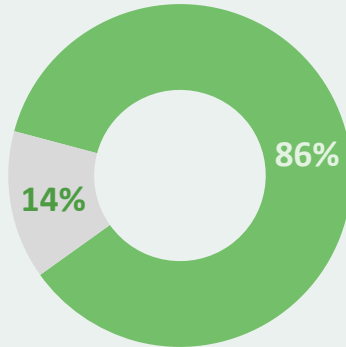


We invited 429 people to view and comment on the 'Starboy' clip...

...their immediate reactions...

...after reading the BSA's decision...

86% agreed to view and comment on the clip, 14% did not*

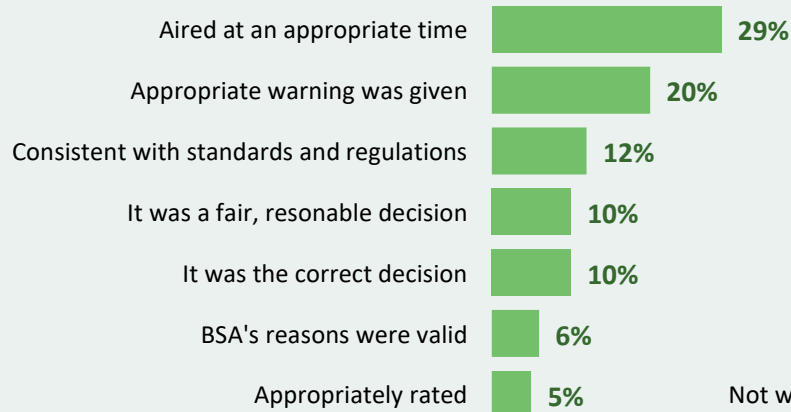


78%

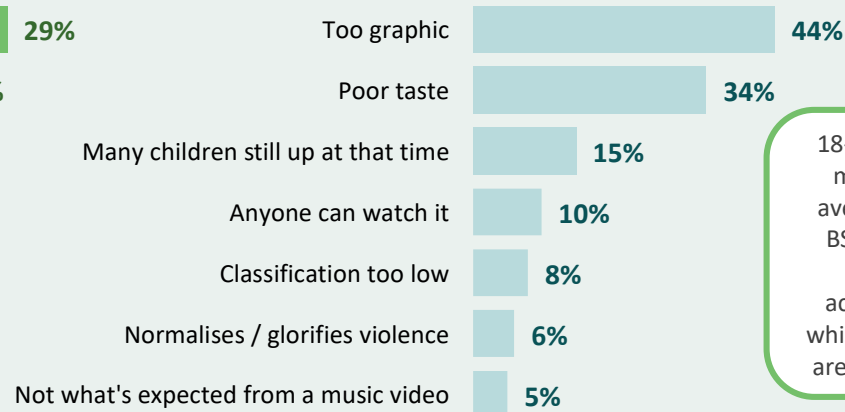
rated the BSA decision as very good, good or acceptable**

Why do you think the BSA decision is.....

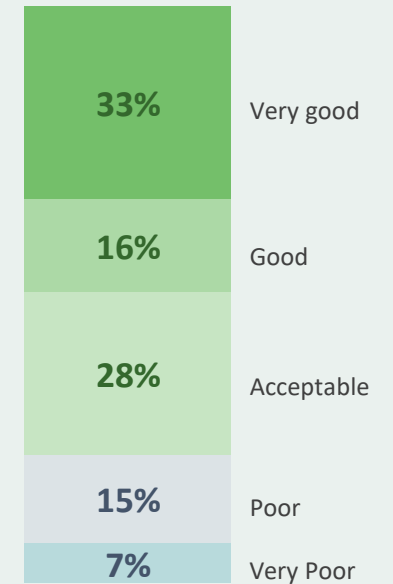
Very good or good



Very poor or poor



18-34 year olds are more likely than average to rate the BSA decision very good, good or acceptable (87%), while those aged 55+ are less likely (68%).



*Data is unweighted

**Note: The KPI is calculated by adding the raw numbers together and dividing by the total. The percentages in the chart are rounded to a whole number, which may result in discrepancies between the two numbers of up to 1 percentage point.

Qualitative insights regarding BSA's decision



DECISION OUTCOME

- While some struggle to reconcile the acceptability of the graphic nature of the music video, there is general agreement it meets the guidelines and does not breach the standards.

APPROACH TO GOOD TASTE & DECENCY STANDARD

- Viewers readily acknowledge the contextual elements that come into play – the expectations of the channel, the time of screening, the classification and the audience advisory – all of which make it acceptable under this standard.

APPROACH TO CHILDREN'S INTERESTS STANDARD

- There is general agreement that the context is not suitable for children. This is reflected in the channel, the time of broadcast and rating.

APPROACH TO VIOLENCE STANDARD

- Those who identify the violence as fictionalised, find the music video more acceptable. Others feel the graphic nature seeks to glorify violence, which has potential to influence young people.

"If we're thinking about the guidelines that are given, then yes, I agree with the decision. But as a parent, I definitely don't agree with the decision."
(Female, 48 years, NZ Māori, Gisborne)

APPROACH TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

- Those who view the strangulation as artistic expression of constraint, tend to be more positive about the video and the content relative to freedom of expression. Those who view the act of strangulation literally (as murder) tend to be more negative, see little value and potential for harm.

CLARITY OF REASONING

- Viewers feel the decision is well laid out, with clear bullet points going through point by point, which enable them to see the logic behind the decision outcome.

Viewers easily reference a number of contextual factors that support the good taste and decency standard. Of note, the time of broadcast, the classification and audience advisory.

In addition, many feel the content is in line with audience expectations. Given MTV is a paid TV channel, there is a general assumption that viewers would have an awareness of the type of content to expect.

Similarly, given it is a music channel, there is an expectation that music artists often try to be 'edgy' and are looking to 'push boundaries'. As an artist, The Weeknd has this reputation as well.

Although the decision references parental locks, there was little discussion of this.

“

"I suppose, if people are buying that channel, they know what to expect."
(Female, 48 years, NZ Māori, Gisborne)

"I think because it's music and because the artists are quite out there nowadays, I don't know what to expect. Un-expectation, if that makes sense. It's just them expressing the way their art is, I suppose."
(Male, 25 years, Asian, South Auckland)

"I just didn't really think much into it. Musicians like to be edgy. I've seen a lot worse music videos, a lot of them do weird shit like that in their music videos. I just thought it was, I don't know, a fun visual way of representing what his song is about. Not fun, but you know what I mean."
(Female, 26 years, NZ European, Porirua)

”

- There is overall agreement that the content is not suitable for children and this is reflected in the classification and time of broadcast.
- Some suggest the onus is on parents and caregivers to ensure their children are not accessing this type of content at the time screened.

“

"The time of broadcast I think is very important. If you've got a kid up past 9pm-10pm and they're watching TV, I think that's on you. It's not the responsibility of the broadcaster to censor it. If it was gam that could be different, but that time in the evening should be fine."

(Male (B), 42 years, NZ European, Nelson)

"There should have been no kids up at that time."

(Female, 26 years, NZ European, Porirua)

”

- Those more positive towards the music video tend to reference the violence as being fictionalised, which is used as a means to tell a story and to 'entertain'.

- The fact that it is 'not real' enhances its acceptability for some.

- Those less positive, feel the graphic nature of the scene is glorifying violence. The concern is that musicians can be influential with young people and there is potential for some sort of copy-cat behaviour.

“

"I just view it as being fiction and them trying to create a story by showing that. I just see it as it's just fiction, so I'm not really affected by that."

(Female, 43 years, NZ Māori, Gisborne)

"I don't think the violence is particularly extreme in this. There's no blood or gore and the shots of suffocation and restraint are only a few seconds long. It's also clear that this is a dramatization and not 'real life' footage, so it has less of an impact than a news report."

(Male (B), 42 years, NZ European, Nelson)

"It's in a fictitious realm. If I saw that happening on the news, or possibly in a documentary, there'd be more of a shock factor. But I'm looking at a music video for entertainment, and if I see this is an entertaining sphere, I see it as fiction."

(Male (A), 46 years, NZ European, Nelson)

"Yuck. I'm a bit alarmed at this content. I feel like this is glorifying a particular behaviour. Music and musicians have the ability to influence, especially youth."

(Female, 48 years, NZ Māori, Gisborne)

”

- There appears to be a difference between whether the act of strangulation is perceived literally or artistically.
- Those who perceive the strangulation in a literal sense (murder) tend to be more negative.
- Some viewers reference the artistic expression of the strangulation. So rather than being a literal translation of someone being strangled, some interpret it in a more creative manner. For example, the artist's ideas are being strangled or it is a form of rebirth.
- Others struggle to see the value in the clip and feel there is potential for harm.

“

"It was pretty full on, even with the timeslot and the rating. I am not comfortable seeing this on general TV where you would expect that level of violence. Basically it shows someone being killed."
(Male (C), 45 years, NZ European, Nelson)

"What I thought it was about, because he used to have the big hair thing and he was different, then he reinvented himself. It was him torturing himself. I thought it was self on self, that he kills his old self, now he's reborn or something."
(Male, 28 years, NZ European/Pasifika, South Auckland)

"I thought that because it was suggested in a fictitious environment, rather than an actual news clip or a story, that it was a lot more open to perception. Yes there is a scene involving strangulation, that's violent and it's definitely not ideal, but in an artistic sense it could mean something different, like his emotions are being strangled, or his ideas are being strangled..."
(Male (A), 46 years, NZ European, Nelson)

"I have concerns regarding copy cats, re-trauma and those who are easily influenced. How is this creative or artistic?"
(Female, 38 years, Asian, Porirua)

”

CLICK HERE

DailyMail TV

- The DailyMail TV is an entertainment programme featuring stories from the website of the UK tabloid newspaper.

- This episode was broadcast at 3.30pm on free-to-air television and was classified PGR (Parental Guidance Recommended). The clip depicted the last moments of a stabbing victim.

- While some content was blurred, there was no warning given before this content.

- The BSA upheld the complaint regarding the playing of graphic content (with no warning) under the good taste and decency and children's interests standards.



Image sourced: <https://twitter.com/dailymailtv>

CLICK HERE

Decision summary

The BSA upheld the complaint for the following reasons:

- The content went beyond what could be expected from a PGR programme broadcast during children's normally accepted viewing times (after school).
- The programme should have been classified AO and broadcast in adults only time.
- The footage of the stabbing victim was likely to upset / distress some viewers.
- The disturbing nature of this story (and others in the episode) required an audience advisory (warning).



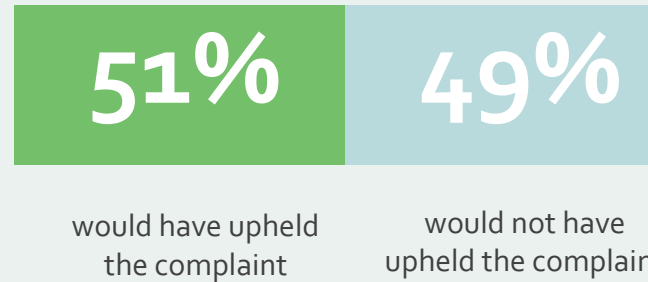
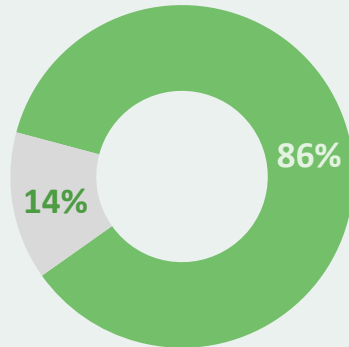
Image sourced: <https://twitter.com/dailymailtv>

We invited 429 people to view and comment on the Daily Mail TV clip...

...their immediate reactions...

...after reading the BSA's decision...

86% agreed to view and comment on the clip, 14% did not*



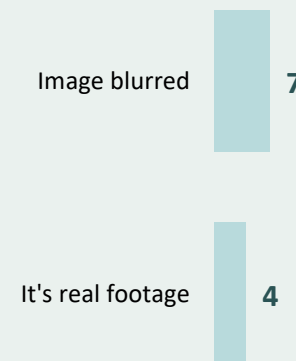
95%
rated the BSA decision as very good, good or acceptable**

Why do you think the BSA decision is.....

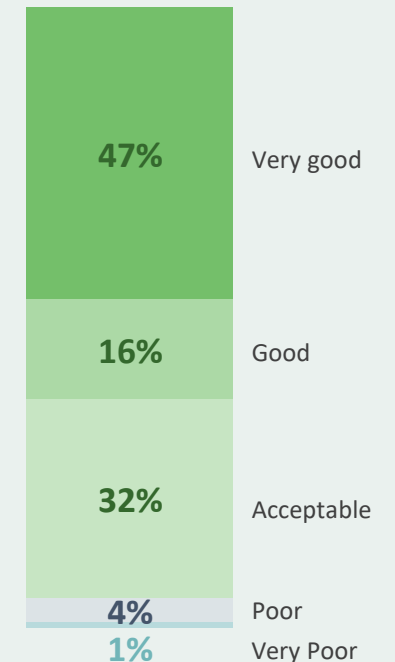
Very good or good



Very poor or poor***



The are no significant differences of note by subgroups of interest.



*Data is unweighted
**Note: The KPI is calculated by adding the raw numbers together and dividing by the total. The percentages in the chart are rounded to a whole number, which may result in discrepancies between the two numbers of up to 1 percentage point.

***Caution: Small base size, results are shown as the number of people who made each comment not percentages.

Qualitative insights regarding BSA's decision



DECISION OUTCOME

- There is strong agreement with BSA's decision.
- Many are positive that there was a consequence for breaching the standards. However, some feel the amount of the costs was ineffectual.



"I thought the fine was a bit weak considering it's a television broadcaster. It's not even a slight slap on the hand, a thousand bucks is chump change, right? Why would you bother even deterring this if you can put something on at 3.30pm like that for a thousand bucks?"

(Male, 39 years, NZ European, South Auckland)



APPROACH TO GOOD TASTE & DECENCY STANDARD

- There is a general perception the clip seeks to sensationalise violence and would likely disturb some people.
- The lack of audience advisory does not allow viewers to make an informed decision.

APPROACH TO CHILDREN'S INTERESTS STANDARD

- The screening time and PGR rating are primary areas of concern, being in children's prime viewing time.
- The lack of an audience advisory does not allow parents to make an informed choice.

APPROACH TO PUBLIC INTEREST

- The clip is perceived to offer little value to New Zealand viewers as the crime occurred in another country.

CLARITY OF REASONING

- Overall, the decision is perceived to be well laid out. There is a direct link between the guidelines and rationale.



"I think they've explained the reasons for their decision, and the logic behind it, it's hard to disagree with any of their reasoning really."

(Female, 26 years, NZ European, Porirua)



Those familiar with the Daily Mail suggest the clip could be in line with audience expectations, given the Daily Mail is has a reputation for tabloid style, shock-value reporting.

However, even in this context there is a perception that the shock-value was taken to an extreme – with the provocative voice-over and repetition with which the clip was shown. In all, perceived to sensationalise the violence.

Similarly, the programme's PGR classification and scheduling is of primary concern, not reflective of the content and likely audience.

The lack of audience advisory does not allow viewers to make an informed decision.

“

“The Daily Mail is quite well known for shock factor reporting and that kind of thing, so the fact that it’s from them doesn’t surprise me in the slightest.”

(Female, 31 years, NZ European, Porirua)

“The voiceover, it’s deliberately provocative and it was kind of ‘terrifying sight, oh, so much blood gushing out of her neck’. Then at 3.30pm on TV3, no, I don’t think that’s okay.”

(Male, 28 years, NZ European/ Pasifika, South Auckland)

“I think there should have still been an advisory and warning because it was quite graphic in nature even though the quality was quite bad.”

(Male, 25 years, Asian, South Auckland)

”

Participants strongly agree that the PGR rating and time of broadcast directly after school are unacceptable relative to the content of the clip.

Viewers note that some effort had been made to minimise the graphic nature of the visuals, by blurring out the wound. However, it is still perceived to be inappropriate and has potential to be distressing for children.

Similarly, the lack of audience advisory does not provide parents with the opportunity to exercise discretion.

“

"For this to be aired right after school finishes is a huge concern. I don't think anything like this was being displayed back when I was in school. It would be quite scary for kids to see this clip."

(Male, 25 years, Asian, South Auckland)

"I think the time is a really big factor. If it was on the 6pm news and it was within an appropriate context, having it blurred out, having the story would probably be a lot more acceptable, but 3:30pm on an entertainment show is just, no."

(Female, 31 years, NZ European, Porirua)

"There was no advisory.... So, parents couldn't make an informed decision about whether their children could watch that or not."

(Female, 46 years, NZ Māori, Gisborne)

”

There is a general sense that the clip offers little 'value' to New Zealand viewers and New Zealand society, particularly given that the crime occurred in another country.

As such, the clip is deemed to be presented as entertainment and is not informative in nature.

“

"How does this add value to anyone's life or allow us to understand sections of New Zealand society any better?"
(Female, 38 years, Asian, Porirua)

"That clip has added nothing to my life. It's a UK tabloid so we can't even learn from any aspect of it I don't feel. The time is inappropriate, free to air TV, I think it's a really poor choice personally."
(Female, 26 years, NZ European, Porirua)

"It's not really public interest in New Zealand that someone in the States gets stabbed while going for a run."
(Male (C), 45 years, NZ European, Nelson)

”

CLICK HERE

MMA (Mixed Martial Arts): One Championship Weekly

- This clip features short extracts from an episode of MMA: One Championship Weekly which is a mixed martial arts highlights and commentary programme broadcast on free-to-air television.

- The full programme contained 5-6 minute clips of previous MMA fights. It was broadcast free-to-air on TVNZ DUKE at 8.30am on a Saturday morning.

- The programme is an unclassified sports programme (it is not required to carry a rating).

- The BSA did not uphold the complaint that the content was offensive and inappropriate for a time when children may be watching unsupervised.



Image sourced:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TKF5ebSE8y8>

Decision summary

The BSA did not uphold the complaint for the following reasons:

- The target audience of both the channel and the programme is adult males.
- The signposting prior to, and at the beginning of the programme, gave an indication of martial arts content including previews.
- The content was consistent with audience expectations of MMA: One Championship Weekly, and of TVNZ DUKE.
- As sports programming, MMA fights and footage can be broadcast without a classification and are therefore not restricted to being broadcast at a certain time.



Image sourced:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TKF5ebSE8y8>

MMA: One Championship Weekly

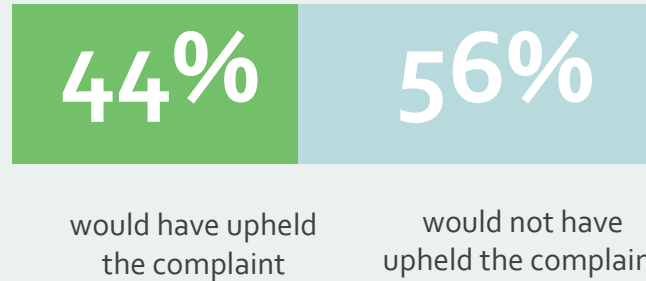
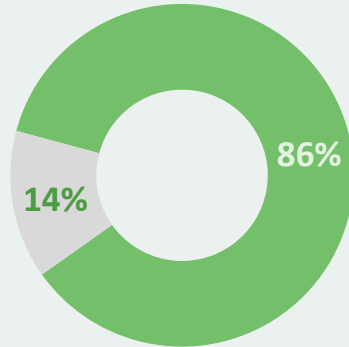


We invited 429 people to view and comment on the MMA clip...

...their immediate reactions...

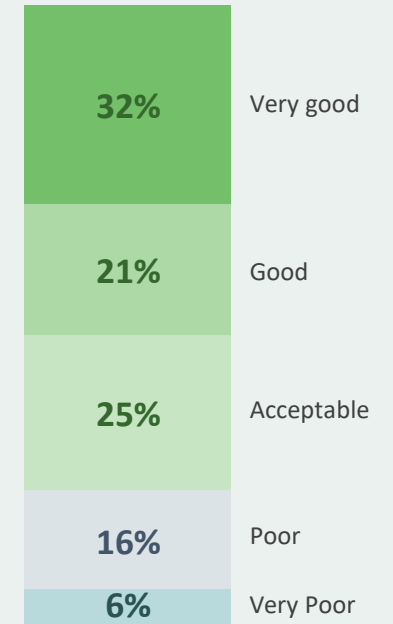
...after reading the BSA's decision...

86% agreed to view and comment on the clip, 14% did not*



78%

rated the BSA decision as very good, good or acceptable**

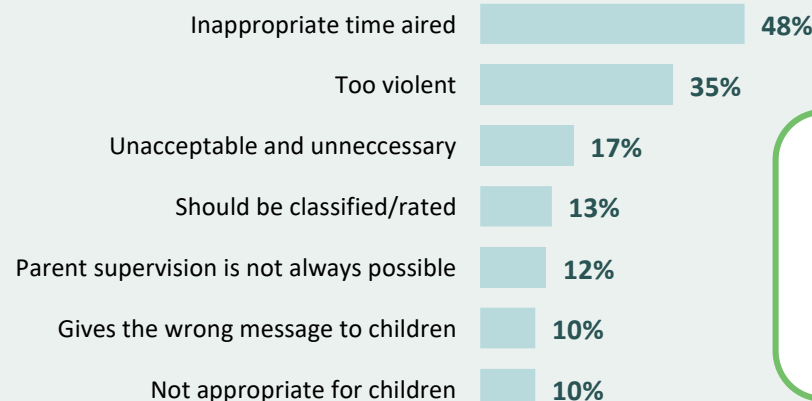


Why do you think the BSA decision is....

Very good or good



Very poor or poor



18-34 year olds are more likely than average to rate the BSA decision very good, good or acceptable (94%), while those aged 55+ are less likely (67%).

*Data is unweighted

**Note: The KPI is calculated by adding the raw numbers together and dividing by the total. The percentages in the chart are rounded to a whole number, which may result in discrepancies between the two numbers of up to 1 percentage point.

Qualitative insights regarding BSA's decision



DECISION OUTCOME

- While viewers acknowledge the decision meets the standards, many struggle to reconcile the time of broadcast and combative sport not requiring a classification.

APPROACH TO GOOD TASTE & DECENCY STANDARD

- There is general agreement that the channel and signposting of the programme provides context for the content.

APPROACH TO CHILDREN'S INTERESTS STANDARD

- The time of screening is a point of contention, given 8.30am on a Saturday morning is a time when it is assumed to be more likely children are watching TV and less likely parents/caregivers are monitoring their children's viewing. Some suggest children could inadvertently stumble onto the show and be distressed by the content.

APPROACH TO VIOLENCE STANDARD

- Many viewers are surprised that sport does not require a classification. However, others can justify the level of violence in a professional sporting context.

APPROACH TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION STANDARD

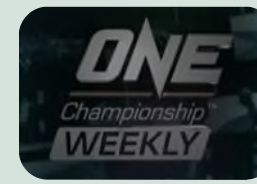
- Viewers acknowledge the potential harm.

CLARITY OF REASONING

- There is a general sense the decision is well explained and easy to understand.

“I think they have explained the logic and the reasoning behind their decision, and the fact that due to the nature of the content, and it being sport, certain rules don't apply, so yeah not something I'd want my kids watching, but I can see their reasoning.”

(Male (B), 42 years, NZ European, Nelson)



There is a general agreement that Duke is a channel targeted towards adult males and content generally reflects that.

The programme was clearly signposted with regard to content to follow.

Many are surprised that sport, and particularly combative sport, does not require a classification. While some do not necessarily agree, it prompted discussion on whether all sports should be treated equally or whether some *should* require a classification.

“

"Duke right? It's not really a kids' channel anyway. It's a niche channel. There's a few unique shows on there. It's for blokes... sort of the Hauraki radio equivalent for TV."

(Male, 39 years, NZ European, South Auckland)

"I just worry where it starts and ends. Does badminton get a classification?"

(Male, 39 years, NZ European, South Auckland)

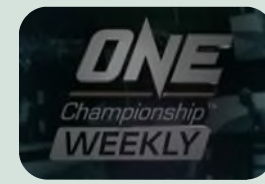
"Because I mean you don't have an advisory before a rugby game do you, and sometimes they have a bit of a go."

(Female, 31 years, NZ European, Porirua)

"The fact that there's no classification to me is a bit of a concern. I think it's quite clear that there should be a classification. I don't know what that is, but I think it should be classified to some extent just because it's fighting."

(Male, 25 years, Asian, South Auckland)

”



Those who feel the violence can be justified in a sporting context rationalise that:

- It involves highly trained and skilled athletes
- There is a degree of professionalism – ‘they are being paid, it is their job’
- They are consenting adults
 - They understand the risks
 - They have entered into an agreement to participate
 - There is a clear expectation of an outcome – a winner and a loser
- It is a controlled environment (rules, an umpire)
- Viewers familiar with MMA even suggest the content is ‘tame’ compared to other MMA fights they had seen.

“

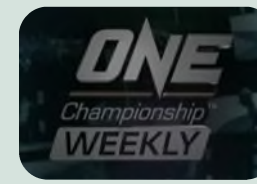
“When you watch something like that, you know what you’re going to watch. You realise that you’re going to watch people that are trained to be in a ring for a purpose. That purpose is to fight and to win. It’s controlled to a degree. You expect that there’ll be an outcome. You’ll expect that there will be violence because you understand that it’s a boxing match.”

(Female, 48 years, NZ Māori, Gisborne)

“I don’t think it’s gratuitous. It’s a sport event. They don’t focus on the blood or anything. If you take MMA as a sport, and I understand some people don’t, but it is a sport, so don’t think it’s breached that standard.”

(Male, 28 years, NZ European/ Pasifika, South Auckland)

”



The primary point of contention is the time the programme screened. There is an assumption that Saturday morning is prime children's viewing time, and that parents/caregivers may be less likely to be monitoring their children's viewing behaviour. The concern is that children could inadvertently stumble on the content (especially as it a free-to-air channel).

Potential harm includes children being distressed by the content or undertaking copycat behaviour of what they have been exposed to.

“

"Kids are channel surfing at that time of morning. A 6 year old's not going to think, 'I shouldn't watch Duke', if they're flicking around looking at the next cartoon."

(Male (C), 45 years, NZ European, Nelson)

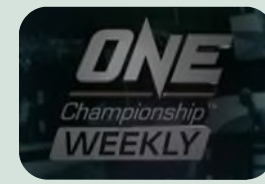
"The only major risk is that kids may copy what they have seen on tv just like WWF and get hurt."

(Male, 39 years, NZ European, South Auckland)

"If Joseph Parker was fighting, I would watch it with my kid, and I'm not ashamed to say that. I don't think it would cause too much harm. It wasn't displaying something intentional to harm someone, that's a sport basically."

(Female, 27 years, Pasifika, Porirua)

”



Viewers acknowledge the potential harm of being exposed to this content:

- it may be distressing for people
- it may act as a trigger
- there is potential for the behaviour to be copied.

“

"I think it is pretty extreme for that time of the morning, and again it comes down to potential for imitation or re-enactment, if kids are starting to sort of copy this in their living room, and they start throwing punches at each other, and hitting each other in the face, then that's dangerous."

(Male (C), 45 years, NZ European, Nelson)

”

CLICK HERE

Checkpoint

- This clip is from a radio item that reported on the final stages of a court case about a kidnapping/assault and included graphic descriptions of violence against the victim.

- The segment was broadcast on Checkpoint – a news and current affairs programme starting at 5.30pm on Radio NZ.

- It was not preceded by a warning.

- The BSA upheld the complaint concerning the graphic content in this broadcast under the good taste and decency, children's interests and violence standards.



CLICK HERE

Decision summary

The item had high value in terms of the right to freedom of expression and high public interest. However, aspects of the complaint related to good taste and decency, children's interests, and violence were upheld because there was no warning given.

BSA gave the following reasons:

- The item was signposted by the presenter at the outset, which gave some indication of its likely content.
- The programme is targeted at, and likely to be listened to by an adult audience.
- There was high public interest in the broadcast.
- However, a brief verbal warning from the presenter should have been broadcast to enable listeners to decide if they wished to listen to the graphic, detailed content.



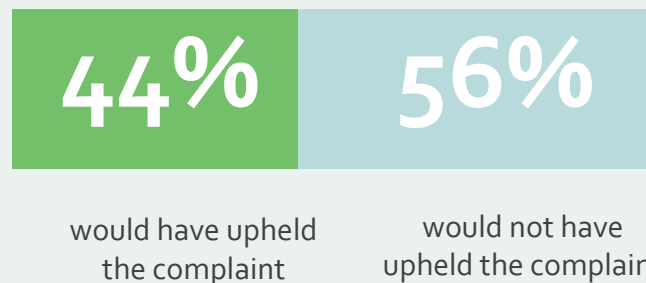
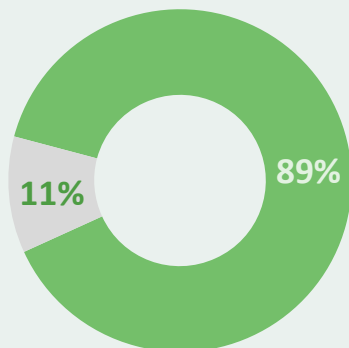
Image sourced: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F-Bc4mrsMeE>

We invited 429 people to view and comment on the Checkpoint clip...

...their immediate reactions...

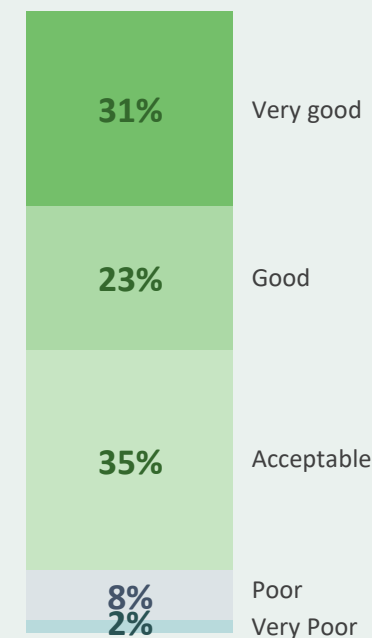
...after reading the BSA's decision...

89% agreed to view and comment on the clip, 11% did not*



90%

rated the BSA decision as very good, good or acceptable**

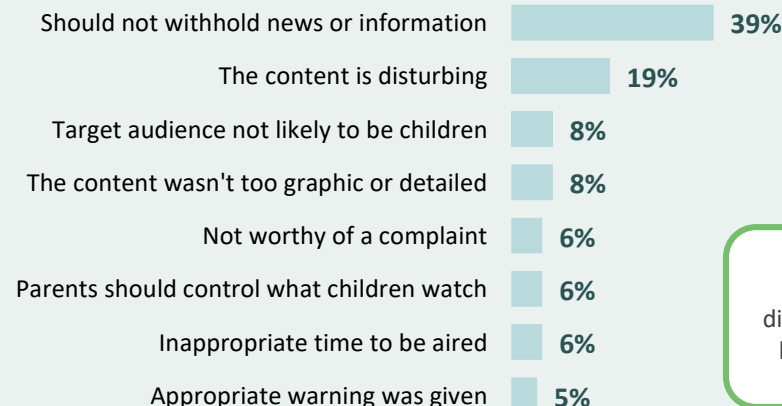


Why do you think the BSA decision is....

Very good or good



Very poor or poor



The are no significant differences of note by subgroups of interest.

*Data is unweighted
 **Note: The KPI is calculated by adding the raw numbers together and dividing by the total. The percentages in the chart are rounded to a whole number, which may result in discrepancies between the two numbers of up to 1 percentage point.

Qualitative insights regarding BSA's decision



DECISION OUTCOME

- There is strong agreement with the decision, particularly that a warning was required and not provided. Participants acknowledge the challenge in achieving a balance and adhering to the standards.

“
“
"I don't have any particular criticisms. I don't think that they over-regulate, but I think they don't also under-regulate. I think it's a good balance."
”
”
(Male, 28 years, NZ European/ Pasifika, South Auckland)

APPROACH TO GOOD TASTE & DECENCY STANDARD

- While there is agreement the primary audience would be adult listeners, there is concern that others would be inadvertently exposed to the content given the lack of warning.

APPROACH TO CHILDREN'S INTERESTS STANDARD

- Again, the lack of warning and the fact that children may inadvertently be exposed to the graphic content are a cause of concern.

APPROACH TO VIOLENCE STANDARD

- It is acknowledged the violence is justified by the context – a news programme, which presents the story in a factual manner. However, some question if the level of graphic detail is necessary.

APPROACH TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION STANDARD

- There is agreement the content has high value in terms of public interest and has potential to provide learning opportunities for ensuring safety.

CLARITY OF REASONING

- The decision is considered well explained and logical.

- There is a general perception that a current affairs programme on Radio New Zealand would be likely listened to by an adult audience.

- However, participants express concern that the time of broadcast (5.30pm) was during peak commuting time and given many people listen to the radio in their cars, there may be others/children present in the vehicle.

- The lack of warning means there is potential harm - ie for listeners to be distressed or re-traumatised by the content.

“

"I think the fact that it was broadcast on Checkpoint, which is a news and current affairs programme, you think that maybe the content is not always going to be rosy."

(Female, 31 years, NZ European, Porirua)

"My greatest concern would be for those that this may cause feelings of anxiety. People who have been through a similar experience may find this to be a trigger and revisit passed trauma."

(Female, 48 years, NZ Māori, Gisborne)

”

- There is strong agreement that the content has potential to be highly distressing for children. This includes the 'story' as well as the graphic detail about the violence and how it was inflicted.
- The lack of warning does not give parents/caregivers the opportunity to make an informed decision to continue listening.

“

"I think the level of graphic detail in the description of the violence was too much considering the time of the broadcast. People could be driving in their car with their children and – with no warning – end up exposing them to something that could shock or scare them."

(Male (B), 42 years, NZ European, Nelson)

"It's a concern for the younger audience as the details are quite gruesome. It exposes the nature of intense violence, which is something you never want youth to experience or hear. Ultimately, it is a concern for anyone who cannot cope with this genre or theme – so having a warning is crucial."

(Male, 25 years, Asian, South Auckland)

"It could give children nightmares or cause them to ask some difficult questions around the nature of the violence."

(Male (C), 45 years, NZ European, Nelson)

”

- Many agree the violence is justified in the context of a news programme. It is also noted that the content was presented in a factual way and did not seek to sensationalise it.

- Some acknowledge they find the content distressing because it is 'real life'. In this context, the level of detail is perceived to be overly graphic and listeners question whether it is necessary.

- Others suggest violent content can be further justified in the context of it being pro-victim, giving the woman a voice and letting her tell her story (which may be part of her healing process).

“

"To me, it sounds more like something that a jury would hear to do with intimate details a heinous crime. I don't think we need to know some of those details."
(Female, 46 years, NZ Māori, Gisborne)

"When you're tasing people's privates, you've got to give people a bit of warning."
(Male, 27 years, NZ Māori, South Auckland)

"And the woman was telling her story, I'm guessing that was the reason why the voice was disguised was because it was the victim telling their story, and I'm very, very pro the victim being allowed to say their piece about their crime if that's what they desire."
(Female, 31 years, NZ European, Porirua)

”

There is agreement the content has high value in public interest given the events were located in New Zealand.

Some suggest it provides learning opportunities for members of society to be more vigilant, and to seek to ensure the safety of their friends and family.

“*Definitely graphic but it’s real. These are the types of things that we are faced with in the world. It makes us aware to be forever vigilant re the safety of our children.*”
(Female, 48 years, NZ Māori, Gisborne)

“I think in the context it probably is ok. It was a news item on a news channel, yeah sad as it is that these things happen in society. Like I said, I hope that there’s the opportunity to learn from it, or maybe this is an opportunity for this woman to heal and move forward a bit as well.”
(Female, 38 years, Asian, Porirua)

“I remember this story when it happened, very shocking reading about it. There is a public interest element to this. I think it’s the responsibility of broadcasters to let the public know about these things happening, especially when it’s in our local area, or our country.”
(Male, 39 years, NZ European, South Auckland)

06

Appendix

Demographics*



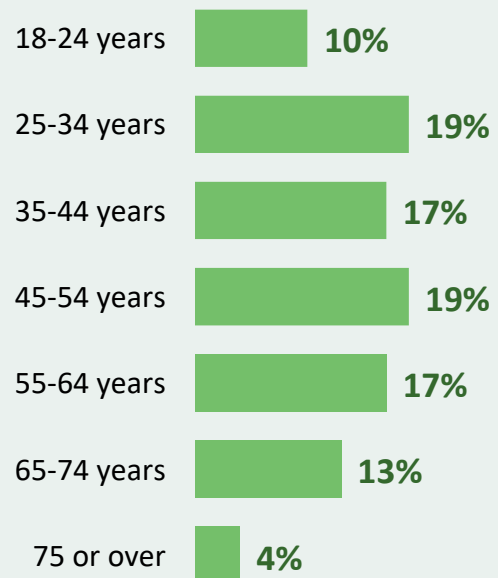
GENDER



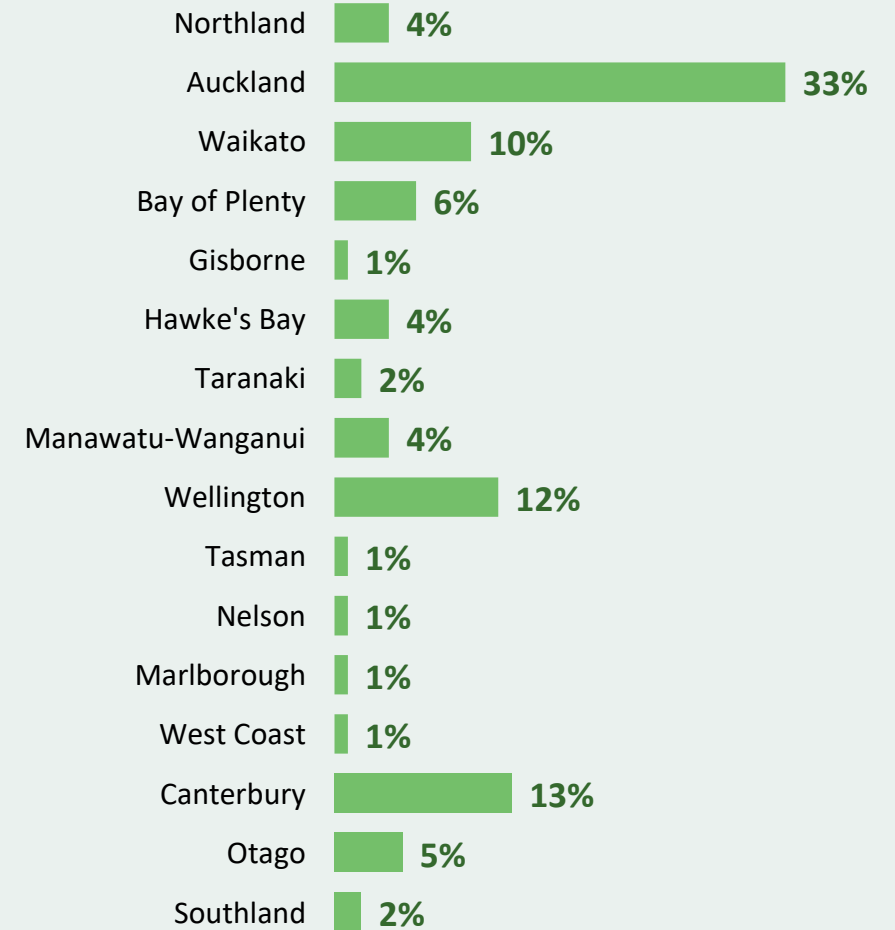
Gender diverse



AGE



LOCATION

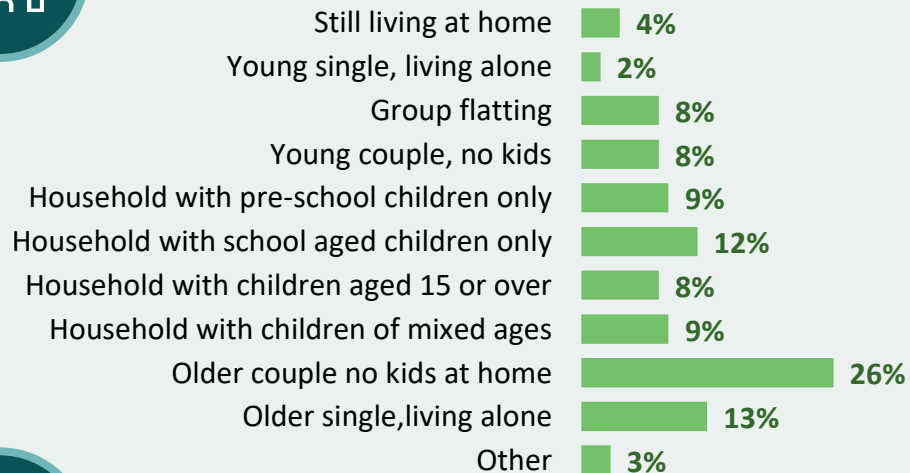


*Please note demographic data is unweighted

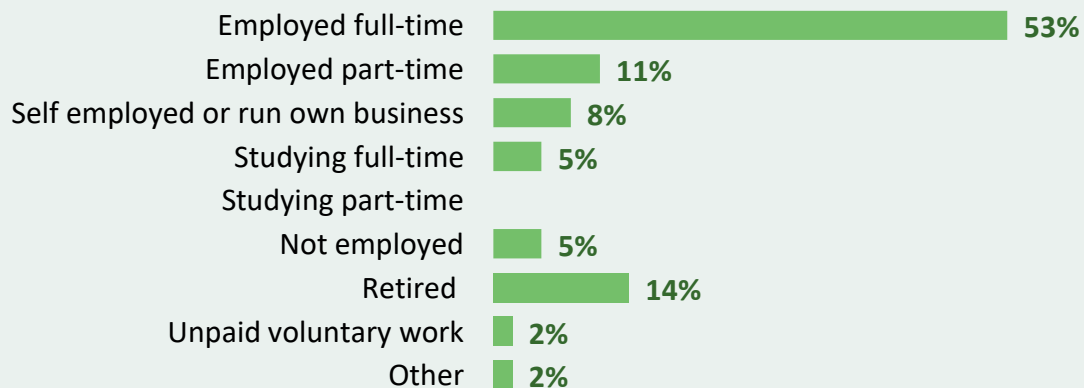
Demographics continued*



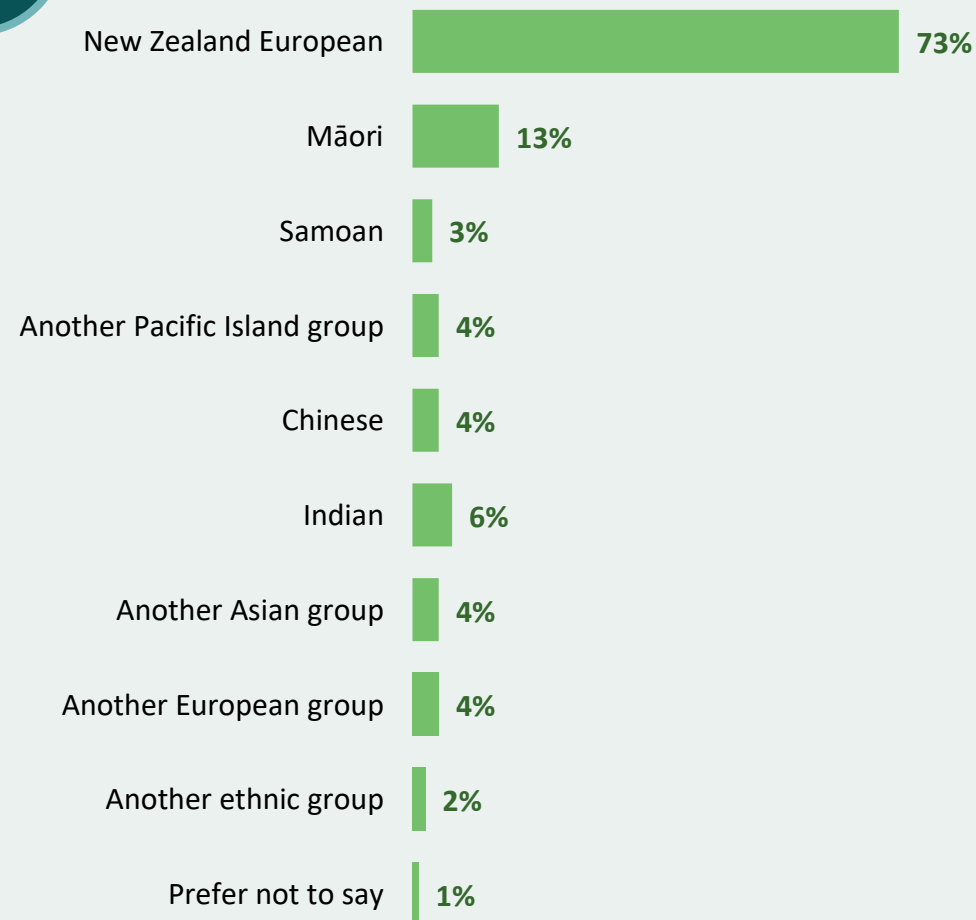
HOUSEHOLD



EMPLOYMENT



ETHNICITY



*Please note demographic data is unweighted



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