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MEDIA RELEASE
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FREE TV STILL ON TOP

Free TV networks dismissed as fanciful claims by News Limited chief John Hartigan this week that newspapers are continuing to outperform free-to-air television. The claims come after similar comments by Fairfax Holdings CEO, David Kirk, about the future of television in Australia.

According to an article published on The Australian news site today, total newspaper readership in Australia has declined 0.8 per cent in the past twelve months.

Analysis of Free TV audiences over the same period showed an increase of 0.7 per cent in metro markets and an increase of 0.9 per cent in regional markets.

Australians spend more time with television than any other media. Australians watch an average of 3 hours and 28 minutes of television a day in metro areas and an average of 3 hours and 49 minutes a day in regional areas.

The Roy Morgan figures also indicate that newspapers attracted 11.77 million readers each week. A massive 11.35 million Australians watch Free TV every day!

Free TV Australia CEO, Julie Flynn, says the figures speak for themselves. "Not only did Free TV audiences see an increase in the comparable 05/06 period, in the first half of this year overall Free TV audiences are up 4 per cent."

The results demonstrate Free TV is responding to the highly competitive landscape with compelling content that is also creating new opportunities for advertisers to engage and interact with viewers.

"People love to undermine the massive appeal and strength of television; some because it makes a good headline, and others to deflect attention from their own issues" says Ms Flynn.

Roy Morgan's readership measurement continues to be the subject of much scrutiny from advertisers, analysts and the newspaper industry with News Limited CEO, John Hartigan recently referring to the measurement system as 'outmoded' and in urgent need of review.

On the one hand, News Limited and Fairfax spruik Roy Morgan's readership findings, on the other they continue to seriously question the readership survey methodology and the integrity of the data.

By contrast, Australia's television ratings service is world's best practice, providing advertisers with the ability to analyse who is viewing what and when on a daily basis.

"I would suggest the newspaper industry has enough on their plate without worrying about us." says Ms Flynn.

- For media enquiries call (02) 8968 7100 -

"Newspaper readership holds up well", Martin Beasley, 11 August – theaustralian.news.com.au. Free TV figures sourced from OzTAM and Regional TAM data. Compares 05/06 with 04/05 based on viewing 2am-2am. Audience figures based on people 16 years+. Increase of 4 per cent based on viewing in metro markets surveys 7-26 06 vs 05 excl Easter and spill.