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Media Release
29 August 2008

OLYMPIC GAMES COVERAGE PROVES A WINNER WITH AUSTRALIAN TV AUDIENCES

Peak industry body Free TV Australia said today that official ratings data for the Olympic Games reaffirms the popularity of sport on free-to-air television with Australian viewers.

17.2 million people watched all or part of Seven's coverage – the largest in Australian television history - and an average of over 11.6 million tuned into the commercial television coverage every single day.

Free TV CEO, Julie Flynn, says the ratings prove the anti-siphoning list, which is designed to ensure that all Australians are able to see major sporting events for free on television, continues to work well.

"The popularity of the Olympics underlines the ongoing importance of the anti-siphoning list. More than 70 per cent of Australians continue to rely solely on free-to-air television," said Ms Flynn.

"The latest attack on the anti-siphoning list by the pay TV lobby group ASTRA is entirely predictable.

"ASTRA has consistently sought to misrepresent the anti-siphoning scheme in an effort to force Australian families to pay to watch major sporting events and has fought to prevent more free sport becoming available. Contrary to ASTRA's claims, ACMA's independent monitoring has confirmed there is absolutely no hoarding of sport on free-to-air television," Ms Flynn said.

"ASTRA's claims that allowing the Olympics to migrate to pay TV would help drive digital television take-up are nonsense."

Ms Flynn adds, "The move from analogue to digital broadcasting does not change the basic premise of the anti-siphoning rules that all Australians should be able to see major sporting event for free."

Media enquiries and interviews:

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