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We are making a difference thanks to your ongoing support.

Child-sex-offenders themselves have noted that their biggest fear when sexually abusing children, is being exposed in the community in which they live. One child sex offender has been quoted as stating; "I wouldn't want the neighbours to find out." By lifting the veil shielding the secrecy of child sex crimes we can STOP THE SUPPRESSION and prevent countless children becoming the victims of sexual abuse. This will also serve as a deterrent and help avert reoffending.

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So this is it!...The fight that has Garth all fired up and brought me out of retirement!

When I read in the last newsletter that the Human Rights Commission is suing SST so they can defend the privacy ‘rights’ of a convicted paedophile over SST’s rights to inform the public who we have living in our communities and interacting with our children, I knew I had to help. I’m not sure if it’s more fear, outrage or Motherhood that has motivated me to dust off my boxing gloves and re-enter the ring. Thirteen years ago similar emotions were stirred up in me as I watched the news item about what our justice system was doing to Mark Middleton (Stepfather of Karla Cardno) The stand we made back then lead to the launch of the Sensible Sentencing Trust movement and just look at the changes we have brought about!

The Human Rights Commission’s decision to take us on will lead to similar significant change, because this case gets to the root cause of the problem in this current offender friendly system. They will have the country to answer to when they defend their policies and justify how they decide whose rights are valued more and their priorities for who is more deserving of protection.

They’ve done us a favour thinking they can knock SST out of the ring…..but I can assure you SST won’t be doing them any favours in return. We can now expose them for the damage they cause by aiding and abetting known criminals, putting the rest of us at risk. It’s very easy to be angry about the fact they are using tax payer money to sponsor this convicted paedophiles case, but I choose to think that in the long run there will be a return on this investment, namely the safety of our children and their human rights.

If ever there was a time for us to all be in Garth’s corner... This is it!

Louise Parsons

Welcome Back Louise!

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Louise Parsons

Thank you to our members!

In our last newsletter we issued an SOS to help fund our case against a legal action the Director of Human Rights Proceedings [DOHRP] has instigated against SST on behalf of a paedophile with multiple convictions.

Please visit www.sst.org.nz/newsletter-november-2013/ to view our last newsletter

We are extremely grateful for the generosity of many of our members and pleased to announce that securities are now in place and the various legal challenges are under way.

Lodging documents in the Court of Appeal

Challenging the absurdity of the DOHRP in instigating frivolous proceedings against SST. [Scheduled for June]

The case against SST

Initiated by the Director of Human Rights on behalf of the paedophile. [Scheduled for August]

Victims of the paedophile applying to have their names unsuppressed

Victims are granted automatic name suppression and we want to prevent the possibility of the offender gaining derivative name suppression courtesy of his victims. [Scheduled for May]

Louise Parsons

Louise Parsons
NZ needs a Victims’ Commissioner

“The Government has poured millions into new victim initiatives. The problem is, these are mostly administered by existing service providers, entrenched in bureaucracy, with no accountability and no responsibility! While most of these agencies are well meaning and we appreciate the Government is genuine in trying to improve services to victims, we believe the time has come for an independent Victims’ Commissioner. This will be one of the ideas SST will promote this election. Below is a piece from Debbie Marlow, CEO Red Raincoat NZ. Close to home, the NSW Attorney General has seen the need and has taken the step and implemented the appointment.” Editor

Red Raincoat NZ Trust
To Know That You Are Not Alone

Background - In New Zealand, a victim’s journey through the criminal justice process is confusing and disjointed; they more than often feel isolated and removed from the process. There is no one entity which ensures victims interests are considered, where they are able to access the services available to them and ensure that the level of service provided is acceptable. Currently families who are lost within the criminal justice process, or who require assistance to get an acceptable level of service, contact the Sensible Sentencing Trust and/or Red Raincoat Trust for assistance.

The Victim Centre established under the Ministry of Justice in July 2011 is internally focused, with no direct contact with the victims. Their victim’s reference group floundered with centre staff struggling to interact successfully with the victims and it has now been well over a year since any contact has been made. In addition, there are few accountability measures in place for criminal justice service delivery providers which, combined with victims understandable inability or lack of energy to demand accountability allows service providers to be protective of their funding streams and the true extent of their service delivery failures are not often known nor recorded. Victims do not have the energy to complain – they have lost enough.

The Proposal – A New Zealand Victims Commissioner

Similar to the Victim Commissioner appointed in the UK. (www.justice.gov.uk/about/vc)

The Victims’ Commissioner’s role will include promoting the interests of victims and witnesses, encouraging good practice in their treatment, and regularly reviewing the Code of Practice for Victims which sets out the services victims can expect to receive. A Victims’ Commissioner will listen to the views of victims and witnesses, understand the criminal justice system from their point of view, and try to help improve the services and support available to them.

For a Victims’ Commissioner to be effective in New Zealand they will need to be independent of all existing service providers and report directly to the Minister of Justice. A Victims’ Commissioner will ensure that all ongoing service delivery issues for victims are addressed at a level that will be effective. To truly understand the extent of a victim’s family criminal justice journey a Victims’ Commissioner will regularly engage with victim’s families in New Zealand and can be consulted on all matters with regards to victims.

Debbie Marlow

Recent Calls for a New Zealand Victims’ Commissioner
http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?id=1&objectid=11119910
http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?id=1&objectid=11120958

Great work NSW Australia! Let’s hope our parliament will do the same.

New NSW Commissioner of Victims’ rights appointed

NSW Attorney General, Greg Smith SC, has announced that Mandy Young has been appointed the first Commissioner of Victims’ Rights - a role that involves advancing the rights of victims of crime and assisting them in their interactions with government and non-government organisations.

Ms Young, formerly Director of Victims Services of the Department of Attorney General and Justice, is taking over the new role to implement reforms to the support for victims of crime, including a new Code of Practice for the Charter of Victims’ Rights.

The statutory duties of the Victims’ Commissioner include overseeing support services for victims of crime and ensuring compliance of government agencies with the Charter of Victims’ Rights, including reporting breaches to Parliament and helping to find ways to make sure that victims are able to participate in justice processes.

The Commissioner will also manage complaints, advise government and oversee the promotion of training, public awareness and research on issues affecting victims of crime.

Ms Young will take up the position immediately for a term of one year, at which point the functions and responsibilities of the role will be reviewed and a Commissioner will be appointed for a longer term.

www.nsw.liberal.org.nz

“We need a Victims’ Commissioner”

Gil Elliott - Sophie's Dad
NZ Herald 2/9/13

“It's very difficult often for victims' to know exactly where they're going, because you become a victim immediately and you've never been in that position before,” he said. “Apart from all the trauma and grief and God knows what, you don't know where to go to get advice, or who's going to look after you – it just adds to the trauma”. - Gil Elliott
Below are ten key issues we will be promoting for this year's election. More information on these proposals will be on our election website www.protectthatchild.co.nz

Please note - this website will not be available until the second week of June

Stop the Suppression
The granting of name suppression is currently rife throughout the New Zealand Justice System. The core element which allows many child-sex predators to continue offending is name suppression. Sensible Sentencing Trust believes name suppression should only be used to protect the victim. In the interest of openness and transparency as a deterrent, the government should establish an online, publicly available sex-offender register.

We all have an obligation to protect children and indeed ourselves from sex offenders

Unprovoked Attacks
We are concerned at the light sentences being handed down for attacks where the incident was unprovoked. Overall sentencing practice for unprovoked attacks is too light and does not reflect current community concern. SST believes there should be Mandatory Maximum Sentence for an offence involving unprovoked violence.

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Three Strikes for Burglary
The tough line on sentencing for recidivist burglars is likely to be the single most effective sentencing policy in reducing crime overall. We propose a minimum sentence of 5 years imprisonment to be served as a non-parole sentence after the third burglary conviction.

Victims' Commissioner
The Government has poured millions into new victim initiatives, the problem is these are mostly administered by existing service providers. While most of these agencies are well meaning and we appreciate the Government is genuine in trying to improve services to victims we believe the time has come for an independent Victims Commissioner.

See the full report on page three

Degrees of Murder
Our proposal is to introduce 1st and 2nd degree murder. 1st degree murder would have a presumptive sentence of “Life imprisonment without parole’. 2nd degree would be a mandatory sentence of “Life” with a minimum non-parole period not less than 10 years. Go to our election website for a more in-depth explanation.

Kicks to the head
We have been tracking an increasing volume of serious attacks and homicides which feature the offender kicking or stomping the victim to the head. It is cowardly, uncalled for and extremely dangerous often ending in life-changing injuries and death.

Our proposal is to have any assault involving a kick or stomp to the head be a ‘strike offence’

Home Invasion
Home invasion is an aggressive and highly criminal form of burglary in which a home is forcibly or unlawfully entered while occupied. We propose the government should introduce a new offence of ‘Home Invasion’ into the Crimes Act, carrying a maximum of 20 years.

See further on our election website

Abolish Parole
We propose the offender should serve their Judge given sentence without parole and be under strict monitoring upon release. Parole should be a privilege not a right.

Mental Health [Proven but insane]
Current verdict results of ‘Not guilty by reason of insanity’ results in the offender being acquitted and carries no conviction. We propose ‘Proven but insane’ would result in a conviction and would give victims some sense that the offender has been held to account for their actions.

Cumulative Sentencing
Tighten the guidance in relation to the use of concurrent versus cumulative sentencing. This will ensure that offences committed as part of separate incidents or involving multiple victims would require cumulative sentences.
Unprovoked Attacks

Over recent years there have been a number of totally unprovoked attacks which have resulted in horrific injuries and even death to the victim. Currently legislation does not treat such gratuitous attacks as seriously as we believe they should be.

SST is promoting a policy which will mean an ‘unprovoked attack’ will be treated with the seriousness deserved and will provide judges with the ability to give an appropriate deterrent sentence which will not only hold the offender accountable for their actions but also give a sense of justice for victims.

Justice that Hawea Vercoe’s family didn’t get. Tai [the offender] in this case punched Hawea in the face in a public place with such force he fell, hitting his head on the footpath. Tai then kicked Hawea in the head with considerable force. Hawea suffered a brain haemorrhage and later died in hospital. Tai was originally sentenced to a pathetic sentence of two years, 10 months. The Crown appealed the sentence and the Solicitor-General increased the sentence to four and a half years, BUT under NZ’s law Tai was allowed to apply for parole two years into his 4 and half year sentence and was granted parole at his second parole hearing.

So while the Vercoe family is still grieving for their son’s death, Tai is out, free to go on with his life.

Is that Justice? - Garth

PROTECT THAT CHILD - Stop the Suppression

Child abuse issues are a regular focus across many media outlets in New Zealand. The statistics facing this country are shocking and while the NZ population screams for justice, SST is busy making waves and standing up for those vulnerable children who do not have a voice.

We need complete transparency in the sentencing of child-sex offenders. We as a community, need to speak out and make a stand so that these people will no longer hide behind their victims and continue their horrific offending.

The core element which allows many child-sex-predators to continue offending is name suppression. In New Zealand the Criminal Justice Act 1985 states that the names of those victims of certain sexual offences will be automatically suppressed along with the names of those who may lead to the identification of the victim. Because of this provision many sexual perpetrators receive automatic name suppression, even in cases where there are multiple victims.

The entire act of offending sexually against a child, and ‘grooming’ a child is shrouded in secrecy. SST hopes to lift the veil of secrecy on this insidious and damaging offending. With the launch of a new campaign, ‘Stop The Suppression’, SST hopes to bring about a reform that will ultimately save the innocence of countless children.

Three Strikes for Violent Offender

It’s official - the three strikes policy for violent offending is working. Currently there are over 3720 first strikers, and just 30 second strikers. There are no third strikers.

Three Strikes for Burglary

Burglary is a very serious crime in New Zealand with more than 50,000 reported annually. A large proportion of burglaries are understood to be committed by a small number of prolific offenders. The deterrent for recidivist burglars is low, due in part to limited consequences for further reoffending. Burglaries are notoriously difficult to obtain convictions for. Burglars have the highest rate of recidivism of any offender type, as well as the highest rate of recidivism for burglary type of offending. The current maximum sentence for burglary is 10 years imprisonment. It has never been imposed, even for the worst repeat offenders.

The current ‘three strikes’ law excludes burglary as a strike offence. It is unlikely to be politically acceptable to simply add it to the list of ‘strike offences’. An alternative sentencing policy is needed for recidivist burglars. UK has had a ‘three strike’ rule for burglary since 1999, mandating a minimum 3 year term of imprisonment for a third or subsequent offence. The UK burglary rate has plummeted by 32% between 2002 – 2012.

This needs community support to show the government. If the UK can do it why can’t a small country like ours. -Garth

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It’s official - the three strikes policy for violent offending is working. Currently there are over 3720 first strikers, and just 30 second strikers. There are no third strikers.

Three Strikes for Burglary

Burglary is a very serious crime in New Zealand with more than 50,000 reported annually. A large proportion of burglaries are understood to be committed by a small number of prolific offenders. The deterrent for recidivist burglars is low, due in part to limited consequences for further reoffending. Burglaries are notoriously difficult to obtain convictions for. Burglars have the highest rate of recidivism of any offender type, as well as the highest rate of recidivism for burglary type of offending. The current maximum sentence for burglary is 10 years imprisonment. It has never been imposed, even for the worst repeat offenders.

The current ‘three strikes’ law excludes burglary as a strike offence. It is unlikely to be politically acceptable to simply add it to the list of ‘strike offences’. An alternative sentencing policy is needed for recidivist burglars. UK has had a ‘three strike’ rule for burglary since 1999, mandating a minimum 3 year term of imprisonment for a third or subsequent offence. The UK burglary rate has plummeted by 32% between 2002 – 2012.

This needs community support to show the government. If the UK can do it why can’t a small country like ours. -Garth

Three Strikes for Burglary
Part of our election campaign for 2014 will be the delivery of Black and White cards similar to these but promoting our ‘Protect That Child’ Project. We are proposing letterbox drops/corner dairies or display at any businesses that will take them.

We are calling on our members to help us distribute them. If you are able to deliver around your neighbourhood or know of a business that might advertise these, you can contact me directly. Thanks for your support - Anne

Contact: anne@sst.org.nz - Mobile: 027 492 4609
Address: SST. P.O. Box 701. Napier

Find A New Member

We would like to thank the thousands of fantastic New Zealanders who have supported us and made it all possible.

I would encourage all our members to become SST ambassadors and encourage your friends and associates to get on board. Enclosed with the newsletter is our membership form, take up the challenge and ‘find a new member’.

On our election website www.protectthatchild.co.nz we will feature more information on the following:

- Our wish list proposals
- Links to various SST election campaigns
- Recent party votes on Parliamentary Bills pertaining to Law and Order
- MP’s positions on SST’s wish list

Talk to your local MP and check out their Law and Order Party policies. Help us bring about changes that will make NZ a safe place again.

Options for receiving your Newsletter

Please see the option box on your remittance form.

Option 1; Our new website is set up for members to receive their newsletters via email. The plus of doing this is you will receive more up to date news.

Option 2; Receive the newsletter the conventional way via post.

Reminder: our election website won’t be available until the second week of June.

www.protectthatchild.co.nz

Check out the website

www.judgethejudges.co.nz

One of the aims of SST is Judge Accountability, combined with an Annual Performance Review of the judiciary.

Follow us on Facebook

Social media will play a big part in this year’s election. Don’t forget to check it out and tell your friends!
The Trust receives numerous letters/thoughts/ideas from members. We thought it was time to give you a chance to have your say. We will publish your thoughts in a new column “Letters to the Editor” and would love you to write to us.

To the Team at SST,

After reading your last newsletter I was prompted to put pen to paper.

For a Tax funded Government Department [Human Rights] to cover up for a paedophile is beyond words. I intend to donate towards your Fighting Fund although as a tax payer figure I am paying twice.

I find it unspeakable that the Human Rights Department is supporting a paedophile. Have they not given any thought to the Victim’s Human Rights?

I believe in what the Trust is doing and pressure you to take it all the way.

Keep up the good work.

Please find my donation enclosed.

Regards, R. Reeves

Dear SST,

Thank you for your last newsletter, it was very good reading. It riles me when I read about Christie Marceau’s killer and how he wasn't charged with that beautiful girl's murder because he was diagnosed to be ‘insane’. I agree with Garth - nobody has been held liable for the murder of Christie. I think in this particular case Ashkay Chand is hiding behind the law.

Graeme has written a very good article, although frightening, especially the statistics of the increase of insanity acquittals up 500% since 2002. Incredible! My opinion is that by closing down the mental institutions many years ago and letting these patients out unprepared has increased the statistics.

I think the only solution to this terrible situation is to open the institutions again as some of these patients can't cope with life. By following this there would be a lot less victims.

Thank you Garth and Co

R. Dickens - Auckland

The Importance of Select Committee Submissions

Parliament Select Committees are a very good way of voicing your concerns on what is happening within our Justice System. During the parliamentary year there are several bills that are being read. Recently SST members presented on the Parole Amendment Bill and the Judicature Modernisation Bill [this is set to modernise our current court system].

Below is a piece from Jock Jamieson who coordinates Auckland's Legislation portfolio.

"Alan Monk, Harry Young, Graeme Moyle, Margaret Jamieson and myself all presented our particular take on the proposed Parole Amendment Bill to the Law and Order Select Committee on February 21st.

We supported the bill in principle since it’s thrust is to extend the time between parole hearings from one to two years and reduce stress on victims who have had to attend parole hearings annually and feel the current parole process as cruel re-victimisation.

We voiced concerns about how well the proposed reforms would improve that; in particular how offenders would be monitored as the length of time between hearings hinged on whether so called ‘risk milestones’ were reached or not by the offender.

We wondered if the system would continue to favour offenders’ rights over the victim’s.

Postponement orders, extendable under the bill to 5 years were also criticised as difficult to implement under rules which again, tend to favour the offenders’ rights ahead of the victims.

On a positive note, the board did give us a fair hearing. They said our submissions were valuable to them and several probing, though sensitive questions were asked."

Jock Jamieson

Make sure your voice is heard

Please make sure your voice is heard and submit your thoughts. It’s quick, easy and can be done online. If you are interested in looking at current submissions; go to www.parliament.nz/en-nz/pb/sc/make-submission. This will bring up the two committees which are relevant to Justice.

Justice and Electoral Committee
Law and Order Committee

Under these headings the bills which are currently being read are listed along with the dates the submissions close. The website gives you an example on how to set out your submission.

It takes one to start a ripple but a team to make a storm

For more information email: sstcoord@sst.org.nz
Christchurch

Big congratulations to Jayne Walker, our Christchurch coordinator, who has been nominated for TVNZ’s Sunday night ‘Good Sorts’. It was a great segment and well deserving. Good one Jayne.

Helena Watson, our Christchurch fundraising coordinator, has been out speaking on our behalf. Both Jayne Walker and Helena’s husband Kim attended the meeting as well. We have had some excellent feed-back from the meeting in Oxford with lots of new members. Thank you Helena, Jayne and Kim.

Auckland

We would like to thank Jock and Margaret for the wonderful job they do raising our profile by addressing various groups. We have had great feed-back with new members that have joined after Jock’s address, most writing a wee note of thanks.

Caroline Speedy and her helpers held a sausage sizzle fundraiser on the North Shore in March.

‘Thank you Caroline - it’s good to have members out there ‘flying the flag.’

Waikato

On the 13th June, Graeme, our Waikato coordinator is holding a Public Meeting in Cambridge. Garth will speak at this meeting.

It will be held at the Function Room at Riverside of Cambridge. Time: 7.30pm. All welcome.

The same day Graeme will be holding a street stall in Cambridge. I am sure he would welcome anyone who can help with this. Please email sstmhealth@sst.org.nz.

Thoughts on Garth McVicar

I came across this and thought it was a great commentary. Garth is committed to Justice Reform and Victims’ Rights. After 13 years of SST, Cameron is quite right. Garth has always stuck to the Trust’s core principles and is in tune with what New Zealander’s want.

By Cameron Slater: whaleoil@whaleoil.co.nz

When you meet Garth McVicar in person you realise why Sensible Sentencing has had such traction. Having been around politicians for most of my life, I have found few in this sphere to be as genuinely nice as Garth, or as committed to core principles. It helps that his principles are sensible and in tune with what most of New Zealand wants.

So next time some lefty wanker starts bashing Garth, remember he is a bloody good guy fighting a massive liberal elite driven machine that puts criminals ahead of victims, and the rights of scum ahead of the rights of the rest of us to live in a decent society free of crime.

The only down side to Garth is he is apolitical. It would be great to have him in parliament, and even better if he were to run for a seat head-to-head with some criminal apologist like Marie Dahlberg.

Email to Garth

FROM: Prof. Greg Newbold
[Criminologist Canterbury University]

“I direct my students to your most useful and informative website”

Sensible Sentencing Trust shared a link. 10/4/14

Judge Saunders YOU ARE AN ABSOLUTE DISGRACE! The law allows for victims to read a victim impact statement - how dare you question this victims right because they didn’t want an RJ meeting with the offender. Not many people want to meet the person who sexually assaulted them. You should stand down immediately – Ruth

www.facebook.com/sensiblesentencingtrust

www.sst.org.nz

Ruth Money our 2IC ] spent many hours getting our new website up and running. A huge thank you to Ruth.