

**Press release 29 June 2006**

**Waitakere takes the Auckland lead in calling for Repeal of Section 59**

Educators, members of the public and 20 members of 'coal face' agencies dealing directly with children met in Henderson tonight, to call for complete repeal of Section 59 of the Crimes Act - the controversial legislation which allows parents to use "reasonable force" in the discipline of their children.

Manager of the FAIR Centre of Barnardos in Wellington, Mike Coleman, travelled from Wellington especially to attend the meeting and lend his support.

"It is unbelievable that New Zealand still has an archaic law on its books which allows parents to hurt their children," Mr Coleman said. "Momentum for Repeal is growing rapidly right around the country and Waitakere's action in convening this meeting is a very positive step."

Mr Coleman was encouraged to see the Waitakere City Council standing firmly beside community agencies who everyday see the real, negative effects of the excessive force used on children.

"Our politicians need to listen carefully to the argument for Repeal and remove this destructive legislation," he said.

Also at the meeting was long time childrens' advocate and the first Commissioner for Children, Dr Ian Hassall. He said it was essential that Section 59 of the Crimes Act be repealed.

"Section 59 needs to be removed completely from our law book," he said. "Amending, reforming, or re-wording the law is not the answer and won't improve the situation for New Zealand children. As it currently stands this law is protecting adults who abuse ..... not children"

Tonight's meeting was called by Elaine Dyer, Co-ordinator of Violence Free Waitakere, and Ngaroimata Reid, Co-ordinator of Te Korowai Manaaki.

Both believe there must be a change in the messages parents get about parenting. They are committed to helping parents learn effective methods of discipline and positive parenting strategies that really work and don't involve hitting children.

Elaine Dyer trains agencies in support of parents through the SKIP project.

Those attending the meeting were keen to see other regions around New Zealand join the call for Repeal.

They urged parents and caregivers to talk to their politicians and make it clear to them that all children must be allowed to grow up safe in a country where tolerance of assaults on children should be a thing of the past.

**Barnardos NZ Press Release**