

Media Release

Friday 25 August 2006

Congratulations, Auckland!

“This is a most heartening development,” said Murray Edridge, Chief Executive of Barnardos NZ, when commenting on the news that Auckland City Council voted to support repeal of Section 59 of the Crimes Act at its meeting last night.

Section 59 provides a legal defence for parents accused of assault.

“Section 59 has provided a legal refuge in a number of court cases for actions which constitute physical abuse. Now the largest local authority in the country has provided real community leadership in supporting the call for repeal.”

“This decision follows hard on the similar decision of the Porirua City Council. Local government is sending a message here that Parliament would do well to listen to when it votes on the Repeal Bill currently being considered by the House.”

For more information on Barnardos reasons for seeking the repeal of Section 59 of the Crimes act visit www.barnardos.org.nz

“The public release earlier in the week by EPOCH of a letter from the Police Commissioner’s office is another useful addition to the public debate,” he continued.

The letter spells out all the factors which Police consider in making a decision to prosecute. “It is clear that this is not an automatic action and that parents have little to fear of possible widespread prosecution for occasional use of minor physical punishment.”

A copy of this letter can be found also on www.barnardos.org.nz.

“As we approach the time when Parliament must vote on the issue the public debate is moving past the scaremongering by the anti-repealers and the weight of informed opinion is now moving decisively in favour of repeal,” Murray concluded.

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