



ECPAT CHILD ALERT

Preventing the sexual exploitation of children

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From the Director's Desk

A CALL FOR ACTION!

This will be our last Newsletter for 2011 and I have chosen to reflect on the year and express a growing concern for the safety of our children in New Zealand.

In August we presented the Minister of Justice with a petition signed by over 74,000 New Zealanders. This petition was the result of a joint campaign by ECPAT Child ALERT and The Body Shop and was a call for action against the sexual exploitation of children. Included in the petition there was a call for the Government to ratify the Optional Protocol against the sale of children; to include education on child rights and protection in the secondary curriculum and to take stronger action to mainstream child protection measures. These issues demand attention if we are to take child protection seriously.

In a similar timeframe the Minister for Social Development released a Green Paper for Vulnerable Children. This recognises that New Zealand needs to address its dismal record of child abuse and calls for submissions to be made to ensure our children "thrive, belong, achieve." Paula Bennett says "Personally, my first priority is the protection of vulnerable children. Every hour, two children in this country are physically, sexually or emotionally abused. It has to stop. We have to make a concerted effort to protect children from the lifetime of harm abuse can cause. Every child should be afforded the best opportunities this country has to offer and every child deserves to thrive, belong and achieve."

The Paper quotes "The facts speak for themselves: More and more New Zealanders are coming forward with their concerns about suspected abuse or neglect of children. In fact notifications to Child, Youth and Family grew by 205 per cent from 2004 to 2010 ..."

Added to this is the fact that child pornography (child sex abuse images) websites are being widely accessed by New Zealanders. According to the Department of Internal Affairs their Digital Child Exploitation Filtering System has identified that in the first quarter of 2011 over 5 million requests by New Zealanders

to access illegal child sex abuse sites were identified. Whilst this does not represent individuals and recognising that one person could have been responsible for multi requests it does indicate a very concerning amount of activity related to child exploitation by people within New Zealand.

A recent report from the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) that surveys various conditions in 30 industrialised democracies around the world ranked New Zealand second to lowest in their 'Doing Better for Children' child health and safety indicators. New Zealand was ranked 29th with Mexico at 28 and Turkey at number 30. In terms of teen age suicides New Zealand ranked the worst in ratio to the population.

This rather gloomy and disturbing view of our children's welfare is despite the sterling work carried out by our law enforcement agencies. New Zealand is fortunate to have robust legislation, a Police force with integrity and determination, a Customs regime that is vigilant at our borders and a censorship compliance system of exceptionally high standard - plus numerous non government agencies and many concerned individuals all contributing to child protection. Essential as these are and worthy of complete support and adequate resourcing the fact emerges that these alone do not alter the behaviour of offenders. Despite the constant flow of convictions the abuse continues.

The call to action by ECPAT Child ALERT is for all New Zealand citizens to take a stand against the sexual exploitation of

children. The realisation that legislation and controls do not on their own change peoples behaviour highlights the urgency to bring about a change in attitudes so that here is a choice to protect rather than punish our children. This demands a concerted effort to create public awareness and educate people in such a way that children are respected and protected - not only because our legislation outlaws their abuse but because we value them and want every child to reach their full potential free from the fear and resulting trauma of all forms of abuse - including sexual exploitation through prostitution, pornography and trafficking.

It is a good time to take stock and determine to 'do better for children'. The Optional Protocol against the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography should be ratified shortly. The Green Paper provides a vehicle for people to inform the Government of their concerns and solutions. The work being done by law enforcement agencies is bringing a clear focus on the degree and extent of offending and it is time now for the general public to be a voice for children and advocate for their well-being.

It is only when that voice gets strong enough that New Zealand will become a better place for our children to grow up in.



The Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) operates an Internet filtering system that monitors Internet traffic and identifies when computer users are requesting access to a website that has already been classified as containing illegal child sex abuse images. When this occurs the person requesting access will be advised they are attempting to access an illegal site and access will be denied. The Digital Child Exploitation Filtering System (DCEFS) has been very successful in blocking

access to such a degree that a number of websites have been closed down because they are no longer viable. In the first quarter of 2011 a staggering number of over 5 million attempts to access illegal sites were identified by DCEFS. This number does not relate to the number of individuals but just to the attempts to access - often by a mouse click. Whilst it is recognised that one person can make many attempts the total number is still very large and is of serious concern.

Hotel Group and Child Protection Agency Join Forces

On 12 August, 2011, the ACCOR group of hotels throughout New Zealand and Fiji registered as signatories to the global responsible tourism code of conduct (known as The Code) through the local Code representatives, ECPAT Child ALERT.

At a meeting of their hotel managers in Auckland Paul Richardson, Vice President for ACCOR in New Zealand and Fiji committed their organisation to meet the requirements of The Code to protect children from sexual exploitation through tourism. This includes training of staff, monitoring and reporting, as well as the raising of guest awareness. They now join almost 1,000 members from the tourist industry around the world in 42 countries who have adopted this corporate social responsibility.

Within the framework of its sustainable development policy and its Earth Guest

Programme, ACCOR is committed to help combat child-sex tourism and the group has now signed the code in more than 40 countries.

ECPAT Child ALERT welcomes the ACCOR membership and hopes that others in the travel and tourism industry will demonstrate their support by becoming signatories also. This is a responsible and timely move by



a major international organisation to add this dimension of corporate responsibility to their already fine record of setting high professional and social standards in their business operations.

New Zealand is fortunate that law enforcement exercised by the Police, Customs and Internal Affairs monitors and enforces the law to a degree that we do not experience child sex tourism to the same degree as some other countries. However it is wise to be proactive and to be alert to the risks as we are not exempt from this sort of child abuse. The measures become of particular importance during times such as the Rugby World Cup where a lot of overseas visitors moving around the country with a probability of increased alcohol consumption and crowd behaviour.

ECPAT Child ALERT News

“Dreamboard” online child porn network dismantled

4 August, U.S. authorities said they have dismantled an online bulletin board allegedly used by 600 people around the world to trade graphic images and videos of infants and children aged 12 and younger that contained in some 27,000 posts.

More than 70 people have been charged in connection with the private site, which was called “Dreamboard” and gave members varying access to the material. Board members who molested children themselves getting the most coveted “Super VIP” access to pictures and videos.

“To put it simply, we have charged that these individuals shared a dream -- to create the preeminent online community for the promotion of child sexual exploitation,” Attorney General Eric Holder told reporters. “But for the children they victimized, this was nothing short of a nightmare.”

U.S. officials called it the largest prosecution of people who participated in an online child exploitation enterprise operated for the purpose of promoting child sexual abuse, disseminating child pornography and evading law enforcement.

Reuters Washing News, August 2011

Kate is our newest member to the team. She has come to us from Otago University to carry out her fourth year Social Work degree placement. You might remember Kate from the ‘Take a Step’ walk. Kate and a fellow Otago University student walked from Bluff to Cape Reinga last summer to help ECPAT Child ALERT raise awareness of the issues of child sexual exploitation. Now Kate is working with Becky (Youth Advisor) to get many projects off the ground for the Youth Participation Program (YPP).



The YPP is hoping to make their movement ‘Don’t Sweep it Under the Rug’ a strong and well known name amongst youth and will be reaching out to high school and university students to get involved in the

movement in some new and creative ways.

Carol Ah-Voa is a fourth year Bachelor

ABUSED CHILDREN BEING LET DOWN BECAUSE PEOPLE DON’T KNOW HOW TO INTERVENE

VICTORIANS report up to 23,000 allegations of sexual and physical abuse of children to protection authorities each year. But child welfare advocates say many cases go unreported because people do not know how to intervene.

Children aged under three had 1774 notifications for sexual abuse over the 2 1/2 years. The highest number of sexual abuse concerns were for children aged four to six, with 1952 cases reported to police.

Australian Childhood Foundation chief Joe Tucci said he believed many cases of abuse went unreported. “People are more willing to see the problem, but they’re still not confident about knowing what to do,” he said.

“We don’t want to believe that adults can hurt children.”

Dr Tucci said he was concerned abuses against children were not being treated seriously enough. “Very few of these reports lead to a conviction. If a conviction doesn’t occur it leaves children really confused, that they’ve told the truth but it hasn’t lead to anything.”

“That’s a trauma they live with for a long time.”

Sunday Herald Australia; September, 2011

Meeting Kate & Carol



of Social Work Honours student from the University of Auckland. Her interest in child protection has brought her to ECPAT Child ALERT.

She is carrying out research for ECPAT Child ALERT that involves looking at the current status of Preventative measures in the Pacific Islands for sexual exploitation of children.

Anyone interested in their work can contact them on office@ecpat.org.nz

Child Protection Agency Petitions Government

On Thursday 11 August the Parliament passed the Child and Family Protection Bill which means the New Zealand Government can now ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. This protocol was signed off by New Zealand in September of 2000 and has been waiting for Parliament to pass this important legislation.

Mr Bell, Director of the child protection agency ECPAT Child ALERT says "This move by the Government heralds a new opportunity for New Zealand to put renewed efforts into protecting our children from all forms of sexual exploitation. We have been asking for this final act by Government to take place over a number of years since the initial signing of the protocol in the year 2000."

In ratifying the Optional Protocol, a State accepts an obligation to respect, protect, promote and fulfil the enumerated rights of the child and signifies an agreement to be

legally bound by the terms of the Convention. The Convention's Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography details requirements to end the sexual exploitation and abuse of children.

"This is a national problem as well as a global problem. It is estimated that globally over 1 million children are trafficked into the illegal sex industry every year and that the illegal sex industry including child prostitution, pornography and trafficking is the second or third largest criminal revenue earner along with arms and drugs and totals the equivalent of around \$NZ50 billion annually," says Bell. "And New Zealand is not exempt. Child prostitution and particularly child pornography are evident in this country and we should not fall into the trap of thinking this type of crime only occurs in overseas locations. We owe it to our children to be vigilant and make every effort to keep them safe from sexual abuse."

The passage of this legislation in August

coincides with the presentation of a petition signed by over 74,000 New Zealanders calling for the Government to take stronger action in preventing the sexual exploitation of children. The petition is the result of a campaign being waged jointly by ECPAT Child ALERT and The Body Shop to stop sex trafficking children and youth and other forms of sexual exploitation. The New Zealand signatures will be added to a global petition that will total nearly 7 million signatures from around the world and that will be presented to the United Nations in Geneva during September 2011.



GREEN PAPER FOR VULNERABLE CHILDREN

On 9 August, Social Development Minister Paula Bennett joined Sir Peter Gluckman, Green Paper Champions, MPs and the public in Aotea Square to launch the Green Paper for vulnerable children.

"Too many children are being hurt, abused, neglected and badly let down but we can change this and now is time to act," says Ms Bennett.

"The decisions this country needs to make about our children are bigger than politics and electoral cycles and the Green Paper focuses on child-centred decisions that will fundamentally change the way we care for children," says Ms Bennett.

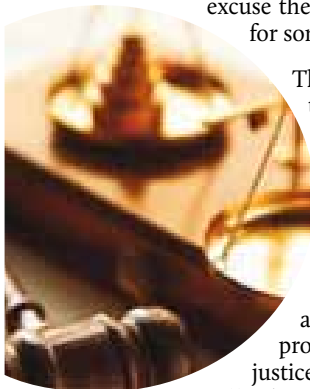
The Green Paper is a discussion document which outlines ideas the Government wants to test with the public before forming a Children's Action Plan.

Source: Press Release-New Zealand Government, 27/07/2011

ECPAT Questions Court Decision

On Friday 2 September at the Auckland District Court, Judge Philippa Cunningham discharged a man without conviction on a charge of performing an indecent act. The man who has name suppression was facing sex abuse charges against his 4 year old daughter - a charge he pleaded guilty to. The judge felt the consequences of a conviction would outweigh the gravity of the offence.

ECPAT Child ALERT questions the decision. "What does this say about protecting our children from sexual exploitation? Does this decision provide a deterrent for other would be offenders? Does being intoxicated and the possibility that he "was not fully awake" excuse the abusive behaviour? Is there one law for some and another for others?"



The offender's lawyer said in defence that her client should be allowed to keep his record clean. She said a conviction would make it hard for him to work again as a comedian. "ECPAT Child ALERT's comment: this appears to place more importance on the man being able to continue his life as normal and as if he had not offended than on protecting children and ensuring that justice was being exercised evenly against offenders."

Further the judge stated that the man was a talented New Zealander. "He makes people laugh. Laughter is an incredible medicine and we all need lots of it" ECPAT Child ALERT questions the basis for such a comment. "If this was a reason for not convicting the guilty offender how does it apply to other offenders who might provide some form of entertainment? Is this an automatic "get out of jail free" card? And what difference does it make what an offender does for a living? Should not anyone who abuses children pay the price for what they have done and by so doing send a strong signal to others that the sexual abuse of children in New Zealand will not be tolerated."

Child ALERT Hotline

The Child ALERT Hotline is a free, easy, safe, confidential and effective way for you to report any websites that you think may contain objectionable child sex abuse images. You simply download the small plug-in software and this puts the ECPAT icon on your browser. When you come across a suspect site just click on the icon and the screen disappears from sight but the software gathers the details of the site and sends it to us. We do the rest! You will have contributed towards making the internet a safer place. We then check the reporting and forward to site to the Censorship Compliance Unit who have the authority to open and examine the site and take the appropriate action.



Download the Hotline now and join other New Zealanders in the fight against child pornography! To date we have had over 5,000 sites reported. Refer to www.ecpat.org.nz

