

Press Release

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What Is It That Don't People Understand about Child Pornography?

This is a question being raised by a child rights organisation working to prevent child sexual exploitation.

The NZ Herald reported today on three convictions for serious offences of accessing illegal child sex abuse images on the internet including scenes of rape, bestiality and sex with children. Two of the men were teachers at the time of being detected. The court stated that *"The deterrence message about child abuse pornography is not being taken on board by the community."* Kathy Basquire, the Crown Prosecutor at the sentencing said *"The type of person getting caught by the police net is not what you would normally consider criminal. It would seem to be rife throughout the community,"*

Alan Bell, Director of ECPAT Child ALERT says *"The Internal Affairs, Police and Customs are doing a great job in tracking down offenders. They rank among the best in the world in terms of detection. However the community at large does not seem to be aware of the degree of exploitation of children. And yet it as real as though the abuse was happening right in their neighbourhood. People need to understand that the images are of real children who feel the pain and suffer the trauma for a lifetime."*

Child pornography is a multi-million dollar business where children are traded as commodities. It is closely linked to child prostitution and child trafficking for sexual purposes. All three are sometimes described as the "evil cousins."

Kathy Basquire was quoted as saying *"The court needs to send a message that generally name suppression will not be afforded to men who sit on their computers and view objectionable publications in the privacy of their homes."*

ECPAT Child ALERT hosts a Hotline where people can anonymously report websites they suspect contain child sex abuse images. It is a free, safe quick and easy way to get these sites checked out by the authorities and for them to take action to prevent access to them. *"As long as there is demand for this type of material children will continue to suffer"* says Mr Bell. *"What is it that people do not understand about this vile trade? There is no place for this in our society. Why do the offenders continue to plead innocence and hide their shame behind name suppression?"*

ECPAT Child ALERT is a registered charitable trust working to prevent the sexual exploitation of children.

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