



## Press Release

Who deserves protection the most?

Child-sex offender on bail near kids

The Northern Advocate today stated that a Northland community is concerned a man who admitted child sex offences was bailed ahead of his sentencing today to his home, near a school and early childhood centre.

The man, who cannot be named to protect the identity of his victims, was to be sentenced in court today on several child-sex charges.

He pleaded guilty on the day of his trial several months ago to seven counts of doing an indecent act on a female aged between 12 and 16 and one charge of unlawful sexual connection with a child while outside New Zealand.

Alan Bell, Director of the child protection agency ECPAT Child ALERT says *“ This is unnecessary and unwise. Whilst agreeing that individual rights need to be maintained and upheld the same sort of consideration should be afforded to the children and their parents who live in the area. This placement was bound to give rise to concern and anger that could lead to unfortunate outcomes for both parties.”*

A community member told the Northern Advocate the man's presence in the area had caused untold stress and tension, some people taking to writing graffiti on signs pointing to the man's home saying "paedophile".

"People in the community aren't happy about it and we're wondering why he's been allowed to stay in the community, and so close to our kids, after pleading guilty to serious sex offences against kids," the woman said. "It's horrible for us and putting people in a very awkward position. Everybody knows about it and there was even graffiti about it on the school wall."

*“This is similar to placing an alcoholic to work in a brewery or a gambling addict to work in a casino. It does not make sense to create a situation that provides possible access to the very context in which the offending took place. The offender has pleaded guilty and although name suppression is understandable to protect the victims placing him in the locality does not provide the maximum protection for the child victims. It is completely understandable that parents, particularly those of the victims, are concerned and fearful. It is to be hoped that this situation is corrected as soon as possible.”* States Bell from Child ALERT.

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