



The New Zealand Centre for Political Debate

Sensible sentencing

The Sensible Sentencing Trust was started in 2001 by a small group of New Zealanders who were extremely concerned at the break down in law and order, the gradual decay in society and the consequences on our wider community in general.

New Zealand currently has an offender centered legal system that gives all the “rights” to the criminal at the expense of the Victims. As our legal system has gradually become more Politically Correct, offender-orientated violent crime has escalated alarmingly. With many vested interest organizations and individuals now feeding off this gravy train, reversing the trend will take time, patience and novel thinking.

“Back to basics for the sake of our children” is the catch phrase of the Sensible Sentencing Trust. Most parents bring up their children using good old-fashioned common sense. They teach them to be accountable and responsible for their actions. But as our education and legal systems have gradually removed the principles of accountability and responsibility, and the PC movement has gained momentum, a general dumbing-down of society standards has resulted. We now accept a lesser standard of values, morals, ethics and individual behaviour than ever before. This treadmill now has a vigour and life of its own.

The Sensible Sentencing Trust decided to focus on the more horrific crimes and the consequences to the Victims. We wanted to expose the systemic failures of our education and legal systems, hoping this strategy might motivate New Zealanders to join our fight

The Trust takes every opportunity to give victims the opportunity to use their experience in a positive manner to initiate law changes and ensure that other people are not

subjected to the same failures within our legal system.

One example is the legal challenge to the parole system that is currently proceeding through the Courts. Many horrific murders and violent offences are committed by criminals who are on parole. William Bell was a classic example: he was on parole when he killed three innocent people and badly injured a fourth at the Mt. Wellington-Panmure RSA. Bell and many more like him have numerous previous convictions and yet the systemic failures within the Corrections/ Probation service are so bad that they are virtually letting ticking time-bombs loose on an unsuspecting community. The RSA breach of parole Court action is forcing the various departments to re-evaluate their procedures and systems, ensuring that safeguards are put in-place to reduce the likelihood of a similar occurrence.

The Sensible Sentencing Trust also utilizes the Select Committee process to bring politicians face-to-face with many of the Victims who have been treated so appallingly by our legal system. Giving MP's the opportunity to have first hand experience of how badly our system treats Victims is bringing about gradual change.

The Trust is now the largest privately funded victim support and justice reform organization in New Zealand. The success of the Trust is dedicated to the very courageous Victims who have unselfishly shared their horrific experiences for the benefit of all New Zealanders.

To find out more about the Sensible Sentencing Trust and how to join the organization, please visit our web-site at www.sensible-sentencing.org.nz.

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