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Through Education

## Systemic failings contributing to child abuse shame

"The hospitalisation of yet another newborn with life threatening injuries is a much a reflection of systemic ineptitude within government and social agencies as it is an indictment of the social decay and violence that now pervades our communities, with one all too common link," according to MethCon Group director Mike Sabin.

In recent years New Zealand has experienced over a 65 percent increase in child abuse, now having the shameful tag of one of the highest rates of child abuse in the developed world. About 240 children, 14 years old or younger are hospitalised for assault every year, with 96 recorded violent deaths of children of the same age between 1990 and 2006.

"There is no coincidence in these disgraceful statistics, as the vast majority share a common theme and that is drug and alcohol abuse alongside a lack of coordinated responses to address it, with 'P' in more recent years bringing about an alarming escalation in these cowardly crimes," said Mr. Sabin.

"Recent research on 'P' use in New Zealand has shown that use in the lower socio-economic groups has been steadily increasing and this has in my view mirrored trends seen in the United States, where Child Protective Services now report that 70 to 90 percent of the child abuse cases they investigate involve methamphetamine," claimed Mr. Sabin.

"For many years alcohol and cannabis have been the mainstay of abusive family environments, but when you add 'P' to that mix, you get a stoned, drunken thug, who doesn't fall asleep, who is paranoid, predisposed to violence and wound up like a coiled spring," said Mr Sabin.

"In the lead up to the election there has been 'desk thumping' from all quarters about social dysfunction and crime in an attempt to score political points, but what we fail to see is a clear plan to address the root cause of these issues, which is drug and substance abuse," said Mr. Sabin.

In May this year Mr Sabin presented a research study to a Parliamentary Law and Order Select Committee along with 21 recommendations to address the methamphetamine crisis in New Zealand, work which was also recently recognised when he was awarded a Sir Peter Blake Emerging Leader Award, acknowledging efforts to lead social change in this area.

Mr Sabin claims the solutions to so many social scourges and crime such as child abuse lay in successfully addressing drugs, in particular 'P' and cannabis, along with the widespread harm stemming from alcohol abuse, drugs he claims are so often used in combination with one another.

"It is clear to me, in all my years in the Police and now in drug education, that thousands of employees from a myriad of government departments and social agencies are so submerged in political correctness, beauracracy and systemic ineptitude, that meaningful intervention is more a result of good luck than good

management and until that changes we will continue to see innocent children paying the price, often with their lives," Said Mr. Sabin.

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(NZ's only specialist methamphetamine education providers)

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