

The price of P - measured in the lost lives of children:

The loss of another toddler's life under the dark shadow of 'P' highlights a social crisis which is nothing short of a national disgrace according to MethCon Group director Mike Sabin.

"The true cost of pure methamphetamine or 'P' can be found in the social decay, violence, neglect and contamination that the innocent victims of this drug scourge live with every day of their lives, as children living with users and manufacturers of this drug" said Mr. Sabin.

"Dylan Rimoni, the three year old child who died in Starship hospital a few days ago of 'unexplained head injuries' is yet another tragic example, with his caregivers now facing charges related to methamphetamine manufacture, as inquiries as to the cause of his death continue. Add Dylan to the list of others who have paid with their lives for the methamphetamine habits of their caregivers; Coral Burrows, her skull shattered by her stepfather, the Kahui twins with broken bones and fatal brain injuries, the child of Natasha Pederson left to drown alone in riverbed, to name but a few".

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, taking New Zealand to the forefront of child abuse statistics in the developed world, as one of the worst three. "As one of the worlds worst countries for methamphetamine use we don't have to look far to find a reason for this" claimed Mr. Sabin.

Successive studies in the United States have shown that in 70% - 90% of child abuse cases involving violence, methamphetamine was the primary cause, with Californian Child Protective Services stating that around a third of the homes that meth is being manufactured in, there were children living at the addresses. Of the children removed from these homes a staggering 90% of them tested positive to dangerously toxic levels of chemicals and between 35% - 70% of the children tested positive to meth resulting from pervasive exposure, let alone the violence they were exposed to.

As at the end of 2007, 1219 labs had been dismantled by Police in New Zealand with around a third of them having children living at the address, and when you consider that for every lab that is found there may be 10 others that are not, we could anticipate thousands of children directly affected.

In October 2006 Police Commissioner Howard Broad singled out methamphetamine as the driving force behind the spiralling crime rates with Police statistics showing methamphetamine related offences rocketing up by 50%. Prime Minister Helen Clark responded saying she was disturbed by the growth in methamphetamine promising to divert resources towards cracking the problem.

"It appears to me that the only thing being 'cracked' is the bodies of young children living with their abusive 'P' addicted parents" said Mr. Sabin highlighting that Police stats for 2007 show even further increases in violent crime to worst ever levels.

"Until we as a nation have the courage to accept and confront the disgraceful mess we have created for ourselves we can continue to measure the impact in tiny

defenceless bodies, a price none of us should be prepared to pay" said Mr. Sabin.

Mike Sabin

Managing Director

Methcon Group Ltd (NZ's only specialist methamphetamine education providers)
