

Submission 29

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Wednesday, July 31, 2002
The Committee Secretary
House of Representatives Standing Committee
on Legal and Constitutional Affairs
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Sir,

I am a church welfare worker and have asked those with whom I come in contact for their thoughts and ideas on some of your subject material. The following is randomly set out for your information. One might say "it is the opinion of the man on the street":-

PERPETRATORS OF CRIME & MOTIVES

Juvenile Crime and the well known fact that the juveniles know they can get away with it. Something has to be done to deter this group from feeling so confident about their actions This was very high on the list, punishment suggested were to somehow hit their pocket, make them pay for the material damage, from the day they start work or unemployment payment, confront the victims of their crime, hold back their driver's licence for a year or two. No more protection of their name being publicised..

IMPACT OF BEING A VICTIM OF CRIME AND FEAR OF CRIME

Road rage: seems to be on the increase. Victim being able to phone for help perhaps through 000. This might deter some. Elderly are afraid as they cannot protect themselves and realise they can easily be pulled up on deserted roads at night. Elderly people are staying home instead of taking the risk of being a victim. Driver's licences are being handed out too early, put the age up and bring back L and P Plates. Publicise the fact that the public can phone through to Crime Stoppers where a record is kept and acted upon on receipt of multiple complaints. Publicise heavily some scenarios as a deterrent.

STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT VICTIMS AND REDUCE CRIME

Disrespect for Elders - - How and where in time did this disappear and why? Have an investigation panel look into this and see if it can't be turned around. It has to be something to do with school education, working mothers and TV programs, Could high school students be encouraged to attend NHW or Progress Assn meetings to be part of what's happening in the community and reporting the information to the school as a whole, thereby creating an attitude of responsibility and pride in their community. When I was a minor, elderly people were those to be helped, today they are to be bashed and robbed.

2.

EFFECTIVENESS OF SENTENCING -

Punishment and Forgiveness:

Punishment should fit the crime: A house was trashed by a 13yr and 15yr old juvenile. This included faeces on the walls. The police made the perpetrators clean up the mess. There should be more of this. I have witnessed juveniles on community service for a minor act. find a good feeling from actually being responsible for something. One lad in particular went forward to further education after 'finding himself' with the encouragement of the staff. There are thousands of kids out there who need encouragement and responsibilities - maybe more low cost training centres rather than more jails. I wonder if it would be possible for the Police Dept to open a department where juvenile offenders (16-20 age group) could apply for a pardon when they eventually grow up - especially boys. I am thinking of the group who just do silly things to 'try the scene' as part of growing up and never reoffend. Many juveniles get caught with drugs on a one off occasion for instance, establish a criminal record for this one offence and never delve again. After proving that it was just an experiment, there should be a way they could be crossed off the criminal list.

Sincerely,

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Fran Craig
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