



**Safe
communities**

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OUR POLICY: SAFE COMMUNITIES

Background

Crime is at a record high, there are increases of more than 20% across a number of offences, and robberies are up 49% over the past year. The Government's policy of reducing the prison population and going soft on crime has been a failure with ram raids now an everyday occurrence.

Businesses are being forced to close or employ security guards to avoid being targeted. There is no plan to address youth crime, which is exploding. Police dealing with this upsurge in crime don't have the resources or right equipment to tackle offenders. What we are seeing is society heading towards a complete breakdown of law and order.

Our solution

We need to get back to the basics of targeting the main perpetrators of crime. This will require a strategic multi-organisational approach and dedicated resources. Frontline policing needs to be significantly better resourced - and valued.

Drivers of crime need to be addressed, which includes drugs, alcohol, lack of education and employment, and mental health issues. Organised crime is a major driver of crime, and we need a focus on targeting criminal networks. We need to have tougher sentences to deter offending.

1. We will prioritise and better resource frontline policing.

We will conduct a review of frontline resource allocation in each district. Frontline police numbers have not increased even though police numbers have increased - resulting in burnout and increasing crime.

We will significantly increase resourcing to frontline police and focus on retaining experienced staff by making sure they feel respected and valued, as well as better resourced and supported.

We will conduct a review of serious incidents needing an immediate and urgent Police response (priority 1) per district and compare that to resource allocation.

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Ram raids are a symptom of a society that is breaking down. Increasing frontline policing will help address this issue, as well as better funding for organised crime units. We want to see the community involved in addressing this issue – Police, shop owners, and security teams working together to tackle this serious issue.

We will:

- Reallocate funding within the Police to allocate more staff and resources to support frontline police work.
- Work with the Police to develop a strategy to attract and retain experienced staff in frontline work.
- Ensure that frontline police focus on their core business – which is reducing crime.
- Work with the Police, businesses and security providers to stop ram raids and prosecute those involved.

2. We will ensure there is increased funding for organised crime units to reduce crime levels.

Organised crime is the major driver of crime in New Zealand. Using risk management tools, organised crime is the major risk Police should be addressing, but this has not been done due to political interference and lack of focus.

Police have tended to focus on lower-level crime that they can measure. This has been a short-sighted strategy which has allowed gangs to increase in numbers and become more sophisticated. The result is gang membership is increasing, and crime is at record highs.

We will:

- Ensure that organised crime becomes a major Police focus - and provide police with the resources to significantly reduce organised criminal activity.
- Work across government agencies to target illegal activity (for example through IRD and customs).
- Develop new tools - and if needed - legislation, to make it easier for Police to target and dismantle criminal networks.
- Work with academics to study the factors contributing to crime in New Zealand. We will develop as well as implement strategies for targeted early intervention of at-risk children across Government departments to give them a better future.

3. We will reinstate three strikes legislation so that repeat offenders are dealt with seriously.

This law would apply to people who commit three serious offences. On the third offence, they face the maximum penalty in the law.

Three strikes legislation was successful previously, as in most cases people only committed one or two serious offences. Third strike offence numbers are relatively low, which shows that the legislation is effective.

We will:

- Lobby to have three strikes legislation reinstated to address increasing levels of serious crime.

4. We will review and improve firearms legislation, so it's sensible, safe and fair.

Changes to firearms legislation were rushed through without time for the public to consider the changes and was very poorly drafted.

The legislation penalises firearms license-holders but does not deter criminals, as they don't abide by the law.

As the legislation was rushed through without proper consultation, many gun owners felt their views were ignored and didn't think the changes were justified, leading to widespread non-compliance.

A firearms register has not been effective elsewhere in the world in reducing crime. There is a real risk that the register could end up in the hands of criminals and result in firearms owners being targeted by criminals, which would increase rather than decrease crime. A firearms register is hugely expensive to develop, manage and maintain.

We will:

- Review submissions made on changes to firearms legislation to consider community views.
- Involve the community in developing better legislation, which is safe, sensible and fair.

5. We will push for the Coward Punch Bill, introduced in the House by Matt King, to become law.

A coward punch is a single, unprovoked assault causing death – a 'blind shot' or 'king hit' punch. It sits between grievous bodily harm and manslaughter in terms of sentence length.

The 20-year sanction with a coward punch in this legislation signals to the judge how serious this offence is. The new law will also allow additional charging options that could help the victim's family avoid the trauma of a trial and reduce legal costs.

The coward punch legislation will help people better understand that one punch can kill and deter people from getting into fights. The legislation has been supported by a number

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of high-profile sportspeople willing to raise awareness of it, in order to create safer communities. Similar legislation already operates in several Australian states.

We will:

- Introduce legislation into Parliament to ensure that a coward punch is a serious crime contained in the Crimes Act 1961.
- Carry out publicity on the new legislation to raise awareness that one punch can kill, to help deter assaults.

6. We will require full public disclosure of any criminal convictions of all political candidates in local and central government.

We have had previous cases of convicted criminals standing for local government positions without the public knowing about their background. This has included former gang members who had assaulted people, and sex offenders.

We think the community deserves to know who they are voting for, and make their own decisions about whether they are fit to hold office.

We will:

- Ensure people standing for local government are required to disclose previous criminal offences and are vetted by Police before taking office.

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