

NEW BOOK

UNREASONABLE FORCE

New Zealand's journey towards banning the physical punishment of children

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New Zealand's journey towards banning the physical punishment of children



Beth Wood, Ian Hassall
and George Hook
with Robert Ludbrook

On the 16th of May 2007, in an historic accord, politicians from nearly all parties voted overwhelmingly to pass the Crimes (Substituted Section 59) Amendment Bill. The new law repealed the legal defence used by parents who had assaulted their children, and banned the use of force when disciplining children. This courageous and far-sighted decision by politicians has recently been commended by Yanghee Lee, the chair of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, as one that respects the human rights of children and will contribute towards children growing up in an environment free from all forms of violence.

This book traces the history of New Zealand's long journey towards the emergence of our children into full citizenship. It explores key aspects of the intense debate that gripped the nation, including the growing recognition of children rights, tensions within our laws, the impact of religious convictions, shifting public attitudes, the work of child advocacy, the influential role of the media, and the fascinating political story. The authors also look to the future and explore how we can build on the new law to benefit all children.

This very readable publication, which has been sponsored by Save the Children New Zealand, is a case study in social change that will be of interest to the public, politicians, campaigners, child advocates and the media, as well as to academics and students from many disciplines.

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co-ordinator of the repeal campaign

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