



Family Violence – A major concern *By Constable Ian Willetts*

I am currently working at the Counties Manukau East Family Violence Unit on secondment. Family violence is a serious and chronic enduring social issue in New Zealand. It has for many years consistently been one of the highest demand areas for Police.



It takes approximately between seventy to ninety minutes for two officers to attend and carry out tasks at a domestic violence incident. That time increases dramatically dependent upon the level of investigation and any subsequent Prosecution.

Officers attend about seventy domestic violence type incidents a week in the Eastern Manukau area.

This highlights the extreme high demand of resource in a complex and at times dangerous environment for the victims and also Police attending such incidents.

- **One in three women experience physical or sexual violence from a partner in their lifetime.**
- **Internationally, family violence is the largest killer of women under 44 years of age.**
- **A child living in a home with family violence can have negative impacts on their physiological and social development, and increases their chances of becoming future victims and offenders of family violence.**

The Ministry of Social Development, Department of Corrections, National Council of Independent Women's Refuges (NCIWR), Community Family Violence Response Services and the New Zealand Police are working hard together to jointly respond to and improve family violence outcomes to prevent future harm. These groups represent a cross section of our society and are government and non-government organisations. These groups are motivated, dedicated and work tirelessly towards helping families address the issues that manifest themselves in domestic abuse. The emphasis is on reducing repeat victims and offending. The Police cannot do this alone.

Making the offender accountable and hearing the matter before a speciality court, coupled with full agency support for the victim is the most effective weapon Police have against long term offending.

Before it reaches the need for Police to be called upon seek help early. It is only a matter of time before events go past the point of no return and irreversible harm is done to yourself, your partner and your children.

Victims can contact Woman's Refuge 09 378 1893, Victim Support 0800 842846 or Police.