

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**22 August 2008**

### **Trust & confidence in our justice system relatively low**

Six out of every 10 Kiwis don't have full trust and confidence in the New Zealand justice system, the latest Research New Zealand polling shows.

The poll found that 62 percent of Kiwis didn't have full trust and confidence in the justice system, compared with 36 percent who said they did.

"Care must be taken not to interpret the 62 percent as representing Kiwis with absolutely no confidence. Amongst this group, there will be people who have some, but not complete confidence," Research New Zealand director Emanuel Kalafatelis said.

The poll also found that Kiwis don't think we're tough enough on criminals when it comes to sentencing, with 75 percent of New Zealanders thinking criminal sentences were too soft, 21 percent thinking they were about right and one percent thinking sentences were too tough.

Mr Kalafatelis said the results showed New Zealanders had very strong feelings about the issue of justice.

"The results on the appropriateness of sentencing in particular were very clear cut. There's been lots of media coverage of particularly violent crimes over the past couple of months that may lead to justice and law and order being top of mind for Kiwis.

Mr Kalafatelis said those who don't have full confidence in the justice system are more likely to be older (69 percent of 50-59 year-olds don't have full trust and confidence, compared to 50 percent of those aged 15 to 29) and on higher incomes (68 percent of those who earn \$70,000 or more don't have full trust and confidence, compared to 54 percent of households who earn under \$40,000).

"The results for this poll should also be considered in relation to a poll we carried out last month about how safe people felt they were compared to the year before. In that poll, we found that 44 percent of Kiwis were more concerned about their personal safety than they were 12 months ago. A social indicator report released by the Ministry of Social Development early this year also shows that 40 percent of New Zealanders had a fear of crime affecting the quality of their life.



Attitudes to capital punishment for the worst murder crimes was also polled. New Zealanders were split over whether or not they supported capital punishment, with 48 percent saying they would support it and 49 percent saying they wouldn't.

Research New Zealand polling was conducted between 7 August and 14 August.

*The Research New Zealand poll of 500 people aged 15 and over was conducted by telephone between 7 August and 14 August. The maximum margin of error is +/- 4.4% (at the 95% confidence level). The data has been weighted to ensure it is an accurate representation of the population 15 years and over. The poll was not taken on behalf of any organisation but as part of Research New Zealand's monthly survey of attitudes and opinions.*

**Table 1: Full trust & confidence in the justice system**

*Do you have full trust and confidence in the New Zealand justice system?*

|            | Total | 15 to 29 | 30 to 39 | 40 to 49 | 50 to 59 | 60+ |
|------------|-------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----|
| Base =     | 500   | 90       | 75       | 101      | 106      | 128 |
|            | %     | %        | %        | %        | %        | %   |
| Yes        | 36    | 45       | 40       | 31       | 29       | 34  |
| No         | 62    | 50       | 60       | 66       | 69       | 66  |
| Don't know | 2     | 5        | 0        | 3        | 2        | 1   |
| Total      | 100   | 100      | 100      | 100      | 100      | 100 |

Total may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

**Table 2: Full trust & confidence in the justice system**

*Do you have full trust and confidence in the New Zealand justice system?*

|            | Total | Under \$40,000 | 40,000 - \$69,999 | \$70,000 plus | Don't know/refused |
|------------|-------|----------------|-------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Base =     | 500   | 182            | 103               | 162           | 53                 |
|            | %     | %              | %                 | %             | %                  |
| Yes        | 36    | 44             | 35                | 31            | 23                 |
| No         | 62    | 54             | 63                | 68            | 71                 |
| Don't know | 2     | 2              | 2                 | 1             | 5                  |
| Total      | 100   | 100            | 100               | 100           | 100                |

Total may not sum to 100 due to rounding.



**Table 3: Appropriateness of sentences**

*And in your opinion, the sentences handed out to criminals are....*

|             | Total | Male | Female |
|-------------|-------|------|--------|
| Base =      | 500   | 214  | 286    |
|             | %     | %    | %      |
| Too hard    | 1     | 1    | 1      |
| Too soft    | 75    | 74   | 76     |
| About right | 21    | 23   | 19     |
| Don't know  | 3     | 2    | 4      |
| Total       | 100   | 100  | 100    |

Total may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

**Table 4: Support for capital punishment**

*Would you support or not support bringing back capital punishment for the worst murder crimes?*

|                             | Total | Male | Female |
|-----------------------------|-------|------|--------|
| Base =                      | 500   | 214  | 286    |
|                             | %     | %    | %      |
| Yes I would support this    | 48    | 53   | 43     |
| No I would not support this | 49    | 46   | 51     |
| Don't know                  | 4     | 1    | 6      |
| Total                       | 100   | 100  | 100    |

Total may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

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