

MEDIA RELEASE

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‘Three Strikes’ law popular among New Zealanders

The ‘Three Strikes’ legislation, under which an offender who has committed a third ‘Three Strikes’ offence, will receive the maximum sentence available for the crime concerned, and will not be eligible for parole, but must serve the full sentence, was passed into law on May 25 2010.

The debate that has taken place since the legislation was first mooted has been fairly vigorous and the suggestion that it would result in fewer offences being committed has not been accepted in all quarters.

Research New Zealand decided to survey New Zealanders on the issue to establish what level of awareness there was of the proposed ‘Three Strikes’ legislation, what support there was for it, and whether it was felt the new law will reduce offending.

Some 66 percent of New Zealanders had heard of the legislation, 71 percent of males and 62 percent of females. The younger age group (15 – 34 years) had the lowest awareness at 46 percent. Maori and Pacific people also had relatively low awareness at 51 percent.

The nature of the proposed legislation was explained to the participants in the survey, who were then asked whether they were in favour of it, and whether they thought it would deter criminals from committing a third ‘Three Strikes’ offence.

Eighty-one percent, and almost equal proportions of males and females, were in favour of the legislation. “Clearly the government had not misread popular sentiment on the issue”, said Research New Zealand Director, Emanuel Kalafatelis. Support was high throughout those surveyed. Among Maori and Pacific People the proportion in favour was 79 percent, not very different from that of NZ Europeans (83 percent) and other ethnic groups (76 percent).

However, New Zealanders are rather pessimistic about the deterrent effect of the legislation. Just over half of the participants in the poll felt that it would have a deterrent effect, the highest proportion (64 percent) being in the age group 15 – 34 years.

Interestingly, only 61 percent of those who were in favour of the legislation believed it would deter criminals from committing a third ‘Three Strikes’ offence, showing that for a significant minority of respondents (30 percent) punishment and not deterrence is likely to have been the driver of opinion.



The Research New Zealand poll of 502 people aged 15 and over was conducted by telephone between 18 and 25 May. The maximum margin of error is +/- 4.8 % (at the 95% confidence level). The data has been weighted to ensure it is an accurate representation of New Zealand's general population. The poll was not taken on behalf of any organization, but as part of Research New Zealand's monthly survey of attitudes and opinions.

Research New Zealand is an independent, New Zealand-owned research organisation undertaking social and business research.

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Table 1:

Q6. Now on a different topic, have you heard of a proposal for a new law called 'Three Strikes and you are out'?

	Base =	Total	Male	Female
		502	232	270
		%	%	%
Yes		66	71	62
No		31	27	34
Don't know		3	2	4
Total		100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Table 2:

Q6. Now on a different topic, have you heard of a proposal for a new law called 'Three Strikes and you are out'?

	Base =	Total	15-34 years	35 to 54 years	55 years and over
		502	97	183	222
		%	%	%	%
Yes		66	46	75	78
No		31	49	23	19
Don't know		3	4	2	3
Total		100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Table 3:

Q6. Now on a different topic, have you heard of a proposal for a new law called 'Three Strikes and you are out'?

	Base =	Total	New Zealand		
		502	Maori/Pacific	European	Other
		%	%	%	%
Yes		66	51	71	51
No		31	46	25	48
Don't know		3	3	4	1
Total		100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.



Table 4:

Q6. Now on a different topic, have you heard of a proposal for a new law called 'Three Strikes and you are out'?

	Total	North North Island	Lower/Central North Island	South Island
Base =	502	171	181	150
	%	%	%	%
Yes	66	69	60	71
No	31	30	34	28
Don't know	3	1	6	2
Total	100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Table 5:

Q7. Under this proposal a criminal convicted for the third time of certain violent or sexual offences, will be sentenced to the maximum term available for their third offence, without the possibility of parole. Are you in favour or not in favour of this proposed law?

	Total	Male	Female
Base =	502	232	270
	%	%	%
Yes, in favour	81	82	81
No, not in favour	12	15	9
Don't know	7	2	10
Total	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Table 6:

Q7. Under this proposal a criminal convicted for the third time of certain violent or sexual offences, will be sentenced to the maximum term available for their third offence, without the possibility of parole. Are you in favour or not in favour of this proposed law?

	Total	15-34 years	35 to 54 years	55 years and over
Base =	502	97	183	222
	%	%	%	%
Yes, in favour	81	80	84	79
No, not in favour	12	11	10	16
Don't know	7	8	6	5
Total	100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.



Table 7:

Q7. Under this proposal a criminal convicted for the third time of certain violent or sexual offences, will be sentenced to the maximum term available for their third offence, without the possibility of parole. Are you in favour or not in favour of this proposed law?

Base =	New Zealand			
	Total	Maori/Pacific	European	Other
	502	52	403	63
	%	%	%	%
Yes, in favour	81	79	83	76
No, not in favour	12	14	10	18
Don't know	7	7	6	6
Total	100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Table 8:

Q7. Under this proposal a criminal convicted for the third time of certain violent or sexual offences, will be sentenced to the maximum term available for their third offence, without the possibility of parole. Are you in favour or not in favour of this proposed law?

Base =	North North Lower/Central			
	Total	Island	North Island	South Island
	502	171	181	150
	%	%	%	%
Yes, in favour	81	80	82	83
No, not in favour	12	15	12	8
Don't know	7	5	6	9
Total	100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Table 9:

Q7a. Do you believe this will deter criminals from committing a third such offence?

Base =	Total	
	Male	Female
	502	232
	%	%
Yes	55	54
No	34	37
Don't know	11	9
Total	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.



Table 10:

Q7a. Do you believe this will deter criminals from committing a third such offence?

	Total	15-34 years	35 to 54 years	55 years and over
Base =	502	97	183	222
	%	%	%	%
Yes	55	64	54	45
No	34	27	37	41
Don't know	11	9	10	14
Total	100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Table 11:

Q7a. Do you believe this will deter criminals from committing a third such offence?

	Total	Maori/Pacific	New Zealand European	Other
Base =	502	52	403	63
	%	%	%	%
Yes	55	50	56	49
No	34	37	34	35
Don't know	11	13	10	16
Total	100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Table 12:

Q7a. Do you believe this will deter criminals from committing a third such offence?

	Total	North North Island	Lower/Central North Island	South Island
Base =	502	171	181	150
	%	%	%	%
Yes	55	60	50	54
No	34	30	38	34
Don't know	11	10	12	11
Total	100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Table 13:

Q7a. Do you believe this will deter criminals from committing a third such offence?

	Total	Yes, in favour	No, not in favour	Don't know/refused
Base =	502	409	60	33
	%	%	%	%
Yes	55	61	27	30
No	34	30	61	39
Don't know	11	10	7	30
Total	100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.