



MEDIA RELEASE

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### **The system fails the Livingstones**

"The view that GPS and a gun register might have prevented the tragic deaths of Bradley and Ellen Livingstone ignores the fact that the Government and its agencies no longer prioritise the safety of women and children." said Leonie Morris spokesperson for the Auckland Coalition for the Safety of Women and Children.

"The Domestic Violence Act 1995 was based on an understanding of the serious nature of domestic violence, the need to keep survivors and their children safe, and the importance of holding perpetrators accountable, but that analysis has now been so watered down that it is ineffectual."

"Unless there is a transformative change in the Government's policy and processes it is only a matter of time before more women and children are murdered."

"Evidence and research on domestic violence shows that male perpetrators use a recognisable pattern of violence designed to have power and control over their partner. It also shows that a violent partner is a dangerous father."

"Today our courts and police frequently ignore women's fears, minimise dangerousness and fail to prioritise the safety of women and children. From media reports, we can see that there were many red flags that indicated Edward Livingstone was a real threat to his ex-wife and children. In the face of these risk factors, it is shocking that the judge awarded the killer not one, but two discharges without conviction.

"In this recent tragedy the Judge prioritised Edward Livingstone's continued employment over the safety of his ex-wife and children, resulting in the deaths of Bradley and Ellen."

"Unfortunately this is not an isolated incident. As recently as November 2013, Sarwan Lata Singh was found killed in her Wellington home after the accused had breached a protection order she held against him; in June that year a Hawkes Bay mother of two, Gail Bower, was murdered by her ex-partner despite having a protection order against him."

"A breach of a Protection Order is a breach no matter what the action entails. It is an action defying a court order and should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law whether it is a text message or a serious physical assault. When a perpetrator thumbs his nose at the court and gets away with it, his power and confidence increase at the same time as the safety and confidence of the victim decrease. A woman will not take the risk

of calling the police unless the consequences for the perpetrator are swift, predictable and severe enough to provide a deterrent.”

“These systemic failures raise grave concerns about the adequacy of protections and processes in place for those experiencing domestic violence. The Coalition contests the view that these tragedies are unforeseeable and unpreventable”.

“We urge the Government to prioritise ending men’s violence against women as a serious issue affecting women and children and New Zealand society.”

### **For further inquiries:**

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**The Auckland Coalition for the Safety of Women and Children** was developed in 2006 to strategise and work toward achieving the ultimate goal of safety for women and children in Auckland.

We have undertaken a number of innovative activities including a competition for young people to make a video for YouTube on violence against young women and a community development programme involving small businesses making a commitment to speaking out against domestic violence.

### **Members:**

- Auckland Sexual Abuse HELP
- Auckland Women’s Centre
- Eastern Women’s Refuge
- Homeworks Trust
- Inner City Women’s Group
- Mental Health Foundation
- Mt Albert Psychological Services Ltd
- North Shore Women’s Centre
- Rape Prevention Education – Whakatu Mauri
- SHINE Safer Homes in NZ Everyday
- Supportline Women’s Refuge
- Women’s Health Action Trust