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NEW ZEALAND
POLICE ASSOCIATION
*A member of the New Zealand
Police Association group*

26 February 2007

Stuart Hylton
Senior Policy Advisor
Wanganui District Council
P O Box
WANGANUI 4500

D-28507

Copy → all councillors.

Dear Stuart,

Thank you for the opportunity to assist in relation to your strategy to depower the gangs in your town.

Broadly gangs' work on the principle of intimidation and their power is based on their sphere of intimidation. For example if their intimidation is limited to the patrons of a certain hotel in a part of town then they will be far less effective than a gang whose presence is felt whenever groups of people are involved in activities like cannabis or other drug use and who need to indulge in some illegal activity such as purchasing drugs to carry out their activities. In this respect gangs very much mark out their territory often by subtle means of having known individuals, or members of gang associates, frequenting establishments like clubs or bars to give the message that it is their turf. Their most obvious claim to their turf is to wear the patch.

No one initiative on its own will disempower the gangs but there is a series of small things that can be done that will serve to diminish the standing of the gangs in the eyes of those they have intimidated or seek to intimidate. One of these ways is to be seen to be arrested for breaching a gang patch law and to be seen to be hiding such paraphernalia from Police. It is part of giving the public the message that the gangs can be stood up to by the authorities.

Flaunting of the of the gang paraphernalia is an act of intimidation and any by-law which gives the authorities the ability to limit or even hopefully eliminate such obvious paraphernalia is a small but significant step towards reclaiming the streets for law abiding New Zealanders.

It is the Association's belief that all strategies designed to disempower the gangs should be co-ordinated between local bodies and central Government and especially between Government departments like Corrections, Justice, Police and IRD.

The Association applauds the efforts of the Wanganui City Council to assist in your attempt to show the citizens of Wanganui that overt gang behaviour will not be tolerated. We believe a successful law in your city could become the model for the country.

Congratulations once again and please let us know of any way we can be of assistance.

Yours sincerely



Greg O'Connor
PRESIDENT