

## **Media Release**

Saturday 15 November 2025

### **Child sexual exploitation charity conducts silent march through Mount Maunganui streets**

More than 20 people took to the streets of Mount Maunganui on Saturday, wearing masks to symbolise children silenced by sexual exploitation, as part of a growing national movement led by the Saint Nicholas Children's Trust.

This was the fourth march organised by the Trust - and the first in the Bay of Plenty - following a series of successful events in Nelson, Wellington, and Christchurch.

Founded earlier this year by senior health leader Angela Francis, the Saint Nicholas Children's Trust aims to bring visibility to an issue that remains hidden, despite its widespread impact.

"Child sexual exploitation is not just happening overseas - it's happening right here in New Zealand, often in ways that are covert and hard to detect," said Francis. "Our marches are a way to give a voice to children who cannot speak out, and to push for the awareness and change that's urgently needed."

Participants gathered at Marine Parade at 10am on Saturday November 15, marching together through the town's streets. Supporters wore masks - representing children whose experiences are too often silenced.

Also in attendance was Labour MP Hon Jan Tinetti, who opened the event, and Act MP Cameron Luxton.

"I am honoured to be supporting the Saint Nicholas Children's Trust as they are committed to raising awareness of child sexual exploitation through education, advocacy, and community partnerships," Tinetti said.

"Shining a light on child sexual exploitation saves lives, prevents further harm, and helps build a society that truly protects and values children."

Luxton noted: "The Saint Nicholas Children's Trust does essential work raising awareness of child sexual exploitation. I'm proud to stand with them and to support their mission to protect vulnerable young people".

[Research published in May by \*The Lancet\*](#) found more than one-quarter of Kiwi women and one in five of the country's men are estimated to experience sexual violence before age 18.

In addition, [Stand Strong, Walk Tall](#) co-founder and University of Canterbury associate professor, Dr Sarah Christofferson, [said she estimates](#) around 3% – 5% of the adult male population in New Zealand would have experienced feelings of sexual attraction to a minor. That equates to tens of thousands of New Zealand men.

"At Saint Nicholas Trust we consider awareness as the first step in evidence-based prevention, so that is why we focus on raising awareness," said Francis.

Angela Francis, who is also the charity's Chair, says the response from communities across the country has been encouraging.

"It's been wonderful to see so many local leaders, families, and New Zealanders showing up, asking how they can help at our events this year," she said. "Every single person who is aware of the issue, knows how to spot it, and has the tools to take actions means we are working towards a safer New Zealand for our tamariki."

Further details about the Saint Nicholas Children's Trust are available at [www.snctrust.org](http://www.snctrust.org).

**ENDS**

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**Saint Nicholas  
Children's Trust**  
*raising awareness of child sexual exploitation*



