

## Please help our children

A STREET survey recently appeared in the News-Mail asking residents their opinion on a safe house campaign being considered in Port Augusta to get children off the streets at night.

PLEASE has for three years now been fighting to have a safe house established for runaways who leave home prematurely and begin living in environments that are unsafe. A submission was presented to the Department of Families as well as the opposition stating what we felt were the problems, causes and possible solutions that contribute to these kids being allowed to leave home.

Part of the proposal was to have the department and police work closely together along with parents and the kids.

A magistrate would issue an order to remove the child from harm, giving them an option of either going to a safe house or returning home. Part of the proposal included mediation, counselling and rehab if required being undertaken by both the child and the family.

Many of the kids roaming the streets at night are out there because their parents are unable to bring them home.

Parents are powerless to act in these circumstances and need the backing of authorities to protect their children. We should not be forced to break the law to protect our kids.

Blaming parents is not the way to solve the problem. Something needs to be done, and as a group PLEASE is trying to do something about it.

We need support by becoming one voice to force policy makers and the authorities to listen. We can't stand by and watch our kids destroy their lives.

Many children Australia-wide are leaving loving homes to live in unsafe environments. Of these kids some are becoming involved in drugs, prostitution, and a life of crime.

Several have died of drug overdoses. Our kids are dying and we are watching it happen. One death is one too many. Please help us save our kids.

**KAREN GOULD**  
Secretary PLEASE

## good progress

ON behalf of PLEASE, I sincerely thank Rod Rehbein and Belinda Saban for their continued support this past year.

Through the News-Mail we have reached many people who might not otherwise have heard of us.

PLEASE has had a very successful year working closely with Denver Beanland, the opposition spokesperson for families.

We are working on a submission for Mr Beanland to present to parliament.

Mr David Dalgleish, Member for Hervey Bay, has shown support for our objectives and has presented several questions to the Minister for Families in Parliament.

Service clubs are regularly inviting PLEASE to attend meetings as guest speaker and we have received strong support from these groups.

PLEASE will continue to lobby all levels of government to bring about changes to the current, ineffective legislation.

Thank you to the general public who have supported us in our first year.

I invite interested people to our meetings next year.

Anyone wanting more information about PLEASE can telephone Joan on 4159 4243 or myself on 4153 3423.

**KAREN GOULD**  
Secretary  
**PLEASE**

## ROCKHAMPTON MORNING BULLETIN Parents fight back

□ Reference is made to recent media coverage of the dangers children are being exposed to and the helpless situation parents face when trying to protect them. The House of Horrors in Rockhampton is an example.

Parents Lobbying Empowerment Against Systematic Exclusion (PLEASE) was formed in Bundaberg in October 1998 to lobby all levels of government for changes to current legislation which excludes parents from their very important role of protecting their precious children. Since its formation, the group has

continually addressed the problems with the Premier and relevant Ministers. The apparent encouragement and support given by "the system" for children to live in dangerous situations is of serious concern to our group as evidence shows that the criminal element is always waiting in the wings to further destruct young lives.

To further highlight the problems on a statewide basis, support is sought from interested persons to establish a branch of our organisation in your city.

For further call 4159 4243 or leave your contact details on our e-mail address, please@tpgi.com.au.

**Joan Strohfeldt, President, Parents Lobbying Empowerment Against Systematic Exclusion.**

THE GUARDIAN 9/12/98

## Parents group in operation

PLEASE (Parents Lobbying Empowerment Against Systematic Exclusion) is an initiative of concerned parents Maryanne Cooper of Bundaberg and Lisa Ervasti in New South Wales.

These women, along with many other Australian families, share a passion for a joint cause after experiencing systematic exclusion when it comes to their rights as parents.

PLEASE is a group of concerned people in the community who are working together to address the fact that the system leans heavily towards the rights of the child/adolescent and that parental/community rights and responsibilities are not recog-

nised adequately.

The group aims to get the balance right by lobbying the appropriate government departments for changes to legislation and policies. All are welcome to observe, join in their mission or log on to the mailing list.

Meetings are held every Wednesday from 7pm, at the Neighbourhood Centre, 111 Targo Street. The mailing address is: PLEASE, PO Box 2899, Bundaberg Q 4670. Telephone/fax 4152 1495. Telephone president Joan Strohfeldt on 4159 4243 for more information.