



## *Enough is Enough*

*“Hurt people, hurt people.”* Ken Marslew

An interview with Maggie Hamilton

Almost thirty years ago Ken Marslew founded *Enough is Enough*, an organisation designed to tackle the violence currently experienced in our communities, by encouraging people to take responsibility for their actions and by promoting violence prevention strategies.

This powerful work was prompted by the tragic murder of Ken Marslew’s son, university student Michael, who lost his life during a bungled armed hold-up at Jannali Pizza Hut. ‘I lost the plot initially,’ Ken confesses. ‘Then came the anger - wanting to get back at those four men who had murdered Michael.’



My focus began to change after meeting Sandy McGregor, whose three daughters had been shot dead several years earlier, when he said to me, ‘No matter what you do, you won’t get Michael back.’

Over time, Ken went on to meet all four men, involved in his son’s murder. Two of the four men agreed to take part in a restorative justice session, where they faced the family. One of these men showed considerable remorse. ‘This was a life-changing moment,’ Ken recalls. ‘I remember thinking, maybe I can use this experience to help others...’

*‘I began wondering what was needed to put a stop to violence in our communities.’*



Ken began writing to this prisoner, sending him self-help books, then employing him once he emerged from prison – moves which attracted a lot of criticism.

As Ken pondered the complexities of dealing with violence, he got the opportunity to go into the juvenile justice system and was moved by the experience. ‘The boys started telling me their stories – of domestic violence and suicide and other terrible experiences,’ he recalls, ‘and I started to see how violence is a learned behaviour.’



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There are many reasons, Ken has learned, why people offend. Overall, he believes, the cause can be summarised as hurt people hurt people. Ken has made it his mission to deal with this hurt.

*Enough is Enough* offers a range of offender rehabilitation programs from stress and anger management, and a drug and alcohol relapse prevention program, as well as victim impact and risk management seminars.

As a tireless advocate in this space, Ken represented the community on the Premiers Council on Crime Prevention, the Attorney General's Victims Advisory Board for 15 years, and Victims Support Australasia. He also served on the Corrective Service Restorative Justice Advisory Committee and NSW Sentencing Council, along with the Young Offenders Advisory Council and NSW State Parole Authority.

'There's a lot,' he insists, 'we can do, to turn around the level of violence currently experienced.' One of the favourite catch cries is the importance of getting tough on crime.

I believe we need to get smart on crime, and part of this process is building a more inclusive community.'

'There is much to be learned from the Scandinavians whose rate of re-offending, for example, is now

around 20 percent, compared to 70 percent here.

The transition back into the community needs to be our focus, rather than building bigger prisons,' Ken reflects. 'And prison needs to have less of an institutional feel and have instead more of a community focused on personal responsibility and skill-building. Restorative justice is also under-utilised. Some see it as a soft option, but it's anything but.'

Redfern in NSW was going through a difficult period with high rates of offending, when aboriginal elder Shane Phillips and police Commander Superintendent Luke Freudenstein combined forces to work with local young indigenous people. 'The cops boxed with the kids,' Ken explains. They fed them, trained and disciplined them, and reduced offending rates by 40 percent in just one year.'

Working with both victims and perpetrators, those involved with *Enough is Enough* have a unique perspective on violence. 'This approach gives you the big picture,' Ken reflects, 'a strong sense of the solutions needed.' Always on the search for more funding, *Enough is Enough* is also committed to being part of the debate around violence, and to finding new and more effective ways forward. Ken is presently finishing off a book on his journey, "Motivated by Murder", which will be out later this year.



People talk about getting tough on crime.  
We need to get smart on crime.

VISIT: [www.enoughisEnough.org.au](http://www.enoughisEnough.org.au)

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Heart of Australia  
(26 October)