



Winner of New Zealand Idol announced October 30, 2006

The winner of the third series of New Zealand Idol was announced by host, Dominic Bowden during a live two hour special at a packed Saint James theatre and the winner was Matt Saunoa from Levin, 21-years-old, who cried when the announcement was made.

Matt beat other finalist, Indira Moala from North Shore, Auckland, who is also 21-years-old.

Matt Saunoa receives more prizes than the other two idols before him, including NZ\$50,000 cash, a Daihatsu Terios car and a recording contract which includes a guaranteed single release.

Matt said: "I just want to thank everyone so much. I didn't think I would make it past the first round and I won the competition." Matt was lucky to make it past the first round one of the judges, Frankie Stevens, only allowed Matt to progress on in the competition after Matt assured Stevens that he would win the competition. He also didn't make it past the first round in the first season of NZ Idol.

Before the announcement Indira said: "I had no idea I'd make it this far. You have no idea how excited I am. Whatever happens tonight I'm going to rock it out." And then Matt said: "If you make me New Zealand Idol I will

work my ass off to make sure there are singles and albums out there that do it justice," referring to past winners, Ben Lummis and Rosita Vai who both had no commercial success.

Centrebet, online betting service, said that their odds on Matt were \$1.90 while Indira's were at \$1.80, the first time Matt hadn't been favoured since September 18.

The Prime Minister of New Zealand, Helen Clark, made an appearance and applauded the success of the two for getting this far in the competition. And the rest of the final ten also made a brief appearance.

TVNZ, the broadcasters of NZ Idol, are yet to confirm a fourth NZ Idol even though the ratings were excellent. TVNZ will be speaking to South Pacific Pictures of the future of NZ Idol.

New Zealand police lose criminal at Heathrow Airport October 31, 2006

The New Zealand police lost Rafal Luczynski, a convicted drug dealer, while at London's Heathrow Airport awaiting to be taken back to his homeland, Poland. Luczynski managed to lose the two New Zealand detectives in Terminal One on October 12.

32-year-old Luczynski was convicted three and half years ago of importing four kilograms of amphetamine ("speed"), worth an estimated \$4

million. He still has eight and a half years of his twelve year sentence to serve.

The police have launched an inquiry to find out whether Luczynski's escape was due to a procedural deficiency or an error by the detectives. If the detectives are to be faulted, then they may face disciplinary action.

The findings of the inquiry may not be made public for security reasons. Jon Neilson, spokesman for the police, said: "I can not guarantee the findings of the review will be released, because of the secret nature of the operation." It is expected in three to four weeks.

The police are not going to attempt to recapture the criminal. This is mainly because he was out of the New Zealand jurisdiction. "He's no longer wanted by New Zealand police at all," Michael Player, spokesman for the police, said, "It's just unfortunate that he exited ahead of his destination, but really he's now a UK responsibility. It's up to the UK authorities to decide how much effort they put in to trying to find him."

The Police say that a criminal evading had never happened until now, even though they do provide several escorts per week. "The policemen were rather embarrassed at losing Luczynski, who was not handcuffed when he escaped," Player said.

Luczynski first managed to escape from New Zealand when in 2001 he was in home detention. He was not

caught for two years until he was found in New York. "He seems to be a bit of a Houdini artist," Player said.

Luczynski has connections to the Polish mafia.

Neilson said: "There was a formal notification for alerting British police if a prisoner was being handed over, but if the prisoner and escorts were in transit then it was a more straightforward procedure."

Api Fiso, group manager of border security for the Labour Department, said: "It was the responsibility of the police, not the department, to ensure deportees reached their destinations. Though the department had an interest in the outcome of any search, it would not be taking an active role in finding Luczynski."

Dutch Prince leaves sour impression with New Zealanders November 1, 2006

The heir to the Dutch throne, Prince Willem-Alexander of Orange, left New Zealand onlookers bemused with an apparent snub as he and his wife Princess Máxima started an official visit to New Zealand on Tuesday.

Prince Willem-Alexander and Princess Máxima are visiting New Zealand after an official visit to Australia. An official state welcome was held in the grounds of Government House in Wellington yesterday.

As they left a hotel, in Queenstown, New Zealand's tourism capital, ending a three-day private holiday before embarking on their official tour of New Zealand, a radio reporter asked the prince about his impressions of New Zealand.

"Mind your own business, it's private," was the curt reply, which drew gasps

from onlookers, as the Prince of Orange got into a cream-coloured Mercedes. Just seconds earlier, Princess Máxima who is pregnant with the couple's third child, waved and smiled, saying she had "just loved" Queenstown.

Hotel general manager Victoria Shaw said the couple "loved the hotel and their time in Queenstown, but it was their private time and they requested they have their privacy while they were here."

One upset onlooker yelled "And don't come back" after the departing motorcade.

They left Queenstown in a bright orange private jet and will host their first reception in Wellington on Wednesday.

The couple are due to fly out for Singapore Saturday afternoon.

New Zealand Medical Association says no party pills November 1, 2006

The New Zealand Medical Association has warned the public against taking party pills, even though they are legal in New Zealand. This warning comes because Benzylpiperazine, or BZP, can trigger hypothermia, seizures, paranoia, insomnia, anxiety, nausea, vomiting, palpitations and spasms of the muscle. Some of those side effects will occur if the person has taken 4.5 tablets.

Those who do take party pills should not mix them with medication, drugs or alcohol. Also those with mental illnesses are advised to steer clear of the pills.

Ross Boswell, chairman of the medical association, said: "There were growing concerns about the safety of BZP-based party pills," and the

legality of the pills is coming under fire. "If people insist on taking the pills, they should make sure they stick to the manufacturer's recommended dose, of one or two pills, and not combine them with other stimulants."

A study done at the Christchurch Hospital has shown that 61 patients had been to the emergency department a total of 80 times. Of those 80 times, 15 of them were toxic seizures and two patients presented life threatening conditions.

The pills are often sold as "herbal highs" but according to Boswell, there is nothing "herbal" about them as they were first made to treat cattle that had worms.

Boswell said: "Further research on the effects of BZP is soon to be released by the Health Minister," as the New Zealand government is debating whether or not they should be banned or have their sale restricted.

Plane with Dutch royal couple on board makes emergency landing November 1, 2006

The heir to the Dutch throne, Prince Willem-Alexander of Orange, has been forced to make an emergency landing in New Zealand after passengers smelt smoke on board a chartered plane soon after takeoff.

The private Jetstream 32 carrying Prince Willem-Alexander and his wife Princess Máxima departed for Wellington from Nelson, and was forced to make an emergency landing at Nelson Airport at around half past four this afternoon, minutes after takeoff.

Nelson Airport General Manager Kay McNabb says the plane was not in the air long when the crew detected what they thought was smoke in the cockpit,

forcing the aircraft to circle the airport and land.

She says that the rescue fire crews were on standby as the royal couple's airplane touched down.

She says the plane landed without incident, all 17 people on board were unhurt. The royal couples were put on a commercial flight to Wellington at five o'clock.

The emergency landing comes after they made headlines earlier this week, with an apparent snub as he and Princess Máxima started an official visit to New Zealand on Tuesday.

The royal couple are visiting New Zealand from October 31 to November 4. Their stay will include visiting Christchurch, Nelson, Wellington and Auckland. They are due to fly out for Singapore Saturday afternoon.

Wellington airport denies National party advertisements November 1, 2006



Wellington, New Zealand, airport has denied supporters of New Zealand's National party to use its land for its newest billboard advertising. The advertisement was denied for being too politically sensitive.

Bill English, National member, said: "Vicious attacks on critics by Helen Clark and her Labour-led Government have led to Wellington Airport turning down a National Party billboard as it was too politically sensitive."

However the sign has been put up in Auckland, State Highway 20 and on Christchurch's Main North Road.

"The billboards are being paid for from party funds and highlight the scandals and controversies that have surrounded Helen Clark during her time as Prime Minister. The airport company has every right to decide who advertises on airport property, but last year Wellington Airport accepted billboards critical of the Government," English said.

The billboard states on it: "painter-gate, corn-gate, doone-gate, speed-gate, pledge-gate and (next to an arrow) departure gate," all these words were accompanied by a picture of Helen Clark, PM, which slowly decreased in size. And then, at the bottom next to the National logo, it said: "Proudly paid for by supporters of the National Party - with their own money."

Wellington Airport will not comment on why they declined the billboard on its property. Louise Murray, a spokesman for the airport, said: "The

airport reserves the right to decline any advertising." Murray made no comment on how the decisions are made or why this particular billboard was rejected.

"However, Wellington Airport, like everyone else, saw Helen Clark's assault on the Auditor-General and Labour's plans to legislate to stop people who don't belong to political parties criticizing the Government next election. These actions have created a climate of fear and more so for a company doing business with Government-owned Air New

Zealand," English said.

Australia beat New Zealand to enter into the final of 2006 ICC Champions Trophy November 1, 2006

Australia have beaten New Zealand by 34 runs in the first semifinal of the 2006 ICC Champions Trophy at Punjab Cricket Association Stadium in Mohali. By beating New Zealand, Australia secured their place in the final which will be taking place on November 5 in Mumbai.

New Zealand cricket captain Stephen Fleming won the toss and decided to field first. Australia set up a target of 241 in 50 overs for New Zealand. New Zealand could not reach the target and were all out on 206 in 46 overs. Australia won the match by 34 runs. They will play in the final with the winner of the second semifinal which will take place tomorrow in Jaipur between South Africa and West Indies.

The man of the match award was given to Glenn McGrath for his good bowling by taking 3 wicket for just 22 runs in 10 overs.

For technical reasons the rest of the article cannot be placed into this print edition, sorry for the inconvenience.

Consumers' Institute: decline in New Zealand Internet satisfaction November 2, 2006

An annual survey done by the New Zealand Consumers' Institute has shown that there has been a dramatic decline in satisfaction with the respondents' Internet service providers (ISP).

Of the over 10,000 Internet users who participated in the survey, only 66% said they were either satisfied or very

satisfied with their current ISP. This is compared to the 2005 survey which was at 82%. The reason, according to the Consumers' Institute, is because of national ISP, Xtra dragging down the ratings. Xtra users made up 51% of the respondents.

Only 55% of Xtra's customers said they were satisfied or very satisfied with Xtra, it was 78% last year. Xtra rated worst in every single category. Nick Brown, spokesman, said: "Xtra will be working to improve its ranking. The rapid growth in the broadband market at the moment means you don't get things right all the time. [Xtra is] disappointed with the results and will be going through the details with a view to making improvements."

The best ISP, as voted by the survey respondents, was Inspire, the third consecutive time they have won. 97% of Inspire's users said that its performance was either good or very good.

David Russel, chief executive of the Consumers' Institute, said: "The wonderful world of cyberspace has a long way to go in New Zealand in terms of providing customer satisfaction. Providers must sharpen up on their advertising and improve the performance of their service desks. The big ISPs are promising too much. Broadband speed and the price people are paying are the biggest bones of contention."

Mr. Russell added: "Support, both online and offline is a key factor in satisfaction with your ISP. However, price is still key."

New Zealand government introduces graphic warnings on cigarettes **November 2, 2006**

The New Zealand government has now introduced graphic health warnings on cigarette packs. The new warnings, which replace the text warnings, will show images of gangrenous toes, rotting gums and teeth and diseased lungs and will also include the quit smoking Quitline number.

The new warnings will cover 30% of the front side and 90% of the back.

The new warnings will come into effect January 2007 but the manufacturers will not have to produce the new warnings until February 27, 2008 and retailers have till August 2008 to clear all their old stock.

Damien O'Conner, associate minister of health and ex-smoker, said: "Pictures were more effective than written warnings. Actually seeing what it does to you is probably more acute than just reading the words on a cigarette packet. The approach is designed to shock people into realising smoking kills and causes serious illness. Using powerful imagery to remind people of the real and horrific effects of smoking will act to deter smokers and discourage New Zealand's young from starting the habit in the first place."

Other countries which also show graphic warnings include Australia and Canada; they say that the warnings are effective. Chris Laurenson, Health Ministry team leader national drug policy, said that international evidence was strong. "That was confirmed by research in New Zealand which supported the effectiveness of pictorial labelling."

Altogether there will be fourteen images, of which seven will be released first, with rest following.

Mr O'Connor said: "The images were horrific; but they are what happen to people who smoke in this country."

The Cancer Society says that the new warnings are good but does say that the manufacturers will bypass the new warnings by:

- including stickers to cover the warnings,
- Peel off labels,
- provide cigarette holders which will enable smokers to bypass the use of the packet,
- slow the introduction by stockpiling old packets in storage.

However, according to Mr O'Conner, one company had used removable sticker that were later removed due to consultation.

The industries will not be reimbursed for any cost that may occur. "They've given a commitment to comply by the regulations. They understand what it might mean if they don't and I'm confident that they will," Mr O'Connor said.

"The 2008 deadline is way too excessive, [...] Pictorial warnings are not a new idea. They have already been implemented in other countries and the NZ tobacco industry has the technology to print the new packets within weeks," Becky Freeman, the Action on Smoking and Health director said.

World Health Organization rules make New Zealand obliged to increase the warning sizes on packets.

Kiwis docked competition points

November 2, 2006

The New Zealand Rugby League team (Kiwis) have been docked two competition points and hooker Nathan Fien barred from playing in the Gilette Rugby League Tri-Nations series.

It comes after allegations of Fien's availability to play for the Kiwi's were exposed by a documentation of his birth certificate.

At a hearing the Rugby League International Federation ruled that Fien was unable to play for the kiwis as he was Australian born. Instead of his grandmother a resident of New Zealand, it was in fact his great-grandmother. According to Rugby League International Federation chariman Colin Love, the Kiwis thought great-grandparents were as good as grandparents.

For a player to play for a different team other than their birth place the rules say that then their parents and/or grandparents have to be born in the other country.

The two points which were docked were the ones that the Kiwis earned when they beat Great Britain last week, it was the same game in which Fien was hooker for the Kiwis team.

The Tri-Nations subcommittee who made the decision didn't want to kick the Kiwis out of the competition.

The penalty incurred has put the Kiwis team into last place with zero points, alongside another team, the Lions. The Kiwis are now not going to be able to qualify for the final on November 25.

The Kiwis last game is against Great Britain on Saturday.

Fien has reportedly left the Kiwis training camp and is reportedly

heading back to Townsville.

Pizza 'lust' campaign attracts numerous complaints

November 3, 2006

New Zealand's Hell Pizza company sparked a storm of protest on Thursday after putting 170,000 condoms in mailboxes.

Hell Pizza, located in 18 cities throughout New Zealand, included a condom and explicit instructions on how to use it during sex in its small pamphlet delivered to promote its "Lust" pizza, and has attracted more than 30 complaints to the Advertising Standards Authority.

Groups such as Family Life International, Focus on the Family and the Catholic Church have condemned the campaign as encouraging children to use the condoms and follow the "explicit instructions" contained in the packet and called for a boycott of the company.

"From the feedback we're getting a lot of people are making complaints to the Advertising Standards Authority and are boycotting Hell's Pizza, and we encourage that."

The church had received a number of complaints from people offended at finding a condom along with the advertising in their letterbox, Bishop Browne said.

Bob McCoskrie, national director of the group Family First said Hell Pizza had crossed the line of what was decent and acceptable advertising material to be put in letterboxes of families and that the connection between "meat-lovers" pizzas and condoms cheapened women and the act of sex, and that Hell Pizza's advertising has previously been cheeky and fun, but he thinks the line has now been crossed.

"It is offensive to families to have condoms and explicit sex instructions put in their letterbox, and it is unacceptable for Hell Pizza to link pizza with the intimate act of sex," McCoskrie says.

McCoskrie says children and families should be protected from offensive grubby advertising.

"It is time we started protecting our children and families. Family First believes the Advertising Standards Authority will be receiving plenty of complaints about Hell Pizza's latest advertising campaign."

Hell Pizza's director Warren Powell refused to apologise for distributing the condoms.

Powell says the company discussed the promotion with Family Planning and the Aids Foundation and they completely support the campaign.

"While the primary aim of the campaign is to promote our Lust pizza, let's not forget that promoting the use of condoms has important public benefits," said Warren Powell.

"Government and public agencies distribute these things for free to young people."

"Before this campaign started we rang a number of these agencies and offered them our excess condoms at no charge."

Clint Brown, ex NZ TV presenter, investigation complete

November 3, 2006

The investigation over whether the allegations that resulted in ex-sports presenter for 3 News, Clint Brown, being hospitalised has been completed but police are still tight-lipped over the result and if he will be charged.

Clint Brown was assaulted on

September 13, 2006, and was put in hospital due to a concussion and a broken eye socket, for allegedly abusing a taxi driver while he was drunk in Taupo. Many witnesses say that Mr Brown was hit because he was swearing and verbally abusing the taxi driver from the Top Cab company. However other witnesses say that Brown was injured because he was hit by the partner of another woman he insulted, not because he was verbally abusing the taxi driver.

Inspector Kevin Taylor, Taupo area commander, said the police had completed their investigation yesterday and wouldn't comment on whether he would be charged. "No progress will be made until at least next week."

The police reviewed closed-circuit video, interviewed several witnesses to find out what happened in Taupo that night.

Mr Brown had been suspended from work after the allegations came to light. On October 13 Mr Brown resigned from TV3 due to stressful conditions.

The reason that Mr Brown had been in Taupo that night was because he was at a promotional dinner for the New Zealand A1 team. It has been said that he was drunk.

TV3's own investigation into the allegations did not clarify anything.

New Zealand journalists fall ill on testing water filter November 3, 2006

The two inventors of an iodine-based filtration system from Christchurch, New Zealand, are still backing it even after media tested the 'filtered' water and became violently ill. The inventors are blaming it on a handling error and not the filter itself.

The filter is supposed to turn contaminated water into clean, healthy water.

Last week Russell Kelly, co-inventor of the filter, invited the media to test it out. Mr Kelly had taken water from both the Avon River and sewage water and mixed them together and then placed into his filter. The three journalists and the freelance cameraman became ill the next day, experiencing vomiting and diarrhoea.

Mr. Kelly is currently overseas but his wife Sue Kelly, co-inventor of the filter, said: "The water the journalists drank could have become contaminated because my husband did not disinfect his hands. We are usually so careful, quite focused, but with the press team there it was not a controlled environment. We feel really disappointed in ourselves but I didn't feel I could interrupt the filming process (to ensure her husband had disinfected his hands)."

The three journalists who became sick were from TV One's One News, TV3's 3 News and The New Zealand Herald, the freelance cameraman was working for TV3 at the time.

Blair Norton, One News reporter, had drunk the water and became ill, also required medical treatment for a viral infection instead of a bacterial infection, according to Television New Zealand, which owns TV One.

Beverly Lockhart, 3 News reporter, and cameraman Joe Morgan, both tried a half a glass of the treated water. Ms Lockhart said: "I would not draw any conclusions about the incident but would be wary of any future on-the-job trials. We tried the water about midday on Wednesday and about Thursday at 10pm I was violently ill with vomiting and diarrhoea."

The reporter from The New Zealand

Herald also became ill after drinking the contaminated water.

The Kelly's had invented the filter for aid agencies to make drinkable water in the times of emergencies. They had come up with the idea after they lived in Kashmir, India-Pakistan border, where they saw the problems with water supplies.

New Zealand Police car involved in collision November 3, 2006

A New Zealand police car landed on its roof after colliding with a truck in Upper Hutt at 9am NZDT (2100 UTC) today, closing State Highway 2.

The highway patrol car flipped, and its siren-lights ripped off, during a collision with two other cars at an intersection of River Road and Gibbons Street.

The police officer had minor injuries, but needed surgery to his hand and the truck driver was not hurt, a police communications spokesman said.

The Serious Crash Unit is currently investigating.

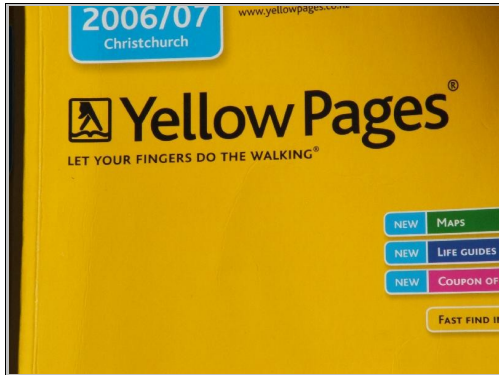
Senior Sergeant Bengé says police are speaking with witnesses, but will not have a clear idea about what happened until they can speak with the people involved in the crash. He says that could be a few days away.

Bengé says initial investigations indicate the police car was not involved in a pursuit, however witnesses say the car appeared to be rushing to a job with lights flashing.

The truck was carrying a load of windows and shattered glass was scattered over the intersection.

Telecom New Zealand to sell Yellow Page Group November 4, 2006

Telecom New Zealand has announced that it is going to sell its Yellow Page Group business and is expecting at least NZ\$2 billion. The Yellow Page Group includes the Yellow Pages, White Pages (which includes both offline and online services), New Zealand Retirement Guide and New Zealand Tourism Online.



Christchurch Yellow Pages (Photograph by Gabriel Pollard).

However Chief Financial Officer, Mark Bogoievski, will not comment on how much the reserve price is.

The company says that the money they get from selling the directories will be used to repay almost \$3.5 billion worth of debt.

Theresa Gattung, Chief Executive of Telecom, said: "There has already been considerable interest shown in the future of Yellow Pages Group based on recent media speculation. We expect that the sale should be completed by the end of this financial year."

The Yellow Page Group generates \$250 million worth of revenue per annum and employs 600 people.

Ms Gattung said: "In the long term the business will be dominated by the global players. It's really prudent off us to take this opportunity to see what

value we can get looking at the sale of this business at this stage."

Analysts are warning Telecom that it would miss out on the digital media possibilities. "It looks to me that it is a bit of a panic reaction in order to generate some quick cash," said, telecommunications expert, Paul Budde, "I think it's a short-term sort of strategy to generate some cash, but it will undermine its long term strategy to move from the old Telecom's world into the new digital media world."

Ms Gattung said that the privacy of the individuals will be kept, "obviously we're only going to sell to a very reputable party."

Telecom is also hinting at cutting hundreds of jobs to invest in new technology to beat off competition.

New Zealand radiographers plan to strike November 4, 2006

250 New Zealand hospital radiographers are planning to strike this Friday for ten days unless they get a pay rise so they are paid the same amount as their peers at fourteen other district health boards (DHB). The DHB's say they will not raise their pay by 20% as it is unrealistic.

The strike will occur in the Hutt Valley, Southland, Otago, Bay of Plenty, Canterbury and Gisborne DHB. The strike will only last for seven days in Canterbury and five days for Gisborne, however.

The radiographers have already been on strike earlier this year, but it was only for three days.

They had first planned to walk off the job this Friday for five days instead of the now ten days. Deborah Powell, national secretary of the Association of Professionals and Executive

Employees, said: "The length of the strike reflected the anger and frustration members felt with DHBs that had vetoed a mediated settlement."

Chai Chuah, chief executive of Hutt Valley DHB, said: "A settlement had not been reached and the union was wrong to blame the strike on the boards. He hoped industrial action could be averted by mediation next week. Meanwhile, hospitals have begun cancelling elective surgery and outpatient clinics.

The strike will mean that doctors will be unable to do scans or get x-rays, unless it is life-threatening.

Next week there will be mediation talks and the DHB's are hoping that the radiographers and themselves will be able to reach a settlement before anymore disruption is caused.

Senior doctors are also planning to strike next year because their pay negotiations have failed. Ian Powell, executive director of the Association of Salaried Medical Specialists, said: "Two-hour stopwork meetings would be held in February, in effect wiping out a half-day of elective surgery and specialist clinics at hospitals run by all 21 health boards. Full-out strikes could follow. Never before had senior doctors called for nationwide industrial action."

100 icebergs heading for New Zealand November 4, 2006

About 100 icebergs are heading for New Zealand and a warning has been issued for ships in the Southern Ocean. The icebergs were spotted off the South Island of New Zealand by plane, Orion. However they are likely to melt before reaching New Zealand, but they may be visible from Stewart

Island.

An Orion, a Royal New Zealand Air force plane, spotted the icebergs heading towards New Zealand when it was doing a routine fisheries patrol, south of the Auckland Islands, about 260 km away from Southland.

One of the longest of the hundred icebergs is said to be about 2 km long, 1.3 km wide and 120 m high. But seeing as most of the iceberg is underwater it is more around 1.2 km high.

Andy Nielsen, Royal New Zealand Air Force squadron leader, said that they "were surprised by the number of them and by how far north they were. We came across approximately 80 to 100 icebergs...what's unusual about this is we located them about 130 nautical miles south of Stewart Island...we would expect to find the number we found around 600 nautical miles south of Stewart Island. They pose a significant maritime threat (as they are near a major shipping lane). The weather down there is deteriorating, visibility is low tonight in the majority of the southern area."

The last time that an iceberg had been seen from the Mainland was in 1931 at Dunedin, even though icebergs do occasionally break away from Antarctica and head into the Southern Ocean. Mike Williams, physical oceanographer for the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research, said: "The latest sighting may be seen from the Mainland if it gets a bit further north and comes closer in shore. The currents and the wind are likely to drive it north along the Southland and Otago coast."

The icebergs are not being blamed on global warming. Mr Williams said: "It has made it all the way to New Zealand is a fantastic rare event, but I

don't think we can draw any conclusions about changes in climate."

Outlaw gangs, says New Zealand First November 4, 2006

New Zealand First is calling for gangs to "be outlawed" out after the New Zealand police discovered stun guns cash and large quantities of drugs.

The drugs found included Methamphetamine ("P"), Methylenedioxymethamphetamine (ecstasy) and cannabis, which, according to police, is to be worth thousands of dollars altogether.

The seven stun guns, capable of disabling a person, were discovered at houses and in cars in Hamilton and Tauranga on Tuesday.

New Zealand First's law and order spokesman Ron Mark said Parliament should pass legislation to outlaw gangs "once and for all".

"How many more of these discoveries is it going to take before we see some effective legislative action to stamp out gangs? While we applaud the efforts of police we feel that the passing of legislation to outlaw gangs once and for all is well overdue. Outlawing gangs would eliminate much of the organised crime within New Zealand, including drug manufacturing and distribution," Mark said.

"Section 98A of the Crimes Act makes participation in an organised criminal gang a criminal offence but the Minister has informed us through parliamentary questions that prosecutions were brought under that section on a mere dozen occasions in 2004-05 and 18 times last year."

"It is time for the police to be armed with definitive legislation carrying a

high maximum sentence to better enable them to charge these thugs as it seems that the longer that gangs are allowed to flourish the more heavily armed they are becoming."

The head of the Waikato police crime control unit, Detective Sergeant Karl Thornton, said the seizure of the stun guns was a major issue that the public should be aware of. It is alarming that drug dealers are equipping themselves with weapons like stun guns."

11 people will appear in Hamilton District Court later this week on drug charges and with possessing restricted weapons.

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