September 7 2005.

Interests of victims must come before the interests of criminals

The interests of victims must be put before the interests of criminals, Acting Opposition Leader Fay Miller said today.

Mrs. Miller was commenting on the six-week suspended sentence given to a German tourist after he pleaded guilty to dangerous driving that resulted in the death of a seven-year-old Humpty Doo girl last week.

Louisa May Turner was killed when the vehicle German Lothar Eibofner was driving collided with another car on August 23.

Louisa’s father Wayne Turner has claimed the case was rushed through the courts so the tourist could meet an airline schedule. Police are investigating to ensure proper procedures were followed.

“When will this Government and the magistracy understand that victims must be the first consideration of our justice system?” Mrs. Miller said.

“The community is sick and tired of hearing about the concerns our judicial system shows for perpetrators of crime and the apparent lack of concern shown for victims.”

Mrs. Miller said it was time for all legislation to strongly reflect these principles.

“Society hurts and punishes victims and victims’ families and friends doubly when an offender is let off with a slap on the wrist,” she said.

“Our courts and police must immediately start to truly involve victims and their families in the justice system. I am aware of victim impact statements but I wonder just how seriously they are taken.

“Enough is enough. I can see that this little girl’s family are understanding, forgiving and compassionate people. But, how can our justice system be so cruel as to ignore their feelings in this terrible accident?”

The crash also critically injured Louisa’s 57-year-old grandfather, who is in a coma, and seriously injured her grandmother.