



2 June 2015

C71515

Anonymous
www.fyi.org.nz

Dear Anonymous,

Thank you for your email dated 2 May 2015, requesting information about why the community was not made aware of your escape from prison in 2009. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) and the Privacy Act 1993 (the Act).

Public safety is the Department's number one priority. Escapes from New Zealand prisons have fallen to an all-time low and have remained relatively consistent over the recent years. All offenders who have escaped during the last decade have been returned to custodial control.

Despite our success in reducing the number of escapes, we are continually striving to improve upon our high standard of prisoner management. We have invested in a range of security improvements to sites across the country during the last decade, including enhanced perimeter fencing, installation of detection and surveillance systems, and the introduction of single point-of-entry into prisons.

Whenever a prisoner does manage to escape from custody we immediately notify the New Zealand Police, who are responsible to recapturing the prisoner. We also contact customs to set up a border alert. Following recapture, we may undertake a review to identify how the prisoner escaped custody; how we can enhance our systems and policies; and whether staff adhered to those guidelines. A prisoner will also have their security classification reviewed and may be placed in more secure accommodation.

Following escape and recapture, charges may also be laid by Police and a sentence of imprisonment may be imposed by the judiciary. The charges and sentences will vary depending on the circumstances of the escape. The most common charge is Escape from Lawful Custody under section 120 of the Crimes Act 1961. This charge can result in a maximum sentence of five years' imprisonment being imposed.

Section 12(1) of the OIA provides that requests can only be made by New Zealand citizens, permanent residents, people in New Zealand, and body corporates that are incorporated or have a place of business in New Zealand.

Principle 11 of the Privacy Act provides that an agency shall not disclose the information to a person or body or agency unless it is believed on reasonable grounds that the disclosure is to the individual concerned or authorised by the individual concerned.

The Department would like to be satisfied that you are eligible to make a request under the OIA and would require identifying information to investigate the circumstances you refer to in your email further, or disclose any information under the Act.

In addition, we would require supporting information as to your eligibility under the Privacy Act, such as your New Zealand postal address, or a personal email address indicating a New Zealand domain and your full name and any other identifying information, such as your date of birth, to provide any further information.

If you have any further queries, please send them with the required information to info@corrections.govt.nz for consideration or:

The Department of Corrections
Private Box 1206
Wellington 6140
New Zealand

Should you have any concerns with this response, I would encourage you to raise these with the Department. Alternatively you are advised of your right to also raise any concerns with the Office of the Ombudsman. Contact details are: Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Yours sincerely



Debby Butler
Acting Deputy Chief Executive
Corporate Services