

8 April 2026

Hayden  
fyi-request-33296-4df2906b@requests.fyi.org.nz

Ref: OIA 128832

Tēnā koe Hayden

## **Official Information Act request: Crime rates and economic correlations**

Thank you for your email of 16 December 2025 to the Ministry of Justice (the Ministry), requesting information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), regarding crime rates, economic correlations, corrections costs, and justice system demand analysis. Your full request is attached as **Appendix 1**, and requests information on the following sections:

1. *Crime Data and Economic Correlations*
2. *Cost Of Crime Analysis*
3. *Corrections System Demand and Costs*
4. *Reoffending and Intergenerational Crime*
5. *Preventive vs. Punitive Approaches*
6. *Coordination with Economic Policy Agencies*
7. *Economic Policy Impact Assessment*
8. *Family Violence and Economic Stress*
9. *Youth Justice*
10. *Victim Support and Costs*
11. *Justice System Capacity*
12. *International Comparisons*
13. *Longitudinal and Causal Analysis*
14. *Transparency and Accountability*
15. *Clarification Questions*

On 26 January 2026, you were advised that parts 3, 4, 5.3 and 12.1 of your request were transferred to the Department of Corrections (Corrections), and parts 9.1 and 9.3 were transferred to Oranga Tamariki.

That same day you were also advised that due to substantial collation and research, and the need for external consultation, the timeframe to respond to your request was extended under section 15 of the Act and a response would be with you by 10 April 2026.

For ease of response, each section of your request will be addressed in turn.

### 1. *Crime Data and Economic Correlations*

#### *1.1 Crime Rate Time-Series Data*

Your request for this information is refused under section 18(d) of the Act, as the information is publicly available.

You can refer to Ministry of Justice information at: [NZCVS Violent Crime Releases | Ministry of Justice](#) and New Zealand Police (the Police) information at: [Crime statistics publications | New Zealand Police](#) and [policedata.nz | New Zealand Police](#).

### *1.2 Economic Stress Crime Indicators*

In addition to what is contained on the websites above, you can refer to **Appendix 2** attached to this response, that relates to analysis undertaken in 2009 and 2010. This information was not released and remains in draft form. Some information has been withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act, to protect the privacy of natural persons.

In withholding information under section 9, the Ministry has considered the public interest and does not consider that it outweighs withholding the information at this time.

The report was produced by the Ministry's Justice Strategic Policy Unit and covered data up to 2007-08. This analysis was carried out in 2009, and the draft report attached was sent out for both internal (Research & Analysis team at the Ministry of Justice) and external (Lew Evans, Victoria University) peer review in 2010.

This draft report was never published due to a large number of concerns about the quality of the analysis and the main findings in the report, from both the internal and external reviewers. This feedback was saved as Groupwise files, which was the email system for the Ministry at the time. Unfortunately, we can no longer open these files or convert them to a readable format.

Access to these files is therefore refused under section 18(e) of the Act, as the documents alleged to contain the information requested, despite reasonable efforts to provide the information, cannot be provided.

### *1.3 Offender Economic Circumstances*

The Ministry attempted to transfer this part of your request to the Police, however this was declined as they do not hold this information. This part of your request is therefore refused under section 18(g)(i) of the Act, as the Ministry does not hold this information and there are no grounds for believing it is held by any other agency or Minister subject to the Act.

## 2. Cost of Crime Analysis

This full section of your request is refused under 18(g)(i) of the Act, as the Ministry does not hold this information and there are no grounds for believing it is held by any other agency or Minister subject to the Act.

## 3. Corrections System Demand and Costs

This full section was transferred to Corrections for response under section 14 of the Act.

## 4. Reoffending and Intergenerational Crime

This full section was transferred to Corrections for response under section 14 of the Act.

## 5. Preventative vs Punitive Approaches

### *5.1 Economic Efficiency Analysis*

This part of your request is refused under section 18(g)(i) of the Act, as the Ministry does not hold this information and there are no grounds for believing it is held by any other agency or Minister subject to the Act.

### *5.2 Alternative Justice Models*

[Restorative Justice](#), [Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Court](#) and [Family Violence](#) evaluations are all publicly available on the Ministry's website. Your request for this information is refused under section 18(d) of the Act, as the information is publicly available.

### *5.3 Māori Justice Outcomes*

This part of your request was transferred to Corrections for response under section 14 of the Act. However, the Ministry can refer you to a small amount of joint agency information that does fall within scope of your request but is refused under section 18(d) of the Act, as the information is publicly available. You can find this at: [Justice Sector Longterm Insights Briefing - Imprisonment in New Zealand](#) and [What works to reduce crime](#).

## 6. Coordination with Economic Policy Agencies

This full section of your request is refused under section 18(g)(i) of the Act, as the Ministry does not hold this information and there are no grounds for believing it is held by any other agency or Minister subject to the Act.

## 7. Economic Policy Impact Assessment

This full section of your request is refused under section 18(g)(i) of the Act, as the Ministry does not hold this information and there are no grounds for believing it is held by any other agency or Minister subject to the Act.

## 8. Family Violence and Economic Stress

### *8.1 Family Violence Data*

This part of your request is refused under section 18(d) of the Act, as the information is publicly available at: [Family violence offence data | Ministry of Justice](#).

### *8.2 Economic Correlations*

### *8.3 Cost Analysis*

These parts of your request are refused under section 18(g)(i) of the Act, as the Ministry does not hold this information and there are no grounds for believing it is held by any other agency or Minister subject to the Act.

## 9. Youth Justice

### *9.1 Youth Crime Trends*

### *9.3 Prevention Investment*

These parts of your request were transferred to Oranga Tamariki for response under section 14 of the Act. However, the Ministry can refer you to a small amount of data that does fall within scope of your request but is refused under section 18(d) of the Act, as the information is publicly available. You can find this at: [Youth Justice Indicators | Ministry of Justice](#).

### *9.2 Risk Factors*

This part of your request is refused under section 18(g)(i) of the Act, as the Ministry does not hold this information and there are no grounds for believing it is held by any other agency or Minister subject to the Act.

## 10. Victim Support and Costs

This full section of your request is refused under section 18(d) of the Act, as the information is publicly available at: [New Zealand Crime & Victims Survey \(NZCVS\) | Ministry of Justice](#).

## 11. Justice System Capacity

### *11.1 Court backlogs*

The High Court does not have a backlog. Jury trials are held on the first available date in the relevant centre, taking into account the time required for the prosecution and defence to prepare for trial, counsel availability, existing cases already scheduled for jury trials (and other work) in that centre, and courtroom and cell availability. The number of criminal trial cases awaiting hearing in the High Court at a national level has remained steady over the past two years.

By way of background, approximately 80 per cent of the High Court's jury trial workload is homicide trials. These trials are lengthy and complex. The average time for such a trial is now 17.5 days. The seriousness and complexity of the charges tried in the High Court means that the prosecution and defence will usually require a minimum of 12 months from a defendant's first appearance in the High Court to prepare for trial.

For information on High Court criminal case numbers and waiting time for scheduled hearings as at 31 December 2024, please refer to the Courts of New Zealand website: [Annual Statistics for the year ended 31 December 2024 — Courts of New Zealand](#). Data for the year ended 31 December 2025 will be published in the coming weeks.

For District Court data, please refer to **Appendix 3**:

- **Table 1a**: proportion of backlog in the criminal jurisdiction and
- **Table 1b**: proportion of backlog in civil and family jurisdictions, by financial year, from July 2015 to June 2025.

You have also asked whether backlogs have worsened and the drivers of this. Over the last 10 years, we have seen a larger volume of complex cases entering our district court system. This

has resulted in more adjournments, delays, and a growing backlog of active cases which was exacerbated by delays during COVID-19.

While the longer-term trend reflects sustained pressure on the District Court, the 2024/25 financial year shows early signs of improvements. Compared to the previous year, more cases were disposed, the number of active cases decreased, and backlogs have decreased. These improvements are likely attributable to the initiatives currently underway across the Ministry aimed at improving court efficiency and timeliness.

Key initiatives include the Chief District Court Judge's Timely Access to Justice Protocol, which sets standards and timely justice thresholds for criminal cases; the jointly led District Court Timely Justice Programme to reduce delays; and priority-based rostering and scheduling to direct judicial and sector resources to courts with the largest backlogs.

#### *Average time from charge to trial/sentencing*

In response to your request for average time from charge to trial, please refer to **Table 2** for the average number of days to establish guilt or innocence at a trial, by financial year, from July 2015 to June 2025.

In response to your request for average time from charge to sentencing, please refer to **Table 3** for the average number to disposal for cases with an outcome of 'Convicted and Sentenced', by financial year, for cases disposed between 1 July 2015 and 30 June 2025.

#### *Cost of delays*

The part of your request about the cost of delays is refused under section 18(g)(i) of the Act, as this information is not recorded or reported by the Ministry, and there are no grounds for believing it is held by any other agency or Minister subject to the Act.

#### *11.2 Legal Aid*

The part of your request regarding unmet legal aid demand is refused under section 18(g)(i) of the Act, as this information is not recorded or reported by the Ministry, and there are no grounds for believing it is held by any other agency or Minister subject to the Act.

For context, the Ministry does not have visibility of those who do not apply for legal aid either due to being ineligible or are unable to find a legal aid lawyer to take their case. The remainder of this part of your request is refused under section 18(d) of the Act, as the information requested is publicly available.

Please see [Annual Reports](#) and [Data tables](#) for the number of legal aid applications processed and the total legal aid expenditure from 2015 to 2024. You can also refer to the [Legal Services Act 2011](#) and [Legal Aid Grants Handbook](#) for information on the factors the Legal Services Commissioner, or Legal Aid Services staff member delegated this function, must consider when deciding an applicant's eligibility to legal aid – this includes financial hardship considerations.

For more information you can [Contact Legal Aid Services](#).

### *11.3 System Sustainability*

This part of your request is refused under section 18(g)(i) of the Act, as the Ministry does not hold this information and there are no grounds for believing it is held by any other agency or Minister subject to the Act.

## 12. International Comparisons

### *12.1 Imprisonment Rates*

This part of your request was transferred to Corrections for response under section 14 of the Act.

### *12.1 Best Practice*

The Ministry attempted to transfer this part of your request to the Police, however this was declined as they do not hold this information. This part of your request is therefore refused under section 18(g)(i) of the Act, as the Ministry does not hold this information and there are no grounds for believing it is held by any other agency or Minister subject to the Act.

## 13. Longitudinal and Casual Analysis

The Ministry attempted to transfer this full section of your request to the Police, however this was declined as they do not hold this information. This full section of your request is therefore refused under section 18(g)(i) of the Act, as the Ministry does not hold this information and there are no grounds for believing it is held by any other agency or Minister subject to the Act.

## 14. Transparency and Accountability

### *14.1 Published research*

Please refer to the response to question 1.2.

### *14.2 Ministerial briefings*

There have been no briefings to Ministers in the last 5 years regarding economic drivers of crime or warnings or recommendations about economic policy settings, therefore this part of your request is refused under section 18(g)(i) of the Act, as the Ministry does not hold this information and there are no grounds for believing it is held by any other agency or Minister subject to the Act.

However, there is some publicly available information on the Ministry's website from 2011-2018 regarding drivers of crime that may be of interest to you. You can refer to: [Trends in Conviction and Sentencing in NZ - 2011](#), [NZCVS - Drivers of Crime](#) and [Drivers of Crime: Investment package for alcohol and other drug assessments and interventions – implementation plan](#).

## 15. Clarification questions

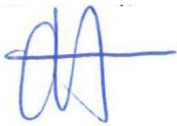
While the Act allows New Zealanders to ask Government agencies for information, there is no requirement to create new information, compile information they do not hold, respond to hypothetical questions, or provide an opinion. The Act does not support requests where a

question is put to an agency for response. This section of your request is therefore refused under section 18(g)(i) of the Act, as the Ministry does not hold this information and there are no grounds for believing it is held by any other agency or Minister subject to the Act.

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Ministry's website at: [Official Information Act responses | New Zealand Ministry of Justice](#).

If you are not satisfied with the way your request is being managed, you have the right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman under section 28 of the Act. The Office of the Ombudsman may be contacted by phone on: 0800 802 602, by email at: [info@ombudsman.parliament.nz](mailto:info@ombudsman.parliament.nz), or via the webform: [Make a complaint \(for members of the public\) | Ombudsman New Zealand](#).

Nāku noa, nā



Georgina Matheson

**General Manager, Communications and Ministerial Services**

## Appendix 1: Copy of full Official Information request

-----Original Message-----

From: Hayden <[fyi-request-33296-4df2906b@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-33296-4df2906b@requests.fyi.org.nz)>

Sent: Tuesday, 16 December 2025 6:10 pm

To: [OIA@justice.govt.nz](mailto:OIA@justice.govt.nz)

Subject: Official Information request - Crime Rates, Economic Correlations, Corrections Costs, and Justice System Demand Analysis

Dear Ministry of Justice,

I am writing to request information under the Official Information Act 1982 regarding crime rates, justice system utilization, corrections costs, and their relationship to economic conditions. This request focuses on whether the Ministry monitors and analyzes economic drivers of crime and coordinates this information with economic policy agencies.

### 1. CRIME DATA AND ECONOMIC CORRELATIONS

#### 1.1 Crime Rate Time-Series Data:

Please provide for the period 2015-2024 (or most recent available):

Monthly recorded crime rates for:

- Violent crime (assault, robbery, homicide)
- Family violence incidents
- Property crime (burglary, theft, shoplifting)
- Drug offences
- Fraud and white-collar crime

Data disaggregated by:

- Geographic region
- Offender age group
- Offender ethnicity
- Victim demographics

#### 1.2 Economic Stress Crime Indicators:

Please provide any Ministry analysis of:

- Correlations between unemployment rates and property crime rates
- Correlations between cost of living increases and shoplifting/theft
- Correlations between interest rate increases and family violence
- Correlations between benefit sanction rates and crime rates
- Crime pattern changes during economic recessions versus growth periods

#### 1.3 Offender Economic Circumstances:

Please provide data on:

- Employment status of offenders at time of offending
- Benefit recipient status of offenders

Housing status (homeowner, renter, homeless) of offenders  
Debt levels and financial stress indicators in offender backgrounds  
Whether "financial hardship" or "economic stress" is systematically coded as an offending factor

## 2. COST OF CRIME ANALYSIS

### 2.1 Updated Cost of Crime Estimates:

In my previous request to Treasury (OIA 20250861), I noted that Treasury's last comprehensive cost-of-crime analysis dates to 2003/04 at \$9.1 billion. Please provide:

The Ministry of Justice's current estimate of total annual cost of crime (most recent year available)

Methodology for calculating this figure  
Breakdown by crime categories (violent, property, white-collar, etc.)  
When this analysis was last updated

### 2.2 Cost Categories:

Please provide breakdown of crime costs including:

Direct justice system costs (Police, courts, prosecution, legal aid)  
Corrections costs (imprisonment, community sentences, rehabilitation)  
Victim costs (medical treatment, counselling, lost productivity)  
Property damage and theft losses  
Social costs (fear of crime, reduced quality of life)  
Lost economic productivity from incarceration

### 2.3 Cost Projections:

Please provide:

10-year projections of justice system costs under current policy settings  
30-year projections if available  
Assumptions about crime rate trends underlying these projections  
Whether projections assume economic conditions remain stable

## 3. CORRECTIONS SYSTEM DEMAND AND COSTS

### 3.1 Prison Population Data:

Please provide for 2015-2024:

Monthly prison population (total and per capita)  
Average sentence length by offence type  
Remand versus sentenced prisoner ratios  
Re-imprisonment rates (recidivism)  
Prison population projections to 2030, 2040

### 3.2 Economic Circumstances of Prisoners:

Please provide any Ministry analysis of:

Employment status of individuals prior to imprisonment

Benefit receipt history of prisoners

Educational attainment levels

Intergenerational patterns (children of prisoners becoming prisoners)

Whether prisoners come disproportionately from economically deprived communities

### 3.3 Cost per Prisoner:

Please provide:

Average annual cost per prisoner (most recent year)

Total annual corrections budget 2015-2024

Projected corrections costs to 2030

Analysis of whether corrections spending growth is sustainable

## 4. REOFFENDING AND INTERGENERATIONAL CRIME

### 4.1 Recidivism Analysis:

Please provide:

Reoffending rates within 1 year, 2 years, 5 years of release

Analysis of factors predicting reoffending (unemployment, homelessness, lack of support)

Cost of reoffending versus cost of rehabilitation and support

Whether economic support upon release reduces reoffending

### 4.2 Intergenerational Justice Involvement:

Please provide any Ministry analysis of:

Children of prisoners: likelihood of future offending and imprisonment

Whether children in Oranga Tamariki care show elevated justice involvement

Whether poverty and welfare dependency predict intergenerational crime patterns

Fiscal cost of intergenerational crime cycles

### 4.3 Breaking the Cycle:

Please provide any Ministry analysis of:

Cost-effectiveness of prevention versus incarceration

Whether early intervention in high-risk families reduces long-term justice costs

Return on investment for social programs preventing crime versus managing offenders

## 5. PREVENTIVE VS. PUNITIVE APPROACHES

### 5.1 Economic Efficiency Analysis:

Please provide any Ministry analysis comparing:

Cost of punitive justice approaches (longer sentences, more imprisonment) versus preventive/rehabilitative approaches

International comparisons: countries with lower imprisonment rates and their justice costs  
Whether reducing poverty and inequality would be more cost-effective than expanding corrections capacity

## 5.2 Alternative Justice Models:

Please provide any Ministry analysis of:

Restorative justice outcomes and cost-effectiveness

Community-based sentences versus imprisonment: recidivism and cost comparison  
Therapeutic courts (drug courts, mental health courts) versus traditional prosecution  
Whether addressing root causes (addiction, mental health, poverty) is cheaper than punishment

## 5.3 Māori Justice Outcomes:

Please provide:

Māori imprisonment rates compared to general population

Analysis of drivers of Māori overrepresentation in justice system  
Whether economic deprivation explains disparities  
Cost-benefit analysis of addressing Māori economic inequality versus current justice expenditure on Māori offenders

## 6. COORDINATION WITH ECONOMIC POLICY AGENCIES

### 6.1 Information Sharing with Treasury:

Please provide documentation of:

What crime and corrections cost data the Ministry routinely provides to Treasury

Whether Treasury incorporates justice system cost projections into fiscal planning  
Whether the Ministry has warned Treasury about justice cost blowouts driven by economic policy settings  
Any memoranda of understanding regarding justice system fiscal impacts

### 6.2 Coordination with Reserve Bank:

Please provide documentation of:

Whether the Ministry notifies RBNZ about crime pattern correlations with economic conditions

Whether RBNZ consults the Ministry before OCR decisions about potential crime impacts  
Any joint analysis between Ministry of Justice and RBNZ on monetary policy and crime

### 6.3 Cross-Agency Coordination:

Please confirm:

Whether the Ministry coordinates with MSD on benefit policy impacts on crime

Whether the Ministry coordinates with Health NZ on mental health/addiction drivers of crime

Whether the Ministry coordinates with Oranga Tamariki on child welfare-to-justice pathways

Any formal mechanisms for the Ministry to influence social policy based on crime prevention evidence

## 7. ECONOMIC POLICY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

### 7.1 Budget Measure Impacts:

Please provide any Ministry analysis of crime impacts from:

Benefit cuts or sanctions → crime rate changes

Social housing reduction → property crime and homelessness-related offending

Mental health service cuts → crime committed by people with untreated mental illness

Education funding changes → youth crime patterns

### 7.2 OCR and Monetary Policy Impacts:

Please provide any Ministry analysis of:

Whether OCR increases and resulting financial stress correlate with crime increases

Historical analysis: previous OCR tightening cycles and crime patterns

Whether mortgage stress and housing insecurity drive family violence and property crime

### 7.3 Cost-Benefit of Economic Policy:

Please provide any Ministry analysis of:

Whether fiscal savings from reduced social spending are offset by increased justice system costs

Examples where cutting preventive programs led to increased crime costs exceeding savings

Whether the Ministry has calculated the justice system cost of economic austerity

## 8. FAMILY VIOLENCE AND ECONOMIC STRESS

### 8.1 Family Violence Data:

Please provide for 2015-2024:

Monthly family violence incident reports

Protection order applications

Family violence prosecutions and convictions

Family violence homicides

### 8.2 Economic Correlations:

Please provide any Ministry analysis of:

Whether family violence increases during economic downturns  
Correlations between unemployment and family violence  
Correlations between housing stress and family violence  
Whether financial counselling/support reduces family violence

### 8.3 Cost Analysis:

Please provide:

Total annual cost of family violence (justice system, health, social services, lost productivity)  
Whether addressing economic stress would reduce family violence and associated costs  
Cost-benefit analysis of economic support versus family violence intervention

## 9. YOUTH JUSTICE

### 9.1 Youth Crime Trends:

Please provide:

Youth offending rates 2015-2024 by age group and offence type  
Youth justice facility population trends  
Projections of future youth justice demand

### 9.2 Risk Factors:

Please provide any Ministry analysis of:

Economic circumstances of young offenders (family poverty, benefit dependency, housing instability)  
Educational disengagement and economic insecurity as crime predictors  
Whether children from economically deprived backgrounds are overrepresented in youth justice

### 9.3 Prevention Investment:

Please provide:

Cost comparison: youth justice intervention versus early childhood support  
Whether investing in child poverty reduction would reduce long-term youth justice costs  
International examples of countries that reduced youth crime through social investment

## 10. VICTIM SUPPORT AND COSTS

### 10.1 Victim Costs:

Please provide:

Annual victim support service costs

- Victim compensation scheme payments
- ACC claims related to crime injuries
- Total economic burden on crime victims

## 10.2 Victim Demographics:

Please provide any analysis of:

- Whether economically vulnerable people are disproportionately crime victims
- Whether poverty areas have higher victimization rates
- Whether crime creates poverty (victims losing income, incurring costs)

## 11. JUSTICE SYSTEM CAPACITY

### 11.1 Court Backlogs:

Please provide:

- Current court case backlog levels
- Average time from charge to trial/sentencing
- Whether backlogs have worsened and drivers of this
- Cost of court delays to defendants, victims, and system

### 11.2 Legal Aid:

Please provide:

- Legal aid expenditure trends 2015-2024
- Number of people requiring legal aid
- Whether legal aid eligibility captures people in financial hardship
- Unmet legal aid demand

### 11.3 System Sustainability:

Please provide:

- Whether current justice system funding is adequate for demand
- Projected funding gaps if crime rates don't decrease
- Whether economic conditions are creating justice system demand that exceeds capacity

## 12. INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

### 12.1 Imprisonment Rates:

Please provide:

- New Zealand's imprisonment rate compared to OECD countries
- Countries with lower imprisonment rates: their crime rates and approaches
- Cost comparison: NZ justice system versus more rehabilitation-focused countries

## 12.2 Best Practice:

Please provide any Ministry analysis of:

International evidence on economic security and crime reduction

Countries that successfully reduced crime through social investment

Whether New Zealand could learn from Nordic models combining social welfare and low crime

## 13. LONGITUDINAL AND CAUSAL ANALYSIS

### 13.1 Life Course Studies:

Please provide any Ministry analysis tracking:

Poverty → educational failure → unemployment → crime pathways

Childhood adversity (abuse, neglect, poverty) → adult offending

Intergenerational transmission of offending in economically deprived families

### 13.2 Natural Experiments:

Please provide any Ministry analysis of crime impacts from:

1991 benefit cuts → crime rate changes

2008 GFC → crime patterns

COVID-19 economic support → crime trends versus periods without support

2021-2023 OCR increases → property crime and family violence patterns

## 14. TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

### 14.1 Published Research:

Please confirm:

Whether any of the analyses requested above exist but have not been publicly released

Reasons for non-publication

Whether the Ministry publishes crime data correlated with economic indicators

### 14.2 Ministerial Briefings:\*\*

Please provide (titles and dates):

Briefings to Ministers in the last 5 years regarding economic drivers of crime

Warnings about justice system costs increasing due to economic policy settings

Recommendations to Cabinet regarding economic policy settings to reduce crime

## 15. CLARIFICATION QUESTIONS

15.1 Does the Ministry of Justice consider it within its mandate to advocate for economic policy settings that reduce crime, or is the Ministry limited to managing crime regardless of its economic causes?

15.2 Has the Ministry ever been directed not to analyze or publish correlations between economic conditions and crime rates?

15.3 If the Ministry has evidence that economic hardship drives crime, does the Ministry have an obligation to make this evidence public and advocate for addressing root causes?

15.4 Does the Ministry believe that addressing poverty and inequality would be more cost-effective than expanding the justice system to manage crime caused by economic deprivation?

#### RATIONALE FOR THIS REQUEST:

This request addresses whether New Zealand's justice system is documenting and responding to evidence that economic policy is driving crime.

Criminological research establishes clear links between:

Economic deprivation and property crime

Unemployment and offending

Financial stress and family violence

Inequality and violent crime

If the Ministry is tracking these correlations but not sharing them with economic policy agencies, this represents a system coordination failure.

If the Ministry is not analyzing these pathways despite having the data, this represents a missed opportunity for evidence-based crime prevention.

If the Ministry has evidence of economic drivers of crime but has been prevented from publishing it or advocating for addressing root causes, this raises serious policy questions.

The public has a right to know:

Whether crime is driven by economic conditions

Whether addressing economic security would be more cost-effective than expanding the justice system

Whether economic policy agencies are informed of crime impacts before making decisions

Whether justice system costs from economic policy decisions are factored into fiscal planning

This request is made in context of:

Treasury's claim (OIA 20250861) that no analysis exists of justice costs related to economic policy settings

The need to understand whether service delivery agencies coordinate with policy agencies on demand drivers

Rising corrections costs and questions about sustainability

The Ministry's mission includes reducing crime and improving justice outcomes. This requires understanding and addressing root causes of offending, including economic determinants. Transparency about economic drivers of crime is essential for evidence-based policy.

I am happy to discuss this request if clarification would be helpful.

Yours faithfully,  
Hayden

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This is an Official Information request made via the FYI website.

Please use this email address for all replies to this request:

[fyi-request-33296-4df2906b@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-33296-4df2906b@requests.fyi.org.nz)

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## Appendix 3: Court data

Table 1a: Proportion of backlog cases in the criminal jurisdiction in the District Court, by financial year, between 1 July 2015 and 30 June 2025.

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
<b>Criminal</b>	8%	10%	11%	13%	18%	19%	25%	22%	21%	19%

### Table 1a notes:

- In June 2024, the Chief District Court Judge established a timely access to justice standard and category-based timely justice thresholds for criminal cases in the District Court. Cases that fall out of these thresholds are considered backlog cases. These thresholds have been retrospectively applied to data on cases to produce the measures below. For more information, refer to [CDCJ-Timely-Access-to-Justice-Protocol-June.pdf](#).
- Criminal timely justice thresholds:
  - Category 1 case: > 6 months
  - Category 2 case: > 9 months
  - Category 3 judge-alone trial case: > 9 months
  - Category 3 jury trial case: > 15 months
- When calculating backlog of criminal cases, time that the case was formally 'on hold' was excluded - this is generally when there is an appeal underway or there is an active warrant.
- This data was extracted from the Ministry of Justice's Case Management System (CMS) on 17 February 2026. Since this is an operational system, data for earlier months may have been updated since any previous publications.
- This data represents backlog measures in the District Court only.
- This data represents backlog measures as at 30 June of each year, for each financial year between 2015/16 and 2024/25 inclusive.

**Table 1b: Proportion of backlog cases in the civil jurisdiction and applications in the family jurisdiction in the District Court, by financial year, between 1 July 2015 and 30 June 2025.**

Jurisdiction	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Civil	28%	28%	27%	27%	33%	29%	34%	30%	32%	26%
Family	32%	33%	34%	34%	39%	37%	40%	38%	38%	36%

**Table 1b notes:**

- The definition of backlog cases/applications for each case/application type in the Family and Civil jurisdictions are set in legislation. The percentages provided in Table 1b represent the proportion of total active cases and applications with an age greater than that defined for its case type.
- Family data does not include dissolution, child support, adoption, family proceedings, estates, requests, miscellaneous, alcohol & drugs, and substance addiction application types. The following application/case types are included:
  - Care of Children Act applications; made up of guardianship and Hague application types,
  - Domestic violence applications; made up of family violence and domestic violence application types,
  - General proceeding cases; made up of notice of claim and general proceeding case types.
- Civil data does not include cases heard outside of the District Court such as probate, Disputes Tribunal, law practitioners, company liquidation, mortgagee sale, taxation, bankruptcy, rating sale, judicial review, admiralty and habeas corpus cases.
- Family backlog thresholds
  - Care of Children Act applications: > 12 months
  - Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act applications: > 3 months
  - Property applications: > 18 months
  - Domestic violence applications: > 95 days
  - Mental health applications: > 14 days
  - Protection of Personal and Property Rights Act applications: > 26 weeks
- Civil backlog thresholds
  - Defended general proceeding cases: > 9 months
  - Undefended general proceeding cases: > 9 months
  - Originating cases: > 9 months
  - Appeals: > 9 months
- This data was extracted from the Ministry of Justice's Case Management System (CMS) on 17 February 2026. Since this is an operational system, data for earlier months may have been updated since any previous publications.
- This data represents backlog measures in the District Court only.
- This data represents backlog measures as at 30 June of each year, for each financial year between 2015/16 and 2024/25 inclusive.

**Table 2: Average number of days to establish guilt or innocence at a trial, by financial year, for cases between 1 July 2015 and 30 June 2025.**

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
<b>Average number of days</b>	247	257	272	281	315	345	387	419	413	400

**Table 2 notes:**

- This data was extracted from the Ministry of Justice's Case Management System (CMS) on 17 February 2026. Since this is an operational system, data for earlier months may have been updated since any previous publications.
- This data includes data in the District Court and High Court.
- This data is limited to disposed cases that involved a trial. A case is counted as involving a trial if it reached the date the trial was expected to begin.
- This data represents the active days between case prior activation and the date guilt or innocence was established at a trial; this excludes any time that a case is "on hold" due to the issuing of a warrant to arrest for the defendant.
- Year is based on the date of the trial.

**Table 3: Average number of days to disposal for cases with an outcome of "Convicted and Sentenced", by financial year, for cases disposed between 1 July 2015 and 30 June 2025.**

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
<b>Average number of days</b>	96	103	114	124	142	156	174	178	184	181

**Table 3 notes:**

- This data was extracted from the Ministry of Justice's Case Management System (CMS) on 17 February 2026. Since this is an operational system, data for earlier months may have been updated since any previous publications.
- This data includes data in the District Court and High Court.
- This data is limited to cases with a case disposal type of "Convicted and Sentenced."
- A case is disposed when all charges on the case have an outcome.
- This data represents the active days between case prior activation and disposal; this excludes any time that a case is "on hold" due to the issuing of a warrant to arrest for the defendant.
- Year is based on the disposal date.