

03 June 2026

C209335

Hayden

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Tēnā koe Hayden

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) request to the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) of 16 December 2025, requesting various information. As you will be aware, on 26 January 2026 part of your request was transferred under section 14 of the OIA to the Department of Corrections – Ara Poutama Aotearoa. Your request has been considered under the OIA.

I would like to acknowledge the delay in responding to your requests for information under the OIA. We always aim to adhere to legislative timeframes and I apologise that we have not been able to do so on this occasion.

Please note that some questions have been re-arranged and/or combined for ease of response. You requested:

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.

3. CORRECTIONS SYSTEM DEMAND AND COSTS

3.1 Prison Population Data

Please provide for 2015-2024:

- Monthly prison population (total and per capita)

Corrections manages people on sentences and orders at the direction of the Courts and the New Zealand Parole Board. Corrections does not determine whether a person is sentenced to prison or the length of their sentence.

Please see attached as Appendix One, Sheet One, the total onsite prison population, as a snapshot at each month end, from 31 July 2015 to 30 June 2025.

- *Average sentence length by offence type*

Please see attached as Appendix One, Sheet Three, Table 1, the average imposed days per year for fixed-term sentences in each financial year, broken down by index offence type.

- *Remand versus sentenced prisoner ratios*

As noted, Corrections manages people on sentences and orders at the direction of the Courts and the New Zealand Parole Board. Corrections does not determine who is remanded in prison.

The number of prisoners on remand and the time spent on remand is influenced by a number of complex factors, such as timely access to justice, capacity of the courts, and Government policy settings.

Please see attached as Appendix One, Sheet Two, the total onsite prison population, as a snapshot at each month end, from 31 July 2015 to 30 June 2025, broken down by custody status and remand to sentence ratio.

- *Re-imprisonment rates (recidivism)*

Corrections measures recidivism through the recidivism indices (RI). How RI is measured and RI scores for the past ten years are published in our Annual Reports, which are publicly available on our website here:

https://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/strategic_reports/annual-reports. For example, Corrections' sentence figures for the 2024/25 are available on pages 29-32 of the 2024/25 Annual Report here:

https://www.corrections.govt.nz/data/assets/pdf_file/0003/64920/Annual_Report_2024-2025.pdf.

As this information is available on our website, your request is refused under section 18(d) of the OIA, as the information requested is publicly available.

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*

While Corrections often records information about a prisoner such as their employment status prior to their imprisonment, benefit status, and education level, other information, such as whether the person's parents were ever imprisoned, is not routinely recorded. Where this information is held, however, it will be on individual prisoner files, and Corrections does not centrally record this information in a readily reportable manner. In

accordance with the OIA, we have considered whether to affix a charge or extend the time limit for responding. However, given the scale of the request we do not consider that this would be an appropriate use of our publicly funded resources. Therefore, this part of your request is refused under section 18(f) of the OIA, as the information cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

As per section 18B of the OIA, we have considered whether consulting with you would enable the request to be made in a form that would remove the reason for the refusal. However, we do not consider that the request can be refined in this instance, as the nature of the information requested is such that it cannot be provided without the manual analysis of a significant number of individual files.

3.3 Cost per Prisoner

Please provide:

- *Average annual cost per prisoner (most recent year)*

Corrections publishes the average cost of managing a person on the core sentence types, including the average cost of imprisonment, per day, in our Annual Reports. The link to these is provided above. For example, Corrections' figures for the 2024/25 are available on pages 40-42 of the 2024/25 Annual Report here:

https://www.corrections.govt.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/64920/Annual_Report_2024-2025.pdf.

Therefore, your request is refused under section 18(d) of the OIA, as the information requested is publicly available.

- *Total annual corrections budget 2015-2024*

Corrections publishes our annual budget in our Annual Reports. A link to these is provided above. For example, Corrections' budget figures for the 2024/25 are available on pages 13-16 of the 2024/25 Annual Report here:

https://www.corrections.govt.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/64920/Annual_Report_2024-2025.pdf

As this information is available on our website, your request is refused under section 18(d) of the OIA, as the information requested is publicly available.

- *Projected corrections costs to 2030*

Justice sector projections are released by the MOJ and not created by Corrections. Therefore, we refer you to their justice sector projections which are publicly available on their website here: <https://www.justice.govt.nz/justice-sector-policy/research-data/justice-sector-projections/>.

As this information is available on the MOJ website, your request is refused under section 18(d) of the OIA, as the information requested is publicly available.

- *Analysis of whether corrections spending growth is sustainable*

Corrections faces many cost pressures as part of normal operations, these are first sought to be managed within existing baselines through efficiencies or reprioritisation. If unmanageable then active engagement is undertaken through the Budget cycle. The Minister of Corrections' Performance Plan is a process that has been used to identify and estimate material cost pressures across the next four-year period along with the implications of any available reprioritisation options to inform the Budget process.

As the cost pressures may be the subject of a future Budget, this information is withheld under section 9(2)(f)(iv) of the OIA, in order to maintain the current constitutional conventions protecting the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers and officials. If any information on Budget bids is deemed in the public interest, it will be proactively released.

In accordance with section 9(1) of the OIA, we have also considered countervailing public interest relating to the release of the information, including transparency, and accountability. We are satisfied that in this case, public interest considerations do not outweigh the withholding reasons outlined above.

4. REOFFENDING AND INTERGENERATIONAL CRIME

4.1 Recidivism Analysis:

Please provide:

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

As noted above, Corrections measures reoffending rates through the recidivism indices (RI) which is measured in 12 months and 24 months timeframes. I again refer you to our Annual Reports.

As information on 12 months and 24 months recidivism rates are publicly available, your request is refused under section 18(d) of the OIA, as the information requested is publicly available.

In relation to reoffending rates within five years of release, Corrections does not undertake analysis of this timeframe. Therefore, this information does not currently exist in a form that can be readily supplied to you and would instead require Corrections to initiate a project to extract, analyse and present the data in the form requested. Therefore, this part of your request is refused under section 18(g) of the OIA, as the information requested is not held by Corrections, and we have no grounds for believing that it is held by another agency or more closely connected with the functions of another agency.

- *Analysis of factors predicting reoffending (unemployment, homelessness, lack of support)*
- *Whether economic support upon release reduces reoffending*
- *Cost of reoffending versus cost of rehabilitation and support*

Corrections' publishes research undertaken by Corrections on our website here:

<https://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/research>.

There are a number of research papers on our research page that may be of use to you, for example, but not limited to:

- *Women's Experiences of Re-offending and Rehabilitation*, which is publicly available here:
https://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/research/womens_experiences_of_re-offending_and_rehabilitation
- *About Time – Turning people away from a life of crime and reducing re-offending*, which is available here:
https://www.corrections.govt.nz/data/assets/pdf_file/0014/10652/abouttime.pdf
- *Reconviction Rates of Sex Offenders: Five year follow-up study*, which is available here:
https://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/research/reconviction_rates_of_sex_offenders

As Corrections' analyses of reoffending predictors are publicly available, your request is refused under section 18(d) of the OIA, as the information requested is publicly available.

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*

Corrections does not hold analysis on Intergenerational Justice Involvement and as this request was transferred from MOJ to the most likely repository of this information, this part of your request is refused under 18(g) of the OIA, as the information requested is not held by Corrections, and we have no grounds for believing that it is held by another agency or more closely connected with the functions of another agency.

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*

I refer you to our response to question 4.1, and in particular the research document called *About Time – Turning people away from a life of crime and reducing re-offending*, which, as noted above, is publicly available on our website.

- *Return on investment for social programs preventing crime versus managing offenders*

Corrections does not hold analysis on Intergenerational Justice Involvement and as this request was transferred from MOJ to the most likely repository of this information, this part of your request is refused under 18(g) of the OIA, as the information requested is not held

by Corrections, and we have no grounds for believing that it is held by another agency or more closely connected with the functions of another agency.

5.3 Māori Justice Outcomes:

Please provide:

- *Māori imprisonment rates compared to general population*

Corrections publishes quarterly prison statistics on our website, including prison population by ethnicity. This information is available here:

https://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/statistics/quarterly_prison_statistics

- *Analysis of drivers of Māori overrepresentation in justice system*
- *Whether economic deprivation explains disparities*

As mentioned above, Corrections' research is published on our website here:

<https://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/research>. The over-representation of Māori is considered in many of our papers. For example, but not limited to:

- *Over-representation of Māori in the Criminal Justice System*, which can be found here: <https://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/research/over-representation-of-maori-in-the-criminal-justice-system>
- *What Works for Māori*, which can be found here: https://www.corrections.govt.nz/data/assets/pdf_file/0011/11801/What_Works_for_Maori_final.pdf
- *Cost-benefit analysis of addressing Māori economic inequality versus current justice expenditure on Māori offenders*

Corrections does not hold analysis on addressing Māori economic inequality versus current justice expenditure on Māori offenders. As this part of your request was transferred from MOJ and was also transferred to New Zealand Police, we hope that New Zealand Police may be able to answer the above for you.

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*

Corrections does not hold analysis on international imprisonment rate comparisons and as this request was transferred from MOJ who we believe would be the most likely repository of this information, this part of your request is refused under 18(g) of the OIA, as the information requested is not held by Corrections, and we have no grounds for believing that it is held by another agency or more closely connected with the functions of another agency.

Please note that while we do not hold the information you are specifically requesting, Corrections does publish our research and analysis on our website here, <https://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/research>. Some articles in the Practice: The New Zealand Corrections Journals will likely be of interest to you, for example, *Where New Zealand stands internationally: A comparison of offence profiles and recidivism rates*, which is available here:

https://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/research/journal/volume_6_issue_1_july_2018/where_new_zealand_stands_internationally_a_comparison_of_offence_profiles_and_recidivism_rates.

Please note that Corrections is also aware of a website called World Prison Brief which provides free access to information about prison systems throughout the world which you may find useful - <https://www.prisonstudies.org/about-world-prison-brief>.

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*

Corrections do not hold international evidence on economic security, social welfare and social investment and crime rates. As this part of your request was transferred from MOJ and was also transferred to New Zealand Police, we hope that New Zealand Police may be able to answer the above for you.

Please note that this response may be published on Corrections' website. Typically, responses are published quarterly or as otherwise determined. Your personal information including name and contact details will be removed for publication.

I hope this information is helpful. I encourage you to raise any concerns about this response with Corrections. Alternatively, you are advised of your right to raise any concerns with the Office of the Ombudsman. Contact details are: Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Ngā mihi



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