

16 December 2015

C75287

Bronwyn Drysdale  
[fyi-request-3400-4729522b@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-3400-4729522b@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Dear Ms Drysdale

I am writing regarding your email to the Ministry of Justice dated 24 November 2015, requesting information about women who were pregnant when imprisoned, and/or registered as parents of children under five, and related data regarding mother and baby units in prison and releases to the greater Wellington region.

Your request was transferred to the Department of Corrections on 26 November 2015, with the exception of the information request regarding women involved with the Youth Justice system. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

As you may be aware, there are three women's prisons in New Zealand:

- Auckland Region Women's Corrections Facility (ARWCF) in Wiri, Manukau City
- Arohata Women's Prison in Tawa, north of Wellington
- Christchurch Women's Prison, 20 km south of Christchurch.

Women's prisons generally have the same facilities as men's prisons but some have mothers with babies units and feeding and bonding facilities.

### **Mothers with babies units**

Some women give birth while serving a sentence of imprisonment while others have young children at the time of sentencing.

Some prisoners with babies and children up to the age of 24 months may be eligible to live in self-care units where they can bond in a safe and supportive environment. The mothers with babies units aim to:

- assist the mother to develop and maintain a functional relationship with her child
- reduce the likelihood of the mother re-offending.

## Feeding and bonding facilities

Feeding and bonding facilities are available to remand and high security women prisoners.

Mothers with babies aged less than nine months old who are cared for in the community are permitted daily visits in secure, purpose-built facilities where they can feed and bond with their child.

These facilities replicate a domestic lounge setting with a bathroom, kitchenette and bedroom for the baby. There is also an external courtyard. Mothers are allowed to spend up to 12 hours a day with their babies.

More information about the units is available from the link below, including a link to the 16-page resource 'New Beginnings – Mothers with Babies unit' brochure:

[http://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/new\\_beginnings\\_-\\_mothers\\_with\\_babies\\_unit.html](http://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/new_beginnings_-_mothers_with_babies_unit.html)

The Ministry of Justice transferred two requests for information as below:

- 1. How many women in the greater Wellington region, in the time period: years 2010-2014, who were aged 25 or under, were either imprisoned and also documented as pregnant and / or registered as parents of a child/ children under the age of five?*
- 2. How many women have accessed a mother and baby unit in prison and then are domiciled to the greater Wellington region for release? In the same time period above?*

Unfortunately, the information that you request does not currently exist in a form that can be readily supplied to you, and would instead require initiation of a project to extract, analyse and present the data in the form requested.

Therefore, this part of your request is declined under section 18(g) of the OIA, as the information requested is not held by the Department, and we have no grounds for believing that it is held by another agency or more closely connected with the functions of another agency.

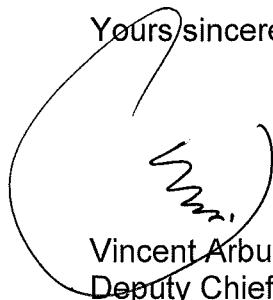
Please note that the Ombudsman has advised that information is not considered to be held by an agency in instances where a request necessitates research or analysis of source data in order to generate fresh information in a form different from that in which the base data is held.

If you would like to discuss your requests further, please contact the Department at [info@corrections.govt.nz](mailto:info@corrections.govt.nz) and we will arrange for you to speak with a staff member directly who may be able to assist.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vincent', enclosed within a large, hand-drawn circular scribble.

Vincent Arbuckle  
Deputy Chief Executive  
Corporate Services