



12 June 2026

C214560

C Lane

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Tēnā koe

Thank you for your email of 14 May 2026 to the Department of Corrections – Ara Poutama Aotearoa, requesting information about Release to Work (RtW). Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

People on RtW have previously taken part in unit and prison-based activities and education to ensure they are well-prepared for community-based employment and that the public are safe. You can find out more about RtW, including the eligibility criteria, application and approval process, under section M.04.07 of the Prison Operations Manual, which is available on our website at the following link:

https://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/policy_and_legislation/Prison-Operations-Manual/Movement/M.04-External-movement-transportation-of-prisoners/M.04.07-release-to-work-RTW.

You requested:

In continuation to my previously made request dated; 4th June 2025, referenced C197076, I would like to request the following information as spreadsheet attachment appendix;

- Number of life sentenced inmates attending RtW that are yet to attend their first parole hearing;*
- Of those life sentenced inmates attending, which prison do each reside;*
- Of those life sentenced inmates attending, what security classification of each of those inmates hold at the time of application;*
- Of those life sentenced inmates attending, how far out from their first parole attendance, were they at the time of RtW application before being approved; e.g 3-6mth prior, 6-12mth prior, 12-18mth prior and so on;*

As mentioned on our website, the eligibility criteria for RtW is:

1. Only prisoners who are specified in regulation 26 of the Corrections Regulations 2005 can be released on release to work. Release to work is a form of temporary release.
2. These prisoners are:
 - a. minimum security prisoners who:
 - i. are serving a sentence of 24 months or less; or
 - ii. are serving a sentence of more than 24 months and have reached their parole eligibility date; or
 - iii. were sentenced to a determinate sentence of imprisonment prior to 1 July 2002 for a “serious violence offence”, are not eligible for parole, and are within 12 months of their sentence end date.
 - b. low and low-medium security prisoners who have a release date set by the New Zealand Parole Board.

As per the eligibility criteria for RtW, a person sentenced to life imprisonment must have reached their parole eligibility date to be eligible for RtW. Therefore, all individuals sentenced to life imprisonment who are approved for RtW have reached their parole eligibility date and attended their first parole hearing.

To prepare a response to your current request, we have sought and received assurances from the relevant regional staff that none of the prisoners included within the data released in the previous response to you (our ref C197076) were undertaking RtW under the circumstances you have described, which would not meet these eligibility criteria.

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.

If you have any concerns with this response, we encourage you to raise them with Corrections. Alternatively, you have the right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman. Information about how to do this is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by contacting them on 0800 802 602 or by post to the Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Ngā mihi



Neil Beales
Acting Commissioner Custodial Services