

6 May 2019

C102925

BAW Russell
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Tēnā koe Mr Russell

Thank you for your email of 4 December 2018, requesting information about the Prisoner Incentive Framework. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA). As you are aware, we extended the timeframe for responding to your request by 40 working days, pursuant to section 15A(1)(b) of the OIA. We apologise for the delay in replying to you.

To achieve our goal of reducing re-offending, Corrections provides a comprehensive range of rehabilitation, education and employment opportunities to help prisoners prepare to maintain a crime free life outside prison.

The majority of prisoners have no formal qualifications and limited education or work experience prior to coming to prison. We know that helping prisoners gain education, qualification, or employment skills increases their likelihood of finding employment when they are released. It reduces their likelihood of re-offending and keeps our communities safe.

Prisoner employment programmes are run to improve the employment potential of people who pass through our prisons each year. In 2017/18, prisoners collectively participated in 10 million hours of industry, treatment, learning and constructive activities. This includes 1,025 prisoners taking part in trades training, 7,710 prisoners completing a rehabilitation programme, 1,469 prisoners receiving literacy and numeracy support, and 3,173 qualifications being achieved by prisoners while in prison. Types of qualifications include horticulture and agriculture National Certificates and forklift licences.

Employment and industry training, including our Release to Work programme, are hugely beneficial avenues for prisoners to gain real work experience and employment skills, making it easier for them to find work on release. Having a job means someone is able to provide for themselves and their family, connect with pro-social support and it gives them a sense of pride.

The Release to Work programme allows minimum security prisoners, who are assessed as suitable, to engage in paid employment in the community where they can gain experience, employment skills and job stability to support them into work and to live crime free on release. Prisoners employed on Release to Work are paid at a full market rate determined by their employer, and 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.

In addition to the training and employment opportunities in prison, we operate our own recruitment service where specialised recruitment consultants help place offenders into jobs in preparation for their release from prison, or while they are serving a community sentence. In the 2017/18 financial year, this recruitment service helped place 926 people with convictions into sustainable jobs.

We also have an employment support service, which includes a more intensive support package for prisoners due for release and for offenders on community sentences. This includes case management and six months of in-work support, in addition to job placement. During the 2017/18 financial year, the employment support service helped 356 offenders find jobs.

It is important to note that prisoners are not employed to work by Corrections and are therefore not subject to the same wage rates, rights and remedies as private sector workers. Prisoners do, however, have protections under the legislation and regulations that govern Corrections. Prisoners can be paid earnings at a rate set out in accordance with section 66(3) of the Corrections Act 2004 for employment in prison. Please note that prisoners employed under these provisions are outside the statutory framework for employment set out in the Employment Relations Act 2000.

Prisoners who undertake employment and training do so on a voluntary basis, and the allowance paid to prisoners through the Framework is not a salary or wage, but a small incentive to encourage prisoners to take part in activities that we know help with their rehabilitation and reintegration.

As you may be aware, the cost to the taxpayer to house a prisoner is approximately \$100,000 per year. This provides for the safe and secure operation of our prisons to ensure the approximately 9,000 staff we employ, as well as prisoners and the public, are kept safe. It also covers a prisoner's meals, electricity, clothing and other amenities, as well as GP, nursing and basic dental services, and mental health support. Prisoners receiving an incentive allowance use this money to purchase items from the prison canteen (which can include snack food, phone cards and selected toiletries), and to rent a television.

The incentive allowance framework provides the opportunity for prisoners to earn up to 60 cents per hour, and most prisoners are encouraged to partake in 40 hours of engagement per week.

All prisoners commencing work start at the initial rate of 20 cents per hour, with progression through the framework depending on their work ethic, skills development and experience gained. Prisoners who attend a programme including vocational training, earn between 20 cents and 40 cents per hour.

Prisoners who both work and attend programmes will receive the amount they earn from their employment.

More information regarding Corrections' employment and training programmes is available at:

www.corrections.govt.nz/working_with_offenders/prison_sentences/employment_and_support_programmes/employment_activities.html.

You have asked:

For the 2017/18 financial year can you please tell me:

- 1. the total number of hours of activity undertaken at each payment level (including the sick or unable to work rate and the refused work or removed from work rate), if possible, broken down by the type of activity (e.g. how many hours at each payment level for employment, education, and rehabilitation respectively)*

Prisoners who receive the Prisoner Incentive Allowance may be engaged in a variety of rehabilitation programmes and training, reintegration, education or work-related activities. This work can include:

- Construction
- Engineering
- Farming (including dairy, cattle, sheep, piggeries, apiculture)
- Forestry
- Horticulture
- Manufacturing
- Arts and Crafts
- Cleaning

Kitchen work, café work, laundry work, grounds maintenance, distribution, asset/building maintenance and recycling/waste management also fall under this framework.

It would take a substantial number of manual hours to collate the information you have requested. Therefore, this part of your request is declined under section 18(f) of the OIA, as the information cannot be made available without substantial collation or research. However, following is four random weeks of data (weeks ending 7 June, 22 July, 14 October and 24 November 2018) providing a breakdown of hours per pay level for an average week.

Pay level	20c	30c	40c	50c	60c
Reintegration	6,158	760	31,395	83	2,724
Industries	9,445	1,927	41,471	204	18,055
Unit employment	10,731	1,463	38,459	225	5,219

2. *the total money paid to prisoners under the framework*

For the financial year 2017/18, offenders receiving an allowance through the prisoner incentive framework were paid \$4,541,050, which translates to \$87,327 per week or an average of \$8.73 per prisoner per week.

3. *the revenue earned by the Department from prisoner employment and other activities undertaken under the framework.*

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Please see the table below showing the total funds Corrections received in the 2017/18 financial year from external clients who have been supplied with the products of any prisoner employment activity.

Employment Activity	2017/18 financial year
Engineering	\$510,668
Other	\$3,345,021
Primary Sector	\$13,690,021
Prison Based Industries	\$982,591
Timber	\$162,442

Please note that these figures are for total funds that we received only and do not include any expenditure. It is important to note that prisoner employment programmes are run by NZQA qualified instructors to improve the employment potential of people who pass through our prisons each year, to support our main goal of reducing re-offending.

Corrections is committed to ensuring all prisons are working prisons, which are based on a structured environment where all prisoners take part in some form of work, education, or rehabilitation programme. This initiative will provide people with the skills and opportunities they need to take greater control of their life. Prisoners participate in offender employment or training activities on a voluntary basis and are generally enthusiastic about being provided with the opportunity and responsibility to gain experience, skills and qualifications.

I hope the information provided is useful. If you have any concerns with this response, I would encourage you to raise these with Corrections. 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.

Ngā mihi nui



Rachel Leota
National Commissioner