



16 July 2013

C62646

Nicholas Bosma
fyi-request-943-1ba072b8@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Mr Bosma

Thank you for your email of 16 June 2013, in which you request information relating to Offender Employment. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

The Department manages approximately 8,500 prisoners at any one time, the majority of whom have limited education or work experience. We know that prisoners who find sustainable employment on release from prison are less likely to re-offend. For this reason, we offer a wide range of programmes to improve prisoner employment opportunities on release from prison, thereby reducing re-offending and improving public safety.

For general information on Offender Employment, please refer to the Employment and Support programmes section of the Department's external website via the link below:

http://www.corrections.govt.nz/working_with_offenders/community_sentences/employment_and_support_programmes.html.

You have requested the number of prisoners who are currently self-employed in New Zealand prisons.

Please note that in September 2011, the Department took steps to reinforce guidelines about prisoner self-employment. Under section 33 of the Corrections Act 2004, a rule was issued in all prisons that prohibited prisoners from undertaking any self employment activities without the approval of the prison manager.

All prisoners sentenced prior to 6 September 2011 were required to complete a *Self Employment Disclosure Form*. If prisoners identified that they were self employed, they were also required to complete a *Request for Self Employment Approval*. The Request for Self Employment Approval is considered by the prisoner's case manager, who provides a recommendation to the prison manager. The prison manager provides the final approval, based on two key principles:

- that the self employment activity does not undermine sentence integrity; and
- that the self employment activity supports the prisoner's rehabilitation and reintegration.

All newly sentenced prisoners are advised of the new rule, and the need to have self employment interests approved.

This process enables the Department to appropriately monitor prisoner self-employment activities to ensure sentence integrity is maintained and to promote the rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders. Self Employment Approval applications have been approved in a range of areas including farming, mining and picture framing.

Unfortunately, we cannot readily extract the number of prisoners who are self employed, as this information is not centrally collated. In order to identify this type of specific information, we would be required to manually review files from each individual prison site. 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 declined under section 18(f) of the OIA, as the information cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

I trust the information provided is of assistance. If you are dissatisfied with this response, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my refusal to provide the information requested. Contact details are: Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Maria McDonald'.

Maria McDonald
Deputy National Commissioner
Corrections Services