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# Long-Term Insights Briefing

## Topic consultation

*Looking forward to 2050, how could the use of new and emerging technology improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the New Zealand corrections system?*

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DEPARTMENT OF  
**CORRECTIONS**  
ARA POUTAMA AOTEAROA



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## What is the Department of Corrections and what do we do?

The Department of Corrections – Ara Poutama Aotearoa (Corrections) is the organisation within the justice sector that administers prison and community sentences and orders, and assists in people’s rehabilitation and reintegration into the community.

The Corrections Act 2004 sets out Corrections’ purpose which is to improve public safety and contribute to the maintenance of a just society by:

- ensuring that the community-based sentences, sentences of home detention, and custodial sentences and related orders that are imposed by the courts and the New Zealand Parole Board are administered in a safe, secure, humane, and effective manner.
- providing for corrections facilities to be operated in accordance with rules set out in this Act and regulations made under this Act that are based, amongst other matters, on the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.
- assisting in the rehabilitation of offenders and their reintegration into the community, where appropriate, and so far as is reasonable and practicable in the circumstances and within the resources available, through the provision of programmes and other interventions.
- providing information to the courts and the New Zealand Parole Board to assist them in decision making.

We have approximately 10,000 staff, and we work with approximately 9,968 people in prison and 26,107 people in the community as of 21 October 2024.



Corrections provides health, education, rehabilitation, and reintegration services to the people in our management, to reduce their risk of reoffending and improve public safety.

Our organisational strategy Hōkai Rangi builds on the work we are already doing but also recognises we need to do things differently to achieve better outcomes for the people we manage, as well as our staff and communities.

# Corrections is required to produce a Long-Term Insights Briefing (LTIB) once every three years

## What is a Long Term Insights Briefing?

The Public Service Act 2020 requires departmental chief executives to publish a Long-Term Insights Briefing (LTIB) at least once every three years. Our next LTIB is due to be published in 2025.

LTIBs are required to make publicly available:

- information about medium- and long-term trends, risks and opportunities that affect or may affect New Zealand society, and
- information and impartial analysis, including policy options for responding to the trends, risks and opportunities that have been identified.

LTIBs are intended to help us think and plan for the future. They are not government policy and are developed independently of Ministers. They are intended to bring a focus to long-term issues and challenges, and promote public debate on important matters for New Zealand.



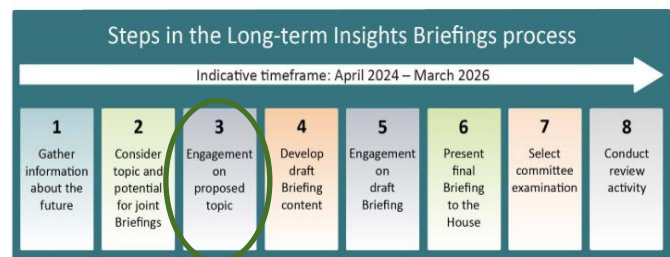
## Our first LTIB explored what our future prison population might look like

Our previous LTIB - *Long Term Insights on Imprisonment, 1960 to 2050* - was developed jointly with the other Justice Sector agencies. It explored long-term insights about imprisonment, including how and why the prison population has changed over the past 60 years.

We want to build on the work done in this previous LTIB and explore what impacts the predicted changes in society, particularly the increasing use of technology, will have on our future corrections system.

## We are consulting on our proposed topic and subject areas

The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) has issued guidance to assist agencies in developing LTIBs, including an eight-step development process (copied below) and criteria for selecting LTIB subject matter. We are at step three of this eight-step process.



Public consultation is required at two critical points:

- on the choice of topics, and
- when a draft is developed.

This consultation is to seek feedback on our proposed topic and scope (i.e. what will be included in the LTIB). Corrections will seek further feedback on the first draft of the LTIB in early 2025, before finalising and publishing our LTIB in mid-2025.

LTIBs are required to undergo Select Committee scrutiny and the relevant Ministers must present a copy of the briefing to the House of Representatives as soon as it is reasonably practical after receiving it.

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# There are changes already happening in the world today that will impact the future of our corrections system

There are several trends which are likely to impact the corrections system in the future.

## *Future prison population - the people we could be managing in 2050*

Corrections is responsible for 18 prisons across Aotearoa (15 for men and three for women) for people who have either been sentenced to a term of imprisonment or have been remanded in custody while they wait for their case to be heard.

The prison population is a product of many variables which may be impacted by future changes. While the prison population will likely be a smaller proportion of the New Zealand population in the future, based on current trends it is likely to be larger than the current prison population.

As we learned from our first Long-Term Insights Briefing, published in 2023, our future prison population is likely to consist of older people on average (average age range of 30- 40 years old), a higher concentration of people serving sentences for violent and sexual offences, and a greater proportion of people on remand.

Corrections also manages a wide variety of community-based sentences and orders, including people on parole and people on home detention.

Any increased use of technology will need to account for the types of people serving sentences and the ways that they might interact with this technology.

## *Increasing technology use across society*

Our previous justice sector LTIB notes: “Over coming decades, the justice system is likely to expand its use of existing technology and new, innovative forms of technology will be introduced .... Technology could be more extensively integrated into infrastructure and service delivery within the criminal justice system. It is likely that new ways of detecting and responding to crime will emerge, which could have implications for the prison population, human rights, the rule of law, and could exacerbate existing disparities in the prison population.”<sup>1</sup>

Increasing use of technology is likely to shape society over the next 50 years. The rate of adoption of new technologies is accelerating, and technological solutions are being applied more and more throughout the justice system.

## *A constrained fiscal environment*

As noted in Treasury’s Long-Term Fiscal Forecasts, as New Zealand’s population is expected to age, there may be a shrinking tax base in the future. This may lead to a more fiscally constrained environment which Corrections must operate within.

Alongside the reduced tax base, there are likely to be increased costs across government as it responds to the increasingly unstable natural environment. For example, it is likely there will be more frequent severe weather events which will place increasing fiscal pressure on the government.

These constraints may lead to greater use of technology-based solutions across the public sector as an alternative to manual or personnel driven practices. Technology adoption may accelerate over time as advancements become more mainstream and their costs reduce.

## *Changes in the broader social context - impacts of global mega-trends on New Zealand corrections system*

‘Megatrends’ are defined as long-term (>10 years) global changes in individual, social, and technological structures that are expected to have a significant impact in the future. Megatrends are known in the present day, but their future path may be unknown. They differ from trends, which are unlikely to last as long, and disruptors, which are a singular occurrence causing radical change on a global scale.

There are six key global megatrends which are likely to directly impact on New Zealand: Geopolitical tensions, climate change and nature, persistent inequity, polarised perspectives, an ageing and changing population, and the accelerating technology landscape. Each of these trends will impact on New Zealand, and the New Zealand corrections environment, in some way either through increasing costs or through the types of prisoners we manage<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.justice.govt.nz/justice-sector-policy/key-initiatives/justice-sector-long-term-insights-briefing/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.deloitte.com/nz/en/Industries/government-public/perspectives/the-power-of-megatrends-for-strategists-and-decision-makers.html>

# Our proposed topic: *Looking forward to 2050, how could the use of new and emerging technology improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the New Zealand corrections system?*

## *Our future corrections system may be more technology enabled than is currently the case*

Technology is becoming increasingly ubiquitous across society, from checking our social media status on our smart phones to scanning our groceries in the supermarket, technology is all around us.

We know that technology is likely to play an increasing role across the system and society in general. This is likely to present both challenges and opportunities for Corrections. This LTIB is an opportunity to consider some important technology-related issues which may confront us in the future.

While the previous LTIB touched on the impacts of technology on the prison population, it did not look at any particular topic within this broad subject area in depth. The LTIB provides an opportunity to explore the potential future risks and impacts of technology on our future corrections population.

New and emerging technologies are already becoming more widely used across all aspects of the New Zealand corrections system. The LTIB could explore the ways that new and emerging technology can be used in the New Zealand corrections system to improve effectiveness and efficiency. Based on new and emerging technologies being used in other jurisdictions, technology solutions could be used to improve:

- **rehabilitation and reintegration outcomes.** For example using technology to provide better communication options for prisoners to maintain community and family connections, improved education options, telehealth services to improve health outcomes / meet additional health support needs.
- **safety and security of both prisoners and custodial staff.** For example, emerging surveillance technologies, such as video analytics and facial recognition, have the potential to provide real-time tracking of prisoners, enabling more proactive and effective management.
- **efficiency of systems, processes, and infrastructure.** For example, improved administrative systems (payroll and management systems) which streamline processes freeing up resources for use elsewhere. Or using analytics as part of risk assessment processes, allowing correctional facilities to better understand and manage the risks associated with individuals. Smart building technology can be used to optimize operational efficiency, reduce costs, and enhance overall infrastructure, creating a safer and more secure environment for both prisoners and staff.

## *New Zealand specific technology considerations*

There has been some research looking at the impacts of different types of technology on prison populations in other jurisdictions, however, there has been little research into the implications of increasing technology use in our New Zealand context.

There are technology and data considerations that are unique to the New Zealand context which will need to be considered more fully as we become more reliant on technology-based solutions.



*An electronic kiosk for prisoner use in a prison yard*

### **Questions:**

1. Would you make any changes to our overall topic?
2. Are there other topics that we should consider, for this or future briefings?
3. Do you have anything else you would like to share with us about our topic choice?
4. Are there any examples of technology use in corrections systems either in New Zealand or overseas that you would like us to consider?



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## Our LTIB can't explore all the technology-related options we may have available to us in the future

*We would like to look at four areas in depth and then look at how we can maximise the benefits, and mitigate the risks of using these new technologies across our New Zealand corrections system*

As technology impacts every aspect of our lives, and this impact will likely only increase in the future, the proposed topic is broad. We wouldn't be able to cover all the technology-related things that may have an impact on Corrections in the future. Instead, we are proposing to look at a few subject areas within our broader topic.

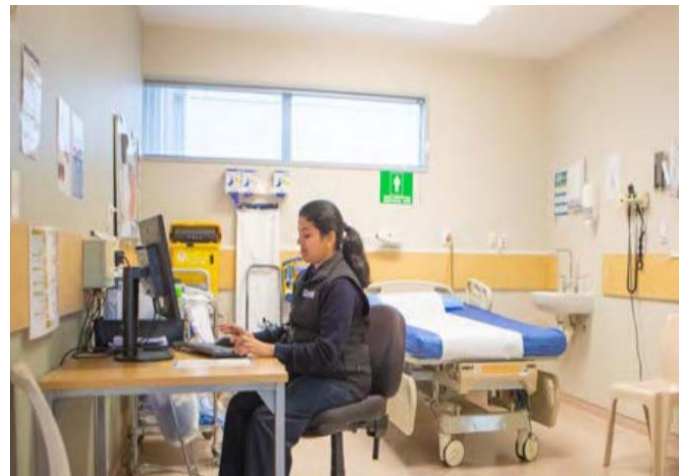
We want to look at four areas in depth that we anticipate will become increasingly important in our future Corrections environment. Our proposed subject areas are:

- **Improving system productivity and resilience:** How could technology enable a more efficient and resilient corrections network?
- **Supporting our frontline workforce:** How could new and emerging technology be used to complement our workforce in the future and improve their safety and security?
- **Improving outcomes:** How could new and emerging technology be used to improve rehabilitation and reintegration outcomes both in prisons and in community settings?
- **Rising use of electronic monitoring technology:** How can Corrections take advantage of new and emerging technology in non-custodial settings?
- **Future policy directions:** How can we maximise the benefits, and mitigate the risks, of new and emerging technologies across the New Zealand corrections environment.

We propose that each subject area is explored as a stand-alone chapter within our LTIB, each chapter would focus on a single question and include:

- a discussion on what technology is currently available, or likely to be available in the future;
- how overseas jurisdictions are using technology to improve operational efficiency;
- potential risks and benefits of increased technology use;
- likely operational efficiencies (e.g. Cost savings, safety improvements, reduced staffing requirements, improved rehabilitation outcomes); and

- New Zealand specific considerations for increased use of technology in this area (eg. Treaty of Waitangi or Privacy Act implications)



*Each chapter will discuss a question about a key aspect of our future corrections system*

### ***How could technology enable a more efficient and resilient prison network?***

This chapter could look at the potential impacts of new and emerging technology on our future prison network. This could include any risks, benefits, and other implications for the future if Corrections adopts new technology.

For example, there is potential for new technology to contribute to a more connected, efficient, and resilient prison network as it is used more, such as in-cell health and communications services.

Increased use of new technology may help facilitate prisoner communication with families, their community, education providers, and health services. This would mean these services would no longer be location dependent, enabling prisoners to be located based on other factors.

While this technology could lead to better health and reintegration outcomes, it may also create risks which should be considered alongside these benefits.

### ***How could technology complement our workforce and improve their safety and security?***

Predicted future demographic changes may impact Corrections' ability to recruit and retain staff. In the future there is expected to be a more limited pool of people available to staff prisons and community corrections.

This chapter could explore how new and emerging technology could better support our workforce. It could explore new and emerging solutions to address safety and security concerns, to improve the attractiveness of the role, and enable staff to have a greater focus on rehabilitation and reintegration.

***How can technology be used to improve rehabilitation and reintegration outcomes?***

This chapter could explore how new and emerging technology is currently being used in correctional rehabilitation overseas, and how this technology could potentially be utilised in a New Zealand context.

It could explore how new and emerging technology could change the types of services that Corrections should provide. For example, by providing different skill training required for people to join the workforce, or to support with emerging types of addiction and health issues.

***How could technology be used in the management of community sentences to improve public safety?***

Community corrections has evolved substantially with the adoption of new technology. For example, the use of electronic monitoring, GPS tracking, and remote check-ins to manage people in the community.

This chapter could explore how Corrections could utilise new and emerging technology in community corrections and non-custodial settings. For example, different uses of electronic monitoring systems, use of technology for reporting and tracking, and use of technology to understand and respond to risk.

***How can we maximise the benefits, and mitigate the risks, of new technologies across the New Zealand corrections system?***

This chapter could look at how technology is being used various overseas corrections contexts and consider potential policy options to provide benefits and mitigate the risks of adopting this new and emerging technology in New Zealand.

In particular, it could look at policy options to enable use of technology to help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the future New Zealand corrections system.

**Questions:**

1. What other technology-related subject areas could we consider as part of our LTIB?
2. Are there particular areas within these subject areas that you would like us to explore?
3. Are there any other examples of technology use in corrections systems here or overseas that you would like us to consider when exploring these subject areas?



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## How you can make a submission

### *Let us know what you think of our proposed LTIB topic*

We want to know what you think of our proposed Long-Term Insights Briefing topic and subject areas and how they could affect you, your community, or your organisation.

To help gain this feedback, we have developed some question prompts. You do not need to respond to all (or any) of the questions if you do not wish.

We will consider your feedback before finalising our LTIB topic and subject areas to explore.

**Written submissions can be emailed to [LTIB@corrections.govt.nz](mailto:LTIB@corrections.govt.nz) and submissions are open until 29 November 2024.**

### *Your submission is public information*

After public consultation, a summary of submissions will be published on the Corrections website and released to the public if requested under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

Unless you clearly specify otherwise in your submission, Corrections will consider that you have consented to us posting information from your submission along with your name.

If you think there are grounds to withhold specific information in your submission from publication, please make this clear in your submission. Reasons that information can be withheld are stated in Sections 6 and 9 of the OIA and may include that the submission discloses personal information.

We will any requests to withhold information in submissions take into account when responding to requests under the OIA.

#### **Questions:**

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#### *Subject area questions*

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