

14 September 2023

C170553

[REDACTED]

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 11 July 2023 to the Department of Corrections – Ara Poutama Aotearoa, requesting information about prisoner releases. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA). As you are aware, the timeframe for responding to your request was extended, and I would like to thank you for your patience.

You requested:

- 1) *For the 18 months from 1 January 2022 to 30 June 2023, how many prisoners were released to the East Coast?*

On release from prison, the vast majority of people return home to family or make their own arrangements about where to live, or have provided the New Zealand Parole Board with a release plan (including a proposed address) for consideration, prior to leaving prison.

The table below presents the number of post release orders for ‘Parole’ and ‘Released on Conditions’ to Ara Poutama Aotearoa’s East Coast District between 1 January 2022 and 30 June 2023.

When reading this data please note that Corrections do not record the release location information for people released into the community who were not required to comply with a post-release order.

| Reporting centre | 2021/22* | 2022/23 |
|--------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Wairoa Main Reporting Centre | 8 | 13 |
| Gisborne Main Reporting Centre | 40 | 67 |
| Hastings Main Reporting Centre | 72 | 103 |
| Flaxmere Main Reporting Centre | 7 | 10 |
| Napier Main Reporting Centre | 46 | 91 |
| Total | 173 | 284 |

**Data provided from 01/01/2022 only.*

2) *How of many of those had residential placements prior to release?*

The information that you have requested does not currently exist in a form that can be readily supplied to you and would instead require Corrections to initiate a project to extract, analyse and present the data in the form requested. Therefore, this part of your request is refused under section 18(g) of the OIA, as the information requested is not held by Corrections, 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.

3) *How many prisoners are released every year on average in New Zealand?*

The table below presents the total number of prison releases and total number of unique offenders released from prison between 1 July 2018 and 30 June 2023.

| Financial year | Number of offenders | Number of releases |
|----------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| 2018/19 | 7,239 | 7,904 |
| 2019/20 | 6,959 | 7,616 |
| 2020/21 | 6,029 | 6,528 |
| 2021/22 | 5,211 | 5,644 |
| 2022/23 | 4,872 | 5,267 |

4) *Does the Department of Corrections have data on the percentage of prisoners nationwide who had a place to live prior to release for the past 18 months?*

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5) *Did the Department of Corrections address deficiencies in its prisoner release policy (as highlighted by the Waitangi Tribunal) in its recently revamped Hōkai Rangi policy? Why/why not?*

Our organisational strategy, Hōkai Rangi was implemented in 2019 and no “revamp” has been completed.

Corrections provides a wide range of services to assist with the rehabilitation and reintegration of people in prison. This includes health services, mental health and addiction programmes, cultural support services, educational opportunities, vocational and employment training, motivational sessions, offence-focused programmes, wrap-around whānau support, reintegration services, intensive (unit-based) residential programmes, and transitional accommodation support to people in prison.

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.

I trust the information provided is of assistance. I encourage you to raise any concerns about this response 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



Sean Mason
National Commissioner (acting)