

Parole is when someone is released from prison before they finish their whole sentence. It is only for people who get a prison sentence that is longer than two years.

The Parole Board decides:

1. Who can get parole, and when they can get it.
2. What people have to do when they are on parole - special conditions or rules to keep everyone safe.

Read this to find out more about parole hearings.



Before the hearing

Getting ready



At the hearing

What happens at your whānau member's hearing



Decision

What happens when the Parole Board makes their decision



Important information

Other things you might need to know



Before the hearing

Getting ready



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Your whānau member in prison gets the date for their parole hearing four months before the hearing.

If your whānau member wants you to go to their hearing they need to tell you when it is.

The Parole Board will put your name on their list of people who are coming to the hearing.

If you aren't on the list you can't go to the hearing.

Your whānau member can only ask 3 people to go to their parole hearing.

Things to do before your whānau member goes to the Parole Board



1. Talk to your whānau member

Ask your whānau member to invite you to the parole hearing and tell the Parole Board you are coming.



2. Talk to someone

You might find it helpful to talk to someone who has already been to a parole hearing. Maybe your whānau or friends know someone who has been to one. They might tell you what the parole hearing was like for them.



3. Talk to the case manager

Talk to the case manager. They can tell you how to prepare for the parole hearing and how to help your whānau. The case manager can give you important:

- Dates e.g. The date of the hearing and the deadline for your submission (the date it has to be in by)
- Information eg how the Parole Board works and what you can expect when you are at the hearing.



4. Submissions

You can write a submission for the parole hearing. A submission is a letter that tells the Parole Board anything you think they need to know before they make a decision. For example, you might want the Parole Board to know things like:

- You have sorted out an address for your whānau member
- You have found a service in the community that will help your whānau member stay on track and out of trouble
- Other support your whānau can provide.



At the hearing

What happens at your whānau member's hearing



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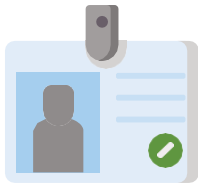
1. Arriving at a prison

Everyone gets searched. You will need to show your ID e.g.

- driver license
- community services card

We are sorry but:

- You can't bring things like food, cell phones with you
- You can't wear patches
- Children are not allowed to come to parole hearings.



2. Waiting room

You go in to the waiting room before the hearing. When they are ready, the Parole Board will ask you to come in.



3. When you go in

The Parole Board panel are already in the room or virtual room online. Whānau, the case manager, and corrections officers all go into the room together. Your whānau member goes into the room a different way – you might not see them before the parole hearing.



4. The hearing

The Parole Board will introduce themselves. You can ask them if you can start the hearing with a mihi, pepeha, or karakia. They might let you.

The Parole Board might speak to:

- Your whānau member
- Case manager
- Corrections officer
- Whānau – you can ask them if you can speak.

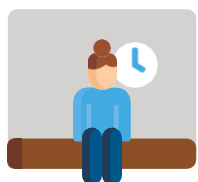
They want to find out about things like:

- How things are going in prison – behaviour, courses
- Plans to keep your whānau member on track if they get parole.



5. Waiting room

You go back into the waiting room while the Parole Board talk to each other.





Decision

The Parole Board makes their decision

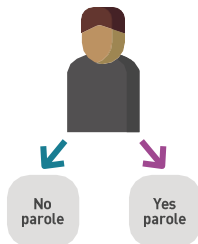


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1. Waiting room

When they make their decision they will call everybody back into the hearing room.



2. Parole Board makes their decision

The Parole Board will tell everybody their decision and their reasons.



3. If your whānau member gets parole

The Parole Board will say:

- The date your whānau member will be released
- The release conditions your whānau member will get.

Talk to the case manager and probation officer about:

- How your whānau member will get home from prison.



4. If your whānau member does not get parole

Unfortunately, not every hearing ends in parole. We understand that you could be disappointed or upset. It might help to go and talk about it with your whānau and friends.

Don't be discouraged, your whānau member will get a chance at another hearing. The Parole Board will say when the next hearing is.

The Parole Board's decision

When the Parole Board make decisions about whether people in prison can get parole, they have to think about:

- Community safety
- The risk that your whānau member might commit a new offence – break the law again or not
- The seriousness of any new offences – how much harm they might do.



Submissions



You can tell the Parole Board what you think. You can:

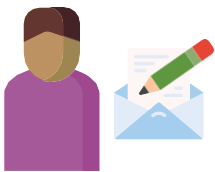
- Write a submission. A submission is a letter that tells the Parole Board anything you think they need to know before they make a decision
- Ask the Parole Board if you can speak at the hearing. They might let you. They might not.
- Talk to the case manager about how you can get your submission to the Parole Board.

Case manager



The case manager in prison can:

- Give more information
- Answer questions
- Help you understand what the parole conditions mean for you and your whānau
- Make sure you know important dates
- Help you know where the hearing is.



Victims

Victims can tell the Parole Board what they think too. Victims can:

- Write a submission
- Speak to the Parole Board. There is a special hearing for victims who want to talk to the Parole Board. You cannot go to that special hearing.



Lawyers

Your whānau member might want their lawyer to come to their parole hearing. If so, your whānau member needs to tell the Parole Board. Legal Aid might pay for their lawyer to come to the hearing. It might not pay. Your whānau member has to ask their lawyer about this.



Cultural reports

A cultural report gives a Te Ao Māori view about you and your whānau member to the Parole Board. It helps the Parole Board get a better understanding of you and your whānau – your history, your strengths in kaupapa Māori, what's important to you, how you do things etc. Talk to the case manager about how to get a report.