

07 August 2023

C170420

James

fyi-request-23418-f0da6198@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe James

Thank you for your email of 7 July 2023 to the Department of Corrections – Ara Poutama Aotearoa, requesting information about the reduction in prison population. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

You requested:

Under the OIA please provide all, if any information that shows the prison population has been safely reduced. This should include but not be limited to all data, research and reports on correlations between the reduced prison population and the current increase in crime that would obviously have to be taken into account.

Corrections does not decide who is in prison and who is in the community – this is a matter for the Courts and New Zealand Parole Board. There are a range of factors that influence the prison population, including arrests, court decisions, releases and seasonal trends.

Corrections is committed to reducing re-offending, and giving offenders every opportunity to turn their lives around. To help people address their offending we provide programmes according to risk, need and their ability to be responsive to the programme. In order to ensure that we are targeting our investment to interventions that work, we measure the effectiveness of our programmes annually, with results published in our [Annual Report](#). For example, the 2021/22 Annual Report records re-imprisonment rate after a 12- and 24-month period (pages 174 – 178) and the Rehabilitation Quotient (pages 179 – 181) records the effectiveness of our prison and community-based interventions.

We continue to work towards long term reductions in the remand population through the High Impact Innovation Programme (HIIP). The programme has operated a number of initiatives to prevent unnecessary delays for people in the justice system. The initiatives improve information flow and access to information, which enables informed decision making by the judiciary or New Zealand Parole Board as quickly and safely as possible. The initiatives also provide increased support to people in the justice system, reducing harm and improving the likelihood of someone complying with any conditions imposed on them.

After conducting a search of our records, we have not identified any further data, research or reports that specifically relate to safely reducing the prison population. In particular, we have not received any information suggesting a correlation between recent crime statistics and the reduction of the prison population.

Therefore, your request is refused under 18(e) of the OIA, as the document alleged to contain the information does not exist.

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

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nic Barkley', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Nic Barkley
Manager Ministerial Services
People and Capability