

3 March 2003

Acting Minister of Corrections

CE/AM

## **Emergency Response Unit: Management Issues Report**

### **Background**

- 1 I have been asked to respond to three issues:
  - (a) Senior national management awareness of the establishment of the ERU;
  - (b) The status of implementation of the recommendations endorsed by the Assurance Board;
  - (c) Whether such an event could occur again.

I will deal with each in turn.

### **Senior National Management**

- 2 Senior national management of the Public Prisons Service was aware that in discussion with the Unions over staffing levels for the newly built Papanui Remand Unit, local management had agreed to the allocation of additional resources for a site-wide security unit. They were not involved in the practical aspects of establishment or the particular duties assigned. This decision was acknowledged in National office but subject to a caveat that it could only be an interim arrangement pending the application of the Workplace Development Project.
- 3 The intent behind WDP was to establish nationally consistent service delivery, efficient staffing and resource levels for all prisons and units within the Public Prisons Service. The WDP process subsequently established that Canterbury had more resources than other parts of the country and that there was no justification for Canterbury, relative to other regions, to be able to undertake additional functions relating to the ERU activities. It was around this time I became aware of the ERU's existence. The decision was consequently taken to close down the ERU. The decision to abolish the ERU was not in fact directly connected with the outcome of the inquiry which came later.

### **Status of recommendation**

- 4 I am assured that all the agreed recommendations from the inquiry have been implemented aside from two minor exceptions:
  - (a) Development of procedures for the deployment of Regional Advanced Control and Restraint teams. This work is underway. They will be cleared through me and my agents before implementation;
  - (b) Development of a national process to ensure staff working in a voluntary capacity do so with the Superintendent's authority. Work has not started, but in the interim Regional Managers and Superintendents will be asked to provide written approvals to Managers' requests to use staff in a voluntary capacity.
- 5 Also a matter of course the Assurance Board does monitor, follow up and receive reports confirming whether agreed recommendations have been implemented. This process will apply to the ERU Report.

### **Prospect of a repeat**

- 6 While managers have flexibility about how they use their resources to deliver agreed outputs, they have no discretion to substantially change the output mix or produce new outputs without central decisions being taken both in respect to the efficacy of the proposal and the funding for it.
- 7 Over the years since the establishment of the department, the level of specification associated with output delivery and related performance standards has reached a very advanced level. There are in place processes by which internal purchase decisions are taken and reflected in Internal Purchase Agreements, which are at a greater level of detail than the Statement of Intent, which itself is quite detailed. There is a comprehensive monitoring regime in place too. Finally, PPS internal budgeting systems have evolved to very decisively allocate funding at a cost-item level, exposing any deviant regional spending to security.
- 8 All major operational policy changes and the associated manual instructions are subject to either national decision-making, oversight or vetting clearance/processes. In the case of the ERU, one of the issues was there were no operational policy/procedures surrounding its activities which had been cleared at a national level.
- 9 Further, given the level of financial stringency now prevailing there is no substantial financial flexibility to fund ventures of this type and particularly so given other priorities.

### **Conclusion**

In short, I can assure you the situation is tidy and a repeat very unlikely.

**Recommendations**

a) You note this report

**YES/NO**

Mark Byers  
Chief Executive

Referred

Hon Margaret Wilson  
Acting Minister of Corrections

Date: