

3 November 2021

C141527

Paul Hunt
Chief Commissioner
New Zealand Human Rights Commission
Sent via email to: paulh@hrc.co.nz

Dear Paul

Thank you for your letter of 20 September 2021 providing Dr Sharon Shalev's draft report, *First, do no harm: Segregation, restraint and pepper spray use in women's prisons in New Zealand*. I note you suggested that Corrections may wish to respond to the report's recommendations, and that Dr Shalev would appreciate responses by 1 December 2021.

Firstly, I am pleased to announce the recent release of our Women's Strategy 2021-2025 *Wāhine - E rere ana ki te pae hou Women rising above a new horizon* which focuses on better outcomes for women in the prison system and their families. The strategy was released on 28 October 2021 and is publicly available on our website [here](#).

We have made significant progress since the launch of our first women's strategy in 2017, but we have also acknowledged the need to do more. I whole-heartedly accept that we need to make significant and systemic improvements in our approach to working with women across the prison network. I also embrace the broad response the 'First, do no harm' report calls for, being, *"a unique response that: centres around the particular needs and challenges of women; reflects women's distinctive roles within their families and communities; and minimises the harm caused by segregation and use of force against women"*. I consider that our refreshed women's strategy steps up to this challenge by setting a clear vision for how we manage women in prisons and the community. The associated action plan outlines a number of tangible steps towards this vision.

Our refreshed strategy will support and continue to build on the work we are doing through:

- Hōkai Rangi, our overarching organisational strategy.
- The Women's Prison Network Improvement Programme, which is responsible for implementing a range of initiatives that will contribute to women's wellbeing and help reduce reoffending.

- Te Mana Wāhine Pathway in Canterbury. This is looking to transform the way Christchurch Women's Prison operates over four years, to then inform the transformation of the other two women's prisons.
- Our ongoing work to strengthen our health, mental health and addictions services.
- Our co-design of kaupapa Māori health Services is set to transform all of Corrections health services to design an end-to-end kaupapa Māori foundation for how health services will be developed, designed and delivered across all sites, including the women's sites.

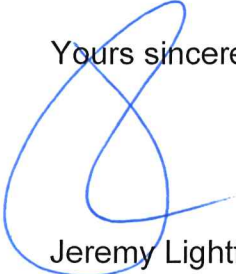
The strategy will also be informed by the independent scrutiny provided by the Office of the Inspectorate and other monitoring entities such as the Office of the Ombudsman and your office. As you may be aware, on 28 October 2021, the Chief Inspector, Janis Adair released a thematic report titled, '*The Lived Experience of Women in Prisons*'. She has also released three individual inspection reports into the three women's prisons, and a special investigation into Auckland Region Women's Corrections Facility. The recommendation and considerations in the Inspectorate's thematic report are based on recent data and analysis and were informed by comprehensive inspections of all three women's prisons. These reports and Corrections' responses are available on the Inspectorate's website [here](#). Corrections related media release is also available on our website [here](#).

As you are aware, in our response to Dr Shalev dated 13 October 2021, we raised concerns about the '*First, Do No Harm*' draft report. This included an apparent absence of methodological discussion throughout the report; the generalisation of all women's prisons in New Zealand, noting that the report was only based on one visit to Auckland Region Women's Corrections Facility; and concerns about the discussion on the over-representation of Māori and Pacific people. The report was also based on older data collated in 2019. We consider that the concerns we raised have not been addressed in the final version of the report.

In light of these concerns, and in light on the comprehensive up-to-date and independent analysis provided by the Office of the Inspectorate, Corrections will not be providing a formal response to the specific recommendations in Dr Shalev's '*First, Do No Harm*' report. Rather, my team will be using the recommendations, findings, and considerations from the Inspectorate's five reports to inform the ongoing implementation of our strategy and work programme. I will, however, ensure that the teams involved in the new strategy and work programmes referenced above are all provided a copy of the '*First, Do No Harm*' report for their information and consideration.

Thank you again for your commitment to ensuring the Human Rights standards
Corrections commits to are upheld and for sharing the report with us.

Yours sincerely



Jeremy Lightfoot
Chief Executive

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