CORRECTIONS WORKS

JUNE 2015
Corrections Works is published quarterly by the Department of Corrections

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ON THE COVER: Contributing to working prisons: Instructor Julie Deighton teaches prisoners skills in the concrete yard at Whanganui Prison.

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Let us know if you have any ideas about stories that you’d like to see in upcoming issues. You can email commdesk@corrections.govt.nz.
hundred years ago, all prisoners had a job. Most were sentenced to hard labour, which involved quarrying rock, road building, firewood cutting or brick making. Women and children prisoners picked oakum (the tar-covered rope that was used on ships). Those not sentenced to hard labour were given work within the prison, which usually meant working in the laundry or kitchen, making or mending clothes, and cleaning. Our concept of what constitutes a working prison has changed considerably since then. While these tasks have counted as work, the intent was more about punishment than rehabilitation.

Today, a working prison is a place of industry, learning and treatment, a place where a person can receive the help and skills they need to steer clear of crime for good when they get out of prison.

In Corrections Works this month we feature Out of Gate, a service that supports people as they leave prison. I’m delighted that we’ve been able to secure funding for Out of Gate for another 12 months.

It’s not just about those in prison. We want to lift the overall participation rates of all offenders in rehabilitative programmes, including those on community-based programmes. One of these is a new Community Family Violence Programme, which is featured on page 8. This collaboration between Corrections, Police and the Ministries for Women, Social Development and Justice makes sense. Working in these organisations we see the enduring damage that violence inflicts on families. We can also see the need to take action against this now, for the generations to come.

Ray Smith
CHIEF EXECUTIVE
Instructor Julie Deighton and Principal Corrections Officer Terry Whittle meet regularly to discuss prisoner management and plan training for more prisoners.

The working prisons philosophy has been growing and evolving since the initial implementation at the three pilot prisons in 2012.
Instructors like Julie Deighton are working all over the country to teach prisoners marketable skills.

Rolleston, Auckland Region Women’s Corrections Facility and Tongariro/Rangipō were the first prisons to begin operating as working prisons. From July 2014, the rollout of the next four working prisons began at Northland Region Corrections Facility, Spring Hill Corrections Facility, Hawke’s Bay Regional Prison and Otago Corrections Facility. These prisons have helped inform the rollout of further sites and the concept has now developed into a mature framework which is currently being rolled out at the 16 Corrections-run prisons around the country.

In a working prison every eligible prisoner is engaged in education, training, employment programmes or constructive activity as part of a structured 40-hour week. There is no ‘standard’ day at a working prison, as each prisoner’s day is targeted towards what they need the most – whether that is studying towards qualifications, learning a trade or attending rehabilitation programmes. Whatever their day looks like, most prisoners are active 40 hours a week rather than sitting in their cells or hanging out in the exercise yard.

Working prisons are a key way that we will reach our target of reducing re-offending by 25 percent by 2017. The more people we engage and give the skills, experience and qualifications they need to turn their lives around, the less likely they will be to re-offend and return to prison or serve a community sentence. They will be better parents, partners and contributing members of their communities. This will ultimately lead to a safer New Zealand for everyone.

By the end of June 2015, all departmental prisons will be well on the way to operating as working prisons.

**Concrete skills at Whanganui Prison**

Whanganui Prison is well on its way to achieving working prison status. Julie Deighton is an instructor in the concrete yard at Whanganui Prison, and a member of the prison’s Working Prison Implementation Team. When you meet Julie, her passion for her job and the care and dedication she has for the prisoners she works with is evident. She has up to 24 prisoners in her care for eight hours a day, five days a week.

The men she works with are keen to make her proud. She supports them in a positive way to ensure they have the best possible opportunity to change their lives so they can live offence free when they are released. To do this, Julie not only teaches the men a trade, but engages with them and encourages them to participate in the programmes, education, training and employment opportunities available to them in the prison.

“Knowledge is learning and learning is knowledge,” says Julie. “I think if you show passion for work or studies, hopefully it rubs off on others. I do a lot of study in my spare time; horticulture is my passion and I am happy to share what I learn with my prisoners so they can gain extra knowledge of things outside the concrete yard.

“I really enjoy seeing the men progress and learn new skills, and see the light bulb go on in their heads when they realise that what they are learning can make a difference to their lives when they leave prison.”

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Instructors like Julie Deighton are working all over the country to teach prisoners marketable skills.
Out of Gate providers work with short-serving prisoners and remandees to help them reconnect with their families and community when they are released from prison. The work begins inside prison and continues once they are released. This is a vital service for offenders; one of the most vulnerable times for a prisoner is leaving prison and trying to piece their life back together. They may have lost a job and their home, they may have little money, their relationships may have broken down, and they may have lost contact with their family and support networks.

Our Out of Gate providers often meet prisoners at the gate when they are released. They support offenders through every aspect of their reintegration into the community, from doctor’s appointments, setting up bank accounts, to supporting them to continue with their rehabilitation and treatment programmes and helping them to write CVs.

Early indicators suggest that Out of Gate is working by helping offenders reintegrate more easily.

When Out of Gate was launched in 2013, Corrections’ aim was to reach 4,000 individuals with the service in a two year period. By May 2015, we have had 3,533 referrals to the standard Out of Gate service, and 503 to the intensive service. That’s 4,036 referrals so we are on the right track.

Presbyterian Support is one of our Out of Gate providers; they work with offenders at our three women’s prisons: Auckland Region Women’s Corrections Facility, Arohata Prison and Christchurch Women’s Prison. The benefits of their service go beyond the offender; it also helps a family who will benefit from a mum who won’t go back to prison, and who has the support she needs to make their life better. This is what breaks the cycle of re-offending and makes a real difference in the lives of all New Zealanders.

Our other Out of Gate providers are Goodwood Park Healthcare Group, CareNZ, Healthcare of New Zealand Ltd, and the National Urban Māori Authority.

+ Taiana Anderson, Out of Gate Programme Manager for Family Works Central (also known as Presbyterian Support Central) works with an offender at Arohata Prison.
Staff safety

The safety of our staff is of paramount importance to Corrections. We’re reaching the beginning of Year Three of our Staff Safety Plan, so now’s a good time to update you on the new and continuing initiatives we’re implementing to keep our staff safe from assaults.

New security elements at Community Corrections sites:
We are introducing security enhancements to 13 Community Corrections sites to help staff stay safe. Enhancements include electronic entry on internal doors, duress alarms, and remote access control to the main entry. We’re also putting in new reception counters that feature a perspex pelmet above the counter and anti-roll fins to impede anybody who tries to get across the counter.

Site Emergency Response Team pilot:
From April 2015, we began piloting a new Site Emergency Response Team at Spring Hill Corrections Facility. The team is on site at all times during high security unlock hours, and when not responding to emergencies, provides proactive support to staff. With a high level of training and quick access to a wider range of equipment, which is kept in a special vehicle, the team bridges a gap between the immediate response tactics available at a prison site, and those provided by Advanced Control and Restraint (ACR) teams who come in to manage very serious incidents. “Many prisons in Australia, Canada and Europe have similar teams so we’re keeping up with international practice,” says Principal Custodial Adviser Leigh Marsh. Nine experienced staff were recruited for the team, which consists of four corrections officers and a senior corrections officer on duty at a time.

Managing Safety in Community Training:
This extensive training package has now been delivered in all our Community Corrections sites around the country. The training package covers situational awareness, de-escalation techniques and physical tactics for staff to extricate themselves from an assault. The package was designed in modules so a manager can revisit any of the modules with their team as a refresher.

New stab resistant body armour:
All frontline custodial staff are to get new, more lightweight, less bulky, and more comfortable stab resistant body armour to help keep them safe in high risk areas. Research shows these staff are at greater risk of stab injuries because they intervene in prisoner on prisoner fights which are more likely to feature stabbing weapons. All staff won’t wear the armour all the time, but we’re kitting them all out so if they are called upon to work in a high risk area they’re properly equipped. The new armour is 25 – 30 percent lighter than our existing armour.
Domestic violence action

Dave*, 31, is serving a three month sentence for drink-driving, and has previous convictions for seriously assaulting his partner and wilful damage against an ex-partner’s property. Dave doesn’t really know why he gets so angry at his partner when arguing over her friends, finances and household matters, but he realises this is not healthy, especially for their children.

Until now, Dave has never managed to complete a programme to address his use of violence in relationships – but now there’s hope with a new Family Violence Programme aimed at low to low-moderate risk men like him.

Dave’s example is, sadly, not uncommon. Family violence makes up a significant proportion of our work, many of the offenders we supervise have current or previous convictions that are family violence related – over 50 percent of violent crime is related to family violence.

“That 50 percent statistic is very confronting and one we need to address directly,” says Manager Programmes and Interventions CJ Lamb.

“The reasons why a person may be violent towards a partner or family members are varied. It is very important that any non-violence programme is targeted to an individual and uses an evidence-based approach.”

Taking this approach into account, Corrections is piloting a new Community Family Violence Programme, created in collaboration with professional programme designers and representatives from a range of providers and agencies including Police, Ministry for Women, Ministry of Social Development, and Ministry of Justice.

“We have been guided by research when considering the best way to design this programme and how to target offenders,” says CJ.

“For example, research indicates there are better outcomes when similar risk offenders are in a programme together, as opposed to mixing lower and higher risk men as has been done previously.”

The new programme is aimed specifically at offenders who have a low to low-moderate risk of reconviction, as part of the three-tiered approach to treating family violence. High risk offenders are referred to a psychologist and medium risk offenders to appropriate medium intensity rehabilitation programmes.

Initially 13 programme facilitators completed training to deliver the programme for offenders in the community. Following on the success of an ‘in house’ programme run in Hawke’s Bay, they started running the programme in some prisons in March.

The programme has participants explore family violence from a model that says domestic violence offending has multiple causes and is influenced by a person’s developmental history, relationship styles, environmental circumstances and ideological beliefs and values.

Our focus on addressing family violence is part of our efforts to reduce re-offending by 25 percent by 2017.

* Not his real name

Further reading:

Literature review – community based domestic violence interventions
Corrections recognises ten volunteers

This Volunteer Awareness Week, Corrections is acknowledging ten volunteers who are doing great work to support our goal of reducing re-offending.

An important part of reducing re-offending is increasing literacy and numeracy levels of prisoners so they can take part in employment training and gain qualifications – and three volunteer literacy tutors are among those we’re acknowledging.

Di Whiteacre works with some of Corrections’ most challenging prisoners, including maximum security prisoners at Auckland Prison. Di works with four prisoners one-to-one, and some of her sessions are held through a grill due to the prisoners’ security classifications.

Margaret Morgan volunteers at Rimutaka Prison and has helped prisoners gain NCEA maths qualifications. She helped one prisoner write an illustrated story for children. Another literacy tutor, Caroline Keddie, gives one-to-one tutoring to prisoners at Spring Hill Corrections Facility.

Patrick Nutira, Daphne O’Connell and Margaret Jones are three Kaumatua who have volunteered at Christchurch Men’s Prison’s Matapuna Special Treatment Unit for many years. The trio have been tireless in their dedication to supporting the kaupapa of Matapuna. Their involvement ensures that the unit works within a Te Ao Māori framework.

Maryanne Villa, Karen Quin and Norah Bacon volunteer for PARS Palmerston North and run a knitting group for up to ten men at Manawatu Prison. They recently helped the prisoners make 150 poppies for the National Army Museum’s poppy appeal.

Another volunteer, David Slack, works for Gamblers Anonymous at Spring Hill Corrections Facility. Drawing on his own experience, David gives the prisoners hope that they can overcome their gambling addictions.

We can’t mention you all by name, but we want you to know how much we appreciate the work you do. Helping offenders turn their lives around is a challenging job – and we couldn’t do it without you!

National Volunteer Week 21 – 27 June
On Friday 8 May 2015, Minister of Corrections, Hon Peseta Sam Lotu-iga officially opened the new 960 bed Auckland South Corrections Facility (ASCF).

The Department of Corrections partnered with SecureFuture to design, build, finance, operate and maintain ASCF, and SecureFuture has subcontracted Serco to operate ASCF. ASCF was built ahead of time and on budget. The new facility commenced operations on 18 May, with the arrival of 60 prisoners in the first week. The number of prisoners will gradually increase until early October when capacity is reached. ASCF will accommodate 360 high security prisoners and 600 men with a classification of minimum, low or low-medium.

ASCF is focused on work, education and training, which is designed to help prisoners address their offending behaviour and equip them with the skills to live a constructive life when they are released into the community. It will accommodate men from the Auckland area enabling them to maintain family connections, create important community links and develop an employment history.

The contract signed by Corrections and SecureFuture is focused on outcomes and improving performance. The delivery of better performance is being driven through a carefully balanced combination of financial incentives and financial penalties designed to focus SecureFuture, and Serco as the operator, on the things that are of the most value to the Department. With our challenge of reducing re-offending by 25 percent by 2017, it is no surprise that reducing the number of prisoners that return to custody is at the top of that list.

Then and now: (above) the prison site just before construction started in 2012, and now (right), inside a unit at the new prison.
One theme that has been consistent in all my visits is the desire by all those involved in the Corrections system to see offenders rehabilitated and in employment.

Our government’s aim is to reduce re-offending by 25 percent by 2017. To help achieve this, all prisons in the Corrections estate will become working prisons. This means all eligible prisoners must engage in 40 hours productive activity each week. This can be a combination of education, programmes, courses and work.

All the Corrections staff I have met are committed to making sure prisoners have the best chance of gaining an education, skills and work experience they need to find employment when they are released.

I have set Corrections the target of getting 1,000 prisoners into employment on release by 2019.

Of course this means there have to be employers willing to offer 1000 work places to prisoners. That is why I am hosting business breakfasts around the country, beginning initially in Auckland and Wellington. Corrections and I want to engage with stakeholders and provide an opportunity for employers to show their support for prisoners and their families. We will also showcase the work Corrections does in the field of prisoner employment.

Getting employers on board could mean offering positions either on the job or inside prison, training, mentoring and participating in the Release to Work programme.

Research has shown that prisoners who gain industry skills and experience do much better in the community when they are released and are less likely to re-offend. This is good for their self-esteem and self-worth. It is also good for their families and their communities. Fewer crimes means fewer victims and a safer society. That is our aim, to reintegrate these prisoners successfully and give them a way to contribute meaningfully to society.

Hon. Peseta Sam Lotu-Iiga
Regional Highlights

MAXIMUM SECURITY PRISONERS GRADUATE

Four maximum security prisoners from Auckland Prison have graduated from a treatment programme designed to address their violent behaviour. The prisoners completed the first two phases of the High Risk Personality Programme (HR-PP).

This is the first time the programme has been offered to maximum security prisoners, whose behaviour makes them too high risk to take part in other rehabilitation programmes.

The programme helps address personality factors that directly link to ongoing violence in prison. It targets behaviour that otherwise keeps the men ‘stuck’ in maximum security.

By successfully completing the programme, the prisoners are able to transition out of maximum security and progress into other treatment programmes, such as for drug and alcohol abuse.

A graduation ceremony was held for the prisoners and some of their families attended, along with staff and the programme’s authors from the Chief Psychologist’s office who provided on-going supervision and support.

During their time on the programme none of the prisoners had any misconducts and staff noted a marked improvement in their behaviour.

“This programme has taken hard work from staff, therapists and group members alike, and has shown what we can achieve when we all work together as one team,” said Principal Psychologist Sarah Bramhall.

“Behavioural change doesn’t happen overnight, but it is essential that we work with these men to keep people within the prison safe, and ultimately the public when these men are released into the community.

“The programme is very challenging for the men; many of them only know a lifestyle that involves violence. Changing the beliefs and behaviours of a lifetime takes time and intensive intervention.”

GOLDIE BUSH REJUVENATION

Corrections has been working in collaboration with the Department of Conservation to maintain the popular Goldie Bush Walkway in the Waitakere Ranges. Goldie Bush draws a number of visitors, locals and tourists alike.

Offenders serving sentences of community work, under the close supervision of a community work supervisor, have cleared paths and made the trail accessible and safe for members of the public to enjoy.

“They’ve really made a difference,” says Service Centre Manager Jackie Brackenbury. “We’ve had great feedback and it’s been an excellent opportunity to do something worthwhile for the community.”

Offenders serving community work sentences provide wide ranging support to projects across the community. The sentence also helps to install good work habits and teach offenders the skills they can use to get a job. Research shows employment is a factor in turning people away from crime.
OFFENDERS CONTRIBUTE TO WAIKATO CYCLEWAY

Offenders being managed by Corrections are helping make Te Awa River Ride along the Waikato River a reality. The partnership between Corrections and Te Awa has been acknowledged with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding.

Offenders from the Tai Aroha residential programme for high-risk offenders in Hamilton, along with community work offenders from Huntly and Cambridge, have been carrying out maintenance and doing planting on the cycleway. More maintenance and clean ups are planned, along with the development of a ‘beach’ near Ngaruawahia.

Te Awa is also planning to employ 10 Corrections-managed offenders for three weeks this year to help plant 20,000 plants.

“The cycleway project is an excellent example of offenders learning new skills and creating higher levels of employability, while providing something positive back to the community,” says Manager Reintegration and Employment Jim Watson.

“Our goal is for Te Awa to promote health and wellbeing by being an easy, accessible and beautifully scenic cycleway,” says Te Awa General Manager Jennifer Palmer. “It’s a bonus that offenders can also make a contribution to the project and work towards living offence-free.”

Te Awa – Great New Zealand River Ride is being built in sections and the full 70km is expected to be completed over the next few years. ■

CARPENTRY MILESTONE AT SPRING HILL

Over 100 prisoners at Spring Hill Corrections Facility have achieved National Certificates in the Building, Construction and Allied Trades Skills (BCATS) course – a significant milestone for the prison.

BCATS is a hands-on programme that leads to a qualification that can help the prisoners springboard to a career in the construction industry. Most BCATS graduates also show significant improvement in literacy and numeracy.

Carpentry Instructor Andy Wood, who runs the BCATS course at Spring Hill, says once they’ve done BCATS, there’s more the prisoners can do.

“The BCATS workshop is a feeder unit for the prison’s housing refurbishment yard and the joinery workshop. There are plenty of opportunities for them to use what they’ve learned and consolidate their skills.”

And once they’ve left prison, the qualification can help the men find a job.

“A BCATS qualification shows an employer that the graduate has an aptitude for carpentry and a work ethic. Once prisoners leave we don’t always get to hear what happens, but I know of several BCATS graduates who went on to be accepted by large construction companies,” says Andy.

The BCATS course contributes to the working prisons initiative which sees all prisoners at a prison engaged in a structured 40-hour week, working, studying and attending rehabilitation programmes. Research shows that ex-prisoners who can get a job are less likely to re-offend. ■
Regional Highlights

Lower North

LUMPY STAMP LEADS TO DRUG FIND

Eagle-eyed staff at Whanganui Prison noticed a lumpy stamp as they checked incoming prisoner mail. They peeled the stamp back to find a suspicious-looking ‘tab’. They called the detection dog handler and the dog gave a positive indication that drugs were present. On-site testing was positive for methamphetamine. The tab has been secured as an exhibit and investigations are continuing.

POSTCARD FROM SAMOA

Ann Abraham (formerly Arohata Prison Manager) has been seconded to the position of Pacific Projects Manager in Samoa. She is leading a team of New Zealand Corrections staff to support the country’s prison service which separated from being managed by the Ministry of Police in January.

Talofa from Apia,

If you’ve been to Samoa, you’ll appreciate its natural beauty, relaxed way of life and the welcoming nature of its people. And while the New Zealand team isn’t here on holiday, we have been made very welcome.

The team of seven includes three corrections officers and specialist staff from different areas of the Department: health, human resources (HR) and operations.

We’re here to support our Samoan colleagues upgrade and modernise their operational processes. There are four prisons in Samoa – two for adult men, one for women (which is located inside a men’s prison) and one for youth. The largest prison is on the most populated island of Upolu, the same island where the youth prison is located. The youth prison can only be accessed by four wheel drive.

Since we arrived in late January we have been running training programmes for Samoan Corrections staff, providing guidance on HR processes, developing a prison health plan and adapting the New Zealand prison operational systems and processes to a Samoan context.

One of our initial challenges was adjusting to Samoa’s heat and humidity; after nearly four months we’re almost accustomed to it. Almost.

The team feel very privileged to be representing the New Zealand Department of Corrections and to have the opportunity to work alongside our Corrections colleagues to support making a difference for prisoners in the Pacific.

Tofa,
Ann Abraham
NEW INTENSIVE HELP TO BEAT ADDICTIONS

In May, Christchurch Men’s Prison began the first eight week Intensive Alcohol and Other Drugs Programme to be run at the prison. The programme is targeted at short serving prisoners who would not have time to attend either a three or six month Drug Treatment Unit programme. The intensive programme will be run in a high security unit, meaning it will be available to offenders who are difficult to get onto interventions prior to release because of their high security classifications. The new programme will be facilitated by the Salvation Army.

The programme was successfully piloted at Auckland Region Women’s Corrections Facility, and will also be made available at Manawatu Prison and Spring Hill Corrections Facility.

Eleven more houses have been refurbished at Rolleston Prison Construction Yard and are ready to be transported to become much-needed homes in the community.

The houses have had impressive makeovers – they’ve been re-clad, rewired and re-plumbed; and had their walls and ceilings insulated (with under-floor insulation to be installed on-site). They have new bathrooms, toilets and hot water cylinders, modernised kitchens and new floor coverings. They have new interior plaster, have been painted inside and out, and the roofs have been repainted.

“This is a great achievement for the prisoners working in the yard,” says John Bryant, Activity Manager Building and Construction.

“The men take great pride in the quality of their work and seeing the houses finished and ready to be home for a family in need. Additionally, the skills they are learning through this partnership are needed in the community, making them very employable.”

“Research shows there is a correlation between employment and leading a crime free life. We are hearing of a large number of the men who have learnt skills in the yard and are now using those skills for employment in the community, many in the Christchurch Rebuild.”

Housing New Zealand Project Manager Mark Harrison is thrilled with the quality of the completed houses. “This partnership has been a win-win for all involved. Our tenants get the chance to live in these rejuvenated properties, while the training programme gives prisoners the chance to learn new skills,” he says.

Through the yard, prisoners are learning employable trade skills, including painting, plastering, carpentry, and timber joinery. Instructors are also trained in literacy and numeracy and embed this into their teaching.

The Rolleston Construction Yard project is a partnership between Housing New Zealand and Corrections which provides community-based offenders and prisoners with qualifications and skills for employment, rejuvenates public housing stock and enables offenders to contribute to the rebuilding of Canterbury.
Court/prison audio visual links safer and more efficient

In May, Dunedin Court joined other courts and prisons around the country who use Audio Visual Links (AVL) to enable prisoners to ‘virtually’ attend court appearances without leaving prison.

The AVL initiative arose out of a desire to streamline the Justice system, while enhancing public safety and decreasing the risks associated with transporting prisoners to court.

The Courts (Remote Participation) Act came into effect in 2010. Before this, all defendants were required to attend court in person, even for minor proceedings. Transporting prisoners brings risks of prisoners escaping, being violent and introducing contraband back to prisons.

It also took prisoners away from the prison for long periods, even for appearances that were minor and brief, and interrupted prisoners’ daily routines such as not being able to participate in programmes or employment for the day. The costs associated with transporting and supervising prisoners for court appearances are significant.

The AVL network has been progressively rolled out, predominantly to those prisons which house remand prisoners, who typically have more court appearances. AVL suites for court appearances will be installed at Spring Hill Corrections Facility and Manawatu Prison later this year.

Around 40,000 remand hearings take place each year. Using AVL technology, court escorts have reduced by more than 3,500 prisoner transports to court in the last six months alone.