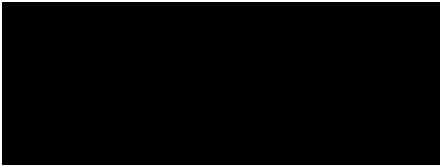


07 June 2024

C182076



Tēnā koe 

Thank you for your email of 16 May 2024 to the Department of Corrections – Ara Poutama Aotearoa, requesting information about the transportation of prisoners by means of private jet. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

You requested:

*I am seeking information please regarding the transportation of prisoners by means of private jet.*

Corrections does not use private jets for the transfer of prisoners.

Corrections does transfer prisoners either on commercial flights (which can include jet planes) or on chartered flights that solely use turbo-prop aircraft. Corrections has therefore responded to the remainder of your request with details of these flights where possible.

Public safety is our number one priority. Each year we carry out tens of thousands of prisoner escorts between prisons, courts, specialist medical facilities and rehabilitation providers. We use a variety of transport methods, including road transport, commercial flights and charter flights and all escorts are planned to minimise any risk to safety and security.

Every time a prisoner is required to be transported outside of the secure confines of a prison staff carry out a thorough risk assessment and we put in place security measures to mitigate any risk to the safety of the public, prisoners and our staff. This includes specifying the number of escorting staff, the transport method, whether the prisoner will be GPS monitored while outside of prison and the restraint type used.

The fastest method of transport between the North and South Islands is air travel. Prisoners may also be flown between North Island prisons. This process enables us to ensure that the time that a prisoner spends outside of a prison is limited, thereby minimising risk to the safety of the public. It also means that prisoners are not spending long periods of time in a cell inside a prisoner escort vehicle. Corrections Officers accompany prisoners on all air

transfers, and additional airport security staff and prison staff are stationed at the receiving airport.

*I'd like to know how many prisoner journeys have been made using jet transport in the last ten years.*

Unfortunately, we cannot readily extract this information for the last 10 years from our electronic records as data previous to our Prison Transfer Records was held across individual spreadsheets and is not held in any readily retrievable format. To identify this type of specific information, we would be required to manually review a large number of files.

We have considered whether to affix a charge or extend the time limit for responding, however, given the scale of the request we do not consider that this would be an appropriate use of our publicly funded resources. Therefore, this part of your request is refused under section 18(f) of the OIA, as the information cannot be made available without substantial collation or research. As per Section 18B we have considered whether consulting with you would enable the request to be made in a form that would remove the reason for the refusal. However, we do not consider that the request can be refined in this instance.

However, we are able to partially provide you with some of the request information for five years from 2019 to 2020.

For the data we have provided in this response, please note that the data displays the number of offenders on a leg of each journey, i.e. if 13 people are on a flight from Auckland with Wellington being the final destination for 10, and Christchurch the final for three via Wellington, a total of 16 flights are counted. Unfortunately, our data system does not allow us to separate these figures without looking through each individual flight record and is therefore considered not readily retrievable.

The total number of prisoners moved from 2019 to 2024 is 4,232, noting that some prisoners have been counted more than once if they were on more than one leg of plane journey as explained above.

The below table displays the total number of flights used for prisoner transfers from 2019 to 2024.

Total Flights	
Year	Total
2019	98
2020	61
2021	47
2022	51
2023	79
2024	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>350</b>

*Please also let me know the breakdown of this in terms of male/female/gender diverse prisoners.*

The tables below display the number of male and female transfers via airplane from 2019 to 2024.

Female	
Year	Total
2019	100
2020	94
2021	33
2022	93
2023	51
2024	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>377</b>

Male	
Year	Total
2019	668
2020	663
2021	587
2022	625
2023	984
2024	328
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,855</b>

Unfortunately, we cannot readily extract diverse genders figures from our electronic records as is not held in any readily retrievable format. This information is held on an individuals profile, and to identify this type of specific information, we would be required to manually review a large number of files.

We have considered whether to affix a charge or extend the time limit for responding, however, given the scale of the request we do not consider that this would be an appropriate use of our publicly funded resources. Therefore, this part of your request is refused under section 18(f) of the OIA, as the information cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

As per Section 18B we have considered whether consulting with you would enable the request to be made in a form that would remove the reason for the refusal. However, we do not consider that the request can be refined in this instance.

*I'd like to know a summary of reasons for these journeys. E.g. court appearances, medical exams*

As previously mentioned, the fastest method of transport between the North and South Islands is air travel. Prisoners may also be flown between North Island prisons. This process enables us to ensure that the time that a prisoner spends outside of a prison is limited, thereby minimising risk to the safety of the public. It also means that prisoners are not spending long periods of time in a cell inside a prisoner escort vehicle. Corrections routinely uses approved Airline Charter Companies for the purpose of transferring a larger number of prisoners around the country at any one time. Charter flight transfers are one way of allowing prisoners to be transferred safely, securely and humanely while minimising the risk to the general public.

Reasons for prisoners being transferred by airplane is predominately to manage the prison populations between the North and South Islands, and also for longer journeys to take

pressure off our road network as each prisoner escort vehicle can only carry eight prisoners at a time.

Commercial flights are usually used for transferring female prisoners between three sites – Arohata Prison (Wellington), Auckland Region Women’s Corrections Facility, and Christchurch Women’s Prison – as we have no feasible road network to transfer women between these prisons due to distances involved.

*I'd also like to know the costs of these journeys, and also how much of this is tax payer money?*

We have decided to refuse your request for total costs of offender plane transfers under section 9(2)(i) of the OIA, to enable a Minister of the Crown or any department or organisation holding the information to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities. We have considered the release of this information would impact contractual agreements and is commercially sensitive.

In accordance with section 9(1) of the OIA, we have also considered countervailing public interest relating to the release of the information including transparency and accountability, however we are satisfied that in this case, public interest considerations do not outweigh the withholding reasons outlined above.

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



Leigh March  
Commissioner Custodial Services