

27 May 2022

C149920

S 9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe S 9(2)(a)

Thank you for your email of 29 March 2022 to the Department of Corrections – Ara Poutama Aotearoa, requesting information about Release to Work (RtW). Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

RtW is a type of temporary release which allows people with a minimum-security classification, who are assessed as suitable, to engage in paid employment in the community.

Employment and industry training, including our RtW programme, are hugely beneficial for people in prison to gain real work experience and employment skills, making it easier for them to find work on release. Having a job means someone can provide for themselves and their family, connect with pro-social support and gives them a sense of pride. This helps with their successful reintegration into the community.

People participating in RtW are paid at a market rate determined by their employer, and use their wages to pay board to Corrections, any fines or reparation to victims and save for their release.

People on RtW have previously taken part in unit and prison-based activities and education to ensure they are well-prepared for community-based employment and that the public are safe. You can find out more about RtW, including the eligibility criteria, application and approval process under section M.04.07 of the Prison Operations Manual, which is available [here](#) on our website.

You requested:

First of all, what is all of the work to release programmes?

People participating in RTW are employed in a wide range of industries, including manufacturing, technology and engineering, construction and farming, service industries, forestry and horticulture.

Further information is available on our website at:

https://www.corrections.govt.nz/working_with_offenders/prison_sentences/employment_and_support_programmes/employment_activities/release_to_work and https://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/information_brochures/release_to_work_-_a_guide_for_employers.

Who qualifies for the work to release programme?

As mentioned above, RtW is a type of temporary release and the eligibility criteria is publicly available [here](#) on our website. These eligibility criteria are also outlined in Regulation 26 of the Corrections Regulations 2005

An eligible person can apply to be considered for RtW at any time. People on the RtW programme are assessed by an advisory panel and have shown that they have a desire to be productive members of their communities.

How many prisoners are on work to release programmes?

How much do the prisoners earn through these programmes for the last five years and could that be broken down into years? But also broken down nationally and also into Waikeria, Spring Hill and Tongariro/Rangipo prisons?

Appendix One provides you with the following information:

- Table one: the number of people who participated in RtW from 2016/17 to 2020/21, broken down by year and prison.
- Table Two: net earnings by people through RtW from 2016/17 to 2020/21, broken down by year and prison.

In accordance with Corrections' standard reporting conventions, figures are provided by financial year being 1 July to 30 June. Figures are provided for every prison with RtW participants, which include Waikeria Prison, Spring Hill Corrections Facility and Tongariro Prison.

As noted above, people participating in RtW are paid at a market rate determined by their employer and use their wages to pay board to Corrections, any fines or reparation to victims and save for their release. Further information about deductions from RTW earnings is included within the Prison Operations Manual policy linked above.

Some information in Appendix One is withheld in accordance with section 9(2)(a) of the OIA, to protect the privacy of natural persons. This includes the net earnings in a small number of cases where only one person at a particular prison participated in RTW during a financial year period.

In accordance with section 9(1) of the OIA we have considered whether there are countervailing public interests attached to this information. As these people may be

identifiable from the release of this information and there are privacy rights attached to personal wages, we do not consider any such considerations outweigh the affected people's right to privacy in this case.

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 'Leigh Marsh', is positioned above the printed name and title.

Leigh Marsh
Acting National Commissioner