

16 September 2024

C184936

[REDACTED]

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 23 July 2024 to the Department of Corrections – Ara Poutama Aotearoa, requesting information about gang populations at Otago Corrections Facility (OCF). Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

In line with an increase in the prison population and rising gang numbers in the community, Corrections has seen an increase across the prison population of those with gang affiliations. Corrections' gang affiliation figures represent any person with a known connection to a gang, and this data does not differentiate between those who are confirmed patched members, associates, or prospects.

Prisons can be volatile environments and many of the prisoners our staff work with can behave unpredictably and act without warning. Over 80 percent of the prison population have had convictions for violence in their offending histories and having a gang affiliation is a known predictor of violence and is linked with more serious offending.

Every Corrections-managed prison, including Otago Corrections Facility (OCF), has a Gang Management Plan, which responds to the unique risks at each site. This includes consideration of gang affiliation in the placement of people in units and programmes, a focus on under-25-year-olds and their risk of joining gangs, tattoo removal programmes and building staff understanding of the drivers that lead to and maintain gang membership.

As well as continuously working to address gang activity through the prison's Gang Management Plan, prison management at Otago Corrections Facility also have regular meetings focusing on gang management, supported by Safer Custody Panel meetings to discuss and monitor incidents, risks, and trends, in relation to the safety of staff and people in prison.

We have invested in training and tools to keep our people safe. This includes training in de-escalation techniques and interpersonal and tactical communication skills, through to stab resistant vests, body worn cameras, and pepper spray. We are continuing to work with unions to implement our Reducing Violence and Aggression Joint Action Plan and developing the next phase of this plan, called 'Safer Prisons', to ensure we are adapting and responsive to the current challenges and risks of the prison environment.

You requested:

1. *The number of incarcerated people at the Otago Correctional Facility who are members of a gang, broken down into what gang they are part of.*

As at 23 July 2024, Otago Corrections Facility (OCF) had a total prison population of 414, of these prisoners, 234 had a recorded association to one or more gang. Please find attached as Appendix One the requested breakdown by gang.

2. *Can we also get the total number of inmates as of July 23, 2024.*

The total prison population across all prisons as at 23 July 2024 was 9,612. This figure excludes a small proportion of the prison population held in offsite facilities on that date.

3. *Can we also get the number of prisoners who are affiliated or connected with gangs in NZ?*

As at 23 July 2024, 3,998 people in prison were recorded as affiliated with a gang. Please be aware that the prison population fluctuates daily due to arrivals, releases, prisoner movements and court decisions, and we typically report on these figures at month end to ensure accuracy. As noted in our previous correspondence with you dated 23 July 2024 (our reference C184898), 39 percent of those in prison across all New Zealand prisons have a recorded gang affiliation.

Please note 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', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Leigh Marsh
Commissioner Custodial Services

Appendix One: Gang affiliations at Otago Corrections Facility as at 23 July 2024

Gang	Count
Mongrel Mob	71
Crips	52
Killer Beez	34
Tribesmen MC	33
Black Power	31
White Power	20
Nomads	19
Head-hunters MC	15
Bloods	13
Mongols MC	8
Rebels MC	7
King Cobra	7
Natives	6
Damned Pirates	6
Road Knights MC	5
Bandidos MC	5
316	4
Aotearoa Natives	3
Westside Outlawz	2
Stormtrooper	2
Southern Vikings	2
Nga Toa 64	2
Mangu Kaha	2
Filthy Few MC	2
Barbarian	2
Who Fucken Kares	1
Westside - Tauranga	1
Uru Taha	1
Other	1
Notorious (MMB)	1
Lost Breed MC	1
Eastsiders	1
Comanchero MC	1
Bandenkrieg	1

Note for table:

- These figures represent recorded affiliations, not individuals, and some people will be counted more than once if they have more than one recorded gang affiliation.