

Introduction

This report provides a statistical breakdown of trends in the Pacific offender population in recent years, in relation to gender, offence type, age and other key characteristics.

Offenders of Pacific ethnicity make up 12 percent of all prisoners, and a slightly lower proportion of the population of offenders serving community sentences (10%).

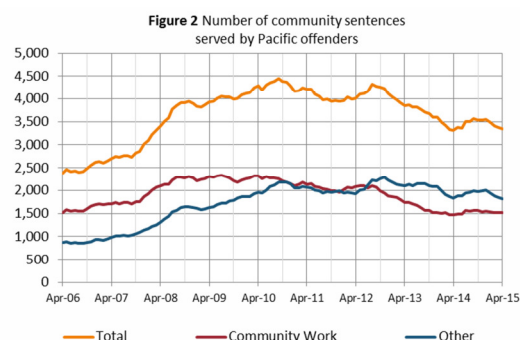
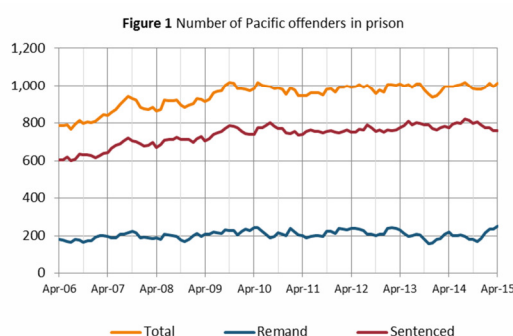
In terms of imprisonment rate per capita, Pacific are imprisoned at a rate of 338 per 100,000 Pacific persons in the general New Zealand population, which is over 3 times the rate for NZ Europeans, but lower than the rate found for Maori (660 per 100,000).

Though rates of re-offending amongst Pacific offenders tend to be lower than for the other major ethnic groups, Pacific offenders nevertheless form an important sub-group for targeted rehabilitation and reintegrative support by the Department. In prison this includes a special focus unit for prisoners of Pacific ethnicity, as well as a specialised rehabilitation programme known as Sali Matagi, which is uniquely adapted to engage Pacific men, and encourage and assist them to embrace a non-offending lifestyle.

Offender status

In April 2015 there were 1,013 persons of Pacific ethnicity in prison. Figure 1 shows numbers of Pacific offenders in prison at the end of each month over the last 9 years. The graph presents the total and number by offender status as remand or sentenced.

The number of Pacific offenders in prison steadily increased from September 2006 until October 2009 and has remained fairly consistent since then. The increase is mainly reflected in the numbers of sentenced prisoners.



In April 2015 there were 3,353 offenders of Pacific ethnicity serving a community sentence or order. Figure 2 shows the number of community sentences or orders being served by Pacific offenders. This is broken down by community work sentences, and other sentences / orders. Where an offender is serving more than one type of community sentence or order, they are counted in each.

The rapid rise from 2007 is a result of the implementation of the 2007 Sentencing Amendment Act, which introduced a number of new community sentencing options.

Whilst community work is the most commonly imposed community sentence, proportionally there is no significant difference in sentence mix between Pacific offenders and offenders of other ethnicities.

Gender

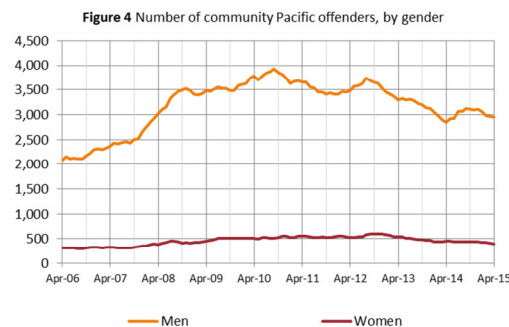
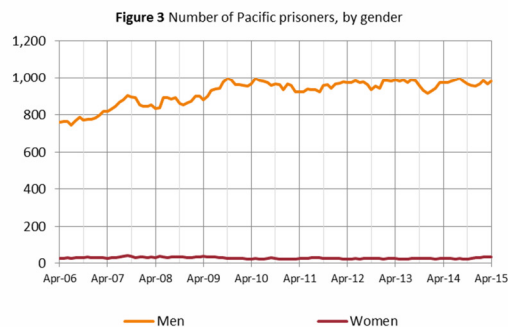
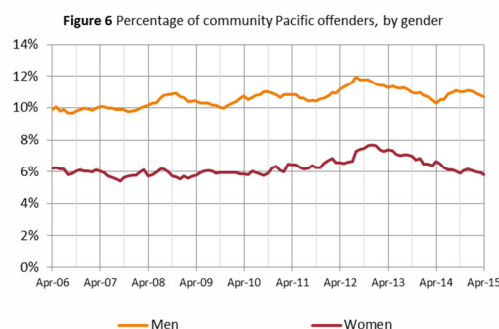
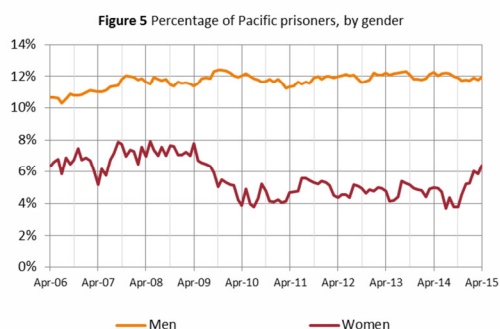


Figure 3 shows the number of Pacific offenders in prison broken down by gender. The increase in offenders from 2006 to September 2009 demonstrated in Figure 1 was primarily made up of male prisoners; the number of female offenders remain very small (ranging from 26 in April 2006 to 34 in April 2015).

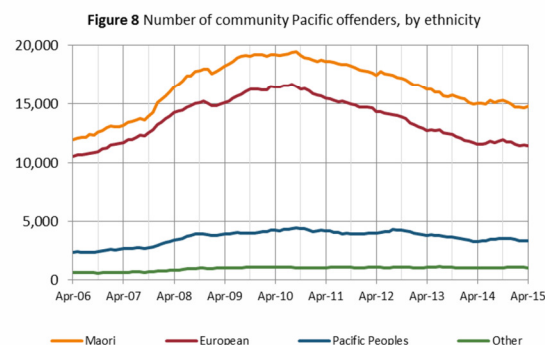
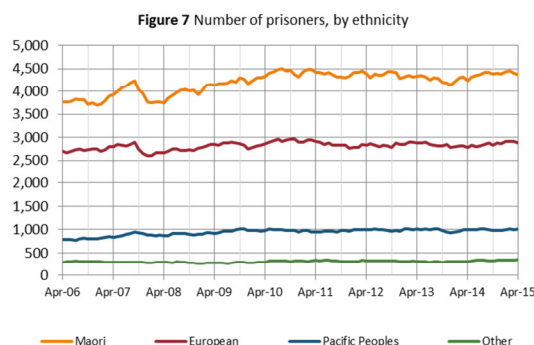
Figure 4 shows the number of community Pacific offenders, broken down by gender. After some impact from the 2007 Sentencing Amendment Act, numbers of women in particular have stabilised and the proportion of men / women offenders remains largely unchanged since 2006.



The proportion of the female prisoner population who are Pacific has decreased over time, from 6 percent in 2006 to 4 percent in 2014. Since 2014 the proportion of prisoners who are female has increased to 6 percent again - percentage point changes tend to be more volatile when numbers are low. In April 2015, Pacific men made up 12 percent of all male prisoners.

Although the proportions of both men and women Pacific offenders in the community has remained largely unchanged from 2006, apart from a slight increase in the proportion of males (1 percentage point), they have both followed a similar trend, increasing moderately between September and December of 2012; reasons for this temporary change are not known.

Pacific vs other ethnicities



The relative numbers of prisoners by ethnicity has been reasonably stable over the last five years. Accordingly, the proportion of the four main ethnic groups has remained reasonably constant, with Pacific prisoners comprising 12 percent of the total custodial population at the end of April 2015.

In contrast to the custody trend, there has been a shift in ethnicity proportions within the community offender population. Proportionally, Pacific offenders have increased, by 1 percentage point, since 2006 while NZ Europeans decreased by 4 percentage points.

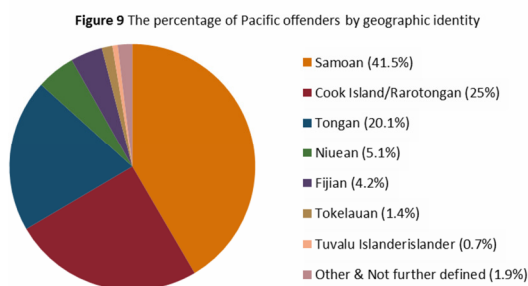


Figure 9 shows the percentages of Pacific offenders (in prison and the community) by their self-identified nationality/identity. Proportions are almost identical for both Pacific prisoners and offenders managed in the community. Place of birth records indicate that in April 2015, 55% of Pacific offenders being managed were born in New Zealand, and the remainder born in a Pacific island nation.

Age

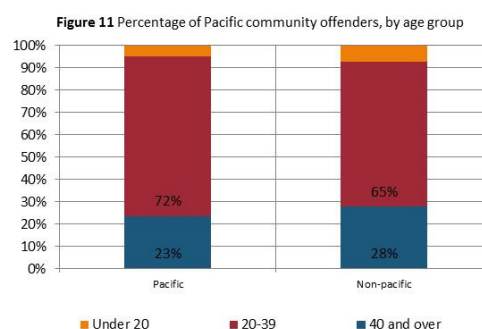
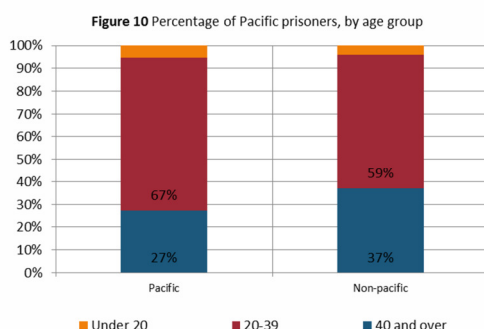


Figure 10 shows the difference in age groups between Pacific prisoners and Non-Pacific prisoners. As with Maori, Pacific prisoners tend to be younger than Non-Pacific.

Non-Pacific prisoners aged 40 and over account for 10 percentage points more than Pacific offenders.

Similarly, Pacific community offenders tend to be younger than Non-Pacific offenders. However, Non-Pacific offenders aged 40 or older account for only 5 percentage points more than Pacific offenders. This is half the difference found in prison.

Imposed sentence lengths

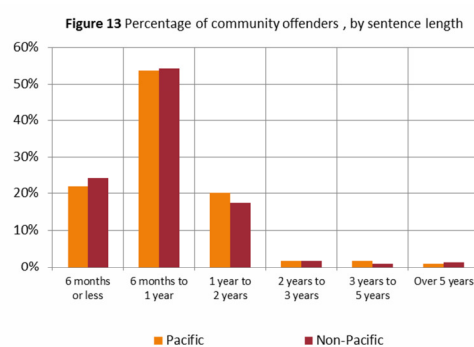
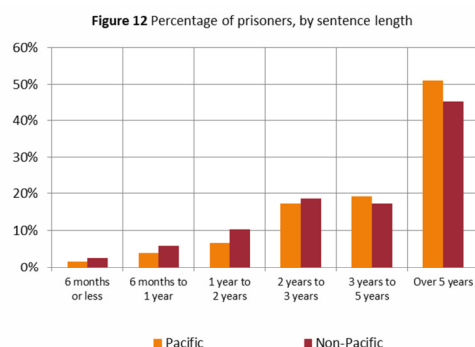
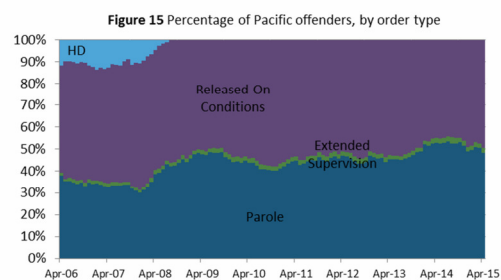
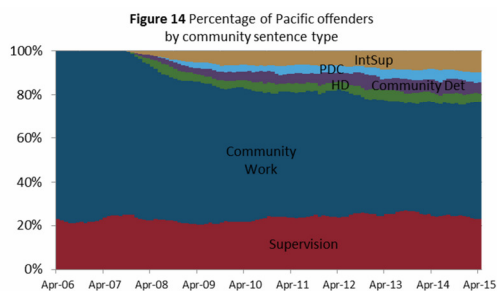


Figure 12 compares the proportion of Pacific and Non-Pacific prisoners serving a sentence on 30 April 2015, broken down by imposed sentence length. The proportion of Pacific prisoners who received sentences less than 2 years was slightly lower compared to Non-Pacific prisoners (13 percent compared to 19 percent). Conversely, 51 percent of Pacific prisoners received sentences of over 5 years, compared with 45 percent of Non-Pacific prisoners.

The proportion of Pacific offenders managed in the community serving sentences and release orders of 6 months or less is 3 percentage points lower than Non-Pacific offenders.

Community sentence / orders



Whilst community work is the most common sentence type, the uptake of sentences introduced via the 2007 Sentence Amendment Act are clearly seen in figure 14, from which point they comprise an increasing proportion of sentence types. Community work has decreased from 81 percent of community sentences to 53 percent in 2015.

Community sentences reported in the graph include Intensive Supervision, Community Detention, and Home Detention. Post-Detention Conditions is also included; this is an order that follows on from a Home Detention sentence.

Figure 15 shows the percentage of post-prison release orders Pacific offenders are serving. The proportion of prisoners released on parole has continued to increase from 2007, from 29 percent in 2006 to 43 percent in 2015.

Previous prison sentences

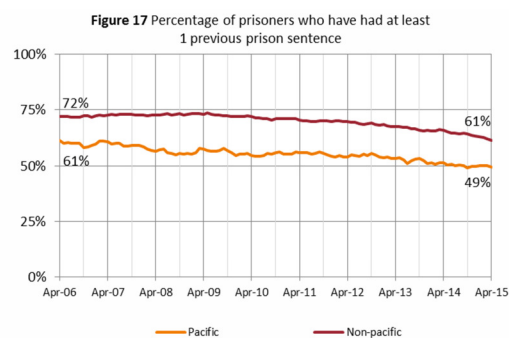
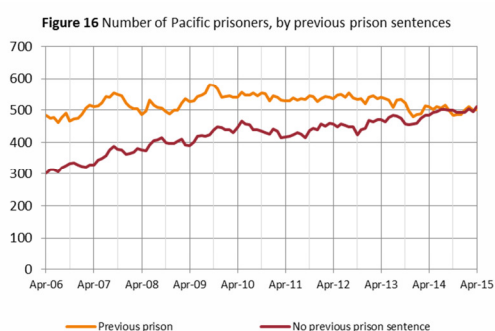


Figure 16 shows that the number of Pacific offenders receiving a custodial sentence for the first time has steadily increased from 2006, whilst the number of returning prisoners has followed a slight downward trend since 2012.

Proportionally, since 2006, Pacific prisoners with at least 1 previous prison sentence have dropped by 12 percentage points to 49 percent, with “first-timers” making up a progressively larger proportion. Similarly, Non-Pacific prisoners have followed the same trend; however it is notable that a larger proportion of Non-Pacific prisoners are serving a second or subsequent sentence.

Risk of Re-offending

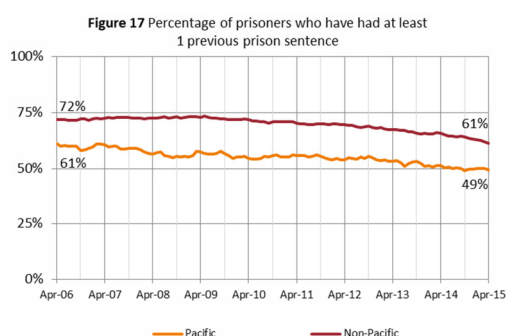


Figure 18 shows Pacific prisoners vs all prisoners as at 30 April 2015, broken down by assessed risk of reoffending (risk is measured by the Department’s actuarial risk tool, RoC*RoI).

The risk profile of Pacific prisoners is largely similar to Non-Pacific prisoners, except with respect to the finding of proportionally fewer in the higher risk of re-offending group, and slightly more in the low-risk grouping. This may reflect an issue with conviction and sentencing history data, with less complete histories being available for offenders who arrived in New Zealand as adults.

Offence type

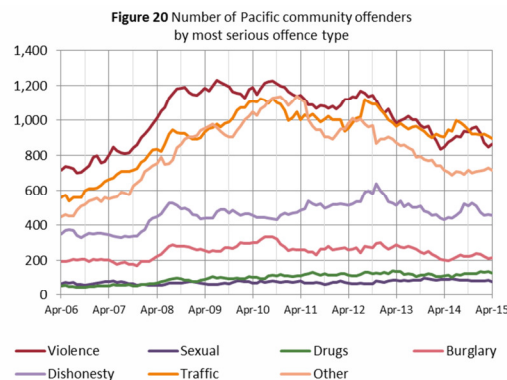
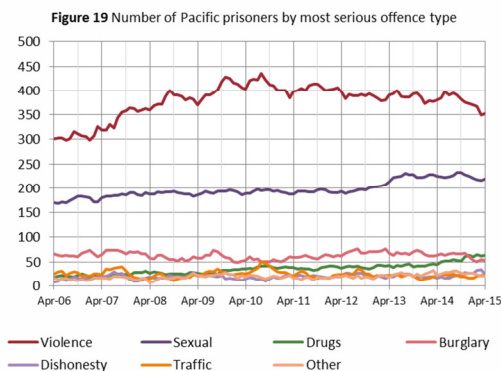


Figure 19 shows the number of Pacific prisoners by most serious offence type for the current sentence.

Violence features as the most significant offence type for Pacific prisoners (46 percent in 2015), whereas the corresponding proportion for the Non-Pacific population is 35 percent. The number of sexual offenders has shown an upward trend, with a higher proportion of sexual offending than that of the Non-Pacific population (29 percent and 24 percent respectively). These offence types typically attract longer sentences, which accounts in part for the higher per capita rate of imprisonment noted above.

In the community, Other offences (see figure 20) are the most prevalent, although violent offending is also significant and is again proportionally higher than in the Non-Pacific population (26 percent and 20 percent respectively).

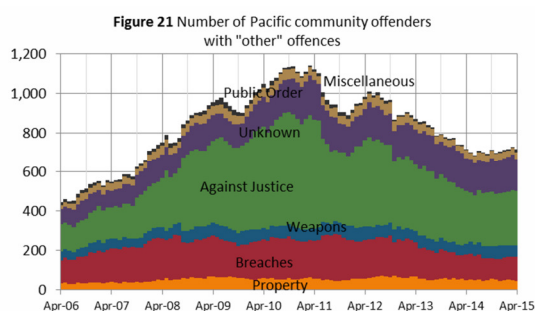


Figure 21 shows the breakdown of Other offences in the community by Pacific offenders. Against Justice offences are the largest group of offences within the Other category. They accounted for over a third (38%) of this category in April 2015. Offences Against Justice significantly decreased around April 2011, and have continued to slowly decrease since then.

Gang Associations

Figure 22 Proportion of Pacific prisoners by gang status compared with non-Pacific prisoners

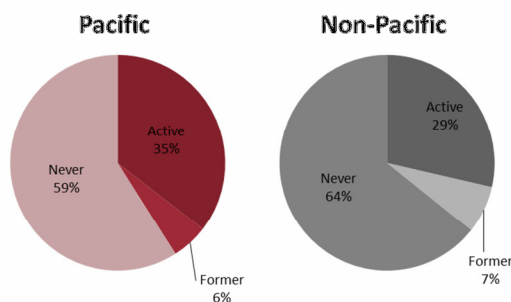


Figure 23 Proportion of Pacific community offenders by gang status compared with non-Pacific community offenders

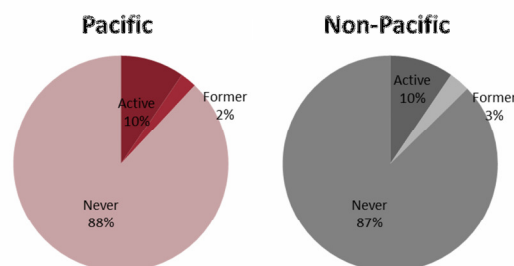


Figure 22 shows the proportion of sentenced Pacific prisoners broken down by gang status and compared with Non-Pacific prisoners. Pacific prisoners have a higher rate of gang association than is recorded for Non-Pacific prisoners.

Figure 23 shows the proportion of Pacific community offender broken down by gang status compared with Non-Pacific community offenders. These figures indicate only a very small difference between Pacific and Non-Pacific offenders.

Security Classification

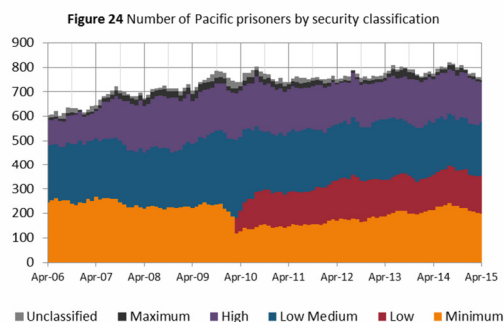


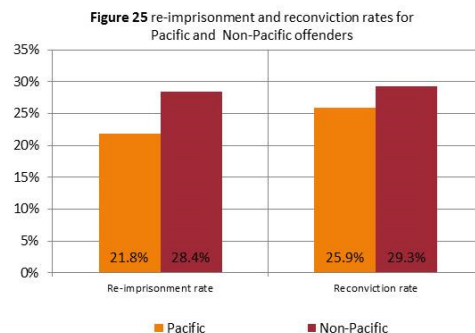
Figure 24 shows the number of sentenced Pacific prisoners broken down by prison security classification. The graph illustrates a steady increase in number of Pacific prisoners from 2006 to the present.

The security classification distribution is not markedly different to comparable figures for other ethnicities.

Recidivism Index

Figure 25 compares released Pacific prisoners' re-imprisonment rates, and Pacific community sentenced offenders' reconviction rates (within 12 months of release or community sentence start date) with rates for Non-Pacific offenders, as calculated at the end of April 2015.

Both the prisoner re-imprisonment rate and the community reconviction rate for Pacific offenders are lower than for Non-Pacific offenders. The prison re-imprisonment rate for Pacific offenders is 21.8 percent compared with 28.4 percent for Non-Pacific offenders.



The community reconviction rate for Pacific community offenders is 25.9 percent compared with 29.3 percent for Non-Pacific offenders.

Lower rates of reoffending amongst Pacific offenders are understood to be influenced in part by the types of offences Pacific offenders more commonly commit. For example, offenders who commit violent and sexual offences tend to reoffend less rapidly and less frequently than do offenders such as burglars, thieves and disqualified drivers.

Summary

Pacific offenders make up around 10 percent of the offenders managed by the Department. As such they are over-represented in both the prison and community offender population. A number of key differences in the make-up of the Pacific offender population, relative to offenders of other ethnic groupings, are identified in the foregoing analysis. Notable differences include greater involvement in violent and sexual offending, and lower rates of reconviction.

Pacific offenders remain an important focus for targeted interventions – both rehabilitative and reintegrative – to further drive down rates of reoffending, ensuring they have the skills and supports needed to maintain a non-offending lifestyle.