



DEPARTMENT OF
CORRECTIONS
ARA POUTAMA AOTEAROA

◆ Prisoner Skills and
Employment Strategy
2009-2012



Prisoner Skills and Employment Strategy 2009-2012

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Foreword from the Minister of Corrections

A key aspect of the Government's Law and Order Policy 2008 is ensuring that prisoners leave prison with better skills than when they entered, to equip them for life outside prison.

The Department of Corrections plays an integral role in meeting this goal and in helping to reform and rehabilitate prisoners so that they can move away from a criminal lifestyle and towards serving productive lives in the community.

The last prison census showed that 55 per cent of prisoners did not have jobs before entering prison and that 52 per cent had no formal qualifications. Research shows that prisoners who find sustainable employment on release are less likely to re-offend, which helps to keep our communities safe.

The Government is determined to reduce re-offending. Improving literacy and helping prisoners to gain valid educational qualifications to help them get work, play a valuable part in achieving this goal. There are a number of programmes in place to help prisoners develop employment skills and gain qualifications and these need to be developed and promoted further.

Not only does getting prisoners sustainable employment reduce their chances of re-offending and increase public safety, it also contributes to other important goals.

Work in itself has an intrinsic value; it improves self-esteem, discipline and independence and helps to foster strong social networks, and every effort should be made to increase the employment prospects of prisoners.

While the Government recognises the importance of improving prisoners' employment and educational skills, there is also a need to recognise that prisoners themselves are instrumental in their own rehabilitation. While the punitive effect of prison cannot be overlooked, prison also presents many individuals with the opportunity to change their lives constructively by using the time they have to improve their employment and educational prospects.

The Government supports efforts to improve the prospects of prisoners by teaching them educational and employment skills and offering paths into sustainable post-release employment. Not only will this improve the lives of the prisoners themselves, but, more importantly, it will reduce re-offending and contribute to public safety.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judith Collins". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Hon Judith Collins
Minister of Corrections

Foreword from the Chief Executive

The Department of Corrections provides employment and employment-related training in prisons to increase the chance that prisoners will obtain sustainable post-release employment.

Raising the skill levels of prisoners not only helps their chances of finding sustainable employment on release, but more importantly makes prisoners less likely to re-offend, which in turn helps to keep our communities safe.

There are many barriers to overcome to help prisoners acquire the skills they need to succeed in the labour market. Many prisoners have low skills, low qualifications and low levels of literacy and numeracy. They also have had little or no experience in the work environment before entering prison.

The Department recognises that helping prisoners to achieve employment post-release will require detailed planning from the time they enter prison through to their release and transition to the community. It is also a goal that will need a significant investment of resources and time.

A key issue for the strategy to address will be ensuring an appropriate focus on improving employment outcomes for Māori. Succeeding for Māori will have significant impacts on the overall re-imprisonment rate, and maximising employment-related opportunities for Māori in prison must remain a priority.

The Prisoner Skills and Employment Strategy 2009-2012 creates a framework and programme of work that will help to address the significant skill deficits and obstacles that prisoners face in obtaining post-release employment, and ultimately contributes to making our communities safer.



Barry Matthews
Chief Executive

Executive Summary

This is a strategy to raise prisoner skill levels and provide prisoners with employment experience. The strategy will result in at least 1,000 extra prisoners gaining skills and work experience by 2012.

The strategy implements the Government's policy to increase prisoner employment and improve literacy and numeracy skills. It promotes and incentivises skill development, increases the provision of training and employment, and expands these opportunities to a wider and more diverse group of prisoners. As a result, prisoners will gain more skills and valuable employment experience.

Primarily, skills will be gained through work experience, literacy and numeracy training, and Release to Work. The main areas of expansion will be work-based training in prison industries, and unit-based employment. The Department of Corrections (the Department) will also review the way that it provides skill development initiatives in prison and make improvements where needed.

To achieve this, the Department will:

- improve the provision of education by:
 - increasing the provision of literacy and numeracy education
 - increasing the provision of schooling – National Certificate in Educational Achievement (NCEA)
 - increasing the provision of trade and technical training
 - expanding the use of Corrections Inmate Employment (CIE) instructors delivering trade and technical training
 - increasing the provision of self-directed tertiary education
 - maintaining computer training
 - maintaining driver licence training
 - maintaining the provision of Te Reo training

- increase employment opportunities by:
 - expanding the number of prisoners in work by splitting shifts
 - increasing opportunities for higher-security prisoners to participate
 - expanding opportunities for remand prisoners
 - expanding Corrections Inmate Employment industry
 - increasing partnerships with the private sector
 - developing a mechanism for the sale of prisoner art
 - exploring the use of prisoners as tutors or mentors
 - increasing unit-based employment
 - continuing contract work party employment
 - maintaining Release to Work employment.

In order to ensure that the Prisoner Skills and Employment Strategy achieves the best outcomes for the Department's investment:

- those who need to gain skills and employment experience will be prioritised
- we will maximise both the number of people gaining skills and the amount and level of skills achieved by each prisoner
- Māori participation in skill development and employment initiatives will rise to match the proportion of Māori in the prison population.

The strategy will mean that more prisoners will come out of prison with marketable skills, will be better able to obtain sustainable employment, and ultimately will be less likely to re-offend.



Background

The fundamental purpose of the Department of Corrections' (the Department's) work is to improve public safety. We will do this by:

- ensuring sentence compliance
- reducing re-offending.

The primary goal of this strategy is to contribute to 'reducing re-offending'. The Prisoner Skills and Employment Strategy contributes to this goal by:

- providing employment inside and outside the prison
- providing quality trade training for prisoners
- incentivising skill gain
- assisting prisoners to find jobs
- improving literacy and numeracy skills
- encouraging prisoners to pursue other education.

The link between employment and reduced re-offending is well documented. International studies have shown that participation in employment can reduce the risk of re-offending by between a third and a half.¹

Participation in education has also been shown to reduce re-offending.² Education contributes to the gains made through employment. Vocational education in prisons has been shown to deliver up to a nine per cent reduction in re-offending.³ Prisoners with more skills are also more likely to be employed on their release from prison. In general, people with no formal qualifications spend more time unemployed than those with formal qualifications.⁴

Employment for prisoners also contributes to the Department's goal of ensuring sentence compliance. Employment:

- keeps prisoners motivated to meet the requirements of their sentences
- keeps prisoners occupied and less likely to engage in disruptive behaviour
- provides for more humane containment by preventing skill loss and reducing boredom.

Māori offenders are over-represented in prison. Approximately 14.5 per cent of the general population identify as Māori, but Māori make up 50 per cent of the prison population. Any initiatives that help to reduce Māori re-offending will have a positive impact on the whole prison population. This strategy acknowledges that, to succeed overall, we must succeed for Māori offenders.

The Department works with other government agencies to address the significant barriers faced by many prisoners, such as drug and alcohol abuse and poor mental health.



¹ Social Exclusion Unit (2002) *Reducing Re-offending by Ex-Prisoners*, p6.

² A number of research articles have been published about the impact of education on re-offending, including: Druid S and Pawson R (1998) *Education, Transformation and Change: The Prison Experience*; Gaes G et al (1999) *Adult Correctional Treatment*; Social Exclusion Unit (2002) *Reducing Re-offending by Ex-Prisoners*; Lawrence S et al (2002) *The Practice and Promise of Prison Programming*; Erisman W and Contardo J (2005) *Learning to Reduce Recidivism: a 50-State Analysis of Post-Secondary Correctional Education Policy*; Washington State Institute for Public Policy (2006) *Evidence-Based Adult Corrections Programs: What Works and What Does Not*.

³ Washington State Institute of Public Policy (2006) *Evidence-Based Public Policy Options to Reduce Future Prison Construction, Criminal Justice Costs, and Crime Rates*, October, p9.

⁴ *Indicator of Unemployment Rate by Highest Qualification* published on www.educationcounts.govt.nz by New Zealand Ministry of Education.

Legislation and International Obligations

Prisoner employment provides an opportunity for prisoners to develop skills and work experience. While the Department is able to direct prisoners to work,⁵ in practice prisoners prefer to participate in activity and volunteer for work.

Prisoners are not defined as employees while they are working in prison industries. However, the Department applies the spirit of health and safety legislation to prisoners, ensuring that working conditions are safe and also ensuring that prisoners are not exploited.

Prisoners on Release to Work are employed directly by employers in the community. These prisoners are covered by all applicable New Zealand legislation.

New Zealand is also a party to the International Labour Organization's Forced Labour Convention⁶. The convention outlaws the use of forced or compulsory labour. Prisoner employment is designed to comply with New Zealand's obligations under this convention. This is primarily achieved by focusing on prisoner skill development and providing opportunities to obtain work experience.

Detail on the relevant New Zealand legislation and international obligations is attached as Appendix A.

The Labour Market

For the past decade, New Zealand has enjoyed strong economic growth, relatively low unemployment and high labour market participation. However, economic, social, environmental and technological trends led to a call for New Zealand's workforce and workplaces to become more flexible and resilient during changing economic cycles.

Technological advances and globalisation are changing the structure and nature of work and workplaces. There has been increased demand both for higher education and for skills that are more transferable across jobs and sectors. At the same time, there has also been more demand for what have been traditionally viewed as lower-skilled service jobs. New Zealand needs a workforce that is more flexible and more resilient.

In the short term, concerns now centre on the current international economic downturn and the prospect of rising unemployment in New Zealand. In June of 2009 a rising unemployment rate reached 6.0 per cent. But because New Zealand has had one of the lowest unemployment rates in the developed world, we remain in the lowest third of OECD countries. Expectations are for further increases in the unemployment rate, rising towards seven per cent by early 2010.⁷

New Zealand still has relatively low unemployment and relatively high labour market participation as a strong base for economic recovery. The challenge is to sustain the numbers of people in work and smooth transitions between jobs (especially for people facing redundancy) to minimise time out of work. A volatile labour market can also create opportunities for people to build skills and shift into higher-value jobs. If we achieve this, New Zealand will not only weather the current downturn, but be able to prosper when the economy improves.⁸

The demographics of the population are changing. In particular, the population is ageing. The proportion of New Zealand's population aged 55 years and over is likely to grow from the current rate of about one in six of the labour force to around one in four by 2020. In future, many more people are likely to work beyond the traditional retirement age of 65.



⁵ Limited to work intended to reduce the costs of keeping prisoners in custody.

⁶ Convention 29 ratified by New Zealand in 1938.

⁷ Department of Labour (2009) Household Labour Force Survey March 2009 quarter.

⁸ Department of Labour (2008) *Workforce 2020 Forces for Change in the Future Labour Market of New Zealand*, Wellington, Department of Labour, October and Department of Labour (2008) *Briefing for Incoming Minister*.

The prison population is also ageing, although not as sharply as the general population. The age at which offending has traditionally tapered off is rising, resulting in more older prisoners.⁹ Longer sentences will also add to the number of older prisoners.

The population is becoming increasingly diverse. Over the next 10 to 15 years, the proportion of Māori and Pacific peoples in the workforce is expected to grow because of their higher fertility rates and younger populations. High net migration is expected to increase the Asian population at an even faster rate.

Contribution of Skill Development

The labour market values people with qualifications.

People with qualifications, particularly degrees, are more likely than others to maintain employment than those without qualifications. Even during periods of high unemployment, people who have qualifications are more likely to remain in work. Obtaining qualifications increases a prisoner's employability and improves the likelihood of them staying in employment. Employment initiatives provide an opportunity for prisoners to develop more generic employment skills such as motivation, work ethic and an ability to take instruction. Employment and training are important components of an overall rehabilitation programme and work in tandem with other rehabilitation activities.

What Does this Mean for Prisoners?

A contracting economy and tightening labour market will exacerbate other disadvantages for prisoners. Many offenders share characteristics that serve as significant barriers to providing opportunities for rehabilitation through work. These include a lack of qualifications and limited employment expectations prior to incarceration, as well as substance abuse problems and disability issues.

Literacy and numeracy are also significant barriers to prisoners gaining skills. Screening in 2008 for literacy and numeracy skill indicated that up to 90 per cent of prisoners may have literacy skills below those needed to participate fully in a knowledge society, and 80 per cent may have numeracy skills at a similar level.

For many, literacy and numeracy training will be a fundamental part of moving towards sustainable post-release employment.

Many offenders have had their formal education interrupted through lack of family support, early offending and undiagnosed health issues. In addition to low literacy and numeracy, these prisoners are unlikely to have any formal school-level qualifications.



⁹ Offenders often stop offending due to a number of factors, including reviewing their lifestyles, family commitments, and more stable environments.

Many prisoners have poor labour market attachment. In 2008, 55 per cent of prisoners reported they had not had a job before they went to prison, while 52 per cent reported they had no formal qualifications. However, a low response rate to the collection of this data means that the percentage of prisoners without formal qualifications could be as high as 84 per cent. Accessing opportunities to earn credits and qualifications and gain employment experience is vital for prisoners.

Many prisoners welcome the opportunity to gain skills and employment experience. However, some prisoners do not value education and employment, which can create attitudinal barriers to their participation. The Department encourages all prisoners to take advantage of opportunities and has an incentive framework to motivate these prisoners.

The Prison Environment

Structural barriers within the prison environment also create barriers to the provision of education and employment. For example, 30 per cent of prisoners serve fewer than 13 weeks, making meaningful engagement with prisoner employment activities difficult. Work is needed to increase the participation of short-serving prisoners (and those nearing release) in post-release employment, or employment-related training while still in prison.



A large percentage of prisoners have restrictions such as high-security classifications or drug-user status, which constrain work opportunities. Providing employment opportunities across all security classifications and for remand and segregated prisoners will provide opportunities to a wider range of prisoners.

Competing priorities (such as attendance at rehabilitative programmes or special focus units) on prisoner time, particularly towards the end of sentences, reduce the availability of prisoners for some employment-related activities. Therefore, it is important that skill gains and employment opportunities occur earlier in sentences.

As the prison population increases, prisoners will be regularly moved (within and between prisons) to where beds are available. This can result in high rates of turnover in employment-related activities. As far as possible, when prisoners are moved, efforts are made to continue any education and/or training activities they have commenced. Literacy and numeracy classes are held in all prisons. Prisoners are able to access employment opportunities in most prisons.

The Department manages 20 prisons across New Zealand, of varying sizes and in a range of locations. Skill development and employment opportunities will be provided in as many prisons as is feasible.

Māori Participation in Education and Employment

A key issue for the Prisoner Skills and Employment Strategy will be to ensure that a primary focus is on improving employment outcomes for Māori, through maximising employment-related opportunities in prison. This will, in turn, impact on the overall re-imprisonment rate.

Māori are disproportionately represented in the prisoner population. While 14.5 per cent of the general population identify as Māori, over 50 per cent of new receptions to prison identify as Māori.

Rates of re-imprisonment for Māori are also significantly higher than rates for Pākehā. The re-imprisonment rate for Māori at 12 months following release is 31 per cent compared with the rate for Pākehā¹⁰ of 23.3 per cent. The re-imprisonment rate at 24 months following release is 42 per cent for Māori and 34 per cent for Pākehā.¹¹

Māori prisoners have higher literacy and numeracy needs than other groups. Investigation by the Department suggests that approximately 93 per cent of Māori prisoners have literacy needs compared with 87 per cent of Pākehā prisoners, and 83 per cent have numeracy needs compared with 77 per cent of Pākehā prisoners. In addition, Māori prisoners are more likely to enter prison with no formal educational qualifications and are more likely to have experienced periods of unemployment than other prisoners.

Currently Māori make up 50 per cent of the prison population, but only 42 per cent of those work through Corrections Inmate Employment (CIE). However, once Māori are engaged in this employment, they achieve National Qualifications Framework (NQF) credits at the same rate as Pākehā prisoners. Māori tend to be over-represented in lower-skilled activities and under-represented in higher-skilled activities in prison.



However, Māori are well represented in trade and technical training. Māori make up 65 per cent of all prisoners engaged in this activity. This type of training tends to be offered at prisons with high Māori populations and to high-security prisoners, who are more likely to be Māori.¹²

The strategy will seek to raise participation in skill development and employment initiatives to match the proportion of Māori in the prison population. Initiatives to increase participation will include delivering additional training and employment opportunities for higher-security prisoners. The Department also continues to promote education and employment opportunities to prisoners in Māori Focus Units.

Minority Groups in Prison

Pacific prisoners, while still a small group compared with the other two main ethnic groups in prisons (Māori and Pākehā), are also disproportionately represented in prison.

Pacific prisoners make up 11 per cent of the total prison population but only six per cent of the general population. The Department is already providing a significant opportunity – refurbishing Housing New Zealand Corporation houses – at Spring Hill Prison, which has the highest concentration of Pacific prisoners. The Department will continue to provide appropriate skill development and employment opportunities for this group.



¹⁰ The re-imprisonment rate for all non-Māori prisoners is 19.7 per cent at 12 months and 30 per cent at 24 months.

¹¹ Department of Corrections (2008) *Annual Report 2008*, App.3.

¹² Department of Corrections internal statistics, March 2009.

Women make up six per cent of the prison population. A wide range of opportunities is available in women's prisons, including the Canon photocopier servicing initiative. The implementation of initiatives directed at increasing and improving education and employment will need to meet the needs of these women prisoners. The type of education and employment offered to women prisoners will need to be free of any gender bias.

The Department operates male youth units at four prison sites. These contain sentenced prisoners aged 14 - 17 inclusive, 16- and 17-year-old remand prisoners and youth aged 18 and 19 who are defined as 'vulnerable' male adults. Youth units meet the Department's responsibilities under the Education Act 1989, which require all those under 16 years of age to be involved in full-time education via enrolment at registered schools. These prisoners are enrolled with The Correspondence School, unless special exemptions are granted. Prisoners over the age of 16 but under 19 are also able to access school education through The Correspondence School.¹³

As with other prisoners, the specific education and employment needs of these subgroups are addressed individually through their sentence plans, which regulate their activities while in prison.



¹³ Under section 3 of the Education Act 1989, "every person who is not a foreign student is entitled to free enrolment and free education at any state school during the period beginning on the person's 5th birthday and ending on the 1st day of January after the person's 19th birthday".

Prisoner Skills and Employment Strategy

The Government has identified prisoner skill development and employment as a priority.

Government priorities include increasing the number of prisoners gaining industry-relevant skills, and raising prisoner literacy and numeracy levels over the life of the strategy. Ultimately our goal is to reduce re-offending through providing education and employment opportunities.

Those who need to gain skills and employment experience will be prioritised

We will prioritise those prisoners who need to gain skills and employment experience. Prisoners without qualifications and those with significant experience of unemployment will be given priority over those prisoners who may already have some employment skills and/or qualifications.

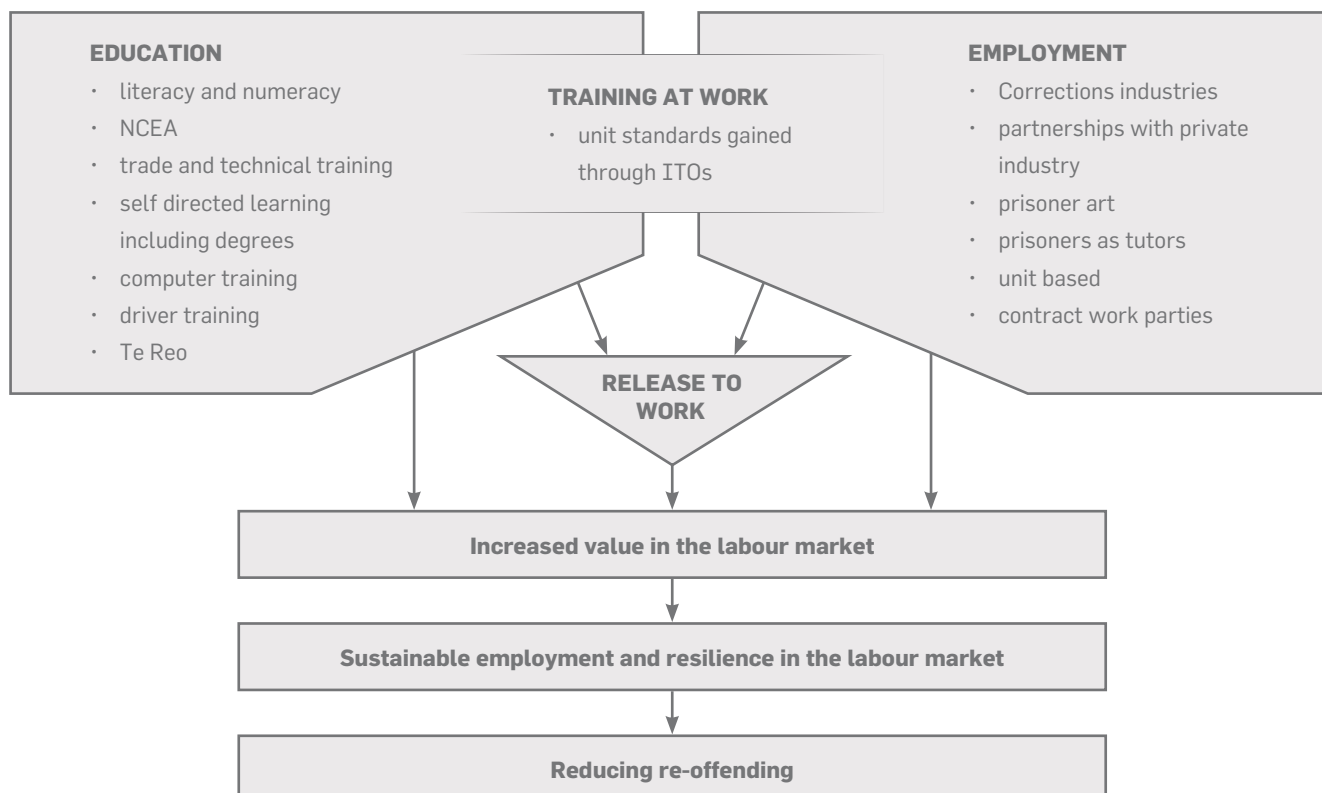
However, we also want to encourage those prisoners who may need very little assistance and support to undertake independent study or to become work-ready both within prison and on their release. This will include those prisoners who may already be working towards a qualification when they enter prison.

We will maximise both the number of people gaining skills and the amount and level of skills achieved by each prisoner

We will seek to maximise the number of prisoners gaining skills. We will focus on increasing the skills each prisoner achieves, which in most cases will mean increasing the number of credits gained towards qualifications and increasing the number of prisoners gaining full qualifications. We will also support and assist prisoners to gain credits at higher levels on the NQF.

Māori participation in skill development and employment initiatives will rise to match the proportion of Māori in the prison population.

Currently Māori make up 50 per cent of the prison population, but only 42 per cent of those work through Corrections Inmate Employment (CIE). We will seek to increase the number of Māori prisoners gaining skills through employment and education so that it matches the proportion of Māori in prison. Initiatives to increase participation will include delivering additional training and employment opportunities for higher-security prisoners. The Department also continues to promote education and employment opportunities to prisoners in Māori Focus Units.



Skill Development

Education includes a range of activities:

- literacy and numeracy education
- National Certificate in Educational Achievement (NCEA)
- trade and technical training
- self-directed tertiary education
- computer training
- driver training
- Te Reo.

Progress to Date

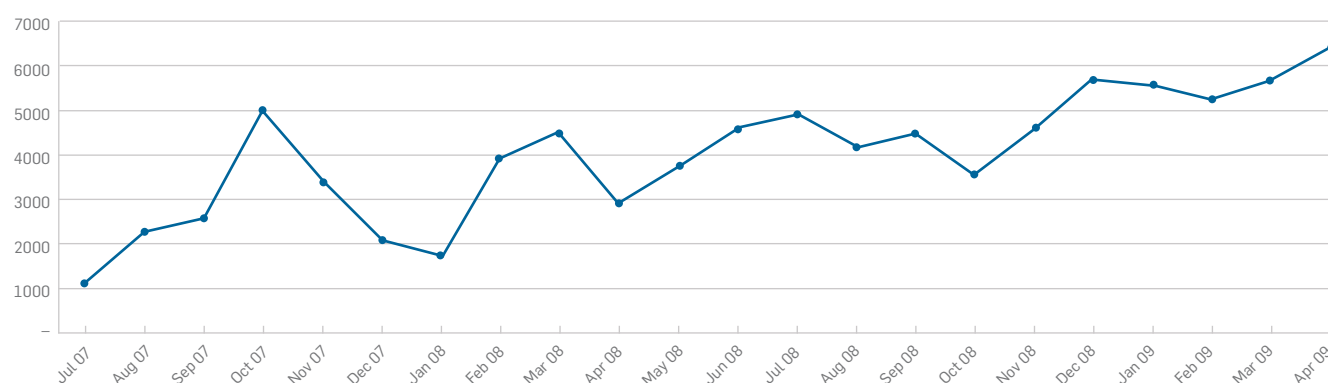
This strategy builds on the achievements of the previous Prisoner Employment Strategy 2006-2009. The Prisoner Employment Strategy 2006-2009 saw the Department take more of a focus on skill gain. This has been particularly true in the areas of on-job training, literacy and numeracy, and the introduction of trade and technical training courses delivered by tertiary institutions. The strategy has seen a significant increase in the number of prisoners gaining skills and credits. The graph below shows the increase in the period since the Department has begun recording credit gain.

A number of these credits have been gained through trade and technical training, which is delivered in prisons by the Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics of New Zealand. These courses have enabled the Department to deliver valuable training to prisoners in areas that have previously been excluded, such as high-security units.

For many prisoners, low literacy and numeracy skills are a barrier to participation in training and employment. To address this, the Department instituted a new programme of literacy and numeracy training for up to 1850 prisoners in July 2008.

In addition to these specific initiatives, the Department has continued to promote skill gain through other mechanisms, including schooling (NCEA) and self-directed tertiary education.

Monthly Credits Achieved



Initiatives

Improving Provision of Literacy and Numeracy in Prison

Prisoners are more likely than the general public to have literacy and numeracy needs. Up to 90 per cent of all prisoners have low¹⁴ literacy skills compared with approximately 43 per cent of the general population. Up to 80 per cent of all prisoners have low numeracy skills compared with 51 per cent of the general population. Delivering high-quality literacy and numeracy training is important for the direct benefits that improved literacy and numeracy brings. It also assists prisoners undertaking other education and employment training.

In 2008 the Department contracted providers to deliver literacy and numeracy courses to up to 1,850 prisoners each year in all New Zealand prisons for the period 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2010. The Department plans similar provision for the period 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2012. The Department also plans to embed literacy and numeracy education into employment initiatives. In the first year of delivery the Department has seen approximately 60 per cent of participants improve their literacy, numeracy or both. On the strength of these gains, two priority groups have been identified for expansion of this initiative. The two priority groups are prisoners serving short sentences and prisoners with an identified need that is less severe than those who are currently targeted. However, these prisoners are not able to be accommodated without additional resources. The Department will be exploring ways of expanding provision to including these two priority groups. An assessment tool currently being developed by the Tertiary Education Commission will enable the Department to improve the way it measures gains in literacy and numeracy.

In 2009 there are approximately 650 prisoners participating in literacy and numeracy courses in any given week. The Department will at least maintain that level of provision for the period 2010 to 2012.

The Department will deliver literacy and numeracy embedded with employment and on-job training to an additional 100 prisoners per year.

The Department will measure literacy gain when a standard approach to literacy assessment has been developed.

¹⁴ A low level is defined as being at level 1 or 2 of the international adult literacy and numeracy scale.

Increasing Provision of NCEA

NCEA is a nationally recognised and valued qualification. The Department provides tutors to teach NCEA in youth units and other prisoners can access NCEA credits through The Correspondence School. The opportunity to obtain NCEA credits while in prison will be extremely valuable for a number of prisoners, particularly those who are still of school age.

The Department is exploring increased provision through The Correspondence School. This provision is funded through Vote: Education for prisoners under the age of 19. In addition, we will be exploring individual prisons partnering with local schools to deliver NCEA inside prison.

In 2009 there are 400 prisoners participating in NCEA education in any given week. The Department's goal is to increase that number over the life of the strategy.

Improving Provision of Trade and Technical Training

Trade and technical training is the delivery of full or partial National Certificate qualifications to prisoners through the Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics of New Zealand. Subjects currently provided in prisons include forestry, horticulture, building construction and allied trades, painting/ decorating and motor mechanics.

The Department has been successful in increasing prisoner skill levels through accessing EFTS¹⁵ to deliver trade and technical National Certificate training by tertiary institutions.

The Department's first priority is to continue the recent trend for greater achievement among those prisoners participating in trade and technical training. There may also be scope to increase the amount of trade and technical training that is delivered by Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics in prison.

The Department expects to use its provision of 200 EFTS in 2009 to cater for 400 prisoners studying part time. The Department plans to increase provision to 550 prisoners in the 2011 calendar year (275 EFTS total) and 650 prisoners in the 2012 calendar year (325 EFTS total).

In 2009 there are 60 prisoners participating in trade and technical training in any given week. The Department's goal is to increase that number to 95 per week over the life of the strategy.

¹⁵ One (1.0) EFTS unit is defined as the learner workload that would normally be carried out in a single academic year (12-month period) by a learner enrolled full time. For example, a Bachelor degree is normally completed in three years and has an EFTS value of 3.0.

The Department will be seeking to maintain recent high completion rates and to encourage prisoners to continue these qualifications through on-job or self-directed learning.

Expanding the Use of CIE Instructors Delivering Trade Theory Training

CIE instructors deliver training within employment to prisoners to meet the theory parts of qualifications available under the NQF. Instructors also deliver this training within classroom settings for higher-security prisoners.

The Department will focus on expanding the delivery of the theory parts of qualifications within classroom settings. Because this initiative enables prisoners to progress towards qualifications without the need to be in work, it is insulated from the current economic climate that affects prison employment. It enables prisoners to gain the theory part of their qualifications when work is in short supply and makes good use of existing resources by using existing CIE instructors. As this initiative occurs within the confines of the prison, it can be used to target higher-security prisoners whose associated risk precludes them from work outside a prison.

The Department's goal is to deliver growth in this initiative over the life of the strategy.

Increasing Provision of Self-directed Tertiary Education

Prisoners are able to pursue any certificate, diploma or degree courses that can be undertaken by distance learning. Ministry of Education figures show that degrees provide the most significant resilience in the labour market. Therefore, they are likely to contribute most to reduced re-offending.

Self-directed learning is generally undertaken at the prisoner's expense. Prisoners may access student loans for fees and course-related costs, dependant on the nature and length of the course.

The Department provides access to government career-related resources to enable prisoners to make wise decisions about courses. The Department will continue to improve its assistance for prisoners to earn qualifications through self-directed tertiary education, including increased promotion of the benefits of self-directed tertiary education to prisoners.

In 2009 there are 100 prisoners participating in self-directed learning in any given week. The Department's goal is to increase that number over the life of the strategy.

Maintaining Computer Training

The Department has a number of computer suites spread across the prison estate that can be used by prisoners to gain computer qualifications. The Department will focus on increasing the delivery of nationally recognised computer training to improve prisoner employability.

In 2009 there are 120 prisoners participating in computer training in any given week. The Department's goal is to maintain that number over the life of the strategy.

Maintaining Driver Licence Training

The Department currently provides prisoners with support to obtain the theory part of their driver licences in a classroom setting. As a driver licence can be a valuable employment skill, this initiative would increase the employability of prisoners.

The Department will focus on increasing the opportunities for prisoners to earn their licences in prison. This is also likely to make a significant contribution to reducing driving-related re-offending.

In 2009 there are 40 prisoners participating in driver licence training in any given week. The Department's goal is to maintain that number over the life of the strategy.

Maintaining Provision of Te Reo

Te Reo Māori courses are the primary language courses taught in New Zealand prisons. In addition to the therapeutic benefits for Māori offenders gaining cultural confidence, the ability to speak Te Reo can be a useful employment skill contributing to prisoner employability. Incorporating Te Reo courses into the strategy will enable the Department to better coordinate and incentivise participation by prisoners.

In 2009 there are 600 prisoners participating in Te Reo courses in any given week. The Department's goal is to maintain that number over the life of the strategy.

Employment

Prison employment is made up of a range of employment activities as follows:

- Corrections industries
- partnerships with private industry
- prisoners producing marketable art
- prisoners as tutors
- unit-based employment
- contract work parties
- Release to Work.

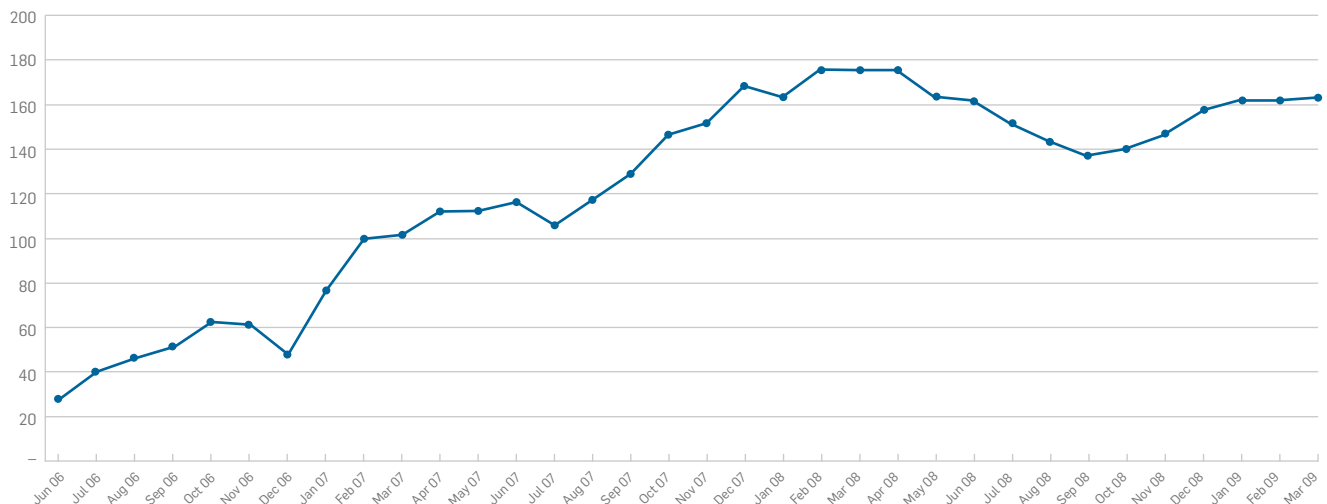
Progress to Date

The Prisoner Employment Strategy 2006-2009 set a target of increasing prisoner employment from 40 per cent to 60 per cent of prisoners. The Department has achieved a good portion of this growth, increasing employment participation to approximately 55 per cent of prisoners in 2009. This growth occurred despite significant pressure that included large increases in the prison population, and the recent economic downturn.

The bulk of this growth occurred in CIE-managed prison industries, which included the introduction of a number of new industries and partnerships with private companies. Highlights include partnering with Canon to build and service its photocopiers and with Housing New Zealand Corporation to renovate and refurbish state houses.

Release to Work has been the most significant success of the Prisoner Employment Strategy. The number of prisoners engaged each week in this activity increased from 27 in June 2006 to 163 in March 2009. These prisoners are employed in regular jobs in the community and gain real work experience and the chance to keep their jobs when they are released. The following table tracks the increase in Release to Work for the duration of the Strategy.

Average Prisoners on Release to Work



Initiatives

Corrections industries/training at work

CIE operates industries both inside and outside a prison's secure perimeter. Through these industries we aim to provide work environments that match, as closely as possible, comparable industry environments in the private sector.

As well as encouraging the development of a work ethic and providing work-based training, industries in prisons enable prisoners to learn new skills and achieve credits within the NQF. These are assessed by industry training organisation-accredited CIE instructors. There are a number of sub-initiatives that contribute to the overall goal of expanding Corrections industries and training at work:

Expanding the number of prisoners in employment by splitting shifts

Currently, many higher-skilled prisoners in CIE industries work long hours. Sharing the work more evenly will give more prisoners an opportunity to gain skills, qualifications and work experience.

Many in the prison population have had little or no experience of consistent work. Preparation for work outside prison could be provided to more prisoners by having prisoners work working shorter shifts.

Increasing opportunities for higher-security prisoners to participate in work

A higher security classification limits opportunities for prisoner employment, as high-security prisoners are unable to work unsupervised or outside the secure areas of a prison. While it is more difficult to provide activity for higher-security prisoners, the Department will continue to investigate ways to expand these opportunities.

Expanding opportunities to remand prisoners

Many prisoners spend a significant amount of time on remand. Employment opportunities may be offered to prisoners who are on remand. In practice, however, because of fluctuation in prisoner numbers and the limited availability of work opportunities, they tend to be excluded. Remand prisoners are managed as high-security prisoners and are therefore subject to restrictions similar to those applying to high-security prisoners.

While prisoners on remand cannot be required to work, the benefits of doing so would be the same as those for sentenced prisoners. These include the opportunity to develop good work habits and work experience and the opportunity to participate in education or training. Work for remand prisoners is also a way to maintain a harmonious environment. The Department will continue to investigate ways to expand work opportunities for this group.

Increasing the sale of CIE products

Departmental policy is that the Department gives first preference to purchasing CIE goods and services subject to appropriate standards of quality and cost being maintained. An increase in the use of CIE as a provider across government would increase orders, and as a consequence, increase employment opportunities. CIE currently provides government agencies with goods and services such as building refurbishment, decorative plants, printing, catering and contract labour, but there is scope for expansion within this market.

The Department, while subject to low labour costs, has custodial costs that are not incurred by the private sector. However, it is obliged to tender on a commercial basis to avoid criticism associated with low labour costs. This initiative would focus on effective marketing of CIE goods and services, both within the Department and to other government agencies.

Creating new CIE industries

The Department runs a number of industries. Increasing the number of stand-alone Corrections-run industries could provide additional work for prisoners. However, building industries from the ground up is time consuming and less effective than partnering with private businesses for the same level of investment. Opportunities will be taken up as they arise, but this is unlikely to be a significant growth area in the near future.

Increasing partnerships with the private sector

Partnerships with businesses provide work opportunities for prisoners that are aligned to the New Zealand economy. Current partnerships include renovation work for Housing New Zealand Corporation, photocopier assembly and repair work for Canon and light engineering work for a number of clients in the South Island.

The Department regularly engages with private companies about opportunities for more meaningful work and training for prisoners. We will be looking to increase the number of contracts with private companies. These partnerships provide real work experience that prepares prisoners for their eventual employment on release.

However, this type of work is difficult to achieve in times of economic downturn. Because of the low skill levels of prisoners, they are often competing with other low-skilled workers in the community, who can be seen as more deserving and easier to work with than prisoners. As we see more redundancies and government agencies such as Work and Income struggle to assist their existing client groups, it may become more difficult to find work for prisoners.

Despite the problems identified above, partnerships with the private sector continue to be a more cost-effective option than the creation of new industries. Partnerships with businesses would enable us to provide opportunities for more prisoners and not require new business knowledge from our staff. Partnerships require resources to establish but allow the Department to carry lower risk.

In 2009 there are 2,216 prisoners participating in prisoner employment in any given week. The Department's goal is to increase that number over the life of the strategy.

Developing a mechanism for the sale of prisoner art

Throughout the prison system, there are a small number of prisoners who produce art that has, or is likely to have, value in the market. This is particularly so for Māori culturally based art.

The Department is developing a policy that will provide a mechanism for prisoners to sell their artworks. Prisoners would be able to earn money and potentially set themselves up for self-employment on release from prison.

Prisoner art is sold primarily through charities, and the number of prisoners able to market their work will be very small. The Department will collect information about prisoner art sales but is unlikely to set targets for increases in the near future.

Exploring the use of prisoners as tutors or mentors

In a number of other jurisdictions, prisoners provide educational or support roles in prison. This approach can take a number of forms. Prisoners with qualifications or particular work experience can assist other prisoners with tutoring or other forms of support to help them gain qualifications of their own.

The Department will be exploring whether there is any scope to introduce these activities. If so, there may be potential for prisoners in tutoring or mentoring roles to be assessed for, and possibly gain credit towards, qualifications.

There may also be potential for prisoners who have completed programmes such as Drug Treatment or Violence Prevention in prison to serve as mentors for prisoners who are currently undergoing or have recently completed these programmes. If implemented, this initiative would include clear parameters to ensure other prisoners' rights to privacy and fair treatment are not compromised.

At this stage, some prisoners act as tutors or mentors on an informal basis. The Department will collect information about this practice and may set targets in the future.

Continuing unit-based employment

Unit-based employment consists of self-sufficiency activities to maintain prison units. The work experience it provides is limited but it promotes good work habits such as taking instruction, being punctual and taking responsibility for one's own environment. In addition, unit-based employment provides work opportunities for high-security prisoners. We will continue to support this activity and explore how this can also be used to support prisoners gaining credits towards qualifications in areas such as 'health and safety' and 'cleaning'.

In 2009 there are 1,644 prisoners participating in prisoner unit-based employment in any given week. The Department's goal is to increase that number over the life of the strategy.

Continuing contract work party employment

Supervised prisoner work parties operate to give minimum-security prisoners experience in forestry, horticulture, farming, construction, local council track maintenance and other industries. Prisoners are taken out of the prison, so are subject to a greater level of trust.

Work parties provide experiences closer to those of external employment and also enable prisoners to develop good work habits that will assist them on release. Employment in work parties will continue provided it does not compromise public safety.

In 2009 there are on average 85 prisoners participating in prisoner work parties in any given week. The Department's goal is to maintain prisoner work parties at that level for the duration of the strategy.

Maintaining participation in Release to Work

Release to Work is a successful programme that provides selected low-security prisoners nearing release, who meet strict eligibility criteria, with work opportunities on day release from prison. These prisoners have regular employment relationships with their employers and earn market wages. Approximately 50 per cent of the prisoners who participate in Release to Work retain their jobs when released from prison. The Department has important relationships with external companies such as Fulton Hogan that lead to them continuing to employ Release to Work prisoners.

With the tightening of the labour market, it is becoming more difficult to expand Release to Work opportunities. However, we are currently maintaining a good level of participation.

In 2009 there are 154 prisoners participating in Release to Work in any given week. The Department's goal is to maintain Release to Work at that level for the duration of the strategy.

Supporting Initiatives

Sentence planning

All sentenced prisoners have sentence plans in prison. These include a range of appropriate rehabilitative programmes and activities such as employment, education, life skills and re-integrative programmes. Sentence plans also identify barriers to employment, including lack of skills and work experience, as well as alcohol and drug dependencies and mental health issues. The Department will continue to work to ensure that prisoner needs are identified, and that prisoners are assisted to access skill development and employment initiatives.

Monetary incentives

The Department's Incentives Framework is designed to incentivise engagement in employment, education and rehabilitation programmes through a system of payments.

The Incentives Framework does this by providing incentive payments for prisoners to gain skills and qualifications while participating in work. The current review of the Incentives Framework looks to further reinforce skill gain and includes addressing appropriate consequences for prisoners who refuse to work. The review also addresses the Government's expectation that refusal to work should be a determining factor in parole decisions.

Payments from Release to Work

Prisoners who participate in Release to Work pay 30 per cent of their after-tax income, up to a maximum of \$250 per week, to the Department. This contribution is used to fund employment initiatives, so that more prisoners can have the opportunity to gain skills and employment experiences. The maximum is adjusted on an annual basis.

Assistance in gaining employment on release

A joint initiative between the Department and the Ministry of Social Development has seen the establishment of Prisoner Reintegration Teams in prisons, by on-site Work and Income staff. Prisoners are able to complete skills' assessments, develop employment plans and apply for Work and Income financial assistance in preparation for release. The Department is continuing to work with the Ministry of Social Development to improve the service being offered and to improve the employment outcomes for prisoners after their release from prison.

Cost effectiveness

There has been significant growth in the development of prisoner employment opportunities in the past few years. However, the Department continues to face a number of challenges that affect the sustainability of employment initiatives. These challenges include:

- difficult physical environments (eg security constraints)
- high supervision costs
- high prisoner turnover
- the broad range of industries
- the size and geographical spread of industries
- competition with the private sector, in terms of both hiring staff and selling our products.

The Department will continually review its employment initiatives to ensure that it is providing value for money for the Government. Facilities and funding that have been provided for non-performing industries will be redirected into more cost-effective initiatives.

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring progress under the strategy and evaluating the impacts of individual initiatives will enable us to know whether we are making progress and how we can better meet our objectives under the strategy.

In general, for education and employment initiatives, we will monitor participation rates and the number of credits achieved per prisoner. Literacy and numeracy education does not attract NQF credits, so we will monitor literacy gains as assessed by providers against the literacy progressions once the standard methodology has been developed.

We will also monitor hours worked, average earnings on Release to Work, the number of prisoners at each earning level of monetary incentive, and the price of any art sold. We will develop measures to track post-release employment and measure rates of re-offending.

Skill development and employment initiatives will be continually monitored to ensure they provide value for money. To assist in evaluating cost effectiveness, we will monitor average cost per credit and per prisoner, as well as sector and industry costs per credit and per prisoner.

For targeted groups including Māori, Pacific peoples, women and youth, we will monitor levels of participation in order to assess progress and help identify particular barriers for these groups.

Targets

The following table outlines the areas where we expect to see growth.¹⁶

Growth	Current	Year One 2009/10	Year Two 2010/11	Year Three 2011/12	Estimated Bed Savings
Education	1,260	1,367	1,433	1,521	86
Employment	4,099	4,283	4,533	4,928	79
Total	5,359	5,650	5,966	6,449	165

This growth implements Government policy of an increase of approximately 1000 prisoners engaged in skill gain over the period of the strategy.

This growth will contribute to the Department's goal of reducing re-offending by improving a prisoner's chances of securing employment on release, and thus reducing the chance that they will re-offend. It will also contribute to the Department's goal of ensuring sentence compliance by keeping prisoners motivated to meet the requirements of their sentences and keeping prisoners occupied and less likely to engage in disruptive behaviour. Employment also provides for more humane containment by preventing skill loss and reducing boredom.



¹⁶ The figures are for any given week and do not measure throughput. The throughput figures for one year will be much higher than those indicated in this table.

Appendix A: Legislation and International Agreements

Corrections Act 2004

Section 50

Prisoners must be provided with an opportunity to make constructive use of their time in prison to the extent practicable.

Section 51

Every prisoner who is sentenced to more than two months, or in custody on remand for a continuous period of more than two months, must have a management plan based on an assessment of their needs and including how the prisoner can make constructive use of their time in prison and how the prisoner can be prepared for release and reintegration.

Section 66

Prisoners may be employed in work directed or provided by the prison manager and may be employed in that work outside the prison. Prisoners may only be employed in work that (a) is intended to provide the prisoners with work experience or to assist rehabilitation or reintegration or (b) is intended to reduce costs of keeping prisoners in custody eg cooking, cleaning and maintenance, Prisoners can only be directed to do the work intended to reduce costs. Further, such work must be of a kind approved by the Chief Executive together with any conditions imposed by him or her.

Employment Legislation: Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992, Employment Relations Act 2000, Minimum Wage Act 1983 and Holidays Act 2003

Prisoners working under s.66 of the Act do not meet the definition of 'employee' under the Health and Safety in Employment Act and are therefore not covered by this legislation. They are not subject to a contract of service, for example. However, the Department applies the spirit of this legislation to prisoners engaged in prison employment. The spirit of the Act has been adopted through the development of health and safety procedures within operational management of prisoner employment.

ILO Convention 29

The International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 29 was adopted by the General Conference of the ILO on 28 June 1930 and was ratified by New Zealand in 1938. This is the main international convention dealing with prison labour and it outlaws the use of forced or compulsory labour.

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