


25 October 2024

C187474



Tēnā koe 

Thank you for your request dated 17 September 2024 to New Zealand Police, regarding convictions for cannabis possession. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

On 25 September 2024, New Zealand Police transferred the following part of your request to the Department of Corrections – Ara Poutama Aotearoa in accordance with section 14 of the OIA:

*What are the costs specifically related to question 3 per year over the past ten years?*

As noted in our extension letter to you dated 22 October 2024, in the context of your wider request, which is being answered by New Zealand Police, we have interpreted your request as:

*What are the costs of those who have been convicted for the charge of cannabis possession and have been sent to prison over the past ten years?*

Corrections manages people at the direction of the Courts and the New Zealand Parole Board. We do not determine whether a person is sentenced to prison or the length of their sentence. We also do not determine whether someone is sentenced to imprisonment for their convictions.

As a person may have a number of charges that result in their imprisonment, we have identified that there have been 36 people who have had their index offence (most serious offence) being cannabis possession over the last ten years.

The below table shows the total number of days these 36 people spent in prison each year. Please note that if a person began their sentence in one financial year and finished in another, the actual number of days spent in prison during each financial year is counted.

When reviewing these figures please also note that cannabis possession may not have been the sole reason for their imprisonment, as these cases include individuals also convicted of other offending or breaches of existing sentences or orders, and as such, these figures also

exclude individuals whose sentence included cannabis possession charges that were not their index offence.

Financial year	Days spent in prison
2014-2015	457
2015-2016	315
2016-2017	195
2017-2018	381
2018-2019	385
2019-2020	117
2020-2021	6
2021-2022	229
2022-2023	156
2023-2024	44

In regard to the costs related to these convictions, while Corrections does not routinely report on the costs associated with imprisonment for cannabis possession offences for the reasons explained above, we do publish the average daily costs associated with the various orders and sentences we manage in our Annual Reports. For example, please see page 67 of the 2023/24 Annual Report for the average cost per person, per day, for managing a person sentenced to imprisonment. Our Annual Reports are publicly available [here](#).

Furthermore, pages 93 and 94 of the 2023/24 Annual Report outline Corrections' approach to supporting people in prison with Alcohol and other Drug (AOD) interventions.

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 hope this information is helpful. I encourage you to raise any concerns about this response with Corrections. Alternatively, you are advised of your right to raise any concerns with the Office of the Ombudsman. Contact details are: Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Ngā mihi



Leigh Marsh  
Commissioner, Custodial Services