

Foreword from 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. This in turn is expected to reduce the likelihood that prisoners will return to prison.

Many prisoners have little or no experience in the work environment before entering prisons. Many also do not have the knowledge or skills to access support services that may assist them on release.

The Department recognises that achieving post-release employment requires careful planning and delivery of a range of interventions for prisoners, from the time they enter prison, through to their release and transition to the community. This strategy takes an integrated, whole of government approach to getting those in prison into legitimate post-release employment.

The Prisoner Employment Strategy 2006–2009 creates a framework and programme of work that will help to address the significant skills deficits and obstacles prisoners face in obtaining post-release employment, and ultimately contributes to making our communities safer.

A key issue for the strategy will be to ensure an appropriate focus on improving employment outcomes for Māori, through maximising employment-related opportunities in prison. This will have significant impacts on the overall reimprisonment rate.

Barry Matthews

Chief Executive

Introduction

This three-year strategy for prisoner employment sets out a comprehensive programme of work that will increase the range and quality of employment and employment-related training experiences for an increasing number of prisoners.

The strategy builds on the Department of Corrections' (the Department) Inmate Employment Strategic Plan 2001–2004. That plan delivered significant achievements in support of prisoner employment. In particular, it resulted in the growth of externally recognised qualifications held by prisoners and the provision of meaningful employment in prison, which was aligned as closely as possible with employment opportunities on release.

This strategy builds on the achievements of the Department's overall Strategic Business Plan 2003–2008.

Why Provide Work in Prisons?

The Department's Strategic Business Plan 2003–2008 sets out how it will deliver on its primary outcome of Safer Communities by:

- protecting the public; and
- reducing re-offending.

The plan identifies four strategic themes that will guide the Department's work over the period. They are:

1. Ensuring effective offender management;
2. Improving responsiveness to Māori;
3. Contributing to reducing re-offending; and
4. Enhancing capability and capacity.

Under Theme 3, the Department provides rehabilitation and reintegration initiatives that allow offenders to address their offending behaviour. The Department has invested in best practice approaches towards successful rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders in recent years. Further work is needed to improve the effectiveness of initiatives designed to reduce reoffending.

Research indicates that sustainable post-release employment contributes to reducing re-offending¹. The Department provides employment and employment-related training in prisons to increase the chance that prisoners have the skills, ability and motivation to obtain sustainable post-release employment.

In addition to assisting in reducing re-offending, structured employment and employment-related training opportunities will reduce idleness of prisoners and tensions in prison. This facilitates the effective management of prisoners.

This Prisoner Employment Strategy is designed to contribute to Theme 3 by:

- increasing the range and quality of employment and employment-related training for significantly more prisoners, to meet both prisoner need and potential employer expectations;
- increasing the level and relevance of National Qualifications Framework (NQF) unit and achievement standards awarded and other quality education;
- reducing idleness and tension of prisoners and therefore contributing to effective management of prisoners; and
- improving the sustainability of business-like industries operated by the Department, to provide employment for significantly more prisoners.

¹ Ref. 'Offenders and Post Release Jobs: Variables Influencing Success and Failure', Harrison & Schehr, Journal of Offender Rehabilitation, 2004, pages 55 and 57.

Diagram of the Prisoner Employment Strategy 2006 - 2009: Linking inputs to employment- related outcomes

The four key strategic priority areas for prisoner employment from 2006–2009 are incorporated in the following diagram that links inputs to employment-related outcomes.

Outcome	Increased number of prisoners obtain sustainable post-release employment and continue with employment-related training on release and a decreased number of prisoners are reconvicted				
Intermediate Outcome	Increased numbers of prisoners (particularly Māori prisoners) participating in quality and relevant employment and employment-related training that meets both prisoner and industry needs				
Strategic Goals (Outputs)	Increased proportion of new and existing employment-related activities are aligned with industry needs	Increased range of quality employment-related reintegrative opportunities for prisoners	Improved sustainability of business-like industries operated by the Department	Increased level and relevance of National Qualification Framework standards awarded to prisoners	A reduction of idleness and tension among prisoners
Priority areas of action (Inputs)	<p>Developing the operational effectiveness of prisoner employment</p> <p>By reviewing the Department's governance, organisational, and sentence planning structures, and by developing new initiatives through joint planning and</p>	<p>Establishing new, and enhancing existing reintegrative initiatives that are employment related</p> <p>By offering a broader range of quality employment opportunities for prisoners who cannot access some reintegrative initiatives (e.g. short-serving prisoners),</p>	<p>Establishing new, and enhancing existing reintegrative initiatives that are aligned with industry needs</p> <p>By selecting employment-related training opportunities for all prisoners that both meet the prisoners' needs</p>	<p>Establishing the medium-term financial sustainability of prisoner activities</p> <p>By reviewing the business models it uses for business-like industries the Department operates to reduce financial risk, enhance rehabilitation</p>	

	communication with other agencies	while working closely with the Ministry of Social Development and other agencies	and those of their potential employers, as a result of a partnership approach with industries, Industry Training Organisations and other industry groups	outcomes, make the employment activities more responsive, and address industry concerns about competition
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Employment-related Activities in Prisons

There is a range of activities undertaken by the Department to assist prisoners to obtain post-release employment. The wider context in which these activities are delivered is set out as a strategic map (refer Appendix 2).

Prisoner Employment Activities

Business-like Industries in Prison

Business-like industries operated by the Department provide work skills and habits for prisoners in work environments that match, as much as possible, a comparable industry environment outside of prisons.

The Department aims to develop industries in areas where work is available for prisoners on release. Industries in prisons include catering, laundry, forestry, farming, timber, horticulture, textiles, and engineering.

Work Gangs

Supervised prisoner work gangs operate to give minimum security prisoners experience in forestry, horticulture, farming, construction, and other industries. Prisoner work gangs currently operate in the central North Island, Hawke's Bay, Northland, Christchurch, and Southland.

Unit-based Activity and Other Prison Constructive Activity

In addition to prisoner employment in business-like industries, prisoners are employed in the cleaning and care of their unit, community work, and other constructive activities. These activities assist prisoners to establish work habits and skills in a work-like, but non-commercial environment.

Release to Work

Prisoners approaching the end of their time in prison may be eligible for release to work. This enables the prisoner to obtain and engage in employment in the community with a view to maintaining that employment on release from prison.

Current Employment Activity

Employment Activity	Prisoner Hours
Farming, forestry, horticulture, and other land-based activities	780,485
Manufacturing, construction, and labour-only services	883,618
Internal self-sufficiency activities such as kitchens and laundry, cleaning, and prison asset maintenance	2,951,040
Release to work outside the prison boundaries during the day	30,350
Undertaking community services work in supervised work parties outside the prison boundaries during the day	55,312
TOTAL	4,700,805

Employment-related Training

As well as providing a work ethic and work-based skills and training, industries in prisons provide a range of opportunities for prisoners to obtain credits toward NZQA qualifications, including trade qualifications.

Employment-related training also provides the opportunity for prisoners to gain work-related skills required for employment, for example, obtaining a driver's licence and basic computer skills.

The Department provides literacy and numeracy education, as well as courses leading to a National Certificate in Employment Skills (NCES), for prisoners with literacy and numeracy needs, or those who require basic education. Prisoners are also able to access student loans² to study at tertiary institutions, for example, universities and polytechnics.

Current Employment-related Training

Number of prisoners commenced employment-related training towards the achievement of an externally recognised qualification	1,370
Percentage of prisoners obtaining that qualification in prison	

The Environment for Prisoner Employment

The Prisoner Employment Strategy 2006–2009 proposes to further develop and implement positive opportunities for prisoner employment, employment-related training, and release to work.

Where relevant, the strategy also looks to enhance education and other activity that support the development of these activities.

The strategy responds to recent findings and recommendations regarding prisoner employment in the Ombudsmen's report titled Ombudsmen's Investigation of Department of Corrections in Relation to the Detention and Treatment of Prisoners, which was released in December 2005. In particular, the strategy is designed to address the:

- perceived reduction in “available meaningful employment”: by increasing the range and quality of employment and employment-related training for prisoners, to meet both prisoner need and potential employer expectations;
- impact of commercial viability on the provision of prisoner employment: by reviewing current business models for business-like employment industries operated by the Department for prisoners¹; and
- targeting of restricted numbers of prisoners for employment activities: by increasing the number of employment-related opportunities for all prisoners, particularly those who could not previously access some employment activities (e.g. short-serving prisoners). The strategy also responds to a number of environmental challenges, as set out in the following section.

Environmental Challenges for the 2006–2009 Strategy

There are a number of environmental challenges that have an influence on the success of prisoner employment. These challenges, which are the key drivers of the strategy (and which the strategy will work to address) are described under the headings below.

Labour Market Disadvantages

In general, people who have criminal convictions suffer particular labour market disadvantage. Employers are likely to be reluctant to employ people with criminal histories. In addition, the nature of an individual’s offending may have the effect of locking them out of particular industries. Accordingly, ex-prisoners are likely to have higher unemployment rates than the general

population. Contributing to this is a lack of qualifications, substance abuse problems, disability issues, low income, and limited employment expectations prior to incarceration.

To overcome these issues prisoner employment activity will need to provide prisoners with a path that facilitates the development of skills that maximise their attractiveness to potential employers.

Prisoner Numbers

Approximately 49% of prisoners are employed in prisoner employment at any one time, although participation rates by prison are variable. Over the period to 2010, the Ministry of Justice forecast² predicts that prisoner numbers will increase to nearly 8,587.

Much of the growth in prisoner numbers will be accommodated in new prisons, which have been designed and built with a focus on successful rehabilitation of prisoners. This includes anticipating high levels of prison employment for prisoners. It will, however, be a challenge to find employment activities within prisons to adequately cater for the forecast growth in prison population. This means that innovative approaches will be needed to maximise prisoner numbers in meaningful employment-related activity.

Māori

Māori are disproportionately represented in the criminal justice system, and the prisoner population. While 14.5% of the general population identify as Māori, over 50% of new receptions to prison, and around 45% of new starts on community-based sentences identify as Māori.

Rates of re-imprisonment for Māori are also significantly higher than rates for European. The re-imprisonment rates for Māori after 12 and 24 months following release are 32% and 41.6% respectively.

The re-imprisonment rates for European at 12 and 24 months following release are 27.2% and 34.6% respectively³.

A key issue for the strategy will be to ensure that the primary focus is on improving employment outcomes for Māori, through maximising employment-related opportunities in prison. This will in turn impact on the overall reimprisonment rate. This means that effectiveness for Māori must be at the forefront of the strategy, as this is likely to produce the greatest gains towards reducing re-offending.

Prisoner Traits and Eligibility

For prisoner employment interventions to be effective, they must be responsive to the following factors:

- thirty percent of prisoners serve less than 13 weeks making meaningful engagement with prisoner employment activities difficult. Work needs to be done to increase participation of short-serving prisoners (and those nearing release⁴) in post-release employment, or further employment-related training while still in prison;
- a large percentage of prisoners have restrictions such as high security classification or drug user status, which constrain work opportunities⁵. Therefore, employment interventions in prisons will need to be cognisant of different security environments and prisoner status issues;
- competing priorities (such as attendance at rehabilitative programmes or special focus units) on prisoner time (particularly towards the end of sentences) reduces the availability of prisoners for some employment-related activities. A structured approach to the management of prisoner time which integrates employment with rehabilitative and other activities is required;
- as the prison population increases, prisoners are regularly moved (within and between prisons) to balance prisoner numbers across prisons. This can result in high rates of turnover in employment-related activities. Therefore, employment and training interventions need to be considered as part of the management of prisoner numbers across prisons, and employment-related training needs to be delivered on a consistent basis across prisons – for example, continuity in the delivery of training if a prisoner is moved; and
- prisoners in male Young Offender Units currently have limited employment and employment-related training opportunities, so further development of employment opportunities for young prisoners is required. Young prisoners require special focus, given the likely longterm fiscal and social benefits of their successful reintegration.

Work Skills and Qualifications

A significant number of NZQA unit standards are delivered in prisons. However, the unit standards are not always related to a prisoner's particular employment needs, or those of an external employer. The employment market should shape the employment and employment-related training in prisons. Therefore, this strategy will help to:

- facilitate closer linkages with industry bodies and Industry Training Organisations (ITOs)⁶;
- ensure that prison employment activities provide unit standards, qualifications, or experience relevant to the labour market; and
- ensure that employment interventions address the skill needs of different prisoner groups, as well as meeting labour market shortages.

Reintegration

The pathway between prison-based employment and employment-related training and sustainable post-release employment for prisoners needs to be strengthened. Therefore this strategy proposes that:

- the Department will continue to develop and implement effective employment initiatives with other organisations, in particular the Ministry of Social Development; and
- the release to work scheme will be strengthened to ensure optimal prisoner participation in the scheme, while not compromising public safety.

Sustainable Performance

While there has been significant improvement in the sustainability of businesslike industries operated by the Department for prisoners, these activities do not yet operate at a long-term sustainable level. Besides the commercial risks of operating in largely commodity markets, prisoner employment has a range of other challenges, including:

- difficult physical environments (e.g. security constraints);
- high supervision costs;
- prison sites are not always close to major markets or a reliable transport infrastructure;
- the high turnover of prisoners;
- the small size of some industries;
- the geographical spread of industries;
- the broad range of industry sectors;
- the need for staff with both business acumen and custodial skills; and
- competition with the private sector.

Prison industries operate to impart work ethic and skills to prisoners, which in turn facilitates prisoner employability on release.

Although prison industries need to perform on a sustainable basis in terms of balancing operating cost and revenue, greater investment by Government in operating cost, to facilitate prisoner skill development and post-release employment in relevant industries, may have significant long-term social benefits.

The strategy proposes to review the model for sustainable business performance with a view to incorporating the full benefits of prisoner employment, such as qualifications gained and work experience delivered, coupled with the investment required to achieve these benefits for the maximum number of prisoners.

This strategy also proposes that:

- each industry sector will need its own detailed strategy to achieve a sustainable financial performance in the medium term; and
- industries need to work in close partnership with the private sector to address both risk and competition issues.

Prisoner Employment Outcomes

International research supports the link between employment, employment related training, and reduced recidivism. Increased research into the specific prisoner employment needs and outcomes from departmental employment activities is required.

The strategy includes proposals to undertake research and evaluation of employment outcomes for prisoners, and specifically analysing outcomes for Māori and barriers to Māori participation in employment activities. Two initiatives the Department is undertaking to measure the effectiveness of employment-related activities are:

- A Framework for Employment and Education Interventions: to set performance standards for literacy and numeracy and for specific employment activities within the Department; and
- An Evaluation of the Department's Prisoner Employment Outcomes: to identify factors that affect employment opportunities, readiness to work, and post-release employment-related outcomes.

The results of this work, including effectiveness for Māori, will inform the design and delivery of employment opportunities for prisoners.

¹ Note that there are a number of employment activities in the Prisoner Employment Strategy which provide meaningful employment or training but do not need to be commercially viable from a Corrections' cost revenue perspective. For example: internal self-sufficiency activities such as cleaning, prison asset maintenance, and community services work.

² The 2006 Ministry of Justice prison population forecast indicates that ongoing growth in prison numbers is likely, with a continuing increase over the next four years taking the current prison population from approximately 7,600 to 8,587 by March 2010, an increase of 13%.

³ 12 and 24 months reimprisonment rates are based on releases in 2003/04 and 2002/03 respectively.

⁴ Prisoners nearing release are involved in a number of reintegrative activities and that can affect their participation in employment-related activities.

⁵ These also include prisoners who are on remand (remand prisoners cannot be required to work under current legislation), and those who are on segregation.

⁶ The Department provides assessors for industry training qualifications through Industry Training Organisations, but prisoners are not eligible for the Industry Training Fund.

Strategic Priority Areas and Initiatives

The strategic priority areas and initiatives for prisoner employment for the period 2006–2009 are set out below. Increasing employment opportunities for Māori will be critical for the success of the strategy.

The timing for implementation of these initiatives is identified in Appendix 2.

Priority Area 1: Develop the operational effectiveness of prisoner employment

To achieve this, the Department will:

- ensure that the prisoner employment strategies and initiatives are developed through joint planning and regular communication within the Department and with other agencies;

- review governance arrangements and organisational structures within the Department to improve delivery of prisoner employment and employment-related training;
- enhance departmental capability using development plans for staff that improve capability to deliver training in a corrections environment;
- conduct research to validate the post-release results of employment related training and use the knowledge to continually improve training strategies;
- develop and implement a management information system that allows for effective monitoring and reporting of core employment activity. This will also enable more effective benchmarking against other similar activities;
- work to increase the effectiveness of the sentence planning model to maximise prisoner participation in employment-related activities;
- develop individual prison site plans to provide employment to all available prisoners, taking into account prisoner security classification and local labour market and environmental conditions;
- establish interfaces with industry to explore employment opportunities for prisoners, which are of mutual benefit to both parties; and
- continue to work with the Ministry of Social Development to develop and implement initiatives that support post-release reintegration.

Priority Area 2: Enhance existing and establish new employment reintegrative initiatives focusing on short-serving prisoners, young prisoners, and those nearing release

To achieve this, the Department will:

- review policy and practices to increase release to work participation, without compromising community safety;
- enhance employment support for prisoners 12 months prior to release to ensure a seamless transition to employment, or employment-related training, on their release;
- develop and implement an operational strategy for the effective management of short-serving prisoners, which includes improving prisoner access to Ministry of Social Development services; and further develop and implement employment and employment-related training opportunities for young prisoners.

Priority Area 3: Enhance existing and establish new employment-related training initiatives aligned with industry needs

To achieve this, the Department will:

- develop operational policy, practices, and procedures to support employment-related training initiatives, to ensure that initiatives are fully aligned and integrated with existing functional responsibilities;
- implement new employment-related training initiatives at a level consistent with available funding, and initially target sites where employment-related training is not readily available;
- develop a partnership approach with industry, Industry Training Organisations, and other industry groups to ensure that training meets labour skill demand and that qualifications obtained by prisoners are relevant to the labour market; and
- assess regional skills demand, including working with the Ministry of Social Development, so that employment and employment-related training activities at prisons are aligned with regional skills needs.

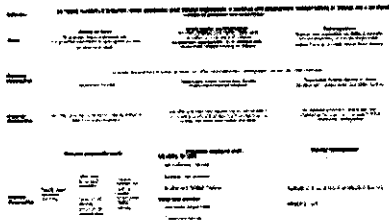
Priority Area 4: Establish the medium-term financial sustainability of prisoner employment activities

To achieve this, the Department will:

- review the business models it uses for its employment activities to enhance rehabilitation and reintegration outcomes and make the employment activities more responsive to market demand, and address industry concerns about competition; and
- develop sector-specific strategic plans (including monitoring requirements) to identify new employment and employment-related training opportunities, and to improve operating costs and productivity.

Appendix 1 - Prisoner Employment Strategy Map

This diagram illustrates the overarching framework of the Prisoner Employment Strategy 2006–2009.



Appendix 2 - Timings for Implementation of Initiatives

Initiatives	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08 and Outyears
<p>Priority Area 1: Develop the operational effectiveness of prisoner employment</p> <p>Ensure that the prisoner employment strategies initiatives are developed through joint planning regular communication within the Department with other agencies.</p>			
<p>Review governance arrangements and organisational structures within the Department to improve delivery of prisoner employment and employment-related training.</p>			
<p>Enhance Departmental capability</p>			

using development plans for staff that improve capability to deliver training in a corrections environment.

Conduct research to validate the post-release results of employment-related training and use the knowledge to continually improve training strategies.

Develop and implement a management information system that allows for effective monitoring and reporting of core employment activity. This will also enable more effective benchmarking against other similar activities.

Work to increase the effectiveness of the sentence planning model to maximise prisoner participation in employment-related activities.

Develop individual site plans to provide employment to all available prisoners taking into account prisoner security classification and local labour market and environmental conditions.

Establish interfaces with industry to explore employment opportunities for prisoners, which are of mutual benefit to both parties.

Continue to work with the Ministry of Social Development to develop and implement initiatives that support post-release reintegration.

Priority Area 2: Enhance existing and establish new employment re-integrative initiatives focusing on short-serving prisoners, young prisoners, and those nearing release

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Review policy and practices to increase release to work participation, without compromising community safety.

[REDACTED]

Enhance employment support for prisoners 12 months prior to release to ensure a seamless transition to employment, or employment-related training, on their release.

[REDACTED]

Develop and implement an operational strategy for the effective management of short-serving prisoners, which includes improving prisoner access to Ministry of Social Development services.

[REDACTED]

Further develop and implement employment and employment-related training opportunities for young prisoners.

[REDACTED]

Priority Area 3: Enhance existing and establish new employment-related training initiatives aligned with industry needs

Develop operational policy, practices, and procedures to support employment-related training initiatives, to ensure that initiatives are fully aligned and integrated with existing functional responsibilities.

[REDACTED]

Implement new employment-related training initiatives at a level consistent with available funding, and initially target sites where employment-related training is not readily available.

[REDACTED]

Develop a partnership approach with industry, Industry Training Organisations and other industry groups to ensure that training meets labour skill demand and that qualifications obtained by prisoners are relevant to the labour

[REDACTED]

market.

Assess regional skills demand, including working with the Ministry of Social Development, so that employment and employment-related training activities at prisons are aligned with regional skills needs.



Priority Area 4: Establish the medium-term financial sustainability of prisoner employment activities

Review the business models it uses for its employment activities to enhance rehabilitation and reintegration outcomes, make the employment activities more responsive to market demand, and address industry concerns about competition.



Develop sector-specific strategic plans (including monitoring requirements), to identify new employment and employment-related training opportunities, and to improve operating costs and productivity.



[<< Previous](#)