



DEPARTMENT OF
CORRECTIONS
ARA POUTAMA AOTEAROA



◆ **Change Lives Shape Futures**

WAHINE – E RERE ANA KI TE PAE HOU:
WOMEN'S STRATEGY 2017 – 2021

Change Lives Shape Futures

Wahine – E rere ana ki te Pae Hou: Women's Strategy 2017 – 2021

In 1897 there were 71¹ women in prison in New Zealand housed right alongside 603 men. Inspector of Prisons at the time, Colonel Arthur Hume, believed these women were long past “all possibility of reform”. Very little was done to help this “most degraded class” who were thought to be beyond redemption. It was considered that their small numbers made it simply not worth the effort to try.

One hundred and twenty years on, 6,712² women are managed by the New Zealand Department of Corrections, (739 women in prison and 5,973 in the community). Our country has changed considerably over the last 120 years, not least our approach to women who commit crimes. We know that people can and do change; they can and do stop offending. While our role must always be to hold people to account for their crimes, it is also our responsibility to help men and women to stop offending.

The female prison population has increased by more than 150% since 2002 when there were 275 female prisoners in New Zealand. The same trend can be seen with women serving community sentences, which increased by 120% from 2004-2015. Over half of the women in prison identify as Māori.

The increase of women offenders demands attention and a fresh approach.

Our corrections system has largely been built around the needs of male offenders, but research has shown that women respond differently to treatment and management. Our women's strategy redresses that imbalance, based on international best practice and our own research into what works best. It recognises that women have different needs to men and sets out a new approach for Corrections that will give women the treatment, encouragement, counselling, skills and support they need to shape better futures for themselves, their children and families.

While we must never lose sight of the fact that they have committed crimes, we must also understand that for a high proportion of women offenders their complex and entwined histories of severe trauma, mental health issues, substance abuse, unhealthy relationships and poverty have contributed to their offending. We recognise the importance of relationships in women's lives, and that their outcomes can be improved by helping women rebuild and maintain relationships, or extricate themselves from violent or dysfunctional relationships.

Successfully implementing a new approach for women will take time. It will mean changing the way we operate and behave, the way we recruit and train our people, the facilities we provide, and the courses and treatment available for women.

The work we do today will have an impact not just on the women themselves but on their children and generations of New Zealanders.

Wahine – E rere ana ki te Pae Hou. Women rising above a new horizon.



Ray Smith
Chief Executive

¹ 1899 New Zealand Department of Justice, Prisons Branch Report

² Muster information recorded 30 June 2017



62%

of women in prison have
**BOTH (CO-MORBID) MENTAL HEALTH
AND SUBSTANCE DISORDERS**
across their lifetime (41% male prisoners)



In the last
12 months

75%

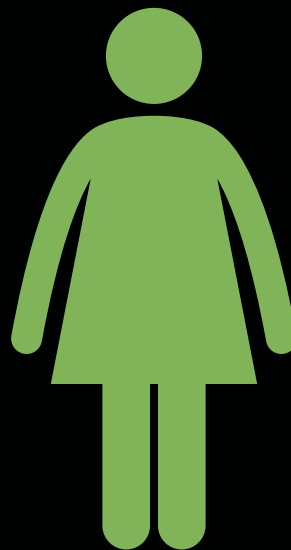
of women in prison have
**DIAGNOSED MENTAL
HEALTH PROBLEMS**
(61% male prisoners)



Across their
lifetime

52%

of women in prison have
**POST TRAUMATIC STRESS
DISORDER**
(22% male prisoners)



46%

of women in prison have
**LIFETIME ALCOHOL
DEPENDENCE**
(35% male prisoners)



Across their
lifetime

44%

of women in prison have
**DRUG DEPENDENCE
DISORDERS**
(37% male prisoners)



68%

of women in prison have been the
VICTIM OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

Why we need a distinct approach for women

The more we learn about the women being managed by the Department of Corrections, the more we understand they need a different approach. Every woman managed by Corrections has her own story to tell. Each one will have her own needs and rehabilitation pathway to follow. Yet many share a similar story that ultimately led to their sentencing.

Poverty, peer influences, parental neglect, families with criminal associations and impulsive personality traits affect both men and women who offend. However, research in New Zealand and overseas shows that there are key differences between women and men who offend as illustrated on the opposite page.

In general, women commit less serious crime and pose a lower risk to the community than men. The pathways they take to offending are also different. It is more common for women to be affected by:

- » trauma and victimisation
- » mental health issues
- » unhealthy relationships
- » parenting difficulty and stress
- » financial pressures.

Departmental research indicates that three quarters of women in New Zealand's prisons have been victims of

family violence, rape and/or sexual assault as a child or adult. This high prevalence of trauma is linked to the mental health issues and substance dependence that impacts the lives of many women who offend:

"It's a big issue, women and trust. It's much more difficult with women because I think they've been more damaged and it's harder for them."

Corrections Officer

Trauma is a particularly significant experience we need to respond to. There is a high prevalence of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder among women in prison, and historical trauma is also particularly relevant for Māori women – the culmination of emotional and psychological wounding that spans generations. Linking women to the treatment, counselling and support networks they need to help address trauma is central to the Women's Strategy. The Women's Strategy is a four year strategy that will continue to develop each year.

"... I didn't actually realise that stuff there influenced a lot of the ways I think about different situations... My mentality is I'll get you before you get me. Yeah. I always cancel out all of those threats by getting them before they can get me and that's one of my issues as well."

Woman in prison explaining the impact of being sexually abused throughout her childhood and adolescence



Many women in prison have limited work histories, and usually less diverse work experience compared to men in prison. Their experience is more likely to be in low-skilled, poorly paid work.

Many are mothers and primary caregivers who are coping on their own, or have unhealthy relationships with the fathers of their children. A report by Corrections in May 2000 found that “women do not leave their families at the prison gate; rather they endeavour to manage their families from inside the prison walls”.³ Women were “not prepared for prison and there was often an enormous amount of pain and guilt for the mother to work through while dealing with childcare, geographic dislocation from families and hardship of maintaining bonds”. At the same time, prison for women can be a break “from the chaos of their lives, a place of safety, a vacuum”. These issues are still relevant to the experience of women in prison today. The impact of sentence requirements on children and whānau is also important to consider for women on sentence in the community.

The ways women communicate and relate to others are also important. Women serving a sentence tend to be more open about their needs and emotions than men. They are more likely to form close personal relationships with other women serving a sentence, and more likely to communicate openly with staff.

All of this shows that as an organisation, we must be responsive to the different gender needs of the people in our care. This must be reflected in *what* we do and *how* we do it.

Corrections will introduce a gender-responsive approach. This is an approach that is designed for women based on evidence of what works to reduce women's re-offending. Corrections' policies, programmes, procedures and processes affecting women will be designed based on women's needs, pathways into crime, and the realities of their lives.

Over the last six years, Corrections has invested in improving the services and interventions available to people under our management. Women have already benefited from these investments and these gains will be further enhanced by a determined focus on three areas that we consider to be essential to improve the outcomes for women.

1. Providing women with interventions and services that meet their unique risks and needs.
2. Managing women in ways that are trauma-informed and empowering.
3. Managing women in a way that reflects the importance of relationships to women.

³ He Kete Pokai, C Lashlie, K Pivac, May 2000, p 25



One goal > *Four priorities* > *Eight action areas*



Our priorities for women

The Women's Strategy places a women-specific lens over Corrections' overall goal to reduce re-offending and each of Corrections' four priorities – our people; community safety; industry, treatment and learning; and modern infrastructure.

The three focus areas of the Women's Strategy underpin all the actions outlined.

1. Providing women with interventions and services that meet their unique risks and needs.

We will provide women with timely access to rehabilitation that is designed to meet women's risks and needs. To do this, we must ensure our services and interventions are culturally responsive. We will provide services to identify and meet their mental, physical and spiritual health needs, and will offer access to education, skills training, work opportunities, reintegration services and support. These services and interventions will enhance women's abilities to build stable lives in the community and maintain meaningful employment.

2. Managing women in ways that are trauma-informed and empowering.

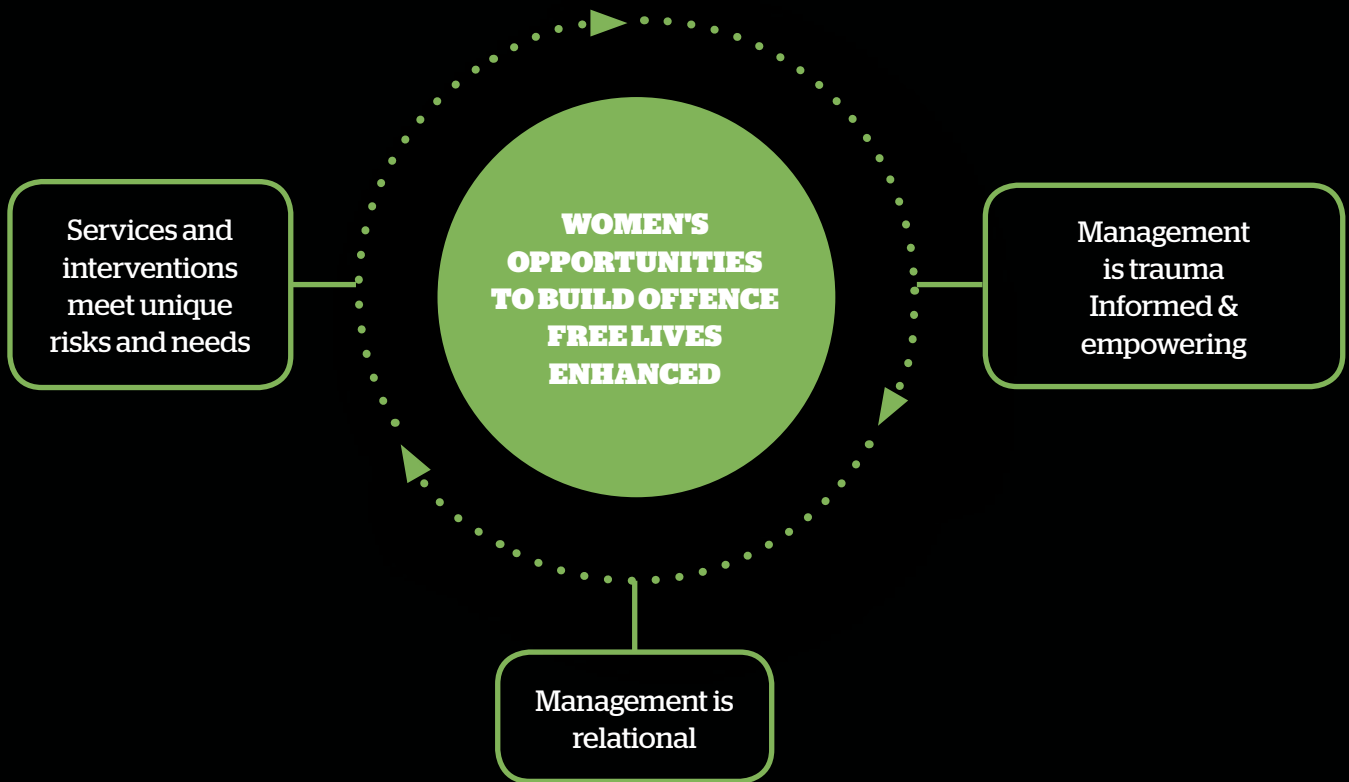
Our people will take the time to understand the impact of trauma on women. They will recognise the signs and symptoms of trauma, and will respond appropriately. We will integrate knowledge of trauma into our practice,

policy and procedure. We will empower women to have ownership over their sentence, and develop confidence in their ability to build positive lives during and after their sentence.

3. Managing women in a way that reflects the importance of relationships to women.

Our people will encourage women to grow healthy relationships with their children, whānau, partners, other women, and Corrections staff. We will recognise the importance of relationships in women's lives, including the role they play in their offending and responses to services and interventions. We will reflect that importance by involving women's children where appropriate and whānau in their sentence management and by linking them to community services and interventions to meet their needs.

We want women to leave Corrections with the right skills, support and self-belief to shape better futures for themselves, their children and other whānau.



6,712^{}**
 women are being managed by the
NEW ZEALAND DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

***Muster information recorded 30 June 2017*



739 in prison



5,973 in the community

Industry, Treatment & Learning

All three women's prisons in New Zealand – Auckland Region Women's Corrections Facility (ARWCF), Arohata and Christchurch Women's Prisons – are places of industry, treatment and learning.

Rehabilitation incorporates **industry** – learning skills, trades and supporting women into meaningful work; **treatment** to improve their physical and mental health, tackle the causes of their offending, address alcohol and drug dependency and trauma symptoms; and **learning** to gain qualifications to help them compete in the labour market and learn essential life skills they can take back to their families.

Industry

Criminal convictions, time spent in prison, limited confidence, responsibilities to care for children and other whānau, and having left school very young make it difficult to compete in the job market. Long term work is valuable for a number of reasons: making money, providing for children, gaining routine, stability and purpose, avoiding old associates and making new contacts, getting exercise and keeping busy.

We also know through recent research that women in prison generally have more limited and less diverse employment backgrounds than men in prison, and are much more likely to have worked in unskilled roles. A number have also worked in the sex industry. Their comparative economic disadvantage, coupled with more limited industry opportunities available in prison and fewer contacts to pursue employment, means that women would benefit from greater efforts to make them work ready before release.

Recognising the importance of gaining work skills and becoming work ready, women in prison are encouraged to learn trades that will help them into meaningful employment.

Corrections already works with the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) to provide funding to tertiary providers to deliver **NZQA-approved industry qualifications** to women in prison, in fields such as hospitality and horticulture.

We recognise that the industry options currently available for women in prison do not always lead to employment in the community that fits with their lives, and we could provide more opportunities for women to build on their existing strengths. The Women's Strategy will investigate and pilot new learning and work skills options that are more relevant to what women want to develop and to the job market. Options already identified are skills for the **construction industry, hairdressing, beauty therapy and barista trades**. More options will be investigated and added in the future.

We will look at what more we can do to support women to become work ready, and plan for the long-term, whether they are in prison or serving a sentence in the community. We already have the **release to work** initiative which allows people to work outside the prison in a real job, and a **free recruitment service** which links offenders with employers. Corrections has **partnerships** with over 100 organisations to provide employment and support for ex-prisoners on release. We will make sure that our partnerships and work opportunities reflect women and the realities of their lives.



"I kind of had a view when I was a kid that I was coming to jail. Everybody that is born in [my] road or raised in [my] road knows they're coming to jail. It's not a matter of if, it's just a matter of when. And I kind of wish I came earlier, so that I could see this earlier, at an earlier stage in my life... I've got to get out there and start again and grow a foundation, and I don't have much time."

Woman in prison

Treatment

In the past, women received the same treatment as men, from rehabilitation programmes to health services. We will adapt and develop treatment to make it more specific to women's risks and needs. By doing this, we will reduce women's risk of re-offending and enhance their wellbeing.

Rehabilitation treatment

Rehabilitation pathways for women in prison will be evaluated and opportunities to better meet their gender-specific and cultural needs will be pursued.

A disproportionately high number of women managed by Corrections are Māori, and this over-representation is higher for women in prison than men in prison.

This means we must be culturally responsive to meet women's needs.

Te Ara Māori Unit, Mirimiri Te Aroha (nurture with love), has been established at ARWCF. The aim of the unit is to support women's rehabilitation through cultural immersion and empowerment. Further programmes and services will also be added to continue to meet the needs of women in the unit. The Women's Strategy will support similar units at the other women's

prisons and progress a women's rehabilitation pathway founded on **kaupapa Māori therapeutic values**.

The **Kowhiritanga programme** is an existing group-based rehabilitation programme that is culturally responsive and designed to meet women's needs. The programme is underpinned by the principles of risk, need and responsivity. This model is evidence based and effective in reducing women's re-offending. It targets the attitudes and behaviours that contributed to their offending and teaches skills and new ways of thinking. This programme will be one of the options in our new treatment pathway and is now available at all three women's prisons, as well as in the community. We will increase delivery of the programme to meet the needs of more women in prison and on community sentences.

Recognising a gap in current services, a **new programme for high-risk women** is also being developed to meet the needs of this small, but challenging group.

For women on community sentences, we will investigate creating specific brief interventions that our probation officers can deliver. These will build on women's strengths, confidence and self-esteem.

Alcohol and other drug (AOD) use is common among women who have offended and is often linked to trauma and mental health issues. Increased AOD support will be available in prison and the community, including better access to residential AOD treatment beds, AOD interventions and outpatient programmes. The Drug Treatment Programme at Arohata Prison will continue to develop to ensure it delivers treatment specifically for women who are dependent on alcohol and other drugs.

Women often face barriers to completing rehabilitation treatment in the community, such as caring for whānau, other family responsibilities and financial concerns. We will investigate forming more community partnerships to support women on programmes through referrals to local services that can provide practical and emotional support over and above the support our probation officers can provide. These partnerships will ensure women continue to receive support after their programme and sentence have ended.

Health, trauma and social work

As part of a \$14 million **mental health programme** investment over two years, women now have access to social workers, counsellors and mental health professionals in prison.

Recognising women's social needs, and high levels of anxiety for women separated from their children and whānau, four **social workers** have been employed in our three women's prisons and they are already making significant contributions to women's wellbeing. A large amount of their work is supporting mothers who are concerned about their children in the community, supporting women through Family Court and Oranga Tamariki Ministry for Vulnerable Children processes, and, if safe to do so, strengthening and maintaining women's relationships with their children.

Social workers also support pregnant women, women who have their babies with them in prison, women who want to continue feeding and bonding with their babies whilst separated, young women in need of support and trans people.

Recognising the high levels of trauma that women in prison have experienced, four **counsellors** have been employed to work one on one with women who are suffering from the ongoing effects of trauma. The causes of trauma are wide ranging, from violence, neglect and grief to abusive relationships. Women have different responses to violence and abuse. Some will need professional support to develop coping skills and strategies. Our counsellors will provide a professional ear for women struggling to adapt to life in prison.

***Trauma** can manifest itself in many ways. Women may suffer extreme stress and self-protection, lack trust, feel unsafe and be hyper-vigilant and fearful. They may find it difficult to form and sustain healthy, appropriate and trusting relationships. Behaviours such as self-harm, defiance, anger, aggression or emotional numbness can be a result of the on-going effects of trauma. At Corrections, our aim is to equip women with a variety of skills to help them cope both in prison and on release.*

Since starting work in prisons in November 2016, social workers and counsellors have received over 550 referrals.

We will evaluate the services of our social workers and counsellors and consider the ongoing development of these roles to ensure the most appropriate support is available to women in prison. In recognition of the high levels of trauma among women on sentence, **our practice** across our prisons and in the community will be **trauma informed**. It is about taking the time to understand the reasons for women's behaviour, and responding accordingly. Our responses seek to avoid causing further trauma. We will:

- » understand trauma, its prevalence and its effect and provide our people with the skills to effectively and empathetically manage women suffering from trauma and related symptoms
- » avoid triggering trauma reactions or retraumatising women through changes to operational practice
- » recognise the effect of trauma exposure on staff and ensure our people are given the help, support and training they need to avoid burn out
- » provide women with programmes and services to educate them on the effects of trauma, and help them cope with its effects.

Learning

"Women aren't used to looking after themselves; they're used to looking after their partner, their children, their parents but not themselves, and once they get here they have lots of time and we try to focus that time on just them, so they become very aware of themselves, what their risks are and learn to like themselves for a change."

Prison Director, Women's Prison

A high number of women serving sentences in prison and in the community left school before their 15th birthday. Additionally, their experiences of school and learning are often associated with trauma and bullying. Corrections can provide an opportunity for women to re-engage with learning opportunities that can have positive effects on their lives.

Around 60% of women in prison and 70% of Māori women in prison have literacy and numeracy levels lower than NCEA level 1 (Tertiary Education Commission Literacy and Numeracy Adult Assessment Tool, 2017). This means they can struggle to read or write, and have difficulty carrying out basic everyday tasks such as filling in forms, applying for jobs, accessing support, getting a driver licence or helping their children with schoolwork.

Parents in prison who struggle to read and write can find it particularly distressing as it can be difficult to maintain communication with their children.

Corrections has enhanced literacy, numeracy and education support for prisoners provided by **Te Wānanga o Aotearoa**. Along with the roll out of **Secure Online Learning** suites at all women's prisons, education tutors assess the skills and **learning goals** of each woman in prison and create an individualised learning pathway for them.

We will increase the range of options available for women's learning, and make sure that what women learn is relevant and appropriate to the realities of their lives. We have run focus groups in all three women's prisons to better understand the types of learning women want.

We recognise the different needs of young women. For women under 25 we are piloting a **healthy relationships programme** which is currently delivered in schools and communities across New Zealand. We are also partnering with the **Duke of Edinburgh Hillary Award** to give young women in prison the opportunity to build their life skills and confidence.

Therapeutic, skill and developmental programmes such as arts, drama, book clubs, quilting and weaving will continue to be delivered by **volunteers**. We will develop these programmes and bring new programmes into prisons such as a Mother's Storybook programme.

Community Safety

Probation officers play a key role in providing Courts with recommendations for sentences.

Probation officers' **reports to Courts** will have greater emphasis on identifying and understanding women's circumstances, especially whānau circumstances.

Taking account of these factors will mean Courts have the information they need to make informed sentencing decisions. It will also mean that conditions imposed on women take account of their needs and circumstances, reducing the chance of breaching their conditions. This will result in:

- » a reduction in breach action against women, which can result in further sanctions, and sometimes prison sentences
- » an increase in the use of appropriate home detention for women rather than imprisonment.

The proportion of women starting prison sentences for breaching the requirements of community sentences has increased in the last decade. We will investigate the causes of women breaching their sentence requirements and develop strategies and solutions to better prevent breaches by women.

The majority (89%) of women being managed by Corrections are serving their sentence in the community. Over half are serving a sentence of **community work**.

Community-based sentences enable women who offend to stay with their whānau and cause less disruption to their lives, at the same time as enabling them to address the causes of their offending.

Through community work, women can give back to their communities and learn new skills, such as carrying out maintenance work for the Department of Conservation or working in community gardens, growing and harvesting fruit and vegetables to share with their neighbours.

We will investigate specific community work projects for women that take account of women's strengths and

the reality of their responsibilities. Some areas already run parent community work crews, which start later and end earlier to allow parents to drop off and collect their children from school. One successful blueprint for population specific community work is the "youth community work" pilot being run in Dunedin.

Women caring for children can find it difficult to complete their community work hours or take part in rehabilitation programmes. To help those women successfully complete their community work sentence we will investigate more flexibility about when community work and rehabilitation programmes can be done and helping with childcare arrangements. This is already underway in some parts of the country.

New devices have been introduced that can be worn on the ankle and will detect drug or alcohol use. **Alcohol Interlock programmes** have also been introduced that physically demobilise vehicles if the driver tries to drive drunk. These devices enable Corrections to keep women and the public safe, to manage women serving sentences in the community for **drink driving or alcohol and drug related offences**, and to refer them to appropriate treatment and support.





WOMEN
make up
7%
of the prison
population



20%
of **COMMUNITY-BASED**
OFFENDERS
are women
(5,973 out of 29,000)



We already provide women on community sentences access to courses including cooking, budgeting, road safety and obtaining a driver licence, violence prevention and parenting. We recognise that women can use their community work hours to learn essential skills to support improvements to their lives. We will increase the number of hours that women can spend developing work and living skills during their community sentence and we will enhance the relevance of **Work and Living Skills** to meet women's risks and needs.

Electronically Monitored bail (EM bail) may be an option for eligible women in prison on remand. As part of the Women's Strategy we have contracted providers to provide **supported accommodation for women on EM bail**. The service is called Community Alternatives and is a \$2.2 million dollar investment over three years. Support is provided for women to access services such as health and financial assistance. Recognising the advantages of staying in the community to receive support, more work will go into improving the uptake of EM bail.

A new service in Christchurch Women's Prison will be piloted as a result of a bid made to the Justice Sector Fund as part of the **Māori Justice Outcomes Strategy** work. The Māori Justice Outcomes Strategy is a wider initiative to directly improve justice outcomes for Māori and the service will be designed by Te Runanga o Ngā Maata Waka, an Urban Māori Authority, with Corrections' support and facilitation. The service is being designed with whānau in mind, and will be



targeted towards Māori women, and women with Māori children. It will benefit women in prison, their children and their children's caregivers. It starts when women enter prison and continues after release, with a combination of **Whānau Ora navigation and Functional Family Therapy**.

Building Foundations is a new supported accommodation service being piloted for women released from prison. Recognising the importance of relationships for women, the service provider will engage early with women to build trusting relationships before release. The service also undertakes important tasks prior to release from prison, such as securing access to financial assistance, setting up meetings with Oranga Tamariki Ministry for Vulnerable Children, building on relapse prevention plans and establishing support networks. The name of the new service was drawn from a quote from one woman nearing release:

"I'm not going to go backwards but I'm just going to take baby steps... The other time I used to jump out and go, "all good, all good" but it didn't stay all good... I'm going to try this time, I'm not going to kid myself and jump into the deep end... I need better foundations for that."

"I understand how difficult it is to be a frontline corrections officer... It is not an easy job maintaining a secure and safe environment and offering work and recreation programmes for rehabilitation to a group of people (some who may have a violent disposition) who are confined and therefore may be highly strung."

Ex-prisoner talking about her time at Arohata Prison

Our People

Women make up 46% of Corrections' diverse and inclusive workforce. In our women's prisons, 74% of staff are women. Wherever you work at Corrections, and whatever gender you are, you have an important part to play in making the vision of the Women's Strategy a reality.

The work our frontline staff do every day is essential in turning people's lives around. Alongside the changes we are making to our practices outlined in this strategy, we will be providing our people with additional training and support in how to work more effectively with women. We want our staff to have the skills, knowledge and understanding to confidently assess the situation and needs of women they work with and respond in the most appropriate way.

From the point of recruitment, through to induction, training and career progression staff will be encouraged to build their skills in this area.

Recruitment

Corrections' doesn't currently require specific skills to work in women's prisons, or to work with women in the community. Prison staff can be moved between men's and women's prisons, which means staff can end up

working in a women's prison when they are more comfortable, and suited, in a men's prison environment.

There are specific skill sets that are best suited to working with women and that enable staff to respond well to women's unique situation, communication styles, mental health, trauma symptoms and emotional needs. Advanced inter-personal skills, listening and communication skills lend themselves well to building positive and effective relationships with women.

Staff who enjoy working with women are more likely to be effective in women's prisons, or in managing women on community sentences.

Through the Women's Strategy we will develop our recruitment to take more consideration of the specific skills we know are needed to work effectively with women.



Training

Training goes hand in hand with recruitment. New staff selected to work with women with a base of good skills will require specific training to understand women's offending and current staff will need training in working with women to better equip them to understand women's unique characteristics and respond to their needs.

It's critical staff are trained in:

- » women's pathways into crime and what they mean for treatment and management
- » understanding mental health issues and substance use and how they affect and relate to women's lives
- » understanding trauma, its effects on behaviour, what can trigger trauma response, and how to appropriately respond to women who have been triggered
- » understanding the importance of women's relationships and the role staff can play to support women through their sentences
- » strategies and skills to avoid burn out.

Staff will be supported to ensure they receive the **counselling or assistance** they need to continue working with people impacted by trauma.

Relationships

Building on the importance of relationships for women, and how integral good support networks are to support women in the community, we will encourage women to **grow healthy relationships** with their children, whānau, partners, other women serving sentences and, importantly, Corrections staff.

Our staff will be encouraged to learn, share their skills and support each other. For instance, **mental health staff, psychologists, social workers and counsellors** who have experience and skills to share about working with women will be available to support staff who need advice, and will provide additional learning opportunities for staff.

Volunteers

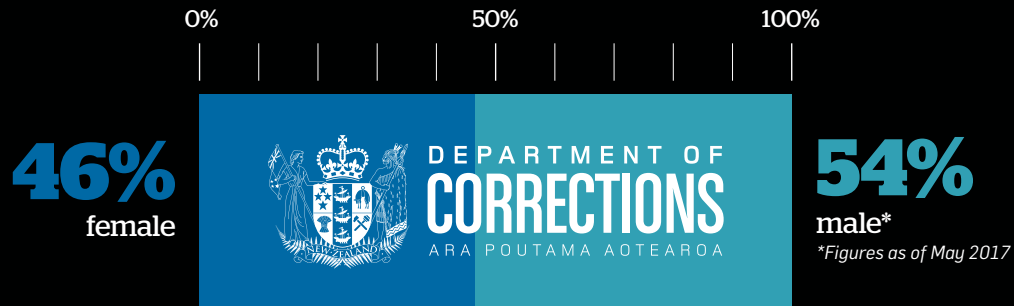
We value the work of our volunteers and groups with a shared commitment to reducing re-offending. Every day volunteers spend time in prison working with women. They help with literacy, teach drama and art skills, show women how to weave, embroider, knit and quilt, teach kapa haka, take yoga classes and run book clubs.

Organisations such as the Mothers Project help mothers in prison maintain family ties, provide legal information and act as role models. The Mothers Project, run in all three women's prisons and with 110 lawyers on their roster is seeking to expand their services for women in prison given the diverse skill sets of their volunteers. The Women's Strategy will support these expansions so that women in prison are provided with a range of services to meet their varied needs.

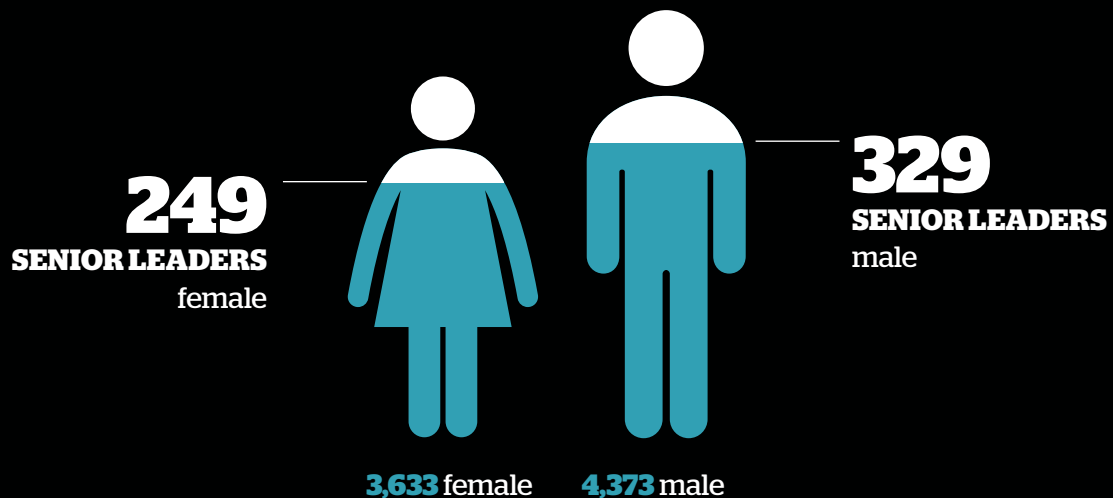
"If you help a mother, you can help a family,"

Stacey Shortall, founder of the Mothers Project.

Workforce



Frontline staff



WOMEN WORKING IN WOMEN'S PRISONS



1,348 WOMEN work in Community Corrections (772 men).
134 WOMEN in Community Corrections are senior leaders (81 men)



Modern Infrastructure

Arohata is the oldest of the women's prisons, opening in 1944. Christchurch Women's Prison opened in 1974 and Auckland Region Women's Corrections Facility in 2006. Before Arohata there were no separate prisons for women. At Arohata Prison a new high security 60 bed unit is being built.

The needs of women will be fed into the **designs of new units at women's prisons**. As we develop new facilities we will include features that support women's rehabilitation such as more interview and programme rooms, trauma informed spaces, health triage areas, gardens, communal and family friendly areas.

A Kawenata (Accord) signed on 16 March 2017 between the Kiingitanga and the Department of Corrections signifies a strong commitment to improve outcomes for Māori women. The accord includes commitment to a Hamilton-based, **community reintegration centre for women being released from prison**. Corrections and the Kiingitanga will work in **partnership** to create this facility.

This partnered initiative has the potential to change the life courses of Māori women released from prison, and their whānau, by increasing whānau resilience through iwi-led services and providing access to safe and secure housing.

All three women's prisons in New Zealand have **Mothers with Babies** Units where women can look after themselves and their babies (up to 24 months) in a self care unit, with the oversight and support of Corrections staff. A review of Mothers with Babies policy and practice will be carried out as part of the Women's Strategy and there will be additional training for staff on the particular needs of women and babies in prison. Through the review, consideration will be given to whether 24 months is the appropriate cut off point for babies to be placed with their mothers in prison.



Visitors Centres have been made more friendly places for children who visit. It can be frightening going into a prison, but these areas have been refurbished to make them more inviting. As well as areas to encourage better interaction with families, there are games for prisoners and visitors to play. As part of the Women's Strategy, our **social workers** are developing innovative ways to improve the quality of contact between women and their whānau during visits. **Special events** on Mothers Day and Children's Day such as card making activities, games and family photographs provide good opportunities to strengthen the bonds between mothers and children by allowing a time and space for positive interactions.

We will pilot "child safe spaces" at Community Corrections sites to remove barriers for women completing their sentence requirements by being able to bring their children to the office with them. These child friendly spaces may be a project for community work crews to create.

Audio Visual Links at prisons and Community Corrections sites are providing a new way for women in prison to keep in touch with their whānau. These virtual visits allow mothers to see and talk to their children who may live far away and cannot visit in person.



Case Study

A woman serving a community work and supervision sentence had struggled with alcohol dependency for many years resulting in social isolation of both herself and her children. She had health issues as a result of her alcohol abuse, and would seldom leave the house.

A wrap-around service from Corrections, Family Works, Rural Education Activities Programme (REAP), the Southland District Health Board, the Salvation Army, Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and the local school has made a real difference in her life.

She is attending a gardening course, has completed a sewing course and has been referred for The Incredible Years Parenting programme through REAP.

Thanks to the support she is being provided, her self-confidence has improved dramatically and she is managing her alcohol use successfully. She has recently been offered paid employment, which will start once she completes her community work hours.



Department of Corrections, Mayfair House, 44-52 The Terrace, Wellington
Phone: (64 4) 460 3000 Fax: (64 4) 460 3263 www.corrections.govt.nz



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