

# Auckland Region Women's Corrections Facility

**Announced Inspection**

June 2020



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January 2021

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## Office of the Inspectorate *Te Tari Tirohia*

### **Our whakataukī**

*Mā te titiro me te whakarongo ka puta mai te māramatanga*

By looking and listening, we will gain insight.

### **Our vision**

That prisoners and offenders are treated in a fair, safe, secure and humane way.

### **Our values**

Respect – We are considerate of the dignity of others

Integrity – We are ethical and do the right thing

Professionalism – We are competent and focused

Objectivity – We are open-minded and do not take sides

Diversity – We are inclusive and value difference

We also acknowledge the Department of Corrections' values: Rangatira (leadership), Manaaki (respect), Wairua (spirituality), Kaitiaki (guardianship) and Whānau (relationships).

## Foreword

The Office of the Inspectorate *Te Tari Tirohia* is a critical part of the independent oversight of the Corrections system and operates under the Corrections Act 2004 and the Corrections Regulations 2005. The Inspectorate, while part of the Department of Corrections, is operationally independent, which is necessary to ensure objectivity and integrity.

This report is part of the programme of prison inspections carried out by the Office of the Inspectorate. The inspection process provides an ongoing invaluable insight into prisons and provides assurance that shortcomings are identified and addressed in a timely way, and examples of good practice are shared across the prison network.

I recognise the challenges this site has faced over recent years with the numbers of maximum security, high security and remand wāhine. Many of the environmental challenges have remained unchanged, despite the obvious need for capital investment to provide outside exercise yards for the high security units.

I note the site is carrying a high number of vacancies and staff who were unable to be rostered. This undoubtedly places a greater burden on the current staff and impacts adversely on morale and the ability to support the wāhine.

I want to acknowledge the recent appointment of a Prison Director and key senior positions in his management team. I am confident that strong leadership will focus efforts to appropriately address the challenges of this site and ensure it is better equipped and supported to deliver a high quality service.

I urge the Department of Corrections to carefully consider the findings in this report and to act with pace to address these.

I also want to acknowledge areas of good practice which were observed, such as the Mobility Dog Assistance Programme, Receiving Office processes, the AVL facility, and the Mothers with Babies Unit. I was pleased to note that most wāhine reported feeling safe from bullying and violence, and Intervention and Support Unit staff demonstrated professionalism and skill when engaging with mentally unwell wāhine.

This inspection found health staff showed professionalism and compassion during their interactions with wāhine, however access to health services was impacted by staff shortages and the limited number of consultation rooms.

The site will need the support of both regional and national teams to implement the changes needed and well-functioning assurance mechanisms to ensure that changes are given effect to, embedded and sustained.

My Office conducted its first inspection of Auckland Region Women's Corrections Facility in August 2018. A draft of the inspection report was provided to the National Commissioner in February 2019. I undertook to complete a second inspection of the site and report on progress following stabilisation of the site's leadership with the appointment of a new Prison Director and other key appointments.

I committed to ensuring that my second inspection and subsequent report would note my initial observations and provide the longitudinal view of the site's journey over recent years.

In taking this approach I also found it helpful, for context, to acknowledge the Office of the Ombudsman's COTA report of its January 2014 inspection of the prison's At Risk and Management units, which was released publicly. It is disappointing that some issues noted in this report (including the management of maximum security and high security prisoners and those on directed segregation) continue to be areas of concern identified during my inspection some six years later.

The Department's Hōkai Rangi and Women's strategies provide a robust framework to respond to the individual and collective needs of wāhine in the prison and I encourage the site to more clearly communicate how it does, and will continue to, deliver on these commitments.

In closing, I want to acknowledge the staff at this site for their openness to share and willingness to learn from these inspection findings and to work collaboratively with a spirit of collective responsibility to focus on one purpose: the wellness and well-being of wāhine in their care.



Janis Adair  
Chief Inspector

## Our findings

1. This report sets out findings from our inspection. The *Inspection Standards* for each section are also noted. Our commentary from the 2020 inspection follows and our findings are listed.

### Reception and induction

- Finding 1. Most wāhine reported no issues with their short transfers to or from the prison. Some wāhine, who were transferred longer distances, did not have all their basic needs met.
- Finding 2. Overall, the Receiving Office and reception process were safe, humane and respectful, with the needs of women arriving into prison generally met.
- Finding 3. Difficulties were noted with staff attempting to connect women with family and whānau for their initial telephone call, and supplying replacement bras.
- Finding 4. Unit inductions were not taking place consistently across all parts of the prison. We note the prison is improving induction delivery.
- Finding 5. The prison did not provide access to information about the Mothers with Babies Unit to new wāhine with children under two. We note the Receiving Office now has information available.
- Finding 6. Trans prisoners we spoke with were consulted and provided with information about their preferred prison placement and had support plans in place which were regularly reviewed.
- Finding 7. Health staff generally explained consents, undertook effective assessments and appropriately triaged health appointments in the Receiving Office. Some health staff require more training in Receiving Office processes.
- Finding 8. Health staff completed required screening for COVID-19 for wāhine being received into prison.
- Finding 9. Health staff had early access to community clinical information via TestSafe which supported continuity of care.
- Finding 10. Some gender specific screening was a routine part of the Initial Health Assessment.

### Duty of care

- Finding 11. The prison makes good use of the audio-visual link facility and has established dedicated staff to move wāhine to and from the facility. The number of AVL booths available has not increased.
- Finding 12. Wāhine did not generally report any issues with accessing their lawyer by telephone.
- Finding 13. Most wāhine reported feeling safe from bullying and violence. Standovers occurred in the Remand and high security units for lozenges or personal clothing items.

- Finding 14. Staff closely monitor and respond to any tension arising from deteriorating relationships between women.
- Finding 15. Documentation stored in files was inconsistent and key documentation was often missing.
- Finding 16. Prisoner files in the Mothers with Babies Unit were complete and held securely.
- Finding 17. Prison staff consistently assess wāhine for eligibility and suitability prior to being considered for a shared cell. Wāhine who shared a cell did not raise concerns and some preferred to share.
- Finding 18. The complaints procedure, while well understood by the wāhine, was not always timely, effective or well administered by staff.
- Finding 19. Wāhine receive limited opportunities to practise their culture and customs.
- Finding 20. Mirimiri Te Aroha Unit requires more resources, staff and volunteers who are equipped to support the wāhine and kaupapa of the unit.
- Finding 21. Some foreign national wāhine experienced delays accessing the funds required to telephone their families overseas. Some were able to access support from their consulate or local volunteers.
- Finding 22. Staff were unable to timely process the significant volume of property received.

### Health

- Finding 23. Health staff demonstrate professionalism and compassion during their interactions with wāhine.
- Finding 24. Some hospital appointments had to be rescheduled due to the unavailability of custodial staff.
- Finding 25. Wāhine access to necessary health services was considerably affected by health and custodial staff shortages and a limited number of consultation rooms.
- Finding 26. The health centres were both clean, tidy and well equipped with medical equipment and health promotion material was available.
- Finding 27. Wāhine were not always prioritised for health appointments according to need.
- Finding 28. Wāhine had to wait three months to access non-urgent dental appointments.
- Finding 29. Health staff generally undertake quality assessments and complete documentation well.
- Finding 30. Patient privacy and confidentiality is maintained.
- Finding 31. Health complaints were responded to in a timely and appropriate way.
- Finding 32. Treatment programmes and support are available to wāhine with addiction issues.



- Finding 33. Intervention and Support Unit staff demonstrated professionalism and skill when engaging with wāhine who were mentally unwell or in crisis.
- Finding 34. Insufficient numbers of health staff meant their ability to collaborate with the Intervention and Support team and be involved in multidisciplinary team meetings was limited.
- Finding 35. There was an inadequate number of consultation rooms available to mental health service providers.
- Finding 36. Custodial staff felt they needed more training to better support acutely unwell wāhine in their care.
- Finding 37. The needs of some wāhine with disabilities were not always met.

### Environment

- Finding 38. The prison was clean, graffiti-free and well-maintained. However, wāhine access to activities, outdoor recreation and programmes in the high security side of the prison (including the Management Unit) is limited by the current prison design and fencing.
- Finding 39. Facility maintenance issues and equipment shortages were not closely monitored by staff and their responses recorded.
- Finding 40. Sanitary items were not always readily available to wāhine.
- Finding 41. Wāhine were not provided with adequate quantities of underwear (including bras). Some did not have access to clothing in their size.
- Finding 42. The quality of mattresses and pillows and the availability of bedding and towels was inconsistent across the prison. Mattresses require a mattress protector but some wāhine removed these as they were uncomfortable.
- Finding 43. Wāhine could not consistently launder and dry their personal clothing items, bedding and towels.
- Finding 44. Overall, wāhine were pleased with the food available. However, high security wāhine often received their food cold and some of these wāhine were required to eat meals in their cells.
- Finding 45. The prison provides access to a good level of midwifery support for pregnant wāhine and those requiring postnatal support.
- Finding 46. Some pregnant wāhine did not receive practical help in their units.
- Finding 47. The site continues to ensure the placement of a child with their mother in the Mothers with Babies Unit is in the best interest of the child.
- Finding 48. The Mothers with Babies Unit provides a good environment and opportunities for mothers to spend time with their child, including external outings, activities and programmes (outside of COVID-19 lockdown periods).
- Finding 49. The outdoor walking area was limited in size and the play equipment needed to be updated.

Finding 50. The prison ensures children in prison have access to health care in the community and staff support mothers to attend these appointments.

Finding 51. The site has processes to ensure that the safety and well-being of the child and mother are carefully considered during the planning for the removal of a baby.

### Good order

Finding 52. While wāhine generally received at least one hour out of their cell each day, this time was often used for cleaning and making telephone calls rather than exercise. Time out of cell for other activities should be in addition to any hour allocated for exercise.

Finding 53. The prison is not consistently recording the unlock and lock times for individual wāhine.

Finding 54. Each maximum security wāhine had an up-to-date, tailored management plan.

Finding 55. Management plans in the ISU generally met the standard although there was room for improvement particularly regarding health involvement.

Finding 56. The prison offers few incentives to encourage pro-social behaviour among high security wāhine.

Finding 57. The administration of the misconduct process is not working effectively at the site.

Finding 58. In the high security and Remand units, some custodial staff did not always actively manage demanding and confrontational behaviour.

Finding 59. The prison generally took steps to ensure that different categories of wāhine were kept separate.

Finding 60. Cell searches were not carried out routinely across all units to ensure the safety and good order of the prison.

Finding 61. Rubdown searches we observed were conducted thoroughly by female staff and took place when necessary.

Finding 62. The majority of strip searches appropriately took place in the Receiving Office, which would be expected, and wāhine said they were treated with respect.

Finding 63. The drug testing regime identified there are very few women using illicit drugs in the prison.

### Purposeful activity

Finding 64. Some high security wāhine were not receiving at least one hour in the open air each day.

Finding 65. Some high security wāhine could not access exercise facilities and recreational equipment.

- Finding 66. Low security wāhine generally had more access to opportunities to exercise.
- Finding 67. Overall, wāhine were able to maintain contact with family (including their children where appropriate) and whānau through telephone calls. Telephones were often situated in noisy areas and offered little privacy.
- Finding 68. Access to family and whānau was supported during the COVID-19 lockdown period with video conferencing and weekly \$5 telephone cards.
- Finding 69. Wāhine often experience delays in getting their telephone numbers approved and receiving incoming mail.
- Finding 70. Wāhine are provided good support by social workers to establish and maintain contact with their family and children.
- Finding 71. Wāhine and visitors were generally positive about their visit experience, but not all visit times were convenient for family and whānau.
- Finding 72. The needs of children during visits were generally met, although the bonding room requires updating.
- Finding 73. At times visitor processing was delayed, reducing the time available for visits.
- Finding 74. Some search information for visitors was not visible in the reception area.
- Finding 75. Wāhine do not currently have reasonable access to the library or library resources.
- Finding 76. The library is run by a wāhine, receives no funding, has no catalogue system and fully relies on book donations.
- Finding 77. Most wāhine have good access to chaplains and other appropriate faith-based support. However, chaplains felt underutilised and disconnected from other prison staff.
- Finding 78. The prison is well supported by a volunteer coordinator and a team of volunteers who support and complement services and constructive activities for wāhine.
- Finding 79. Some wāhine did not have access to a case officer in their unit, however improvements in this area are underway.
- Finding 80. Wāhine had good access and support from case managers.
- Finding 81. Case managers were achieving good results across all of their Standards of Practice.
- Finding 82. The prison generally offers a good range of education opportunities, including access to literacy and numeracy support for wāhine on remand.
- Finding 83. The prison has a limited number of classrooms which impacted on educational activities.
- Finding 84. The prison offers a good range of rehabilitation programmes but access is limited by the availability of programme rooms.
- Finding 85. Psychologists had limited time available to undertake individual treatment with wāhine.

Finding 86. Wāhine in the high security units could access few opportunities for work or training.

Finding 87. Wāhine in the low security and Self Care units received good access to work opportunities.

### Reintegration

Finding 88. Wāhine are supported through a good range of reintegration opportunities.

Finding 89. There were limited Release to Work opportunities.

Finding 90. Parole reports were completed in a timely way. The focus on timeliness, however, had reduced opportunities for psychologists to undertake individual treatment with wāhine.

### Prison staff

Finding 91. Staff morale is improving since the appointment of a permanent Prison Director, and the prison is on a transformational journey to improve standards and outcomes for wāhine.

Finding 92. The prison is staffed predominantly by women, including in senior roles.

Finding 93. Staff and wāhine told us there were insufficient numbers of staff to adequately respond to the needs of wāhine.

Finding 94. There were a significant number of vacancies for health staff.

Finding 95. Corrections' Hōkai Rangi Strategy and Women's Strategy are not yet fully integrated into staff practice and culture.

Finding 96. Specialist training for staff, including trauma informed practice and Mothers with Babies Unit training, is not currently provided on a regular basis.

## Department of Corrections' response



30 October 2020

Janis Adair  
Chief Inspector  
Department of Corrections

By email: [janis.adair@corrections.govt.nz](mailto:janis.adair@corrections.govt.nz)

Tēnā koe Janis

### **Re: Draft Report on Auckland Region Women's Corrections Facility (ARWCF) Announced Inspection June 2020**

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the draft inspection report. The Regional Commissioner and I were proud to see the confidence you have expressed in the ability of the Prison Director and their developing senior leadership team to lead ARWCF site in their transformational journey. While a number of challenges have persisted at ARWCF it is through the spirit of collective responsibility you have referred that as a site they are achieving important changes that focus on the wellbeing of the wāhine in their care.

I note that when your team visited in 2018 they observed staff in the Intervention and Support Unit were not trained to manage the complexity of those being cared for in that environment and did not feel sufficiently supported to meet their needs. It was particularly pleasing therefore to see the staff now described as demonstrating professionalism, de-escalation skills, compassion and excellent communication. The most significant change in this environment since 2018 is clearly the establishment of the Intervention & Support clinical team. The Prison Director has credited this team for their contribution not only to the wāhine but also in supporting the development of the custodial staff working in this complex environment.

The Prison Director was pleased to hear that wāhine reported to your inspectors they feel safe from bullying and violence and that you acknowledge the staff on site for their openness and willingness to learn. That attitude means ARWCF are well equipped to utilise your team's findings as part of their process of continuous improvement which they have made significant progress with, even since your inspection occurred.

It also is important also to put this report, and my response now in the context of 2020. Since you visited in June the Auckland area in particular has again faced disruptions due to changes in COVID-19 alert levels. This has meant that some of

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the initiatives planned for ARWCF have been disrupted. Nonetheless, I'm tremendously impressed by ARWCF's response to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and their ability to pick up where things left off as soon as they were able. Like all our sites, ARWCF has also identified exciting innovations during this time which they are now implementing.

#### *Te Waharoa Whakatautangata*

The most significant of the innovations I would like to share is the establishment of Te Waharoa Whakatautangata. This unit based in the low security setting of the prison accommodates new arrivals to ARWCF and sets the tone for each wāhine's journey in custody. The unit is not simply accommodation but is set up to provide multidisciplinary support to each wāhine. A wide range of staff are included, for example; health, physical education officers, case management, bail support, mental health, industry, treatment and learning and cultural support. An additional benefit is the rich information gathered in this time can help inform placement decisions on transition from the induction unit. It is also hoped that experiencing the low security environment on arrival will help be an incentive to wāhine to strive to achieve and maintain a low security classification once sentenced.

#### *Multidisciplinary team (MDT) approach*

The multidisciplinary approach described in the induction unit is a consistent theme across a number of important areas of practice at ARWCF. This collaboration across disciplines is present for example in the management of women who have a maximum-security classification. At one point, ARWCF had six women managed with this classification and for a period this group represented some of the most significant challenges for the day to day operation of the site and were involved in a high proportion of serious incidents. The multi-disciplinary approach is now well embedded into practice with a focus on supporting successful transitions for each of the wāhine. Where appropriate wāhine are also involved directly in the MDT meetings, building their ownership of their own plans. Recently I was also pleased to hear that when one wāhine transferred to another site a meeting was held with prison staff from both sites and the wāhine together to check in on how she had settled and progressed. This collaboration extending across the women's network is considered an example of excellent practice.

Your report similarly describes multi-disciplinary practice in the mothers and babies unit and I was pleased to note the central focus on the best interests of the child. The Intervention & Support Unit has a similar ethos and the leadership team described excellent collegial relationships between staff operating in this environment. Collaboration and an open approach is now similarly demonstrated in the site's Safer Custody Panels which now incorporates a reflective practice approach to reviewing incidents. This helps focus on opportunities to share lessons and improve practice across the site.

#### *Women's strategy in practice*

Your report provides an important encouragement to ARWCF to clearly communicate how it delivers on our women's strategy and finds that it is not *fully*



*integrated into staff practice and culture.* While staff may not always be able to readily articulate how their day to day work reflects the strategic direction of the organisation I noted many examples throughout your report of the women's strategy in action.

One of the priorities of the women's strategy is to work with wāhine in a way that reflects the importance of relationships. Your report describes staff focus on monitoring and responding to tension between women or deteriorating relationships. I consider this key to the sense of safety experienced by the wāhine. This monitoring relies on staff getting to know the wāhine well. The Prison Director has also reported that relationships between staff and wāhine were further strengthened through the COVID-19 response, in part through the uniting effect of a clear common goal and shared experience.

In addition, several of the specialist staff at ARWCF are a direct result of the women's strategy, for example the pou tūhono, trauma counsellor and social worker. These roles, now business as usual, are providing an important contribution to the care of wāhine at ARWCF.

#### **Priority areas of focus for ARWCF**

Your report also offers valuable insight into the facility by detailing a number of challenges faced. The following areas have been identified as priority areas of focus for the site.

##### *Time out of cell, fresh air and record keeping*

The report talks about the challenges with consistent provision of the minimum entitlement to time out of cell, particularly exercise in the fresh air and sufficient time for other activities and associated record keeping.

The report recognises the associated facility constraints at ARWCF for the high security area of the prison, in particular that ARWCF is not designed with secure yards that your inspectors would be familiar with from other facilities. Due to their current design access to fresh air for wāhine in high security requires high staffing numbers for safe supervision. Facility enhancement work has been identified for ARWCF to improve the security of these environments. This will help support staff to safely and securely enable wāhine to access to fresh air. ARWCF are working closely with the Property team to progress consideration of the options available and are currently finalising the scope of the work. It is anticipated that funding for the work will be proposed through the governance groups in November 2020.

Despite the facility constraints ARWCF are continuously refining and re-setting regimes in the high security environment to maximise time out of cell, and in the fresh air. At the current time, wāhine in high security environment are typically receiving approximately three hours out of their cell each day, including a portion of this time more frequently being in the fresh air. This also allows plenty of time for activities like making phone calls or cleaning.

Given the challenges in this area the Northern Regional Leadership Team has significantly increased their oversight of provision of this minimum entitlement.

Robust systems for record keeping and reporting have been developed which mean that any instance where this minimum entitlement has not been provided or recorded correctly are now tracked and reported to the Regional Commissioner, Regional Director Practice Delivery and the Prison Director so that follow up can occur in a timely manner. They report confidence in this system for providing assurance that wāhine are consistently afforded this minimum entitlement.

### *Health*

The health service at ARWCF is integral to the care provided to the wāhine on site, many of whom have significant physical and / or mental health needs. It was positive to note quality health assessments were undertaken and your inspectors observed professional, compassionate and skilled health and mental health staff.

At site level there is a strong focus on continuing to strengthen relationships with the health team to ensure they are fully integrated in the day to day operations on site. These relationship across custody and health are driven at local, regional and national level and is key focus area for all teams.

The report also described pressures on health staff, particularly strained by low staffing levels, which have since improved. Detail on progress with staffing initiatives is recorded later in this letter. Additionally, a business case is progressing to purchase Telehealth equipment which will help further reduce waiting times, reduce the risk related to transfers out of the site and improve access to care. Health services are currently liaising with the local district health board to commence this service in January 2021.

Improving access to care and reducing the need for transfer off site has also led to work that continues to explore further opportunities to bring external health providers on site, for example radiology for simple x-rays has commenced on site and the mobile breast screening services is being explored. The prison has shared recent positive experiences with tests being facilitated quickly on site with results then able to be communicated to external health providers to inform decision making in the best interests of the care of the wāhine involved. The strengthened internal health structure has clearly contributed to enhanced networks with external health providers and creates these opportunities. This is of particular importance for ARWCF, which as noted in your report, faces particularly high levels of health care needs for wāhine when compared with other sites in the network.

The health team continue to drive refreshed thinking around how we manage and report on quality assurance. The team are engaged in the health services national audit schedule and have been reporting against key service metrics. We will continue to share progress made with the health team through the introduction of quality boards to ensure closure of the feedback cycle and positively reinforce the positive outcomes for our wāhine.

Further, the team are carrying out a needs analysis for health team education delivery in 2021. The observations of your inspectors are helping inform the plan of areas to address, for example reception processes, initial and update health



assessments and consistency of triaging. This work will be delivered by our Regional Clinical Director and Clinical Quality Assurance team through the new year.  
*Wāhine Māori*

The Special Treatment Unit (STU) for wāhine is currently under development for ARWCF and expected to be open in the next financial year. The intention is for the wrap-around and reintegrative components of the unit to be co-designed with mana whenua with the goal of creating a values-led, whanau-centric model, which will offer wāhine access to various cultural activities and support, and include whānau throughout the process. The unit staff will include a full-time cultural advisor, who will support the wāhine and the unit as a whole to ensure Te Ao Māori is upheld. In addition, we will work with mana whenua to source an appropriate service to offer specific cultural services and support for the wāhine in the unit and their whānau.

Recently a new provider for the Mothers and Babies Unit has been confirmed. At ARWCF the provider is Te Ha Oranga o Ngati Whātua. The service commenced in July. The service is a whānau-centred, kaupapa Māori parenting support service which is responsive to Māori and other cultures. It is immersed in Te Ao Māori worldview including te reo Māori, whakapapa and tikanga Māori. Whānau plans will be developed where whānau are the centre of the system and wāhine are connected, supported and empowered to reach their potential, pēpi will have strong connections with whānau, hapū, iwi; the whānau plan will also plan for release from a parenting point of view to ensure the correct services and supports are in place to ensure a successful reintegration for mother and pēpi.

While both are services targeted at specific cohorts of wāhine it is expected there will be flow on benefits for the rest of the site as a result of the additional support, increasing knowledge and skills for Te Ao Māori approaches with staff.

I mentioned above that ARWCF had made progress in a number of areas, reflecting the continued positive trajectory. Several are detailed in brief for you below;

- At the time of your inspection there was a shortage of custodial staff. Custodial recruitment has since been completed and the site are now operating with more staff than their establishment. 25 staff are currently completing their Corrections Officer Development Pathway and the site look forward to them being ready for full duties in the coming months. Your report also notes that some staff are not available for work. ARWCF have worked collaboratively with partners to reduce the overall number. In addition, ARWCF are proud of their work to collaborate with union partners on proposed rosters and rotation for staff. The proposed roster allows greater provision for staff to support the existing high volume of hospital escorts, limiting the impact on overtime and fatigue.
- Recruitment in health services has progressed well since your inspection. A Health Centre Manager and Nurse Practitioner have been recruited and commenced in their roles. Registered nurse vacancies have reduced with only three full time vacancies at this time. These vacancies are currently mitigated through temporary secondments of three experienced staff from another local site which means ARWCF are currently operating with a full team.

- Staffing resource for mental health and addiction services is also being enhanced with the appointment of a Regional Principal Advisor Mental Health and Addictions. Included in their role will be support for the care of wāhine with high and complex mental health needs. Recruitment for the two vacant trauma counsellors positions is progressing well.
- The Health Centre Manager, with the mentorship of an experienced senior health leader from the region has made significant progress with their team on reducing waiting time for planned care appointments. Their mentor has strong experience of health in the prison environment and this pairing also reflects strong collaboration across the region. The nurse practitioner appointment is also expected to have a positive impact on the waitlist for the medical officer.
- Your report also noted the high number of hospital escorts that take place, and in turn, the additional strain this has on staffing capacity. The Chief Medical Adviser has been tasked with progressing a range of improvements across the network related to medical escorts, and in particular those that are unplanned.
- The new Health Centre Manager has been oriented to their responsibilities related to the care and management plans for wāhine who are managed in the Intervention & Support Unit, particularly those who are subject to a specific segregation direction. They are working with the Intervention & Support unit teams to ensure management plans are completed to a high standard.
- More health promotion material has been displayed in the high security health facility.
- A national project has been established on enhancing prisoner escorts. The comprehensive project is considering modes of transport, routes and aims to reduce journey times. The project has appropriate representation to help ensure gender-responsivity throughout. Recently, the use of charter flights to escort women from ARWCF to Arohata Prison in Wellington has reduced the number of women making this long journey by road.
- The Women and Youth Team are collaborating with procurement and wāhine to design and produce a bra for provision in the women's network. Wāhine recently gave feedback on options which is informing the prototype.
- ARWCF have ceased the process of having a temporary file in the unit to reduce record keeping issues and incomplete files.
- Complaint timeliness and follow up has been a key focus. The Custodial Systems Manager provides a weekly dashboard to the Prison Director for oversight and progression.

- Property processes have improved with the assignment of specific staff to collection.
- Programmes rooms are no longer being used for storage, enabling increased access to spaces for scheduled activities.
- The issue of meals being delivered cold to wāhine in high security units has been resolved. It is now delivered later in the day and served more quickly.
- Improved processes for adding friends and whānau to the approved phone list have been implemented.
- Trauma informed training has been scheduled with all staff due to complete by the end of 2020.
- ARWCF, the Women and Youth Team and Property are collaborating to scope a developmentally appropriate playground for the Mothers and Babies Unit. Similarly, collaboration with Property is underway on enhancements to the Management Unit which will further support staff to safely care for women with complex behaviour.
- Information on the Mothers and Babies Unit is being enhanced in the *New Beginnings* booklet, including information on applications to the unit and what the alternatives are. A resource will also be developed for whānau and the booklets will be bi-lingual and appropriate for a neuro-diversity or learning needs.
- The mobile library service for high security women is being re-established.
- The site focused on improving access to sanitary items in June and have reported no further complaints since this time.
- Curtains for cell windows have been sewed in the workshop and installation is underway.
- Approval processes for visitors have been improved with the implementation of a weekly visits panel chaired by the Security Manager with input from key staff. The meeting is formalised with clear agendas and minutes and helps ensure applications are considered in a timely way.
- The Northern Region identified in early 2020 the need to lift performance with misconduct and prosecution processes. They assessed current processes across the region to identify next steps to support the uplift. Their work provides a helpful platform for all sites and has been shared with the Chief Custodial Officer to support a national focus on misconduct progression.
- The kiosk (image seven) has been cleaned and this will be maintained.

I look forward to sharing with you the progress ARWCF continue to make in lifting their performance in all areas. I know ARWCF staff similarly look forward to showing you and your team the impact of their efforts on the wāhine in their care.

I trust you are satisfied with our response to the draft report. Please advise me if you have any concerns or questions about the information provided.

Ngā mihi nui



Rachel Leota  
National Commissioner

Released

## Introduction

2. The Office of the Inspectorate *Te Tari Tirohia* is authorised under section 29(1)(b) of the Corrections Act 2004 to undertake inspections and visits to prisons. Section 157 of the Act provides that when undertaking an inspection, inspectors have the power to access any prisoners, personnel, records, information, Corrections' vehicles or property.
3. The purpose of a prison inspection is to ensure a safe, secure and humane environment by gaining insight into all relevant parts of prison life, including any emerging risks, issues or problems. Inspectors assess prison conditions, management procedures and operational practices against relevant legislation and our *Inspection Standards* (which derive from international principles).
4. The Inspectorate visited Auckland Region Women's Corrections Facility between 24-30 June 2020 to carry out this inspection. This is the first comprehensive inspection of a prison by the Inspectorate since the first COVID-19 movement restrictions were lifted on 8 June 2020 and prisons resumed their standard operations.
5. The fieldwork for the inspection was completed by six Inspectors, including a Clinical Inspector for health-related matters. The inspection was overseen by a Principal Inspector and a Principal Clinical Inspector.
6. Inspectors assessed the treatment and conditions of wāhine<sup>1</sup> at Auckland Region Women's Corrections Facility against the *Inspection Standards*, which consider 10 areas of prison life: reception and admission, first days in custody, escorts and transfers, duty of care, health, environment, good order, purposeful activity, reintegration and prison staff. Inspectors accessed all parts of the prison to complete their assessment.
7. Inspectors may also evaluate how the site is applying the Corrections Act 2004 and the Corrections Regulations 2005, together with relevant Corrections' policies and procedures.
8. The *Inspection Standards* were developed by the Inspectorate and reflect the prison environment and procedures applicable in New Zealand prisons. The *Inspection Standards* are informed by:
  - » the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners ('the Nelson Mandela Rules')
  - » HM Inspectorate of Prisons *Expectations* (England's equivalent criteria for assessing the treatment and conditions of prisoners)
  - » the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders ('the Bangkok Rules')
  - » the Yogyakarta Principles, which guide the application of human rights law in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity.
9. Inspectors make their assessments with four key principles in mind, to ensure that prisoners are treated in a fair, safe, secure and humane way. The principles are:
  - » **Safety:** Prisoners are held safely.

<sup>1</sup> For this inspection, the Inspectorate will refer to female prisoners as 'wāhine' (defined by the online Māori Dictionary as "female, women, feminine").



- » **Respect:** Prisoners are treated with respect for human dignity.
  - » **Purposeful activity:** Prisoners are able, and expect, to engage in activity that is likely to benefit them.
  - » **Reintegration:** Prisoners are prepared for release into the community and helped to reduce their likelihood of reoffending.
10. This report includes gender-responsive standards relevant to the current inspection.
  11. Inspectors carried out:
    - » formal and informal interviews with staff, wāhine and visitors on a one-on-one basis<sup>2</sup>
    - » focus groups with wāhine
    - » direct observation of unit procedures, staff duties and relevant staff meetings throughout the working week and weekend
    - » a physical inspection of the prison environment, including the Health Centre
    - » a review and analysis of relevant information and data from the prison, Corrections' databases and performance reports.
  12. We were informed by the Office of the Ombudsman 2014 COTA<sup>3</sup> report and Corrections' Hōkai Rangi Strategy 2019-2024 and Women's Strategy 2017-2021.
  13. This inspection report includes observations from an inspection by the Inspectorate carried out in August 2018.
  14. On 9 October 2020, we provided the National Commissioner and Deputy Chief Executive Health with a draft of this report. They responded to the draft on 30 October 2020 and the response is attached at pages 11-18.

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<sup>2</sup> Including contracted service providers and volunteers where appropriate.

<sup>3</sup> Crimes of Torture Act 1989.

**Auckland Region Women's Corrections Facility**

15. Auckland Region Women's Corrections Facility is located in Wiri, South Auckland. The prison opened in 2006 as New Zealand's first purpose-built women's prison in the North Island. It is one of three female prisons in New Zealand.
16. The prison is designed as a campus-style facility that accommodates both remand and sentenced wāhine. Sentenced wāhine are classified from minimum to maximum security.
17. The prison has five residential units on the high security side of the prison, including the Intervention and Support Unit (ISU) and the Management Unit. There are five low-medium security units in the low security side of the prison. The high and low security parts of the prison are separated by a long central row of buildings comprising classrooms, the gym and other support service areas. The low security side of the prison also includes eight minimum security Self Care houses and two Mothers with Babies houses. See Table 1.

**Table 1 Prison units**

Unit name	Category of prisoner	Available beds (operational capacity)	Number of wāhine present on day one of our inspection
Self Care Unit (8 houses)	Minimum and low security sentenced prisoners. A small number of low medium prisoners.	32	27
Mothers with Babies Unit (2 houses)	Minimum and low security prisoners.	6	2
Employment Hub	Minimum to low medium security sentenced prisoners. A small number of remand convicted prisoners.	118	111
Training Unit (includes Mirimiri Te Aroha Unit)	Minimum to low medium security sentenced prisoners. A small number of remand convicted prisoners.	79	66
Remand Unit	Unclassified (but managed as high security)	84	78

Programmes and Assessment Unit <sup>†</sup>	High security	90	83
Motivation and Support Unit <sup>†</sup>	High security	32	18
Management Unit	High to maximum security sentenced prisoners.	15	10 (5 maximum security)
Separates Unit	High security	6*	3
Intervention and Support Unit (ISU)	High security	14*	3
Total		476	401

<sup>†</sup> Note, these units are referred to generally in this report as the "high security units".

\* Note, these beds are used on a temporary basis and therefore are not counted as part of overall capacity.

18. The prison's Special Focus Units include Mirimiri Te Aroha, a kaupapa Māori support unit, and the Mothers with Babies Unit, which enables mothers to keep children aged two years and under with them to support bonding and continuity of care.
19. The prison is continuing to develop its relationship with local iwi.
20. In August 2017, the Department of Corrections launched its national Women's Strategy. This set out a new approach and aimed to transform the rehabilitation and support services offered to wāhine and help them shape better lives for themselves and their families and whānau.
21. In August 2019, Corrections launched its Hōkai Rangi Strategy, which set out a new strategic direction aimed at achieving transformative and intergenerational change for prisoners and their whānau.

### Wāhine

22. At the time of our inspection, the prison accommodated 404 wāhine.<sup>4</sup> Of these, 188 (46%) were on remand.
23. The largest ethnic group was Māori (69%), followed by Pākehā/European (20%).
24. Five wāhine were aged 19 and under, and six were 60 and over.
25. Of the sentenced wāhine, 183 (45%) were classified as low medium, low or minimum security, and 28 (7%) as high security. Five (1%) were classified as maximum security.

<sup>4</sup> On 24 June 2020, two wāhine were in the Mason Clinic and one was counted as present in the Receiving Office.



**Staff**

26. At the time of our inspection, the prison had 225 FTE<sup>5</sup> custodial staff, which was 46 FTE below its full establishment staffing level. Twenty-five staff were unable to be rostered.
27. The Prison Director, Steve Parr, was appointed April 2020 (after being seconded in the position for a year). He is supported with the day-to-day prison operations by a Deputy Prison Director and an Assistant Prison Director who oversees industry, rehabilitation and learning.
28. The prison's case management team had its full complement of 23 FTE staff.
29. Only 55% of nursing roles were filled, with seven registered nurse positions vacant.

**Complaints received and deaths in custody investigated by the Inspectorate**

30. For the six-month period ending 29 February 2020, the Inspectorate received the following contact from wāhine at the site:
  - » 77 complaints<sup>6</sup>
  - » 1 information request
  - » 12 statutory reviews (misconducts and temporary release/removal reviews)
31. In addition, there was one death in custody.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Full time equivalent.

<sup>6</sup> The top five complaint categories were: complaints process (27%), property (9%), personal and official visitors (7%), telephone & written communications (7%) and transfers (7%).

<sup>7</sup> There is no further comment in this report about the death. The Inspectorate has investigated this separately.

# Inspection

## Reception, induction and escorts

### 2018 observations

Wāhine were generally kept safe and treated with respect during transport to and from the site, but some found longer journeys uncomfortable. The Receiving Office was short-staffed and staff were working under pressure. Upon reception to prison, wāhine were generally kept safe and treated respectfully. The risks and immediate needs of wāhine were adequately assessed by staff in almost all cases. Wāhine in the high security units did not always receive inductions and were referred to the self-service kiosk or left to rely on other wāhine.

### Escorts and transfers

#### Inspection Standards

- Prisoners travel in safe, decent conditions and are treated with respect, and attention is paid to their individual needs.
- Prisoners understand why and where they are being transferred to.

32. Wāhine are transported to and from the prison for a range of reasons including inter-prison transfers, court appearances, and for medical or reintegration appointments.
33. Shorter transfers, for example between the prison and courts, are undertaken using an eight-seat Prisoner Escort Vehicle (PEV). Longer transfers, for example to and from the other two women's prisons, may be undertaken by PEV (to and from Wellington's Arohata Prison) or commercial flight (to and from Christchurch Women's Prison). Very occasionally, when there are several women to be moved to another women's prison at the same time, a charter flight may be arranged.
34. During our interviews, 17 wāhine spoke about their transfers or escorted movements to or from the prison. Those who had travelled shorter distances, reported no issues. However, eight wāhine raised concerns about how they were treated during their transfer from courts in Hamilton, Rotorua, Gisborne and Tauranga or from Arohata Prison. Several told us they did not receive safety briefings or water before being transported. Five of these wāhine spoke of their difficulties accessing toilet facilities during long journeys.

### 2020 Finding

- Finding 1. Most wāhine reported no issues with their short transfers to or from the prison. Some wāhine, who were transferred longer distances, did not have all their basic needs met.

## Reception and induction

### Inspection Standards

- Prisoners are safe and treated with respect on their reception and during their first days in prison. Prisoners' immediate needs are identified on arrival and staff ensure that individuals' immediate anxieties are addressed before the end of the first day.
- Prisoners are promptly inducted and supported to understand life in prison and know what will happen to them next.
- Prisoners can access legal advice and, where applicable, a consular representative.
- Information relating to prison life is accessible for all prisoners.
- Gender identity disclosures are managed with sensitivity and care.
- On arrival in prison, women's needs are accurately assessed and facilities are provided to contact their families and dependents.
- Children accompanying prisoners are cared for and feel safe.
- The safety of a prisoner's children and other dependents is assessed and action is taken by staff to promote their safety.

35. In the six months to 29 February 2020, the prison managed 635 prisoner receptions and 672 exits.
36. At the time of our inspection, due to COVID-19, new arrivals to the prison were kept separate from other wāhine for 14 days. This response is in line with Corrections' COVID-19 guidance. Staff used full Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) when engaging with these wāhine.
37. Prison staff acknowledged that the Acting Health Centre Manager's experience responding to other viral outbreaks overseas helped the prison prepare for the COVID-19 response.
38. Most wāhine we spoke with told us that staff in the Receiving Office treated them well. Several said they were offered a hot drink and/or a hot meal when they arrived in the Receiving Office.
39. We observed that the Receiving Office was clean, tidy and well-organised. Clear instructions were given to newly arriving wāhine, including guidance on effective hand washing, wearing face masks and coughing etiquette. Women could also access a shower in the Receiving Office after they were searched (although this did not happen under COVID-19 lockdown restrictions). Clean clothing (including underwear) was available if needed and personal clothing items could be washed and safely stored if required. Women were required to hand over their bra on arrival if it contained an underwire, however the prison could not always offer a suitable replacement.
40. During our time in the Receiving Office, we noticed the fingerprint machine was not working and was due to be replaced. Finger or thumb prints are taken to enable wāhine to use electronic kiosks in units. Following our inspection, the prison confirmed that a new fingerprint machine had been installed and was operational.

41. All newly arriving wāhine are entitled to a free telephone call as part of the receiving process. Staff told us initial telephone calls are now made in the units rather than the Receiving Office, because of delays experienced in successfully connecting wāhine with family or whānau.<sup>8</sup> Staff who process the calls told us they can only wait on hold for a limited time to reach the Operations Support Officer otherwise other wāhine are delayed in the receiving process.
42. Of the 47 wāhine we asked about initial telephone calls, IOMS records showed only 24 (51%) received their call. Some wāhine we spoke with said they experienced delays of up to a few days before receiving their initial telephone call. Wāhine also experienced a range of delays (from a few days to a few weeks) getting telephone numbers approved.
43. We noted that across the site wāhine did not always receive their necessary inductions. While the Receiving Office provided arriving wāhine with an induction booklet and offered to play the "First Days" video, the delivery and quality of unit inductions varied across the low and high security units.
44. We confirmed that unit inductions were taking place in Self Care (including in the Mothers with Babies Unit) and the Remand Unit. Most of the wāhine we spoke with in the high security units said they did not receive inductions or received them after being in the unit for several days. Our review of 15 prisoner files in high security units confirmed that most wāhine (12) did not receive an induction.
45. Regional Quality and Performance Advisers<sup>9</sup> were supporting the prison to improve managerial oversight and the timely delivery of unit inductions across the site. From December 2019 to March 2020, the timeliness of unit inductions improved from 56% to 75%.
46. The Prison Director told us that a new 'first-days' unit was soon to be established in the low security area of the prison. This would ensure all new wāhine were properly inducted to prison life and would have their immediate needs promptly addressed. Wāhine arriving in the unit will also be assessed by the Intervention and Support team<sup>10</sup> to ensure women who need immediate mental health support were promptly identified. We were told wāhine will stay in this unit for their first 72 hours before being moved to an appropriate residential unit. The Prison Director said that by placing the 'first-days' unit in low security it will incentivise new wāhine to try to avoid future placement in a high security unit.
47. During our inspection, we spent some time in the Mothers with Babies Unit. One wāhine we spoke with told us she was not given any information about the unit when she arrived at the prison. She was eventually told about the unit by other wāhine. As she had a child who met the criteria to be accommodated with her in prison, she subsequently applied. The application process took approximately two months before her baby could come and live with her in the unit. The Receiving Office now has the Mothers with Babies information booklet for new arrivals.
48. The prison Social Worker confirmed that the prison had no formal procedure in place to advise new wāhine with children under two years that they could apply to have their babies

<sup>8</sup> All initial telephone calls go through an 0800 number which connects to an Operations Support Officer in Wellington (C.02.Res.04 Initial Phone Call process), who carries out several tasks including advising the call recipient that a prisoner wishes to speak to them.

<sup>9</sup> Regional teams which support improvement and best practice.

<sup>10</sup> A specialist health team which provides tailored support to prisoners vulnerable to self-harm.

with them in the Mothers with Babies Unit if they met the eligibility criteria. She confirmed that women generally learn about the unit from other wāhine.

## Placement

### Inspection Standards

- Women are located as close to their family or whānau support as possible, in prisons that will meet their rehabilitation and reintegration needs.
- Trans prisoners are consulted and their preference is considered when deciding whether to place them in a men's or women's prison.
- Trans prisoners are informed of their right to apply to be transferred to a prison that houses prisoners of their preferred gender identity and are supported by staff to apply if they choose.

49. Corrections' data confirms that the majority of the women accommodated in the prison at the time of our inspection came from the surrounding regions, including Northland, Auckland and Waikato.
50. We spoke with two of the three transgender prisoners accommodated in the prison. Our enquiries confirmed that the individual needs of these wāhine were being met and they had been consulted and informed of their rights around prison placement. Both wāhine had support plans in place, which were regularly reviewed by staff.

### 2020 Findings

- Finding 2. Overall, the Receiving Office and reception process were safe, humane and respectful, with the needs of women arriving into prison generally met.
- Finding 3. Difficulties were noted with staff attempting to connect women with family and whānau for their initial telephone call, and providing replacement bras.
- Finding 4. Unit inductions were not taking place consistently across all parts of the prison. We note the prison is improving induction delivery.
- Finding 5. The prison did not provide access to information about the Mothers with Babies Unit to new wāhine with children under two. We note the Receiving Office now has information available.
- Finding 6. Trans prisoners we spoke with were consulted and provided with information about their preferred prison placement and had support plans in place which were regularly reviewed.

## Gender responsive health assessment on entry

### Inspection Standards

- Prisoners' immediate physical and mental health needs, including substance use and prescription medication needs are assessed on reception and responded to promptly and effectively.

- Prisoners receive a gender-specific confidential assessment of their physical and mental health upon arrival at the prison, including urgent health needs (e.g. daily medications, injuries, self-harm and suicide risk assessment).
- As soon as possible after their arrival in prison, prisoners undergo a confidential, gender specific health examination and screening which includes detection of sexually transmitted diseases, mental health needs, post-traumatic stress disorder, reproductive health history, drug or alcohol dependency, ill-treatment and sexual abuse. Referral is made to the appropriate services for treatment or support relating to issues identified during screening.

51. During our inspection, we reviewed the health assessments of several newly arrived wāhine.
52. Nurses undertook COVID-19 screening in the Receiving Office. Wāhine who screened positive to the Ministry of Health COVID-19 risk assessment questions received a COVID-19 test. Staff used full Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to engage with these wāhine. Newly arrived wāhine were then separated in the segregation unit for the required 14 days.
53. Health staff carry out a reception health triage assessment for all newly arrived or returning wāhine, who are prioritised for follow-up health care based on their immediate needs. Of the interactions we observed, the nurse conducted thorough assessments, provided appropriate information about how to access health services in prison, explained the consent process and gained written consent to access community health history. Risk assessments were completed although no consultation with custodial staff was observed, as required.
54. Health staff were able to access the community health information of wāhine via TestSafe.<sup>11</sup>
55. Since April 2020, the mental health screening tool has been completed by health staff during the reception process rather than during the Initial Health Assessment.<sup>12</sup> This practice does not follow health policy, but it does ensure that women with mental health concerns are identified early rather than waiting until they are seen later for their Initial Health Assessment.
56. We observed health staff with limited experience in Receiving Office health processes assess several wāhine returning from court. Health staff appeared to be unclear about which reception health triage process to use.
57. A review of reception health triages for the six-month period to 30 May 2020 indicated that newly arrived wāhine were prioritised for Initial Health Assessment appointments appropriately.
58. At the time of our inspection, Initial and Update Health Assessments, which are completed soon after a wāhine arrives in prison, were not being completed within required timeframes. This was mainly due to health staff shortages and limited custodial staff available to take wāhine to the health clinic. COVID-19 restrictions added additional barriers to providing health assessments. Catch up clinics were being booked for wāhine who had not been seen.

<sup>11</sup> A clinical information sharing service provided by the northern region District Health Boards.

<sup>12</sup> The Initial Health Assessment is a comprehensive health assessment designed to explore the patient's health history, presenting conditions, ongoing health needs and establish the need for an assessment or referral to another provider, such as a doctor.

59. During an Initial Health Assessment, information about a woman's cervical and breast screening history is obtained, and checks are made to ensure they are enrolled with the National Screening Programme. Other information gathered covers mental health, drug and alcohol use, disability and mobility, sexual health and communicable disease, immunisation, general physical history and family history.
60. We spoke with 13 wāhine from the high security units and seven from the Employment Hub, who confirmed they were screened by health staff when they arrived at the prison. They raised no issues about their treatment, and all told us they had been informed about the COVID-19 pandemic and the additional protocols in place.
61. We spoke with five of the 10 pregnant wāhine on site at the time of our inspection. They told us health staff explained the support services available to them and they were provided with relevant guidance and information. Wāhine who required a pregnancy test confirmed they were able to access this from health staff.

### 2020 Findings

- Finding 7. Health staff generally explained consents, undertook effective assessments and appropriately triaged health appointments in the Receiving Office. Some health staff require more training in Receiving Office processes.
- Finding 8. Health staff completed required screening for COVID-19 for wāhine being received into prison.
- Finding 9. Health staff had early access to community clinical information via TestSafe, which supported continuity of care.
- Finding 10. Some gender specific screening was a routine part of the Initial Health Assessment.



## Duty of care

### 2018 observations

Most wāhine we spoke with across the prison told us they felt safe in their respective units. Wāhine in the low-medium security units were generally kept safe. Violence was rare, although standovers occurred occasionally related to nicotine lozenges. In the high security units, relationship breakups were the main source of tension and fighting. There was also evidence of fights and assaults sometimes occurring for other reasons, though not routinely.

No concerns were raised about the use of AVL for court hearings or legal consultations.

### Access to legal advisers and attendance at court hearings

#### Inspection Standards

- Prisoners have reasonable access to consult with a legal advisor.
- An audio-visual link can be used for eligible court cases and for other legal consultations.<sup>13</sup>

62. The prison has six audio-visual link (AVL) booths (*image 1*) and four holding cells within the audio-visual facility. Overall, we found the AVL facilities to be clean and free of graffiti.
63. One of the AVL booths had a removable seat, so a wheelchair user or multiple people could attend.
64. Staff told us there were 8-12 scheduled court hearings and 1-2 unscheduled hearings via AVL per day. There were 10-15 other AVL meetings daily, such as for whānau hui. Parole Board hearings are also increasingly undertaken via AVL.
65. Staff told us the number of booths was inadequate to meet the demand of courts across New Zealand, especially when bookings did not occur on time.
66. Corrections officers are rostered as dedicated staff to move wāhine to and from residential units and the AVL facility. Staff told us this arrangement was working well and fewer wāhine were missing their court appearances.
67. Wāhine we spoke with did not report any significant issues gaining access to their lawyer by telephone. However, some wāhine said that custodial staff were present in the room during telephone calls to lawyers, although staff denied this.

### 2020 Findings

Finding 11. The prison makes good use of the audio-visual link facility and has established dedicated staff to move wāhine to and from the facility. However, the number of booths available has not increased.

<sup>13</sup> Note this is an indicator – not a standard.



Finding 12. Wāhine did not generally report any issues with accessing their lawyer by telephone.

## Bullying and violence reduction

### Inspection Standards

- Prisoners feel safe from bullying, abuse and violence.

68. Overall, most wāhine we spoke with across the prison told us they felt safe in their respective units. A review of Corrections' data confirmed a decreasing number of incidents of abuse, threats and assaults for the six-month period to 29 February 2020. Twenty incidents were recorded respectively for January and February 2020 compared with 63 in October and 47 in November 2019. Incidents most commonly occurred in the Management Unit, one high security unit or the Remand Unit.
69. Staff across the site told us bullying behaviour between wāhine was uncommon. However, they said any deterioration in relationships between women in the units was closely monitored as it could contribute to unit tension.
70. Some wāhine in one high security unit and the Remand Unit said standovers occurred from time to time. Standovers were less likely to occur in the low security units. Staff told us standovers occurred most commonly for nicotine replacement lozenges, which are a highly sought-after commodity in prison, or for personal clothing items in the Remand Unit.<sup>14</sup> At the time of our inspection, the SERT<sup>15</sup> team was undertaking regular cell searches in the Remand Unit due to standovers.
71. Corrections' data for the six-month period to 29 February 2020 showed 102 wāhine (25%) identified as having gang affiliations. The gangs most commonly recorded were Mongrel Mob (44) and Black Power (27). We noted that 36% of wāhine identified as gang affiliated were accommodated in the mainstream high security unit.
72. To ensure the safety of wāhine and staff in one high security unit, staff introduced a staggered unlock regime meaning only 15 wāhine were out of their cells at a time throughout the day. Staff told us this regime change, along with the recent replacement of managers to oversee the day to day operations of the unit, had helped reduce tension in the unit and the number of incidents. We also observed a member of the SERT team on his daily visit to the high security unit to assess tension levels.
73. Prison Tension Assessment Tool (PTAT)<sup>16</sup> data showed that the high security unit and the Management Unit had higher levels of tension than other units.
74. Outside this high security unit, we found little evidence of gang-related tension or violence. Wāhine we spoke with in the Remand Unit, the other high security unit and Self Care did not share concerns for their safety, nor did they report gang tension or influence. The

<sup>14</sup> Remand prisoners may wear their own clothing if they choose.

<sup>15</sup> Site Emergency Response Team.

<sup>16</sup> The PTAT records tension in each unit. It is used to identify trends and manage risks.

women we spoke with in these units told us they felt they could bring concerns to the attention of staff.

### 2020 Findings

Finding 13. Most wāhine reported feeling safe from bullying and violence. Standovers occurred in the Remand and high security units for lozenges or personal clothing items.

Finding 14. Staff closely monitor and respond to any tension arising from deteriorating relationships between women.

## Prisoner files

### Inspection Standards

- A prisoner file management system is in place and used to record all information about that prisoner and confidentiality is maintained.

75. During our inspection we reviewed a random sample of prisoner files across the site. The information contained in the files was inconsistent, with key information missing in many files, including unit induction documentation.<sup>17</sup> Staff told us remand prisoner files were kept in the Receiving Office and not in the residential units, as a result there were often documents stored in temporary files in the units. In some cases, wāhine had temporary files created as well as a substantive prisoner file.
76. In the Training Unit we observed documentation in a tray waiting to be filed in the prison file. Staff in the Receiving Office said unit staff were often too busy to collect documentation and complete the necessary filing.
77. We observed that files in the Mothers with Babies Unit were held securely in the Principal Corrections Officer's office. These files contained key documentation including completed forms and specific information for the unit.

### 2020 Findings

Finding 15. Documentation stored in prisoner files was inconsistent and key documentation was often missing.

Finding 16. Prisoner files in the Mothers with Babies Unit were complete and held securely.

<sup>17</sup> Information in files includes Parole Board reports, offender management information progress reports, file notes etc.

## Accommodation

### Inspection Standards

- The placement of prisoners in shared cells is done after careful consideration of their suitability for associating with one another.

78. At the time of our inspection, most residential units had cells which were equipped for double occupancy. Before placing wāhine in a shared cell, a Shared Accommodation Cell Risk Assessment (SACRA) must be carried out to determine whether there are any safety risks to the wāhine.<sup>18</sup> Staff in the high security units advised us they speak to both wāhine separately and screen them for suitability before any cell sharing takes place.
79. Our review of the SACRA data for the period 1 September 2019 to 29 February 2020 showed 100% compliance, which meant every cell movement was informed by a completed SACRA. During this period, 2,322 SACRAs were completed and 70% of wāhine were double-bunked.
80. Wāhine we spoke with who shared a cell did not raise any concerns. Several wāhine (including one sharing a cell with a close relative) said sharing a cell helped them cope with prison life because they received support from the other woman.

### 2020 Finding

Finding 17. Prison staff consistently assess wāhine for eligibility and suitability prior to being considered for a shared cell. Wāhine who shared a cell did not raise concerns and some preferred to share.

## Complaints

### Inspection Standards

- Complaints procedures are effective, timely and well understood.
- Staff and prisoners are encouraged to resolve complaints at the lowest level in the first instance; when this is not possible prisoners understand how to make a complaint, and are able to do so easily.
- Prisoners feel safe from repercussions when using complaints procedures and can appeal decisions easily.
- Where a prisoner raises a concern about their safety, these matters are prioritised.

<sup>18</sup> The risk assessment considers a prisoner's age, offending history, gang affiliation, prison experience, size and strength, mental health, risks of violence and/or self-harm, special needs, security classification, segregation status, sentence status, and other factors relevant to safety and good order.

81. In the prison network, issues should be resolved at the lowest level if possible. Wāhine can use the PC.01 system to make a complaint.
82. In the six months to 29 February 2020, 450 PC.01 complaints were recorded at the site. Most complaints were categorised as 'other'<sup>19</sup> (108), prisoner property (61), health services (50) and access to telephones/other communications (47). Most complaints (304) were received from wāhine in the high security and Remand units. During this time, the Office of the Inspectorate received 77 complaints from wāhine at the site. Of these, six women made two complaints, five made three complaints and four made four, five, seven or eight complaints respectively.
83. Wāhine most commonly complained to the Inspectorate about the complaints process (21 complaints). The other common complaint types were about property (9), personal or official visitors (7), access to telephones/monitoring (6) and staff conduct and attitude (6).
84. Complaints about the complaints process were mostly about dissatisfaction with the staff response to their PC.01 complaint (12), the complaint had not been responded to within required timeframes (4), no receipt for the complaint had been issued (4), and one complaint was about access to a PC.01 form.
85. Most wāhine we spoke with confirmed they were aware of the complaints process and could access PC.01 forms. However, many said they did not always receive a receipt from staff confirming their complaint had been registered. In the six months to 29 February 2020, 315 wāhine had an interview on time to discuss their complaint and 134 (30%) did not.
86. Several wāhine from different units said they had to be persistent with staff and follow up many times to receive a response to their complaint. A few wāhine told us they thought there were insufficient staff available to help them resolve their issues, which is why they resort to making formal complaints.
87. Wāhine we spoke with were aware of the options available to escalate their complaint if it had not been resolved to their satisfaction through the PC.01 process. We saw information visible in units about how to submit a complaint to the Inspectorate and the Office of the Ombudsman.

### 2020 Finding

Finding 18. The complaints procedure, while well understood by the wāhine, was not always timely, effective or well administered by staff.

<sup>19</sup> When the Inspectorate looked further into complaints classified as 'other', we found most of them should have been recorded in a different category.

## Wāhine Māori

### Inspection Standards

- Māori women can access and practise their Māori culture and customs.
- Māori women have access to kaupapa Māori informed and tikanga-based rehabilitation and reintegration programmes that are specifically designed to meet their needs.
- Māori women are supported by staff to access stable whānau support.

88. At the time of our inspection, 69% of the wāhine in prison identified as Māori. Opportunities to practise Māori culture and customs were limited.
89. Mirimiri Te Aroha Unit, which was established in 2016, is located in the low security area of the prison (*image 2*). The wāhine in the unit usually complete Kowhiritanga, a medium intensity<sup>20</sup> rehabilitation programme delivered by Corrections' facilitators.
90. We were informed that Mirimiri Te Aroha was supported by the Pou Tūhono<sup>21</sup> and Area Advisor Māori and two wāhine (tuakana) on a part-time basis, who together, guided the tikanga and the kawa of the whare (unit). The tuakana taught the wāhine (teina) karakia and kapa haka. Some of the wāhine told us that when those staff and the tuakana were not in the unit, it felt like any other low security unit.<sup>22</sup>
91. The tuakana said they worried about who might continue their work when they were released from prison or could no longer offer the unit their time. They told us the unit had few resources, including full-time cultural and therapeutic staff support, and the wāhine could not access Te Reo or raranga (weaving) classes or Rongoā Māori (holistic well-being) workshops.
92. At the time of our inspection, the unit did not have any volunteer support to undertake cultural-based activities, which had been the case in previous years.
93. Staff told us they believed there was inequality of resources and cultural support staff between Te Tirohanga units (in five male prisons) and Mirimiri Te Aroha Unit. Mirimiri Te Aroha was not formally established under Te Tirohanga model, and therefore does not receive that programme's resources. Te Tirohanga units are supported by a full-time contracted Māori services provider which delivers the medium intensity Mauri Tu Pae rehabilitation programme and cultural and reintegration support. Mirimiri Te Aroha does not have the same full-time support.
94. Wāhine told us there was limited buy-in from custodial staff for the kaupapa of the unit, which was necessary to enable access to cultural activities and embed the values of Corrections' Hōkai Rangi Strategy. The Pou Tūhono said the unit needed more custodial

<sup>20</sup> Kowhiritanga is delivered over a 15-week period and offers 140 hours of treatment. It is delivered in a manner responsive to the cultural needs of the participants.

<sup>21</sup> A role within women's prisons to support wāhine and help them maintain connections or reconnect with their whānau, hapū and iwi in the community to guide their future reintegration.

<sup>22</sup> This belief appeared to be compounded by around 50% of the prisoners in the unit being made up of non-Māori or prisoners who were not in the unit for the purpose of engaging with the unit's kaupapa.

- staff who understand tikanga Māori and Te Ao Maori and were enthusiastic about supporting the purpose and kaupapa of the unit.
95. We reviewed minutes from a prison management meeting dated June 2020 that confirmed managers were aware more support from custodial staff was required at Mirimiri Te Aroha. Managers agreed that a wider range of custodial staff would be introduced to the unit by the Pou Tūhono and Area Advisor Māori, and provided with opportunities to learn how they can best support the unit's kaupapa and tikanga.
96. At the time of our inspection, we were advised a workshop for staff was due to take place in July 2020.

### 2020 Findings

Finding 19. Wāhine receive limited opportunities to practise their culture and customs.

Finding 20. Mirimiri Te Aroha Unit requires more resources, staff and volunteers who are equipped to support the wāhine and kaupapa of the unit.

### Foreign national wāhine

#### Inspection Standards

- There are prison staff with the skills to communicate with all prisoners on site. Where required, interpreters are provided.
- Foreign national women receive practical help to keep in touch with family overseas.

97. Foreign national wāhine can expect to be supported in prison to access their consular representative, if required, and a translation service if they need support to understand key information such as during inductions. Foreign national wāhine should also have their health, culture, religion, and dietary requirements met.
98. At the time of our inspection, the prison accommodated 17 foreign national wāhine; the majority were subject to immigration deportation orders following their release from custody.
99. Staff told us that when they needed to communicate with wāhine who do not sufficiently understand or speak English, they find it more efficient to use an internet translation resource or to call upon a staff member who can speak the relevant language.
100. One wāhine said she could not speak English when she arrived in prison and staff communicated with her using Google Translate. Corrections has access to the official translation service<sup>23</sup> available nationally. Foreign national wāhine told us it would be beneficial for staff who spoke their language to be utilised more in the earlier stages of their arrival in prison to help them adjust to prison life.

<sup>23</sup> Ezispeak is New Zealand's telephone interpreting service for the public and private sector.



101. Several wāhine experienced difficulties contacting their families overseas by telephone. Wāhine said they often had limited or no access to money to buy telephone cards and international calls were expensive.
102. Wāhine also told us whānau and family members overseas who did not speak English also sometimes struggled to understand the prison rules and guidance about transferring funds to trust accounts and property, causing delays. Such delays and confusion can cause distress for wāhine and their families.
103. Managing time differences in their home countries and the time out of cell or their employment hours also prevented wāhine connecting with family overseas. Two wāhine we spoke with said that during the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions they would have liked to be able to connect with their families via video calls, as New Zealand wāhine did.
104. Several wāhine told us they were grateful to receive contact and support from their relevant consulate or local volunteers when they were in prison, as they had no or little other support in New Zealand.
105. One wāhine told us the embassy had contacted her family to inform them of her imprisonment. Two others said they were unable to contact their families to inform them they were in prison because it required an international telephone call. Corrections Regulations provides for prisoners to have a free telephone call within New Zealand.
106. One wāhine told us that if foreign nationals do not have New Zealand-based support, working was essential to assist them to buy canteen items such as food, toiletries and telephone cards.

### 2020 Finding

Finding 21. Some foreign national wāhine experienced delays accessing the funds required to telephone their families overseas. Some were able to access support from their consulate or local volunteers.

## Property

### Inspection Standards

- Prisoner's property held in storage is secure, and prisoners can access it on reasonable request.
- Prisoner funds are managed securely and are accounted for.

107. When wāhine arrive at the prison their personal clothing and other property is sorted and stored in the prison's Property Office. Wāhine can also ask family and whānau to send them a limited number of personal items (such as underwear or other clothing, and telephone cards), which is sorted and registered by Property Office staff on individual prisoner property lists.

108. Wāhine can request access to a limited number of personal items at a time once their property is registered.<sup>24</sup>
109. Property Office staff told us they process and manage significant volumes of property and mail daily and they need more staff.<sup>25</sup> The large volumes of property and the many manual administrative tasks often led to delays in property being issued. Staff told us they had been working overtime to keep up with demand.
110. While we were in the Property Office, we observed large volumes of property arriving from Police, family and whānau and other women's prisons. Many wāhine received multiple bags of property at a time, with each item needing to be processed. Staff said little was done to limit the amount of personal property that was received or stored, particularly when it arrived from other prisons.
111. Property Office staff told us property was regularly waiting to be collected by unit staff, who usually set aside only one day per week to collect it. Sometimes those days are missed when units are short staffed or there are competing priorities. The required property documentation was often delayed, or incomplete and the paperwork had to be returned to the unit, causing further delays.
112. We spoke with 30 wāhine regarding property. The majority reported frustration with the time it took to receive personal property and also to get items they no longer had removed from their property list.
113. All incoming electrical items are tested by a contracted electrician who visits the site on request. No issues were raised about access to electrical items during our inspection.

**2020 Finding**

Finding 22. Staff were unable to timely process the significant volume of property received.

<sup>24</sup> Prisoner property must be authorised in line with 'authorised property' rules under section 45A of the Corrections Act 2004. All property must be processed and recorded as soon as practicable after being received and the property must be either issued to the prisoner, stored, removed, retained as evidence, or disposed of reasonably promptly. There are some site variations to practice.

<sup>25</sup> We were informed four staff were employed in the Property Office. A fifth staff member had recently been seconded to a role elsewhere in previous months and had not been replaced. With rostering of days off, three staff are in the office at any one time.

## Health

### 2018 observations

The Health Service was under pressure, with high demand for services. The site was short of nursing staff and used agency staff. Nurses had a range of competency levels. Some did not appear to have the communication, clinical assessment and decision-making skills necessary for their roles. The system for making medical officer's appointments was not well managed and wāhine complained of long waiting times to see a medical officer.

Staff in the Intervention and Support Unit were not trained to manage wāhine with significant and complex mental health challenges. They did not feel they had sufficient support to make decisions about these wāhine and address their needs. Wāhine in the unit had reasonable access to time out of cell and activities to keep them engaged and support their recovery.

### Inspection Standards

- Prisoners have timely access to community-equivalent health and dental services, and receive treatment which is sensitive to their diverse needs from competent staff in an environment that promotes dignity and maintains privacy.
- Prisoners are supported and encouraged to optimise their health and well-being.
- Prisons have a health-care service which ensures professional care of the physical and mental health of prisoners.
- Health files are accurate, up-to-date and confidential, and accompany the prisoner when they are transferred.
- Prisoners have access to specialised external secondary and tertiary health care services when required.
- On reception, prisoners are made aware of the prison health services available and how to access them.
- Prisoners have a right to health confidentiality and do not have to provide information, undergo health interventions or screening.
- Gender-specific health care services, at least equivalent to those available in the community, shall be provided to prisoners.
- Prisoners receive the option of having a chaperone present if they receive health treatment from a nurse or doctor of a different gender.
- Prisoners receive gender appropriate information about health promotion and the control of communicable diseases.
- Preventative health screening, equivalent to that provided in the community, is available to prisoners of any gender.
- Prisoners have gender appropriate and reasonable access to facilities and sanitary items for their specific hygiene needs, including during escort.

**Provision of health care**

114. Prisons have a primary health care service that is required by Section 75 of the Corrections Act 2004 to provide health care that is "reasonably necessary". The standard of care must be "reasonably equivalent to the standard of health care available to the public".
115. The prison Health Service is nurse-led and supported by contracted providers such as medical officers, a dentist, a physiotherapist and other services such as maternity, podiatry, optometry and mental health services.
116. At the time of our inspection, the health needs of wāhine were generally well met with good access to tertiary and secondary health providers, although some services were unavailable due to COVID-19 lockdown restrictions. For the period 1 January 2020 to 31 May 2020, there were 12,577 nurse, 1,449 medical officer and 627 dentist interactions.
117. A high number of hospital escorts take place at the prison. Our review of data identified, on average, 50 planned hospital escorts and nine emergency escorts per month. From 1 September 2019 to 29 February 2020, 260 hospital escorts took place, equating to almost 5,500 hours of staff time. Hospital escorts, particularly emergency escorts, place considerable strain on the availability of custodial staff on site. We heard from staff that, at times, hospital appointments had to be rescheduled due to the unavailability of custodial staff.
118. During our inspection, health staff were observed completing assessments to a good standard, although they often appeared rushed and not actively listening to the wāhine. As highlighted earlier in our report, the health team was understaffed at the time of our inspection.
119. Documentation we reviewed showed a significant improvement in the quality of nurse assessments compared to what we observed in 2018, with nurses using clinical frameworks, tools and pathways to support their assessments and decision making. Documentation also included health education and advice provided to wāhine. During our interviews, wāhine told us they found health staff friendly and compassionate.
120. In most units, wāhine access the Health Service by completing a health request form and placing it in a locked box, which is cleared daily by health staff. We found most forms were responded to within three days and appointments were scheduled when required. Wāhine appeared to have no issues accessing health request forms in their units.
121. Wāhine we spoke with during our inspection expressed their frustration about the length of time taken to be seen by health staff. Several commented they often put in multiple health request forms because they know it will take a long time to be seen. Data we reviewed confirmed on average 550 health request forms were received per month, a rate double that of other Northern region prisons.
122. This concern about access to health services was reflected in the sample of health complaints we reviewed. Half of all PC.01s and complaints received by the Inspectorate referred to difficulties accessing health care and the time taken to get an appointment with a nurse, medical officer or dentist, or access medication they felt they needed. The complaints were all closed within the required timeframe and all were confirmed as being resolved appropriately or the complainant accepted the outcome.

123. We observed that appointments for nurses' clinics could be rebooked multiple times. Staff told us this was due to a shortage of both nursing and custodial staff. In addition, when incidents occurred in the prison, this removed essential staff away from the clinics.
124. Medical officers provide contracted services for 16 hours per week. Medical officers we spoke with were frustrated by ongoing delays moving wāhine from their units to the clinics on time. Often these delays resulted in appointments having to be rebooked or consultation times shortened. Medical officer hours had been increased to clear the backlog created during the COVID-19 lockdown period. This increase was a short-term solution that ended on 30 June 2020.
125. Waiting lists for medical officer appointments are managed by nursing staff who told us appointments were allocated according to need. At the time of our inspection, nurses did not always appear to prioritise appointments consistently for wāhine with more serious health issues. Due to the high level of health needs among the wāhine, staff told us more medical officer hours were needed to ensure all patient needs could be met.
126. A nurse practitioner<sup>26</sup> had recently been appointed and was due to start in July 2020. This is a new role for the prison and staff anticipated it would have a positive impact and reduce some of the pressure on the medical officer.
127. A dentist is contracted to provide eight hours of dental services per week. At the time of our inspection, there was a three-month waiting list for non-urgent dental appointments, which is slightly less than in 2018. The dentist expressed concern that they were unable to provide preventative treatment which would reduce the number of extractions needed. Wāhine with acute dental needs, such as those with an infection and pain, were prioritised for appointments.
128. Most clinic appointments we observed were conducted in consultation rooms with doors closed. Where this was assessed as unsafe, custodial officers were positioned discreetly outside the room to maintain patient confidentiality.
129. We noted that nurses were up to date with their mandatory training requirements. One nurse was trained to take smear tests and three nurses were trained as independent vaccinators.
130. The health centre, consultation rooms and other clinical areas were clean, tidy and well equipped. Health promotion material was on display and readily available to wāhine. The medication room was tidy, although we found unused medications for destruction stored in a rubbish bag because the secure bin was full.
131. The main health centre in the low security side of the prison<sup>27</sup> has a medication room, three consultation rooms, two treatment bays and a converted hospital-style day room.<sup>28</sup> Staff told us there was a constant shortage of consultation space.

<sup>26</sup> Nurse practitioners are highly skilled autonomous health practitioners who have advanced education and clinical training. They have the legal authority to practice beyond the level of a registered nurse and can prescribe medicines within their area of competence with the same authority as a medical practitioner.

<sup>27</sup> While all wāhine can be seen in the low security health unit, this unit is predominantly used for wāhine accommodated in the low security/self care units.

<sup>28</sup> Sofas had been put in this day room so it could be used by counsellors.

132. The small satellite health centre in the high security side of the prison<sup>29</sup> has a medication room and a treatment room that is used for treatment and consultation appointments. This clinic was also clean and tidy, but there was less health promotion material visible.

### 2020 Findings

- Finding 23. Health staff demonstrate professionalism and compassion during their interactions with wāhine.
- Finding 24. Some hospital appointments had to be rescheduled due to the unavailability of custodial staff.
- Finding 25. Wāhine access to necessary health services was considerably affected by health and custodial staff shortages and a limited number of consultation rooms.
- Finding 26. The health centres were both clean, tidy and well equipped with medical equipment and health promotion material was available.
- Finding 27. Wāhine were not always prioritised for health appointments according to need.
- Finding 28. Wāhine had to wait three months to access non-urgent dental appointments.
- Finding 29. Health staff generally undertake quality assessments and complete documentation well.
- Finding 30. Patient privacy and confidentiality is maintained.
- Finding 31. Health complaints were responded to in a timely and appropriate way.

### Substance abuse

#### Inspection Standards

- Prisoners dependent on drugs and/or alcohol receive prompt clinical treatment which is effective, meets individual and gender-specific needs and offers the same services as those available in the community.

133. Women who are receiving opioid substance treatment in the community continue to receive this treatment on arrival into custody. A review of newly arrived wāhine on opioid substance treatment showed good continuity of care with them receiving their medication. There was also evidence that the women continued to receive regular support via telephone calls and written communication with the community alcohol and drug service.
134. Alcohol and other drug treatment programmes and support were available to wāhine, delivered by contracted service providers and volunteers.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup> The high side health unit was used to see patients who resided in high security and Remand units.

<sup>30</sup> Refer to the Rehabilitation section.



**2020 Finding**

Finding 32. Treatment programmes and support are available to wāhine with addiction issues.

**Mental health care****Inspection Standards**

- Prisoners with mental health needs are identified promptly and supported by community-equivalent services to optimise their well-being during their time in prison and on release.
- Gender-specific mental health needs are recognised, treated and supported by health staff and specialist services at the prison, and they have appropriate access equivalent to that available in the community.
- The gender-specific needs of all prisoners are recognised to prevent self-harm and suicide and therapeutic responses are implemented and are culturally appropriate.
- Staff are able to identify and support women at times when women may feel particularly distressed.
- Prisoners who report abuse while in prison are protected and provided with support and access to gender-specific counselling.

135. Wāhine who have mental health needs are often vulnerable to self-harm or need extra support, and staff devote significant time and resources to care for these women.
136. The prison is one of three nationally which has an Intervention and Support team. This includes a clinical manager, two clinical psychologists, a mental health clinical nurse specialist, an occupational therapist, a social worker and a cultural support worker. The team provides therapeutic support to wāhine who are vulnerable to self-harm, working closely with staff and other mental health services.
137. We spoke with the trauma counsellor who confirmed that all referrals to primary mental health services are triaged and allocated between four primary mental health providers (herself, an ACC sensitive claims counsellor, Time to Live Package of Care provider and Emerge Aotearoa's improving mental health clinician). At the time of our inspection, there were two trauma counsellor vacancies and a large waitlist, so wāhine often had to wait several weeks before their first appointment.
138. All trauma counselling and Intervention and Support staff we interviewed expressed concern at the limited number of interview rooms and the booking system which impacted on the number of sessions they were able to provide. Sessions were often held in the units where it was difficult to ensure privacy and some wāhine were uncomfortable talking openly.
139. There was limited engagement between the Intervention and Support team and health staff, who did not attend the multidisciplinary meetings held each morning to discuss the status and management approach for each wāhine in the ISU. We were told this was due to

the unavailability of health staff. All wāhine in the ISU receive a daily mental health review by health staff.

140. Clinical staff from the Regional Forensic Service visit the prison regularly and work closely with the Intervention and Support team. Wāhine who are waiting to access forensic inpatient treatment are reviewed weekly and other caseload patients are reviewed as required.
141. At the time of our inspection, eight wāhine were in the ISU. One was awaiting admission to a Forensic Service inpatient facility.<sup>31</sup>
142. Custodial staff working in the ISU had received the Mental Health 101 training and some informal training, and expressed a need for more training to help manage acutely unwell wāhine.
143. ISU staff showed professionalism and compassion when engaging with wāhine. They were observed using excellent communication and de-escalation skills with a distressed wāhine who was refusing to be moved to the ISU when assessed as at risk of self-harm.

### 2020 Findings

- Finding 33. Intervention and Support Unit staff demonstrated professionalism and skill when engaging with wāhine who were mentally unwell or in crisis.
- Finding 34. Insufficient numbers of health staff meant their ability to collaborate with the Intervention and Support team and be involved in multidisciplinary team meetings was limited.
- Finding 35. There was an inadequate number of consultation rooms available to mental health service providers.
- Finding 36. Custodial staff felt they needed more training to better support acutely unwell wāhine in their care.

### Wāhine with disabilities

#### Inspection Standards

- Prisoners with physical, mental or other disabilities have full and effective access to prison life on an equitable basis.
- Prisoners with a disability or age-related needs are placed in a cell that is suitable and appropriate for their health-related needs.<sup>32</sup>

144. Newly arrived wāhine are asked about any disabilities during both the Reception and Initial Health Assessments.
145. We spoke with one woman with mobility issues. She shared her frustration that her mobility equipment was broken and needed to be repaired. We alerted the Health Centre

<sup>31</sup> We later learned this woman waited five weeks before a bed became available and she was transferred.

<sup>32</sup> Note this is an indicator – not Inspection Standard.

Manager who was aware that repairs were required and undertook to have the equipment repaired without delay. We confirmed these repairs were completed after our visit.

146. Two women on site were hearing impaired. While their custodial records noted their disability, one of these wāhine did not have an alert on her health file. This meant that this information was not immediately available to health staff. Communication occurred between staff and the wāhine through written notes, lip reading and some sign language. Records showed that sign language interpreters were not consistently used when health records indicated that this was necessary.
147. The prison had cells in most units that could suitably cater for wāhine with disabilities.

### 2020 Finding

Finding 37. The needs of some wāhine with disabilities were not always met.

## Environment

### 2018 observations

We found the prison to be clean, free of graffiti and in a good state of repair. Communal areas and cells were generally in good condition and clean. Access to bedding and towels in the high security side of the prison was an issue. Access to adequate clothing was an issue in both high and low-medium units. While food was generally adequate, some wāhine found it unhealthy (due to too much bread). Unlock regimes meant that evening meals were provided before 5pm, rather than at usual mealtimes.

### Inspection Standards

- Prisoners live in a clean and suitable environment which is in a good state of repair and fit for purpose.
- Prisoners have sufficient bedding that is laundered regularly.
- Prisoners are encouraged to keep themselves clean and are provided with the appropriate toiletries.
- Prisoners have adequate access to a variety of clean clothing, including underwear and footwear, which is seasonally appropriate and of the right size and quality.
- Prisoners have a varied, healthy and balanced diet which meets their individual needs.
- Upon request, the prison provides meals and food in line with religious, cultural and other special dietary requirements.
- Prisoners' food and meals are stored, prepared and served in line with hygiene regulations.
- Clean drinking water shall be available to every prisoner.
- Mealtimes are reasonable and generally match those in the community, where possible.

### Residential units

148. During our inspection, we found the prison to be clean, free of graffiti and in a good state of repair. The outdoor areas were well-maintained and some buildings had brightly painted murals. The prison design and fencing on the high security side of the prison (including the Management Unit) limited opportunities for wāhine to access activities, outdoor recreation and programmes.
149. We found most residential units warm and well-lit, with good levels of natural light (*images 3,4,5,6*). Communal areas and cells were generally in good condition and clean. In one high security unit the cells were poorly ventilated and some cell vents were blocked with dust. The temperature in the one high security unit wing was cool and wāhine were observed wearing several layers of clothing to keep warm. Staff told us the unit had always been too

cold in winter and too hot in summer and adjustments to the thermostat did not appear to work permanently.

150. In 2009, a maximum security classification was introduced for women prisoners with extremely disruptive behaviour (ie assaults against staff and other prisoners etc).
151. There is no purpose-built maximum security unit for women across the prison network. This site is the only women's prison to hold female maximum security prisoners. Corrections' documentation shows it was generally anticipated that up to three wāhine may be classified as maximum security at any one time at the site "*which has the appropriate design and staffing levels to manage this group of women*".<sup>33</sup> The documentation said maximum security wāhine would be accommodated alongside segregated prisoners and those subject to cell confinement.
152. Since 2009, the risks associated with managing maximum security women in the Management Unit was highlighted in the site's Risk Action Plan (dated 14 July 2020) which acknowledged that the security standard was not comparable to Auckland Prison's purpose-built maximum security facility for men.
153. The Office of the Ombudsman's 2014 COTA report into the prison's At Risk Unit and Management Unit emphasised the need for maximum security wāhine to access the same opportunities as other prisoners, including the opportunity to associate with others.
154. Prior to the COVID-19 lockdown, the maximum security wāhine had been housed in Separates Unit cells where they could access a small exercise yard adjacent to their cell. These cells were then required for wāhine who needed to be isolated during the COVID-19 lockdown. At the time of our inspection, there were no plans to relocate the maximum security wāhine back into the Separates Unit.
155. Several wāhine in the low security units told us they had little privacy in their cells and light came into their cells at night preventing restful sleep. Many cells had curtains, although some were ripped and in poor condition. In some instances, wāhine had used blankets as makeshift curtains. Staff told us they were waiting for an order of new curtains to arrive. In one high security unit, the cells did not have curtains and wāhine showered or used the toilet with the lights off in the evening, otherwise staff walking outside could see them. Some wāhine with mental health concerns expressed their fear of showering in the dark, which staff also acknowledged.
156. In the high security units, there were insufficient chairs in the communal areas, and some wāhine did not have a chair in their cell. Staff were aware of the shortage in one unit. Staff in the other unit told us some chairs had been removed from cells and communal areas because they had been thrown by wāhine, causing damage to prison property.
157. In the low security units, wāhine generally had access to a television in their cell or in a communal area. Many wāhine in one high security unit did not. Staff told us those wāhine had broken their televisions, which were offsite for repair. At the time of our inspection, the unit was short of 18 televisions. Across the prison, several televisions in communal areas were not working.
158. Some units lacked kitchen appliances and equipment such as a microwave, fridge, toaster and toasted sandwich maker because they had been damaged by wāhine. Staff in some units said they were awaiting replacements.

<sup>33</sup> Corrections Internal Memorandum, 19 October 2009.

159. At the time of our inspection, only one of the two kiosks<sup>34</sup> in the Employment Hub was working. Due to the high number of wāhine in this area (118), canteen forms had to be printed out for wāhine to complete. The kiosks are situated outside the units, exposed to all weather conditions and one kiosk was covered in bird faeces (*image 7*).
160. The Self Care and Mothers with Babies units were clean and well maintained. The Self Care unit had recently received new tables and chairs.
161. During our inspection, we viewed a random selection of bedding. The women in Self Care and the Mothers with Babies units had good mattresses and access to clean bedding, which appeared to be the exception on the site. In the Management and Remand units, mattresses were thin and did not appear to provide support. Some wāhine told us they use their duvet to make the mattress padded and comfortable. Several mattresses did not have a plastic protector, which is unhygienic (*image 8*) and is required as a fire retardant. Staff told us some wāhine remove the mattress protector as it makes them sweat.
162. The quality of pillows varied across the prison and we observed several wāhine using clothing or a blanket to add more support. Several beds we checked in one high security unit had no bedding or pillows. Staff in this unit told us several wāhine were misusing the bedding (to make "fishing lines" to move items between cells during lockup) and they had difficulty supplying more. Wāhine in the low security units told us they received good bedding and towels from wāhine who were due to be released from prison or if they knew wāhine working in the laundry who would help.
163. Bunk beds have been installed in the Self Care Unit, but had not needed to be used.

### 2020 Findings

Finding 38. The prison was clean, graffiti-free and well-maintained. However, wāhine access to activities, outdoor recreation and programmes in the high security side of the prison (including the Management Unit) is limited by the current prison design and fencing.

Finding 39. Facility maintenance issues and equipment shortages were not closely monitored by staff and their responses recorded.

### Hygiene

164. Wāhine told us they had to request sanitary products and only received a limited number of items. Some said they felt embarrassed when they needed to ask for further supplies. Staff told us they limited the number of sanitary products issued to avoid waste and reduce misuse of these items. In some units, staff recorded the items provided to individual women.
165. Staff in the Remand Unit told us that, three weeks before our inspection, there were no sanitary pads in the unit due to a distribution issue. This caused issues for some women who were uncomfortable using alternative sanitary products. Following our inspection, the prison confirmed the distribution issue had been resolved.

<sup>34</sup> Prisoner self-service kiosk.



166. During our inspection, we spoke with a woman who had arrived two days earlier and was being held in the COVID-19 isolation area. The wāhine said she did not receive any toiletries from staff and had not changed her clothing since she was arrested. We raised our concerns with custodial staff who said they were unaware of her circumstances and arranged for the necessary supplies to be provided.

### 2020 Finding

Finding 40. Sanitary items were not always readily available to wāhine.

## Clothing

167. The prison had a shortage of underwear, in particular bras, which impacted many wāhine we spoke with. Many wāhine told us they were issued with only one set of underwear and relied on family and friends to supply more, which can take time to arrive. Some said other wāhine who were being released may pass clothing and underwear on to others. We found some wāhine were unaware they could request additional underwear and staff were either unaware there was a shortage in their unit or that they could request underwear for wāhine from the Receiving Office.
168. We observed that wāhine had difficulty obtaining larger sized clothing items. One day during our inspection we observed a wāhine refusing to take her time out of cell because her only pair of trousers was in the wash. Pregnant wāhine told us there was no maternity clothing and they also had to wear large sized clothing.
169. Wāhine we spoke with in low security units raised no concerns about clothing and in some units, such as Self Care and Mothers with Babies, wāhine can wear their own clothes.
170. Wāhine had access to a washing machine in their unit, and said drying personal clothing items could be difficult in winter. We also observed bedding and towels being washed in some units, instead of in the prison laundry, which staff confirmed often caused the non-commercial washing machines in the units to break down.

### 2020 Findings

Finding 41. Wāhine were not provided with adequate quantities of underwear (including bras). Some did not have access to clothing in their size.

Finding 42. The quality of mattresses and pillows and the availability of bedding and towels was inconsistent across the prison. Mattresses require a mattress protector but some wāhine removed these as they were uncomfortable.

Finding 43. Wāhine could not consistently launder and dry their personal clothing items, bedding and towels.

## Food

171. Overall, wāhine we spoke with were satisfied with the food provided as part of the new national menu. Four pregnant wāhine told us they were provided with a special diet and were happy with the quality of meals provided. Two foreign national wāhine told us they initially had difficulty adjusting to the meals provided.

172. During our inspection we observed in the high security units that some hot meals were cold by the time wāhine received them. We were told meals became cold due to the time it took to deliver food to the cells, or because there were too few staff to ensure an efficient meal delivery process.
173. In one high security unit, wāhine had meals in their cells because they took too long to return to their cells after eating in the communal area. Wāhine we spoke with in low security units said they enjoyed having hot food and being able to access any leftovers, which was not the case in the high security units.
174. Women in Self Care cooked their own food. Wāhine we spoke with did not raise any issues with this, however their ability to shop for their groceries at the supermarket had been suspended due to COVID-19 restrictions. At the time of our inspection, groceries were being supplied by the prison.

**2020 Finding**

Finding 44. Overall, wāhine were pleased with the food available. However, high security wāhine often received their food cold and some of these wāhine were required to eat meals in their cells.

## Wāhine and children

### 2018 observations

The Mothers with Babies Unit provided a clean, safe and healthy environment in which the basic needs of the wāhine and their babies were met. A babysitter was available to allow mothers to attend programmes and go to exercise classes. A play group visited the Mothers with Babies Unit regularly and external trips were arranged for the mothers and their children. Pregnant wāhine had maternity care provided by a midwife, who believed they received better care in prison than they did in the community as they were being seen regularly.

### Pregnant wāhine and post-natal support

#### Inspection Standards

- Pregnant and breastfeeding prisoners, people who have recently given birth, and those caring for a child in prison have their mental, physical, emotional, cultural, and health needs fully supported throughout their time at the prison by appropriately trained staff.
- Prisoners should give birth in hospital wherever possible.

175. Pregnant women in prison can access midwifery services delivered through the Counties Manukau District Health Board. Approximately 90% of pregnant women received into the prison do not have a community-based maternity services provider. None of the pregnant women we spoke with in the prison had any issues with the support and care they received for their pregnancy.
176. Wāhine in two high security units who were more than six months pregnant said they had difficulty cleaning their cells and staff had not considered this issue. While not a requirement, there were no care plans or support in place for these wāhine and staff thought other women would help them if necessary.
177. The midwife holds a clinic twice a week for pregnant and postnatal women (for up to six weeks post-birth) on site. Women who come to prison frequently experience high-risk pregnancies and may require multiple scans and support from the hospital high-risk team, typically requiring regular escorts to hospital.
178. We confirmed that wāhine who gave birth in hospital did not have restraints applied. However, the midwife shared concerns about the use of handcuffs post-delivery, particularly when the mother was trying to breastfeed. She told us some custodial staff felt comfortable removing restraints while others did not.
179. The midwife told us there is an extremely high rate of breastfeeding by all mothers.

### 2020 Findings

Finding 45. The prison provides access to a good level of midwifery support for pregnant wāhine and those requiring postnatal support.

Finding 46. Some pregnant wāhine did not receive practical help in their units.

## Child well-being

### Inspection Standards

- Decisions on whether a child stays with their mother are made in the best interests of the child based on the conditions in prison, the risk the mother poses to the child, the quality of care children receive in prison and what quality of care they can expect to receive outside prison, and the remaining length of the mother's sentence.

180. The Mothers with Babies Unit enables eligible and suitable wāhine to have their children aged under two years with them in prison. This unit supports mother and child bonding and provides continuity of care.
181. Eligible wāhine must apply to a Multidisciplinary Team (MDT)<sup>35</sup> for a place in the unit. The MDT assesses each applicant and their child for suitability and undertakes placement reviews. The prison's Social Worker also reviews the mother and baby's progress and reports back to the MDT. From our review of recent MDT meeting minutes, we confirmed that all applications and mothers already in the unit were thoroughly reviewed during these meetings and the best interests of the child were central to discussions.

### 2020 Finding

Finding 47. The site continues to ensure the placement of a child with their mother in the Mothers with Babies Unit is in the best interest of the child.

## Children residing in prison

### Inspection Standards

- Prisoners whose child is with them in prison shall be provided with the maximum possible opportunities to spend time with their child.
- Prisoners whose child is with them in prison are provided with a safe, supportive and comfortable environment which prioritises the care and development of the child.
- The psychological/emotional needs of the child are closely monitored to assess any adverse effects of living in a closed institution and measures are taken to reduce the negative psychological impact of institutionalisation, based on individual needs.

182. Both Mothers with Babies Unit houses were clean, bright and well maintained with no graffiti (*image 9*). The environment was child friendly and included a soft padded outdoor area with a shade cloth. The outdoor space would benefit from an upgrade and some age appropriate play equipment for children. At the time of our inspection, there was one

<sup>35</sup> Comprising a midwife, registered nurse, Principal Case Manager, an Oranga Tamariki representative, the Residential Manager of Self Care/Mothers with Babies units and a cultural adviser.

mother and child in each house. The children appeared happy and healthy. The unit is separated from the Self Care Unit by a fence. There is a limited outside area for mothers to walk with their babies.

183. Both mothers were happy that the houses met their needs and those of their children. The houses have child safety gates and latches on cupboards. One mother told us many items had been made child-safe since an earlier visit by Inspectors. Age appropriate books and toys were visible throughout the house.
184. One mother told us the prison provided canned food, baby nappies, wipes and formula at no cost during the COVID-19 period. She was thankful for the support from the prison as this relieved some stress for her.
185. The mothers told us that staff took them and their children on escorted outings outside of the prison, once their babies were fully immunised. Outings were approved by prison management. Staff confirmed that past outings have been to nearby play parks, the botanic gardens and an animal petting farm. Volunteers were also delivering playgroup and music sessions on site. At the time of our inspection, the outings and activities with volunteers had stopped temporarily due to COVID-19 but it was intended that they recommenced when it was safe to do so.
186. Staff regularly take photos of the children in the unit to give to the mothers.
187. Mothers could also access a parenting support programme that was available at the prison bi-monthly by support service Family Works Northern. The Growing Better Brains programme delivered by the Brainwave Trust was not available to mothers at the time of our inspection.

### 2020 Findings

Finding 48. The Mothers with Babies Unit provides a good environment and opportunities for mothers to spend time with their child, including external outings, activities and programmes (outside of COVID-19 lockdown periods).

Finding 49. The outdoor walking area was limited in size and the play equipment needed to be updated.

### Access to health care for children residing in prison

#### Inspection Standards

- The prison provides a child living with his/her mother in prison access to health care in the community whenever appropriate.
- Children undergo health screening before entry to prison and all health needs identified are met.
- Mothers have the opportunity to be present during their child's health interventions.

188. Wāhine must access health care services for their baby in the community. Mothers in the unit told us their access to baby health care was good and custodial staff supported them to attend health care appointments for their children in the community. Wāhine wear

Global Positioning System (GPS) trackers to health appointments and are not required to wear restraints.

### 2020 Finding

Finding 50. The prison ensures children in prison have access to health care in the community and staff support mothers to attend these appointments.

## The removal of a child from prison

### Inspection Standards

- Women who are separated or separating from their child/children are given appropriate support.
- The best interest of the child is the primary consideration in decisions whether to allow children to stay with their mothers in prison.

189. Staff advised that a child had recently been removed from the Mothers with Babies Unit. Every removal of a child is individually planned depending on the circumstances, with a suitable carer and accommodation identified and approved in the community before the child is removed. In the recent case, staff told us the Residential Manager and Social Worker worked closely with the mother to identify an alternative whānau carer and accommodation. We saw evidence of care plans for the child that included a series of whānau visits to support the child's transition and reduce the likelihood of separation anxiety.

### 2020 Finding

Finding 51. The site has processes to ensure that the safety and well-being of the child and mother are carefully considered during the planning for the removal of a baby.



## Good Order

### 2018 observations

Wāhine in the high security wings had little time out of their cells each day, ranging from a few hours a day in some wings to 1-2 hours a day in others. Confining prisoners to cells for long periods of each day limits opportunities for them to rehabilitate, and can cause boredom and tensions.

Wāhine said the short time out of cells was due to a combination of short-staffing and the units operating multiple unlock regimes to separate prisoners of different categories and security classifications.

Wāhine in the low-medium security units were out of their cells for 6-9 hours daily, depending on their work commitments.

Wāhine in the Management and Separates units were in their cells for 23 hours per day, and during their hour out of the cell they were not permitted to associate with others. They had little to do and little human contact other than speaking to each other through cell doors.

### Classification and accommodation

#### Inspection Standards

- Prisoners are held in a safe environment where security is proportionate to risk and not unnecessarily restrictive.
- Classification, placement and treatment are based on an individual assessment of each prisoner's risks and needs.
- Prisoners are held in the appropriate security conditions and can seek review about decisions on their security classification.
- Prisoners are classified based on their gender-specific needs and circumstances. Prisoners are housed in units and managed in regimes which match their gender-specific risks and needs.
- Prisoners are accommodated in units that have the lowest possible security level.

190. Some units operate multiple unlock regimes to ensure the separation of different prisoner categories<sup>36</sup> and security classifications.<sup>37</sup> While limiting the number of wāhine out of their cells can reduce the opportunity for incidents to occur, it can lead to a reduced time out of cell which, in turn, can cause increased tension or boredom for some wāhine. Time out of cell for other activities should be in addition to any hour allocated for exercise.

191. During our inspection, we spoke with a number of wāhine and staff in each unit and reviewed unit diaries which recorded the following unlock hours:

- Remand Unit (Wing H, high security unit) – Two unlock regimes to ensure remand accused and directed segregation wāhine remained separate. Each

<sup>36</sup> Convicted and accused, segregated and mainstream, youth and adult.

<sup>37</sup> High security, low-medium security, and remand prisoners.

group received 2-3 hours out of their cell each day, split between morning and afternoon.

- Remand Unit (Wing G, high security unit) – Four unlock regimes to ensure the separation of remand accused, remand convicted and two separate 'bubbles' of wāhine completing COVID-19 14-day isolation periods. Each group received at least one hour out of their cell per day.
- Programmes and Assessment Unit (high security) – The number of unlock regimes changed throughout the week from two to three, depending on the separation requirements for remand accused, remand convicted and sentenced wāhine housed there. The fewer regimes, the greater the unlock hours. We confirmed all wāhine in this unit could access at least one hour out of their cell each day. The majority of wāhine received more.
- Motivation and Support Unit (high security) – Wāhine are unlocked twice per day and receive at least one and a half hours out of their cell per day.
- Management Unit (including maximum security) and ISU – Wāhine are offered one hour out of their cell each day, which is usually taken alone in the single, large yard due to denied or restricted association requirements.
- Separates Unit – Wāhine have a small enclosed yard attached to their cell that they can access throughout the day.
- Training Unit (low-medium security) – Employed wāhine receive seven hours or more out of their cell each day. Unemployed wāhine receive at least four hours out of their cell.
- Employment Hub, Self Care and Mothers with Babies units (low-medium or minimum security) – Wāhine are typically unlocked from 7am to 7pm. However, with reduced staffing due to COVID-19 (due to staff self-isolation requirements) this was reduced to 8.30am to 4.30pm.

192. Staff we spoke with were aware of the importance of wāhine having time out of their cells each day. Wāhine told us how incidents and reduced staffing in the units impacted their daily time out of cell. At the time of our inspection, we found most wāhine received at least one hour out of their cell every day. Some wāhine in one high security unit said they spent their unlock time washing clothes, making telephone calls and cleaning their cells. Others said they had nothing to do for exercise but walk around the unit and talk to others.
193. An operational review dated 25 May 2020, undertaken by a regional Practice Manager Custodial, found the prison generally had methods of recording unlock and lock times for each unit, but the unlock times of individual wāhine were not always recorded. In response, the regional Operational Performance team undertook to check unlock records for each wāhine every month to confirm compliance. For units with multiple unlock regimes, a recording sheet was introduced.
194. We reviewed unit diaries, logbooks and individual recording sheets used in the high security units for the week prior to our inspection. We found the times each wāhine had out of their cells noted on the recording sheets for one unit but the same information was not recorded for the other unit.
195. The Office of the Ombudsman's 2014 COTA report also found that cell cleaning and accessing telephones had to take place during the one hour exercise time. It is disappointing that this remains an issue six years later.

**2020 Findings**

Finding 52. While wāhine generally received at least one hour out of their cell each day, this time was often used for cleaning and making telephone calls, rather than exercise. Time out of cell for other activities should be in addition to any hour allocated for exercise.

Finding 53. The prison is not consistently recording the unlock and lock times for individual wāhine.

**Segregation and cell confinement****Inspection Standards**

- Prisoners are placed on directed segregation only with proper authority and for the shortest time period, which is regularly reviewed. Prisoners understand why they have been segregated.
- Prisoners are kept safe at all times while on directed segregation and individual needs are recognised and given proper attention.
- Cell confinement is subject to strict policies and procedures.
- Prisoners suspected of internal concealment are located in a dry cell as a last resort and the proper authorisation is recorded.

196. At the time of our inspection, the prison's Management Unit accommodated five wāhine who were classified as maximum security. These wāhine had recently become subject to directed segregation orders for the purpose of maintaining safety and good order.<sup>38</sup> Five other wāhine were subject to directed segregation orders for their own protection.<sup>39</sup> Each wāhine in the Management Unit had an up-to-date, tailored management plan and the plans for the maximum security wāhine were particularly good. Staff told us work had recently been undertaken to improve the standard of record-keeping and the management of wāhine in the unit.
197. We were informed that just prior to our inspection, a Visiting Justice had reviewed the length of time two wāhine had been held on directed segregation (which was for more than three months). The Visiting Justice returned at least three monthly as necessary for further reviews. The remaining maximum security wāhine had been subject to directed segregation for less time and the Regional Commissioner's Office was maintaining oversight of their management and approving their directed segregation status.
198. The adjoining Separates Unit usually accommodates wāhine subject to short periods of cell confinement following a disciplinary hearing. During our visit, the unit was being used to isolate new wāhine for 14 days as part of COVID-19 requirements.
199. In one high security unit, there was a wāhine subject to directed segregation (protective custody) and denied association, who had recently arrived from the ISU. We considered her

<sup>38</sup> Section 58(1) of the Corrections Act 2004.

<sup>39</sup> Section 59(1) of the Corrections Act 2004.

management plan to be unsuitable,<sup>40</sup> incomplete and with administrative errors. The documentation was not tailored to meet the specific needs of this wāhine. We raised our concerns directly with unit staff. We were informed after our inspection that staff reviewed and amended the documentation and we confirmed that the necessary improvements were made.

200. We found several wāhine subject to segregation orders did not have copies of their management plans.
201. All wāhine in the ISU had management plans, however there was little evidence to show health staff (including staff from the Intervention and Support team), were involved in the development of these plans even when the prisoner was subject to a segregation order for the purpose of medical oversight.<sup>41</sup>

### 2020 Finding

Finding 54. Each maximum security wāhine had an up-to-date, tailored management plan.

Finding 55. Management plans in the ISU generally met the standard although there was room for improvement particularly regarding health involvement.

## Incentives

### Inspection Standards

- Systems of rewards and privileges appropriate for different categories of prisoners are established, in order to encourage pro-social behaviour, develop a sense of responsibility and secure the interest and cooperation of prisoners.

202. At the time of our inspection, incentives had recently been introduced for the maximum security wāhine to encourage positive behaviour and lower their security classification. The incentives included the application of handcuffs at the front instead of behind when being moved from their cell, and increased time for telephone calls to connect with whānau and family. The incentives were identified and reviewed regularly by a multidisciplinary team established to oversee the management of maximum security wāhine. We were told that if a prisoner's behaviour regressed, any incentives were temporarily removed until their behaviour improved.
203. We observed limited use of incentives in the high security units. Staff in one unit told us they did not use incentives as wāhine showed little interest or motivation to improve their behaviour.

<sup>40</sup> The management plan had been compiled by ISU staff and was written for a prisoner segregated for the purposes of safety and good order, not protective custody.

<sup>41</sup> Section 60 of the Corrections Act 2004.

**2020 Finding**

Finding 56. The prison offers few incentives to encourage pro-social behaviour among high security wāhine.

**Discipline****Inspection Standards**

- Disciplinary sanctions against prisoners are imposed by the proper authority.
- Prisoners are subject to disciplinary procedures which are fair and proportionate and follow due process.
- Prisoners are promptly informed of any disciplinary sanction, and understand the charges and procedures they face.
- Interpreter services will be used, where necessary, to explain any disciplinary charges, procedures and the process for defending the charges.
- Prison management does not rely on prisoners for any disciplinary functions, whether in a formal or informal manner.
- Cell confinement or disciplinary segregation shall not be applied to pregnant or breastfeeding prisoners or prisoners with babies in prison.
- Prisoner disciplinary sanctions do not include prohibition of family contact, especially with their children.

204. Prisons are required to maintain good discipline and order through effective supervision, communication and fair and effective disciplinary procedures. Offences against discipline committed by a prisoner can result in a misconduct charge. Disciplinary action must be well documented by staff, and disciplinary hearings must comply with statutory and regulatory requirements.
205. For the period 1 September 2019 to 29 February 2020, 496 misconducts were generated across the site. Of these, 60% were withdrawn and 10% cancelled. The majority of misconducts originated from the high security, remand and Management units.
206. At the time of our inspection, the site had two full-time prosecutors and seven adjudicators.<sup>42</sup> The prosecutors told us they have been temporarily redeployed on occasions to cover staff shortages, however this had not occurred so much in 2020. We learned that several principal corrections officers are trained as adjudicators to increase adjudicator capacity. We noted each adjudicator only needed to be available for two hours each month.
207. Prosecution staff told us the lack of available adjudicators often led to misconducts being withdrawn or cancelled. Poor quality misconduct reports was another factor. Prosecutors

<sup>42</sup> Prosecutors are staff trained to charge prisoners with an offence and who have responsibility for proving that charge. Hearing adjudicators have the power to hear complaints relating to offences against discipline alleged to have been committed by a prisoner.

told us they had offered report writing training to staff but it had not been taken up. Prosecutors said that they had observed some reluctance among staff to serve misconduct charges on wāhine.

208. Prosecution staff were confident the level of successful prosecutions would increase as the Prison Director was working hard to make improvements across the site. The high number of withdrawn or cancelled misconducts appeared not to deter staff from laying misconduct charges, but the prosecutors told us that at times it felt like staff were laying misconduct charges rather than actively managing wāhine behaviour.
209. Custodial staff we spoke with were aware and somewhat frustrated by the high levels of withdrawn or cancelled misconduct charges and felt the prosecutors prioritised only the more serious charges.
210. In the high security and Remand units, we saw some custodial staff did not communicate effectively with wāhine nor actively manage what we identified were demanding and confrontational prisoner behaviours.
211. We observed wāhine being actively managed by staff in the lower security units and overall staff-prisoner interactions were positive.

### 2020 Findings

Finding 57. The administration of the misconduct process is not working effectively at the site.

Finding 58. In the high security and Remand units, some custodial staff did not always actively manage demanding and confrontational behaviour.

## Separation of Prisoner Categories

### Inspection Standards

- Prisoners of different categories are separated, where possible, by allocating them to separate parts of the prison.

212. While we were in one high security unit, an incident occurred between two wāhine which required staff to use force to regain control of the women. We learned later these wāhine should not have been unlocked at the same time because they were different categories (remand accused and remand convicted) and there was no National Office approval in place allowing them to mix.
213. Staff told us that on occasion they may move one category of prisoner from their cell at a time when a different category of prisoner is unlocked and in the unit, but staff are always present to prevent any physical mixing of wāhine.

### 2020 Finding

Finding 59. The prison generally took steps to ensure that different categories of wāhine were kept separate.

## Searches

### Inspection Standards

- Searches of cells and prisoners are carried out only when necessary and are proportionate, with due respect for privacy and the dignity.
- Women prisoners are searched only by female staff.
- Strip searches are carried out only when necessary, women prisoners are never fully naked and only two appropriately trained female staff are present.

214. Contraband, such as drugs, alcohol and weapons, can create risks to safety and good order in a prison. For the six months to 29 February 2020, 184 incidents of contraband being found were recorded for the site. The most common types of contraband were 'other'<sup>43</sup> (59%), tattoo equipment (18%) and drugs (13%).
215. At the time of our inspection, many staff and wāhine we spoke with told us cell searches were not happening regularly throughout the prison. Staff in one high security unit said cell searches were not currently undertaken because of the multiple unlock regimes in the unit. The Self Care houses were searched every second week by the drug dog detection team.
216. During our inspection, we observed staff from the Remand Unit and the SERT undertake cell searches. These searches were thorough and we observed staff taking care to tidily return items back to where they came from. We were also told that cell searches occurred in the Management Unit every time a prisoner was removed from their cell, which led to some wāhine refusing to leave their cell.
217. Wāhine told us they routinely experienced rubdown searches when they left or returned to their wing or at the end of visits. All rubdown searches we observed were conducted by female staff. These searches were thorough and wāhine were treated with respect. Wāhine were required to remove their footwear and hair ties. In some units we observed wāhine automatically preparing for the rubdown search to take place as they were entering and exiting a unit. Wāhine we spoke with said rubdown searches were conducted by staff in a respectful manner and they did not share any concerns.
218. Corrections' data for the six-month period to 29 February 2020 showed 465 strip searches occurred at the prison, 81% in the Receiving Office (including after wāhine arrived from another prison or completed an escorted outing). Eight wāhine we spoke with said they were treated with respect by female staff undertaking the searches and staff explained why they were being strip searched. We confirmed that closed-circuit television cameras were absent from all strip searching areas, as required. Staff we spoke with were aware of the rules about when strip searches could be undertaken.
219. Two staff are responsible for the delivery of the prison's drug testing regime. Staff told us they were more likely to identify drug use at the prison as a result of random drug testing and they would like to undertake more tests.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Contraband finds categorised as 'other' include tobacco and smoking equipment, and gang-related paraphernalia.

<sup>44</sup> S.07.01 of the Prison Operations Manual notes prisoners can be drug tested randomly, voluntarily as a participant in any rehabilitation programme, as a temporary release returnee, or on reasonable grounds as required by the Prison Director (or their authorised staff member(s)).



220. Between 1 September 2019 and 29 February 2020, 122 wāhine tested negative and three wāhine tested positive for illicit drug use.
221. At the time of our inspection there were no wāhine with an Identified Drug User status.

**2020 Findings**

Finding 60. Cell searches were not carried out routinely across all units to ensure the safety and good order of the prison.

Finding 61. Rubdown searches we observed were conducted thoroughly by female staff and took place when necessary.

Finding 62. The majority of strip searches appropriately took place in the Receiving Office, which would be expected, and wāhine said they were treated with respect.

Finding 63. The drug testing regime identified there are very few women using illicit drugs in the prison.

## Purposeful activity

### 2018 observations

Some wāhine had good access to a range of education, training and rehabilitation programmes and others did not have case managers or offender plans so could not access these opportunities. Among those who did have case managers, some said they experienced delays getting appointments to discuss their rehabilitation needs. A lack of interview rooms and office space for case managers also contributed to the delays. Some of the education and rehabilitation programmes had lengthy waiting lists, which was compounded by limited programme delivery space. Some high security wāhine could access work in their units but were not offered training and work experience.

Some wāhine in the high security units told us they had little access to activities in the units and were bored. Their access to the library was limited but they could attend the gym and access the exercise yards intermittently.

Wāhine were able to maintain contact with family and friends by telephone, letters and visits. Telephones were placed in noisy areas and offered little privacy. Wāhine and visitors were positive about the visit experience.

### Exercise

#### Inspection Standards

- All prisoners are able to spend at least one hour in the open air every day.
- Prisoners have access to physical exercise and recreational activities.

222. Minimum entitlements are set out in section 69 of the Corrections Act, and include physical exercise (as defined in section 70):
- Every prisoner (other than a prisoner engaged in outdoor work) may, on a daily basis, take at least one hour of physical exercise.
  - The physical exercise may be taken by the prisoner in the open air if the weather permits.
223. At the time of our inspection, the wāhine had limited access to exercise facilities and equipment or other recreational activities.
224. We were informed that the prison's gym was closed at the beginning of 2020 due to staff shortages. At the time of our inspection, the gym was being repainted and planning was underway to re-open the gym by the end of July 2020. After our inspection, we received confirmation that the gym had reopened as planned.
225. Wāhine in the high security and Remand units spent time out of their cells each day, usually in the unit not outdoors. The wāhine were unable to use the outside yards as they were unsuitable due to security issues (*image 10*). Wāhine told us their opportunity for fresh air only occurred when they were escorted to medical appointments or visits outside the unit.
226. The Office of the Ombudsman's 2014 COTA report also found that high security prisoners were denied access to at least one hour of suitable exercise in the open air daily. It is disappointing that this remains an issue six years later.

227. Wāhine in the Management Unit have access to a large yard. Those in the Separates Unit have access to a small enclosed yard adjacent to their cell.
228. At the time of our inspection, there was no exercise equipment for the wāhine in these units. They had limited access to board games or other recreational activities. One wing in the Remand Unit had table tennis and a television in the common area, while wāhine in one high security unit could access board games on request.
229. Each high security unit and the Remand Unit had one or two activity/programme rooms accessible from each wing. However, these rooms appeared to be more commonly used for storage instead of activities or programmes. Staff in one high security unit told us they were aware that boredom often led to poor behaviour by wāhine. The recreational equipment previously available in the unit had been destroyed by wāhine, so had been removed and not replaced. Despite this, we were informed that each wing in this unit would shortly be receiving a table tennis table and television and sofas for the communal area.
230. Wāhine in the ISU had limited access to activities, however each woman had time in the yard with occasional mixing with others when appropriate.
231. In the low security units, wāhine had more access to recreational activities, including new board games (purchased during the COVID-19 lockdown period) and some exercise equipment in the communal areas. The units are surrounded by open grassed areas with a basketball/volleyball court accessible to wāhine during unlock.

### 2020 Findings

Finding 64. Some high security wāhine were not receiving at least one hour in the open air each day.

Finding 65. Some high security wāhine could not access exercise facilities and recreational equipment.

Finding 66. Low security wāhine generally had more access to opportunities to exercise.

### Communication and relationships with family and whānau

#### Inspection Standards

- Prisoners are encouraged to maintain contact with family/whānau members.
- Prisoners have regular access to visits.
- Prisoners have regular access to telephones and other communications, subject to a risk assessment.
- Prisoners are assisted to contact and consult with legal representatives in relation to family matters.
- A prisoner's family situation is identified and support planning undertaken to proactively assist them in maintaining contact with family.
- Prisoners and their families receive ongoing active support to maintain or re-establish relationships, where it is appropriate.

- Prisoners are located as close as possible to their family/whānau and the community they have a strong attachment to. If prisoners are placed in prisons outside their home region, it is for the minimum time necessary and for an identified reason.
- Staff support prisoners to maintain close relationships with stable family or whānau.
- Prisoners can promptly inform their family or whānau or designated contact person about their imprisonment, transfers, illness or injury.
- Prison staff notify prisoners of the serious illness or death of a family/whānau member or significant other, and a risk/well-being assessment is subsequently conducted.

232. Maintaining contact with family and whānau is important for the well-being and reintegration of wāhine following their release from prison. Most wāhine we spoke with throughout the prison did not share any concerns about their ability to keep in regular contact with family and whānau via telephone. Wāhine in the Employment Hub told us there were insufficient telephones in the unit to meet demand when they returned from work or programmes. The women in the Mothers with Babies and Self Care units confirmed they had good access to telephones in their units as there was less demand. Given the different unlock regimes operating in the high security and Remand units, access to telephones was easier as demand was spread over a wider time period.
233. We noted that telephones in the units had notices placed nearby providing contact details for the Office of the Ombudsman and other agencies. Some wāhine told us, and we observed, that the telephones were often in high traffic/noisy areas and with no privacy hoods.
234. Wāhine throughout the prison shared their frustration at the time taken to get telephone numbers approved and 'on the system'. We reviewed a random sample of prisoner files and, on average, it took between one and six weeks for telephone numbers to be approved.
235. Staff are required to speak to a prisoner's family or whānau member directly before approving a telephone number. Some wāhine we spoke with in one high security unit showed us their rejected applications for telephone number approvals. The documentation showed staff had checked telephone numbers during normal office hours when family or whānau were more likely to be at work or unavailable to receive telephone calls.
236. Unit staff said telephone number approvals had previously been undertaken by staff covering the whole prison, but the responsibility had recently been transferred to each respective unit. Staff told us they were having difficulty finding the time to attend to this additional responsibility.
237. The site was used as a pilot site to trial video conferencing with family and whānau during the COVID-19 lockdown. Wāhine we spoke with about this initiative told us they enjoyed being able to see family members (including their children) and inside their homes and hoped this service would continue in the longer-term.
238. During our visit, we also observed wāhine asking staff if they would continue to receive a free \$5.00 telephone card each week. The cards were issued during the COVID-19 lockdown period to support wāhine to maintain contact with family and whānau while face to face

- visits were temporarily suspended. The provision of these telephone cards had recently ceased.
239. Property Office staff process all incoming prisoner mail, which custodial staff were expected to collect regularly from the Property Office. We found prisoner mail was often not collected by unit staff promptly, which led to delays and frustration among wāhine who were often aware that mail had been sent to them.
  240. The site has two social workers who support wāhine to maintain contact with their family and children. The social workers arrange audio-visual link calls for wāhine to maintain contact with family who live outside the Auckland region, as well as supporting the women to prepare for family group conferences or Family Court matters.
  241. The social workers also support women who have not had contact with their children for long periods, and the women residing in the Mothers with Babies Unit.
  242. The social workers maintain a close working relationship with Oranga Tamariki, which arranges visits between some wāhine and their children. Visits currently take between four and six weeks to arrange and it is hoped that a new process would decrease this time.

### 2020 Findings

- Finding 67. Overall, wāhine were able to maintain contact with family (including their children where appropriate) and whānau through telephone calls. Telephones were often situated in noisy areas and offered little privacy.
- Finding 68. Access to family and whānau was supported during the COVID-19 lockdown period with video conferencing and weekly \$5 telephone cards.
- Finding 69. Wāhine often experience delays in getting their telephone numbers approved and receiving incoming mail.
- Finding 70. Wāhine are provided good support by social workers to establish and maintain contact with their family and children.

### Visits

#### Inspection Standards

- Prisoners are aware of prison procedures and their visits entitlements.
- Prisoners and their visitors are able to attend visits in a clean, safe and respectful environment which meets their needs.
- Visitors are informed about search procedures and understand their right to refuse the search and leave the prison.
- Child visitors are searched only when there are reasonable grounds. Reasons for the search should be explained to the child, who should be searched in full view of his/her guardian.
- Visits areas are child friendly and allow for physical contact.
- There is special provision of visits for children at times which are least interruptive of their education and other activities.

243. Visits take place seven days a week (between 9-11am and 1-3pm). Each unit wing receives one timeslot per week. Only those in Self Care or low security had visits at weekends, which was the most popular time. Inspectors observed good supervision by staff during the Saturday morning visit despite there being fewer staff than required.
244. The visits centre was a bright, inviting space with painted murals (*image 11*). Outside space was available for children and families to talk and play together. Fruit and a good selection of toys were available for visiting children.
245. The visits centre included a mother and child bonding room for wāhine who were not eligible or chose not to have their child with them in prison, to feed and bond with their children. This was separate from the main visits area and included spaces for mothers to breastfeed in private and a nappy changing table. Staff told us a portacot was usually available as well. The area was clean but not as well presented as the main visits area nor equipped with child-friendly furniture and new toys. The windows had partially frosted glass panels which reduced the ability of staff to observe the room.
246. We observed staff were professional, friendly and respectful in their interactions with wāhine and their visitors. Overall, visitors we spoke with were positive about their engagement with staff. Some visitors told us they found the presence of SERT team members watching them in the reception or gate house area was intimidating.
247. At the time of our inspection, we observed visitors arriving for scheduled visits. There were some delays processing the visitors, which shortened the time for visits. Some visitors we spoke with told us delays depended on the volume of visitors arriving and processes used by staff which, at times, felt inconsistent.
248. Visitors are now required to submit to a temperature check to detect any possible illness, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This process had sometimes resulted in adult visitors becoming separated from children, leading to distress for both. This happened when the adult caregiver was processed through the security area separately or more swiftly than the child.
249. Search information for visitors was not visible in the reception area, however there were signs describing what food and equipment visitors can bring into the prison for babies and young children.

### 2020 Findings

- Finding 71. Wāhine and visitors were generally positive about their visit experience, but not all visit times were convenient for family and whānau.
- Finding 72. The needs of children during visits were generally met, although the bonding room requires updating.
- Finding 73. At times visitor processing was delayed, reducing the time available for visits.
- Finding 74. Some search information for visitors was not visible in the reception area.

## Library

### Inspection Standards

- Prisoners have regular access to a suitable library, library materials and additional learning resources that meets their needs.

250. The prison has a dedicated library (*image 12*), which is an inviting area for wāhine, but was largely underutilised. At the time of our inspection, the library was open for a reduced number of hours.
251. At the time of our inspection, the librarian was a wāhine who was still being trained by the prisoner previously in the role. The prison library is one of three nationally which does not have a staff librarian. At most other prisons, librarians are staff members or volunteers, at times supported by prisoners.
252. Staff told us that generally up to 10 low security wāhine can visit the library unaccompanied at a time. A maximum of five high security wāhine can be in the library at a time, accompanied by at least one corrections officer.
253. During our inspection, wāhine in the high security units told us they want access to library resources but staff do not take them to the library. They also said there is no library catalogue or trolley system available to bring books to the units. Staff in the unit told us they previously took wāhine to the library, but this stopped after wāhine damaged books. We saw a small number of books in these units and the ISU.
254. The prison relies on book donations from the community to stock the library and has no dedicated fund for book purchases. Each book must be reviewed to ensure it is suitable for wāhine. The prison has no library catalogue so wāhine are unable to request books by their title or author.
255. Staff told us that their application to procure a catalogue system, which is used in some other prisons, was declined due to funding not being available. We were informed that a further request for a catalogue system may be made in the future.

### 2020 Findings

- Finding 75. Wāhine do not currently have reasonable access to the library or library resources.
- Finding 76. The library is run by a wāhine, receives no funding, has no catalogue system and fully relies on book donations.



**Religious or spiritual support****Inspection Standards**

- Prisoners are supported by the chaplaincy, which contributes to prisoners' overall care, support and rehabilitation.
- Prisoners' freedom of religion is respected, and they are able to practise their religion.

256. The prison has a chapel and two chaplains who are available to wāhine five days per week. Forty-eight volunteers also regularly visit the prison to support the chaplaincy service.
257. The prison has a monthly schedule of religious services catering to a variety of faiths. Chaplains provide wāhine with bibles in a number of languages on request. Bible study sessions are held during the week for both low and high security wāhine.
258. The chapel is a welcoming space and appropriately decorated. It is used for low security services and, on occasion, programmes because of a shortage of space on the site.
259. The chaplains told us that gaining access to wāhine, especially in high security units, is problematic at times. They regularly visit some high security units but said that some custodial staff did not value the support they offered to wāhine. Religious services in the high security Remand units take place in the unit activity room.
260. Wāhine in Self Care told us they could access the chaplain, although wāhine in the Remand Unit and Employment Hub said they had not seen the chaplain for some time but acknowledged this may be due to COVID-19 visitor restrictions. Wāhine in one high security unit could only access the chaplains by request. Foreign national wāhine we spoke with also confirmed they could access support from Chaplaincy Services.
261. During our inspection, the chaplains said they felt they had a limited profile across the prison. The chaplains and their services are introduced to new wāhine as part of the Kia Rite<sup>45</sup> programme. However, the chaplains said, as contractors, they still felt disconnected from the wider team of prison staff. They said they receive referrals from some staff to support wāhine, however, they are not always informed or asked to support wāhine during periods of crisis. The chaplains said they now try to attend the morning staff briefings when they are on site to ensure they are informed of any events or evolving situations where they can offer support.

**2020 Finding**

Finding 77. Most wāhine have good access to chaplains and other appropriate faith-based support. However, chaplains felt underutilised and disconnected from other prison staff.

<sup>45</sup> Kia Rite, a programme designed for wāhine who are new to prison, is based on the principles set out in Corrections' Women's strategy and takes a gender informed and kaupapa Māori responsive approach.

**Supporting prisoner well-being****Inspection Standards**

- Prisoners can access out of cell activities which promote learning, well-being and support rehabilitation.
- Childcare facilities are available in women's prisons when prisoners attend work, education, skills training and programmes.

262. The prison has a volunteer coordinator and 130 volunteers, registered to work with wāhine and provide various education courses and activities. At the time of our inspection, volunteers were offering literacy, arts and crafts, yoga, sewing and supporting wāhine who wanted to improve their English. Programmes such as Words for Work,<sup>46</sup> Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous were also available. Wāhine could also access free family law expertise and support through the Mothers Project.<sup>47</sup>
263. Prison volunteers also provided childcare for wāhine in the Mothers with Babies Unit when the mothers attended programmes, work or appointments. We learned there had been occasions prior to our inspection when volunteers were unavailable, and wāhine could not access alternative support to ensure they could attend their programme, appointment or work.

**2020 Finding**

Finding 78. The prison is well supported by a volunteer coordinator and a team of volunteers who support and complement services and constructive activities for wāhine.

**Offender Plans****Inspection Standards**

- All prisoners have an offender plan.
- All prisoners receive support to achieve the targets in their offender plans and progress through their sentence.

264. Custodial staff are expected, through their daily interactions, to actively encourage wāhine to make positive changes in their lives. Units are expected to have regular Right Track meetings where prison staff, including case managers, meet and share information about the offender plan progress for wāhine. Right Track meetings were happening in the low security side of the prison.

<sup>46</sup> An employment skills and communication workshop.

<sup>47</sup> A voluntary programme which helps mothers in prison maintain a positive connection with their children and provides legal advice about their responsibilities and rights.

265. It is expected that every wāhine has ready access to a custodial staff member who is allocated as their case officer.<sup>48</sup> At the time of our inspection, not all wāhine we spoke with had been allocated a case officer in their unit. Following our visit, the prison notified us that the situation had improved and Corrections' data confirmed most wāhine were allocated a case officer.
266. Case managers motivate and work with wāhine to develop an offender plan (including a release plan), which identifies any immediate needs and rehabilitation and reintegrative needs. At the time of our inspection, the case management team was fully staffed with 23 FTEs.
267. Of the 16 wāhine we spoke with from across the prison about case managers and offender plans, 13 said they had met with, and had no issues accessing, their case manager. A review of the Self Care, Mothers with Babies and Training units prisoner files confirmed wāhine in these units all had offender plans. Most wāhine in one high security unit had met with their case manager and either had an offender plan or were aware they would have one shortly after they were sentenced.
268. During our inspection, we reviewed the Case Management Standards of Practice results for the six months to 29 February 2020. Overall, the prison was achieving good results across all Standards of Practice, including a 99% average for having an initial contact with a prisoner in the first 20 days of their arrival and 97% average for the timely production of initial offender plans.

### 2020 Findings

- Finding 79. Some wāhine did not have access to a case officer in their unit, however improvements in this area are underway.
- Finding 80. Wāhine had good access and support from case managers.
- Finding 81. Case managers were achieving good results across all of their Standards of Practice.

## Education

### Inspection Standards

- Education and vocational training programmes are offered in line with the needs of the learners.

269. In the six months to 29 February 2020, wāhine gained access to a range of education programmes including Learning Pathways, Secure Online Learning and self-directed learning, as well as the Parenting Support Programme and the Growing Better Brains programme delivered by the Brainwave Trust.<sup>49</sup> Education tutors completed 316 prisoner

<sup>48</sup> A case officer is a senior corrections officer or corrections officer who is assigned to an individual prisoner to support their rehabilitation and act as the conduit between the prisoner and their case manager.

<sup>49</sup> Staff said prisoners, including those on remand, could benefit greatly from improved access to these parenting programmes.

education assessments between 1 July 2019 and 29 February 2020, despite being short staffed

270. Staff said prior to the COVID-19 lockdown period, remand wāhine who did not have NCEA 1 and 2 could gain this through the completion of the New Zealand Certificate in Foundation Skills Levels 1 and 2. Education tutors aimed to assess remand wāhine within a couple of weeks of their arrival. They issued booklets to these learners who could work through them in their own time (and take them if they were released from prison), receiving NZQA credits on completion.
271. At the time of our inspection, this support was on hold because education tutors were focussed on catching up with their education assessments in the lower security side of the prison. Across the prison, 192 wāhine were waiting for education assessments.
272. Prisoner education was also supported by many registered volunteers, including those from the Howard League who provided literacy support to individual wāhine.
273. Staff said some wāhine struggled with the stigma of attending literacy education classes which, at times, affected their attendance rates.
274. Education and other programme delivery staff had access to a limited number of classrooms.

### 2020 Findings

Finding 82. The prison generally offers a good range of education opportunities, including access to literacy and numeracy support for wāhine on remand.

Finding 83. The prison has a limited number of classrooms which impacted on educational activities.

## Rehabilitation

### Inspection Standards

- Appropriate interventions are provided to reduce the likelihood of reoffending and promote successful reintegration.
- Rehabilitation programmes, targeting the specific needs of the prisoner, are available and accessible.
- There is good cooperation and communication between the prison and social support organisations, including those that deliver rehabilitation programmes in the prison.
- A balanced and comprehensive programme of activities is provided that is gender responsive.

275. Rehabilitation programmes help wāhine address the thoughts, attitudes and behaviour that led to their offending and supports them to develop the skills required to avoid re-offending after release.

276. Rehabilitation programmes are available to all sentenced and remand convicted<sup>50</sup> wāhine, with most programmes available to those identified as a moderate to high risk of recidivism. We found that more rehabilitation opportunities were available to wāhine accommodated in the lower security units, which were situated near the main programme delivery area of the prison. Wāhine we spoke with who were engaged in these programmes expressed a sense of satisfaction with their achievements and the changes they had made to address their offending.
277. At the time of our inspection, most rehabilitation programme delivery was restarting following a pause during the COVID-19 lockdown period. Programmes included the Short Rehabilitation Programme for women, Kowhiritanga,<sup>51</sup> Kimihia (a violence prevention programme), the Short Motivational Programme and the Maintenance Programme. The prison was also resuming its alcohol and other drug (AOD) programmes delivered by contracted providers Te Hā Oranga<sup>52</sup> and Odyssey House.<sup>53</sup> The programmes are all designed to be gender-responsive and trauma-informed.
278. We were informed by staff that most treatment programmes had waiting lists and we spoke with wāhine who confirmed they were waiting to access programmes or individual treatment with a psychologist. At the time of our inspection, five psychologists were working in the prison, three of them delivering the Kimihia programme.<sup>54</sup>
279. Psychologists confirmed they had capacity to treat only a small number of wāhine on a one-to-one basis at a time, alongside their New Zealand Parole Board reporting requirements, maintaining relationships with staff and supporting maximum security wāhine. Staff told us the COVID-19 lockdown had also created a backlog of wāhine waiting to attend programmes, which added to the existing waitlists. Wāhine with unmet offender plan and parole readiness requirements were being prioritised for the resuming programmes.
280. In the eight months prior to the March 2020 COVID-19 lockdown, 149 wāhine started a treatment programme (with an additional 41 wāhine commencing the Maintenance Programme and 12 the Short Motivational Programme). The number of completions varied between programmes, with an overall completion rate of 77%.
281. The Assistant Prison Director told us programme delivery staff had access to a limited number of suitable rooms on site to deliver programmes. Psychologists confirmed this and told us that, in some instances, the lack of suitable facilities impacted on the number of programmes that could be offered and the number of wāhine able to attend.
282. Psychologists and other programme delivery staff also wanted more support from custodial staff to ensure wāhine attended their programme sessions on time and to help keep programme facilitators and wāhine safe when incidents occurred.

<sup>50</sup> Remand accused prisoners cannot access offence-focussed treatment programmes because their offending has not been proven in court. Instead focus is given to their education and reintegration needs.

<sup>51</sup> Kowhiritanga is a medium-intensity general offending programme for women identified as having a moderate risk of reoffending. A high-intensity version of the programme has also recently become available.

<sup>52</sup> Te Ira Wāhine is an 8-week kaupapa Māori intensive AOD programme and aftercare service designed specifically for sentenced and remand convicted women accommodated in the prison's high security area.

<sup>53</sup> An 8-week intensive AOD treatment programme and aftercare service delivered in the low security area of the prison to sentenced and remand convicted prisoners.

<sup>54</sup> Staff told us psychologist retention was challenging and, as a result, many of the psychologists had been in the job for less than two years.

**2020 Findings**

Finding 84. The prison offers a good range of rehabilitation programmes but access is limited by the availability of programme rooms.

Finding 85. Psychologists had limited time available to undertake individual treatment with wāhine.

**Work****Inspection Standards**

- All prisoners, where possible, can engage in work that is purposeful, benefits them and increases their employability.
- Prisoners' health and safety is safeguarded during all work activities to the same standards as in community based work.
- Prisoners receive a fair incentive payment for the work they perform.

283. At the time of our inspection, 151 mostly low or minimum security wāhine were working in prison-based industries including grounds maintenance, distribution, painting, catering, laundry and cleaning. Some wāhine were working towards gaining industry related qualifications in areas such as barista, catering and horticulture. Some staff and wāhine told us there should be more emphasis on the achievement of qualifications.
284. Six women in the Self Care Unit were working with 11 dogs as part of the dog mobility programme.<sup>55</sup> The dogs were removed from the site during the COVID-19 lockdown period but had recently returned. The women told us they hoped their work with the dogs could lead to a recognised qualification, which they could use to obtain employment on release.
285. We found there were few work and no training opportunities available to wāhine in the high security units, apart from unit cleaners, laundry workers or those who distributed meals.
286. All wāhine in Self Care and the Employment Hub are required to work. At the time of our inspection, these wāhine worked in distribution, horticulture, cleaning and the dog mobility programme or were on Release to Work.
287. Two wāhine told us there is a high turnover of wāhine working in the distribution and kitchen area. Staff told us this was a result of some wāhine being in prison for short periods of time, including those on remand.<sup>56</sup>
288. A limited number of shift positions had been introduced in some industries so wāhine could both work and engage in programmes.
289. The wāhine can work on a voluntary basis to gain work experience and support their rehabilitation and reintegration. They earn an incentive allowance<sup>57</sup> in exchange for work,

<sup>55</sup> The programme involves prisoners training mobility dogs to aid and assist a person with a disability.

<sup>56</sup> The prison was utilising the Remand Management Tool to identify suitable remand prisoners to reside in the low security units and work in the kitchen.

education or other programme attendance, which enables them to purchase items from the prison canteen (such as telephone cards and toiletries) or rent a television (\$2 per week).

290. Staff told us the prisoner incentive allowance is insufficient to cover the cost of items that can be purchased through the canteen order system.
291. The Assistant Prison Director told us work vacancies can fluctuate depending on the programmes available at the site at any one time. She confirmed it is a priority for wāhine to attend rehabilitation programmes which can reduce the number of women eligible for work.

### 2020 Findings

Finding 86. Wāhine in the high security units could access few opportunities for work or training.

Finding 87. Wāhine in the low security and Self Care units received good access to work opportunities.

<sup>57</sup> The Prisoner Incentive Allowance Framework, which was established in 2002, provides that prisoners may earn up to \$0.60 per hour for up to 40 hours per week. Prisoners who are sick or who do not work receive an unemployment allowance of \$2.70 per week.



# Reintegration

## 2018 observations

Eligible wāhine could access reintegration opportunities, including Release to Work. The prison did not have sufficient numbers of suitable wāhine to fill all the Release to Work positions. Some wāhine due for parole or release did not have suitable arrangements in place for accommodation and other support to help them reintegrate.

### Inspection Standards

- Where possible, prisoners are housed in prisons close to their families or in prisons which meet their rehabilitative needs.
- Prisoners are able to keep up to date with news and the outside world while in prison, where appropriate.
- Prison management actively prepares prisoners for their release by facilitating access to post-release services.
- Prisoners with continuing health and social care needs are prepared and assisted to access appropriate services in the community prior to their release.
- Prisoners with drug and/or alcohol problems are prepared for release and have access to appropriate support and continued treatment in the community.
- Prior to release, prisoners have an up-to-date plan for addressing outstanding rehabilitation needs, which is managed in partnership with Community Corrections.
- Prisoners are given all necessary practical support and support information ready for their day of release.
- Pre and post-release reintegration programmes are available and are gender responsive.
- Offender plans are gender responsive and take into account, and plan for, prisoner's post-release social reintegration requirements from the beginning of their sentence.

292. Wāhine are provided with a wide range of reintegration initiatives that aim to equip them to engage with their communities and reduce re-offending when they leave prison. With only three women's prisons in New Zealand, staff are required to maintain reintegration networks over a much larger geographical area compared with staff working in men's prisons. This is because wāhine released from prison can return to many different parts of the country.
293. Staff in the Employment Hub told us case managers start release planning for wāhine during the initial contact, including engagement with whānau to ensure support upon release. Contact with whānau, often in the form of reintegration hui, continues up to a prisoner's release date to ensure appropriate and up to date planning and support systems are in place.
294. The Case Management team told us they have good relationships with Community Corrections to assist wāhine to transition to the community on release.

295. Release to Work is a type of temporary release which allows wāhine to work in the community.<sup>58</sup>
296. The Release to Work broker works with the Ministry of Social Development to source work opportunities and help wāhine successfully reintegrate back into their community. This role was vacant at the time of our inspection but is now filled. Release to Work employment opportunities were in distribution, retail and factory work.
297. At the time of our inspection, two women were approved for Release to Work, however this was suspended due to the COVID-19 lockdown. The Assistant Prison Director told us further employment opportunities through Release to Work were currently being sourced.
298. For the period 1 September 2019 to 29 February 2020, 16 applications<sup>59</sup> for guided release<sup>60</sup> were completed. Of these, 12 were approved by an advisory panel, three were awaiting a decision and one was approved as an escorted outing (for short serving prisoners). Wāhine typically completed guided release outings with staff to the Salvation Army (or other community accommodation providers), Vehicle Testing New Zealand for driver licensing, the Department of Internal Affairs to obtain a birth certificate as an identification document, banks to arrange bank accounts and Community Corrections. In 2019, 43 guided release visits were recorded.
299. Two women we spoke with in the Self Care Unit had plans to be employed by Reclaim Another Women (RAW) once released. RAW is a volunteer programme which encourages wāhine to engage in education and rehabilitation programmes and assists with reintegration to the community, including acquisition of skills and employment upon release. Both women spoke positively about RAW and said they were being given leadership opportunities by the organisation.
300. Psychologists told us that while they were currently up to date with their Parole Board reports, the focus on timeliness reduced the time they had available to undertake individual treatment with wāhine. Data for the period 1 September 2019 to 29 February 2020 showed 97% of Parole Board reports met the timeliness standard.

### 2020 Findings

Finding 88. Wāhine are supported through a good range of reintegration opportunities.

Finding 89. There were limited Release to Work opportunities.

Finding 90. Parole reports were completed in a timely way. The focus on timeliness, however, had reduced opportunities for psychologists to undertake individual treatment with wāhine.

<sup>58</sup> Release to Work is available to minimum security prisoners who are serving a sentence of 24 months or less, or have reached their parole eligibility date, or are within 12 months of their sentence end date; and low and low-medium security prisoners who have a release date set by the New Zealand Parole Board.

<sup>59</sup> The 16 applications were for seven women, so some women had more than one guided release.

<sup>60</sup> The guided release programme works with prisoners to gradually reintroduce them to the community. Help is provided to assist prisoners deal with immediate needs such as finding accommodation, opening bank accounts, looking for work or applying for benefits.

## Prison Staff

### 2018 observations

The prison was short-staffed, including nursing staff. Staff were routinely asked to work overtime and additional shifts, contributing to fatigue. In spite of these challenges, staff showed goodwill and maintained positive attitudes.

Staff in the high security units were generally visible and actively managed most wāhine. Most wāhine were positive about their interactions with staff.

### Inspection Standards

- All prison staff, who work with prisoners, have the necessary knowledge, skills and attitude, and are trained to work in line with professional and human rights standards.
- There is an adequate number of custodial staff to manage prisoners safely.
- Staff are good role models for prisoners and relationships between them are professional, positive and courteous.
- Prisoners have a dedicated member of staff who supports them to make positive changes in their lives.
- Prison staff include a sufficient number of specialists, which could include social workers, teachers, trade instructors, counsellors and psychologists.
- Women's prisons are staffed predominantly by women, including in senior roles.
- All staff working in women's prisons have completed training in the gender-specific needs of women and gender sensitivity.

301. The prison had undergone a period of change in its senior management, which had been unsettling and disruptive for the site.
302. At the time of our inspection, the prison had recently permanently appointed a new Prison Director, after several years of seconded staff filling this position. The Prison Director was actively recruiting permanent staff to his management team and was driving a culture change by ensuring appropriately skilled and experienced residential managers, principal corrections officers and senior corrections officers were overseeing day to day operations.
303. Although some staff we spoke with found staff movements unsettling, they appeared to understand the need to have the right people in the right positions. Overall, staff told us they were supportive of the transformation the Prison Director was trying to achieve for the prison.
304. Around 70 percent of staff across the site were women and the management team was predominantly women. Staff ethnicity reflected that of the local community.
305. Corrections demands a high standard of conduct from all employees, and staff are expected to role model pro-social behaviour. Staff across the prison told us there were too few staff to adequately meet the needs of all wāhine, and we observed some staff were not

role modelling and communicating effectively with wāhine, particularly in the high security side of the prison.

306. As highlighted earlier in our report, staff shortages arose often as a result of unscheduled hospital escorts, which took custodial staff away from their core duties. Custodial staff told us they were struggling with the volumes of reporting required each day, which took them away from their engagement with wāhine.
307. Wāhine we spoke with across the prison acknowledged the efforts of staff, but also told us they believe the prison is short staffed. We were told the Prison Director regularly visited residential units to speak with unit staff and wāhine, and understood the challenges facing them.
308. The prison was 46 custodial FTE below its full establishment staffing level and, in addition, 25 staff were unable to be rostered.
309. Due to short staffing, some staff are required to work overtime. We spoke with 40 staff who had recently worked overtime. During our inspection, eight of those staff had to take mandated 10-hour breaks to support their health, safety and well-being.
310. The health services team was led by an Acting Health Centre Manager. There were seven vacant FTE registered nurse positions, as well as a clinical team leader position, a nurse practitioner and two trauma counsellor vacancies. Following our inspection, a nurse practitioner was appointed. Due to short staffing, the health team had been working to a contingency plan since March 2020. A Clinical Quality Assurance Adviser was on site three days a week to provide clinical support and leadership.
311. The Prison Director shared his concerns about staff attrition and vacancies at the site. He told us staff were being lost to other industries and prisons where the cost of housing is more affordable.
312. Many staff we spoke with said they were too busy with day to day operations to engage in Corrections' Hōkai Rangi Strategy and Women's Strategy. Health staff we interviewed were not aware of the Women's Strategy or their role in supporting it. The Prison Director acknowledged at the beginning of our inspection that work was required to bring these strategies to life in the prison.
313. A review of staff training records showed that 94% of custodial staff were up to date in their tactical options certification. More than half of custodial staff had up to date First Aid and Fire Safety certification.
314. Specialist staff training, in areas such as trauma informed practice, had not been repeated or refreshed since the initial training rollout in 2018. Due to staff turnover, many prison staff were unlikely to have received the initial training. The last training for staff working in the Mothers with Babies Unit was in 2018, although we noted that only two staff members who had completed this training were still working in the Self Care and Mothers with Babies units.
315. Several staff told us that during the COVID-19 lockdown period, despite being short staffed due to mandatory self-isolation requirements, the remaining staff across the prison displayed exceptional team work, avoided unplanned absences, and demonstrated a genuine commitment to ensure the safety of their colleagues and the well-being of wāhine.
316. Some staff, including contracted service providers, told us they felt isolated or disconnected from the wider team. The social worker and chaplains felt that if their services

were utilised by prison staff more to help struggling wāhine earlier, some emotional reactions and poor behaviour may be avoided.

317. Staff and wāhine told us morale had improved significantly across the prison since the appointment of the current Prison Director. Staff accepted that the site was on a journey of change and most staff were working more collaboratively towards that transformation. The Prison Director told us he was observing a more positive culture among some staff and daily morning staff briefings were proving to be a good vehicle for visible, positive leadership and encouragement.
318. The prison had introduced its own leadership programme for principal corrections officers and improved its focus on succession planning. The Prison Director presented as having a genuine interest in staff welfare and a determination to improve standards across the prison.

### 2020 Findings

Finding 91. Staff morale is improving since the appointment of a permanent Prison Director, and the prison is on a transformational journey to improve standards and outcomes for wāhine.

Finding 92. The prison is staffed predominantly by women, including in senior roles.

Finding 93. Staff and wāhine told us there were insufficient numbers of staff to adequately respond to the needs of wāhine.

Finding 94. There were a significant number of vacancies for health staff.

Finding 95. Corrections' Hōkai Rangi Strategy and Women's Strategy are not yet fully integrated into staff practice and culture.

Finding 96. Specialist training for staff, including trauma informed practice and Mothers with Babies Unit training, is not currently provided on a regular basis.



## Appendix A – Images



Image 1. AVL booth



Image 2. Mirimiri Te Aroha mural



Image 3. Intervention and Support Unit



Image 4. Motivation and Support Unit cell



Image 5. Programmes and Assessment Unit kitchen and staff base

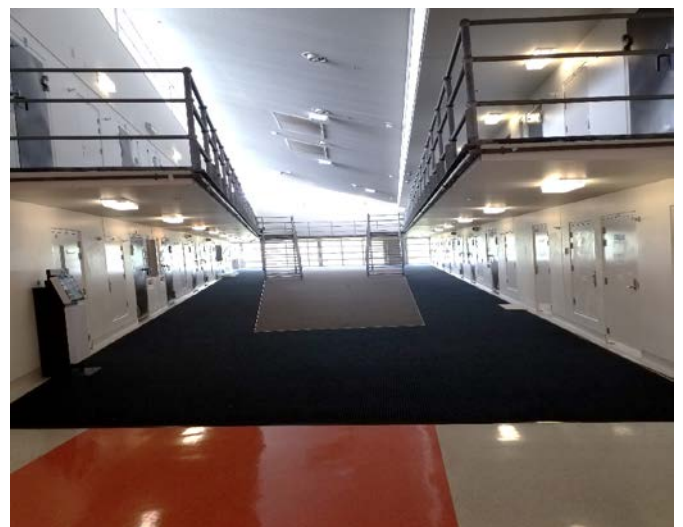


Image 6. Programmes and Assessment Unit





**Image 7. Prisoner kiosk covered with bird faeces**



**Image 8. Uncovered mattress**



**Image 9. Mothers with Babies Unit**



**Image 10. High security units yard**



**Image 11. Visits area with mural**



**Image 12. Prison library**



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