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Janis Adair
Chief Inspector
Department of Corrections
By email: janis.adair@corrections.govt.nz

Tēnā koe Janis

Report of the Independent Inquiry into the Waikeria Prison Riot

I am writing to provide Ara Poutama Aotearoa - Corrections' fourth update on progress against the above report.

We have taken several important steps as an organisation since our last formal update to your Office. This work includes strengthening our purpose statement, refreshing Hōkai Rangi, developing our Organisational Roadmap and refining our Performance Framework.

Work is also well advanced on the new facility at Waikeria Prison. We are close to construction completion. There will then be a period of commissioning for several months to carry out final assurance and security checks before new prison units are brought into operation. Corrections is focused on opening the new beds as quickly as possible, but also on ensuring the site is safe and secure for operating for staff, prisoners, and visitors.

Progress against Recommendations

Corrections is continuing to make progress against the 118 accepted and partially accepted recommendations. As at 21 February 2025:

- 55 recommendations have been completed.
- 5 recommendations are considered complete by system leads, pending assurance.
- 58 recommendations are in the process of being completed.

While work is continuing to progress, some outstanding recommendations require significant collaboration, investment and work over the long term to implement. As we advised in our previous update, we expect the fiscal environment we are operating in to impact our approach, and pace, in responding to recommendations.

A dashboard overview of our progress against the recommendations to date is attached. Future updates will focus on newly completed recommendations and those with a 'due next' due date within the next six months. We have grouped the recommendations into sections in the dashboard and followed the same groupings for the detailed updates below. As in our previous correspondence, relevant recommendations from the report are referenced by bracketed number throughout the below update.

Monitoring and assurance

Our Complaint Support Lead (CSL) pilot has transitioned to a business-as-usual model with three CSL roles working towards providing support to all sites. Sites presently working with a CSL, in various support models, are: Hawkes Bay Regional Prison, Christchurch Women's Prison, Christchurch Men's Prison, Otago Corrections Facility, Invercargill Prison, Auckland Region Women's Corrections Facility, Rimutaka Prison, Rolleston Prison, Whanganui Prison, Auckland Prison and Manawatu Prison.

The Complaints Resolution Team is exploring ways that we can expand the timeliness acknowledgement key performance indicator in Resolve (our centralised application used to manage and resolve complaints and other issues) and apply a similar measure to allegations (14). This would improve visibility of the practice of acknowledging complaints and enable support to be provided to sites where this is not happening in a timely way.

We are continuing a complaints-focused review of Corrections' induction policy and how well this fits with site practice (13).

The Organisational Assurance and Preparedness team is currently in the testing phase for the development of their Organisational Assurance Tools. The Organisational Assurance Framework will set assurance responsibilities, principles, and a common assurance language. It will also provide guidance and a single approach for completing first- and second-line assurance that can be integrated into structures, policies, processes, and procedures, creating shared methods, language and tools. It will promote the importance of assurance for organisational governance and management.

Infrastructure & digital

A site review of all prisons was completed following the Waikeria riot. This exercise included facility-wide checks, assessing the integrity of yard coverings, mesh, and roof tops (31). Any waste or loose materials was removed. Regular site inspections are part of the asset management/facility management providers' obligation under contract with us, this includes inspecting the roof (34). We have a site inspection checklist demonstrating the inspection protocols and what inspections entail. All staff on site should be alert to, and report, any noted facility defects. Remediation work is completed through the Downer, and Cushman & Wakefield, work management system. This enables all jobs to be recorded and tracked with commentary about the work undertaken and any potential cause of failure. Procedures for contractors or sub-contractors who come on site to undertake repairs or maintenance require work areas to be sectioned off to prevent unauthorised access and the removal of materials and equipment. These recommendations are now, respectively, complete or ready for assurance for closure.

The Facilities Management team has investigated anti-climb additions to buildings (32) and these have been implemented at sites such as Christchurch Women's Prison and Manawatu Prison. The risk of access to building roofs is being considered as part of the Custodial Design Standards and will likely be included into other design tools (including Safety in Design) that support the safer design of infrastructure.

Most modernised prisons have a Master Control Room (MCR) and Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) housed in the gatehouse within the secure perimeter of the site. The purpose of the MCR is to maintain security and enable communication, including in an emergency. The EOC is used by multiple parties in the event of an emergency. Most larger sites also have a Central Control Room (CCR). The CCR is a functional back-up for the MCR. It is recommended that sites have an MCR and CCR, along with split equipment/server rooms for resilience and capability (33).

All Corrections prisons have an MCR and EOC. Nine sites do not have a CCR. Of these, one site is currently building a CCR, and another is considering building one. Each site has Business Continuity Plans (BCPs), comprising an Asset BCP and an Operations BCP. These plans are currently under review. Additionally, 11 new regional plans, incorporating prison operational contingencies, have been developed following the Te Ara Whakamua restructure. Contingencies for MCRs are being explored as part of the BCP process for each site. This is a long-term piece of work. While all sites are under review for this benefit as part of improvements, lower security prisons are less likely to be identified for CCR capability. Sites also have emergency plans and there is work happening to establish national standards with Emergency Responders.

The Waikeria New Build has incorporated a twinned MCR. Custodial Design standards specify a backup MCR, meaning that future new builds will also incorporate this twinned MCR feature. The Custodial Design Standards Resilience Guideline (the Resilience Guideline) has been drafted and is pending approval. The Resilience Guideline is for new sites and provides guidance/requirements for improving resilience at existing sites. There is more work to be done in this space. The Resilience Guideline is expected to support the resilience of sites but will not be the sole artefact for doing so.

Body-worn cameras (BWC) must be worn by all Custodial Officers unless a risk assessment determines they are not required while on frontline duty. Issuing other staff with body-worn cameras is based on risk. This measure aims to prevent and record violent and/or aggressive behaviours. Guidance and reminders have been shared with staff about the activation of the BWC. Calculating the exact number of staff to BWC availability across the network is challenging due to variations in attendance through unplanned absences and acute demand, such as hospital or other unanticipated escorts. We are comfortable that the number of available cameras is adequate when a risk-based approach to their deployment is taken, as intended. Prison General Managers are expected to conduct a risk assessment process to determine where BWC are an effective personal protective equipment item and where they are not. For instance, not all staff in a visits centre need to wear BWC; those equipped with cameras would respond if an incident occurred. Our intention is to simplify the risk assessment process for prison leadership, not to increase the number of cameras based on the current operational settings (86).

Physical and online information storage options (91, 92) are included in backlog prioritisation as part of deliverables in the Information Management Programme Investment Case for the 2025/26 financial year. Progress will be subject to approval of the Investment Case.

Corrections has asbestos management plans in place for all sites (120). A new, overarching Asbestos Management Plan for the prison portfolio is planned. The Asset Management team has audited all pre-2000 sites and recorded at a granular, room-by-room level, where asbestos is suspected to be present. This information is accessible for contractors via hard copies kept on site. All contractors are required to access this information before undertaking works on site. This information will be held at site level, within asset management, and at the gatehouse.

Professional Practice and Capability uplift

In terms of work to shift and improve our organisational culture, the Leadership Development Framework has been released this month. Expectations will be set for all leaders to prioritise time for one-to-ones or Kōrero Whakawhanake. These are development conversations that adopt a strength-based approach. The updated version of Kōrero Whakawhanake aims to make it easy for leaders to plan discussions around oranga (wellbeing), performance on the job, followed by development conversations. Reinforcing the 'leader led' message and

demonstrating the link to the development of a learning culture will foster a capable, connected workforce (16).

Firefighting capabilities and training for custodial officers (36) is achieved through completion of NZQA unit standard 3271: 'Suppress fire using hand extinguishers and fixed hose reels.' This has been customised for Corrections and speaks specifically to cell fires. It is mandatory for all custodial officers. Initial training is provided during the Corrections Officer Development Pathway and refreshed every two years alongside a first aid refresher. Delivery methods for the training are determined by each site but must be signed off by a manager and current fire warden, and records kept on site. The fire protection assets across prisons are part of the planned maintenance regime which involves regular inspections and maintenance. This recommendation is pending assurance for closure.

All Coordinated Incident Management System (CIMS) training delivery is presently on hold while the Capability Pathways Governance group completes a capability prioritisation exercise for Corrections.

Policy and instructions for the use of handcuffs (10) and provision of razors (28) have been reviewed and determined fit-for-purpose. Business Partnering Organisational Resilience Learning and Assurance plan to repeat a previous exercise reaching out to sites for point-in-time assurance of compliance with the handcuffs and razor policies and processes. Specifically in relation to handcuffs, that there are no instructions directing the use of handcuffs, or waist restraints in conjunction with handcuffs, for internal escorts as a blanket rule. Also, that all staff are aware of the requirement of reasonable grounds, and considerations for necessity, prior to the application of handcuffs or waist restraints in conjunction with handcuffs.

Safety and Wellbeing

Corrections has developed formal guidance that sets out the requirement for hazardous substances storage on sites (35). The Critical Control Protocol provides standards and expectations on how to store, use, and dispose of these substances safely. We have a system of assurance checks. The Critical Control Assessments is a comprehensive tool that assesses whether the critical and supporting controls are effective at controlling the risk and keeping staff and others on site safe. These assessments are completed annually. The Critical Control Inspection is a more frequent check completed by Health and Safety Representatives confirming that safety controls are in place as they should be. Together these checks monitor control application and provide insights to support improvements in relation to the volume and storage of hazardous substances on our sites.

We are working to ensure that hazardous substance storage areas, where larger volumes or those that trigger higher levels of compliance requirements are held, meet requirements (emergency response, training, storage etc.) Sites are being asked to reduce substance volumes or store them more safely, while also progressing work with location compliance and emergency response plans. Both of these workstreams are actively helping to ensure sites store and use their hazardous substances more safely, which will reduce fire risk. This recommendation has now been closed.

Corrections' Staff Support team has developed a process to support staff after critical incidents (106). In addition, they are working with the Emergency Management team to develop a process that will support staff on large scale events such as the Waikeria riot. These procedures are based on best practice and align with other agencies such as Fire and Emergency New Zealand, the New Zealand Police, the New Zealand Defence Force and Hato Hone St John. They will also incorporate the CIMS model and be influenced by the

New Zealand Civil Defence to ensure consistency in response. Staff also have direct access to Instep EAP who can offer on-site support and assistance to minimise the disruption and distress associated with incidents of trauma, violence, or crisis. This recommendation is now complete.

Strategy, policy & procedures

In October 2024, Corrections launched the Safer Prison Plan. The Plan focuses on four key areas of prison safety, including managing gangs and relationship dynamics. There are national and site level actions around gang management. Sites will be expected to have a local understanding of gangs and meetings to support placement decisions. There is a push for a national plan review that focuses on gang management in three categories, community, prison, and transnational organised crime (TNOC). We expect to release a TNOC strategy in the first half of 2025 to support all prison sites with TNOC management. There is also increased national oversight under the People of Extreme Risk Directorate (PERD) that actively manages these men and their placement within the network.

Emergency Management and Tactical Response

Corrections' Hostage Policy was approved and published in October 2024. The Hostage policy and Prison Negotiation Team manual clearly set out the circumstances in which consideration must be given to handing control of an incident over to Police, given increased risk and threat to life (57). This is also referenced in the Prison Emergency Response Plan (PERM). Unified Control, involving more than one controller from two or more agencies, is taught during the Corrections CIMS 4 training course. The Major Incidents Schedule to our memorandum of understanding with the NZ Police also includes direction around transfer of control to NZ Police. This recommendation is complete.

Equipment provided for negotiators is set out in the Prison Negotiation Manual (75). The Inspectorate's report states, "The Prison Negotiation Team had to rely on Post-it Notes to communicate with each other and did not use on-body cameras to record interactions with the prisoners." Post-it notes are the accepted method of communication between staff in a negotiation cell. The note moves from the negotiator to the cell and is then transcribed onto a flipchart so all incoming negotiators have access to the same information, including following shift change. Radios are not used in a negotiation because they can cause distractions and lead to hostage takers asking for them. At present, negotiators do not wear body-worn cameras at serious incidents as they are standing behind Advanced Control and Restraint (ACR) staff who will have shields (in front and above) so the cameras will be of no use. ACR will be wearing body-worn cameras. This recommendation is complete.

Unique identifiers (77) which are applied to all ACR members helmet's, front and rear, have been distributed to all Unit Commanders. Audit processes will ensure the unique identifiers are applied correctly and as directed.

We have provided advice and procedures to EOCs at all prisons to ensure site plans are available and responsibility for keeping these up to date is clearly assigned (81). The Principal Adviser Specialist Search continues to provide support through site visits, live operational training, and specialist support to site leaders. This has garnered positive feedback from our sites. The Principal Adviser has also commenced a 'live feed' process, whereby sites can make contact and talk through potential situations or live events, and discuss planning and response options. Current site plans are always available at prisons from Downers and also through our Asset Management Team. Strategic Asset Management has undertaken a project using drones to update detailed aerial photos for each prison. This recommendation is now complete.

The updated Delegation Policy includes advice on delegations and approvals in an emergency (96) and has been published on Tātou. Corrections' emergency procurement guidelines have also been updated and published. This has addressed the issue of delegations for emergency 'Controller' positions which are not role specific. A Regional Commissioner or General Manager may hold prison delegations/authority for decision-making, for example, but a Controller may not always be one of these roles. This is particularly a consideration for protracted incidents where shift changes of Controllers occur. This recommendation has now been met.

Corrections has reviewed and considered where actual or perceived conflicts of interest may be present for staff who take on prison negotiator roles (118) as well as the make-up and selection process for negotiators. Prior to selection, all negotiators must have their manager's approval to join the team and to respond to incidents. Being a prison negotiator is a voluntary role and the staff member's substantive role must take priority. Where a potential conflict arises, this will be managed on a case-by-case basis and if participation is not appropriate the person will not be called on. Considering the Inspectorate's comments in the report, the potential for conflict between health (nurse) roles and the negotiator role has been specifically considered with support from the Deputy Chief Executive Pae Ora. No inherent professional or ethical conflicts were identified. This recommendation is now closed.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet and discuss any aspect of this response should you have any questions. We look forward to keeping you and your team involved and updated as this work progresses.

Nāku noa, nā



Richard Waggott
Deputy Chief Executive – Organisation Resilience & Safety