

Mount Eden Corrections Facility Inspection – October 2024

Quick-read summary

Mā te titiro me te whakarongo ka puta mai te māramatanga -
By looking and listening, we will gain insight.

This report was published in August 2025 by the Office of the Inspectorate.

The Inspectorate is part of the Department of Corrections but works independently. We inspect prisons to make sure prisoners are treated fairly.

What we did:

- We visited Mount Eden Corrections Facility (MECF) 7 – 25 October to carry out the inspection.
- We talked to **127 prisoners.**
- We talked to **142 staff and service providers.**
- We got information from the prison and Corrections.

At the time of the inspection:

- There were **1,102 people in the prison.**
- Almost all of them **(1,042)** were on remand.
- **489** of the people were Māori.



Remand prisoners at MECF

- MECF was a busy remand prison; staff managed around **600+ new prisoners**, **600 prison exits**, and **300 prison transfers** a month (between March – August 2024).
- Being 'on remand' means you are held in prison and are either 'remand accused' (not yet convicted of a crime) or 'remand convicted' (convicted but not yet sentenced).
- Prisoners came and went a lot; most were at MECF for only a few weeks or months.
- Remand prisoners often have high health needs.
- MECF holds more prisoners on remand than any other prison in New Zealand.

What did prisoners say?

- They spent most of their time locked in their cells and were bored and stressed.
- Many wanted more to do – more jobs, education and programmes.
- Some did not feel safe and had seen or experienced bullying.
- Some were worried about cell intercom calls not being answered by staff.

What did we find?

We found some positives and some things that could be better, including:

- The prison leadership team was stable and settled.
- Many staff had worked in a New Zealand prison for less than two years.
- Corrections officers were short-staffed. Some felt pressured and had little time to talk with prisoners.
- Non-custodial staff (e.g. Case Managers, Education Tutors, and mental health staff) sometimes had trouble getting to see prisoners.
- Māori prisoners had little or no access to cultural practices and programmes.
- Some prisoners had experienced delays in getting healthcare, though once they saw a member of the health team, they got good care.
- One unit was being run as an alcohol and drug recovery unit which was positive.
- The prison was mostly clean and tidy; prisoner telephones and self-service kiosks were working.
- The prison was a stark place, with no green spaces and little natural light.
- Most prisoners were locked in their cells for around 22 hours a day.
- Around 60 prisoners had jobs in prison industries, including the prison kitchen and laundry, and others had part-time unit-based work such as cleaning.
- Prisoners could have one 30-minute visit a week with family/whānau.
- There were very few rehabilitation programmes or things for prisoners to do.
- Some prisoners were being released without bank accounts, photo identification or a place to live.

What happens next?

After an inspection, the prison creates an action plan to try to fix any problems.

The prison sends the action plan to the Inspectorate and Inspectors check on progress.

Thank
you to all
who talked with
us and helped
with this
report.

More information

The full inspection report is available in prison libraries and online at: <https://inspectorate.corrections.govt.nz/>