

9 November 2021

Ti Lamusse
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Tēnā koe Ti

Official Information Act request – research into the fall in the prison population

Thank you for your request dated 29 October 2021 for information about the fall in the prison population. Your request has been considered in accordance with the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). You have asked:

- 1) Since January 1 2018, has the Ministry (or its contractors) conducted any research investigating the causes of the falling prison population? If so, please provide me with the title of those pieces of research, and the date they were completed. If research has commenced but it is not yet complete, please provide me with the start date of the research and the expected completion date.*
- 2) Please provide me with all the documents identified in response to question 1.*

The Ministry has not completed or commissioned anyone to conduct research to specifically investigate why the prison population is falling.

However, each year we do sector projections that provide an overview of what is happening in the justice system, and what we project the population will be in the future under current settings. These can be found at <https://www.justice.govt.nz/justice-sector-policy/research-data/justice-sector-forecast/>.

Since the prison population has been falling since early 2018, we suggest reviewing the following reports:

- 2018 Prison Projection - <https://www.justice.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Publications/Justice-Sector-Prison-Projection-Report-2018.pdf>
- 2019 Prison Projection - <https://www.justice.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Publications/3.-JS-Prison-Projection-Report-v2.1.pdf>
- 2020 Justice Sector Projections - <https://www.justice.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Publications/imGcg9-2020-Justice-sector-projection-report-v2.1.pdf>

Further to the above, the Justice Sector is currently in the process of consulting on a Long-Term Insights Briefing. The proposed topic is “Long-term insights about imprisonment and what these tell us about future risks and opportunities”. Within the topic there is likely to be further analytical working looking at what has driven the prison population down since 2018.

Please note that you can provide your thoughts on the topic and ask any underlying questions via the public consultation process here: <https://www.justice.govt.nz/justice-sector-policy/key-initiatives/justice-sector-long-term-insights-briefing>.

The Ministry notes that your request has also been made to both The Department of Corrections and New Zealand Police; you can expect to hear back from both Agencies in due course.

You have the right under section 28(3) of the Act to complain to the Ombudsman about this response. The Ombudsman may be contacted by writing to info@ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Nāku noa, nā



Anton Youngman
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