



09 December 2016

C81002

Ti Lamusse
fyi-request-4752-cbacf289@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Mr Lamusse

Thank you for your email of 13 October 2016, received by the Department of Corrections on 19 October 2016, requesting information about prisoner employment in the refurbishment programme with Housing New Zealand and Spring Hill Corrections Facility and Rolleston Prison. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

As you will be aware, Housing New Zealand (HNZ) transferred your request to the Department, as the information is deemed more closely related to the functions of the Department of Corrections.

The Department manages approximately 10,000 prisoners at any one time, the majority of whom have limited education or work experience. We know that prisoners who find sustainable employment on release from prison are less likely to re-offend. Research has found that longer periods in Offender Employment initiatives were associated with lower rates of reconviction. For this reason, we offer a wide range of programmes to improve prisoner employment opportunities on release from prison, thereby reducing re-offending and improving public safety.

We operate over 140 Offender Employment operations in prisons across the country. These industries aim to provide prisoners with work environments that are, as closely as possible, comparable to industry environments. Examples include farming, nurseries, organics, forestry, timber processing, furniture making, textiles, catering, engineering, concrete product manufacturing and printing. These activities allow prisoners to gain experience and skills to enable them to obtain sustainable employment on release from prison. Prisoners are overwhelmingly enthusiastic about being provided with the opportunity and responsibility of learning new skills.

In addition to Offender Employment operations, we also offer other activities such as classroom based qualifications and prison-based work in kitchens, laundries and grounds maintenance. For more information on *Offender Employment*, please refer to the *Education, Training and Employment* section of the Department's external website via the link below:

<http://www.corrections.govt.nz/about-us/fact-sheets/managing-offenders.html>

The Department of Corrections offers trade training and qualifications in construction and infrastructure in eight of our prisons throughout New Zealand. We have building refurbishment yards at Rolleston Prison and Spring Hill Corrections Facility (SHCF) where we refurbish Housing New Zealand Corporation houses. There is also a new builds yard at SHCF which has covered bays for the construction of new buildings such as classrooms.

The main benefits to prisoners working on the construction projects are skills, training and qualifications gained, all of which makes the individual more job ready on release and more likely to go on and live an offence free life.

Prisoner employment rates vary depending on the competency level and range from \$0.20 per hour to \$0.60 per hour in the construction yard.

The framework consists of six classes of payment:

- Class zero \$0.00
- Class one \$2.70 per week, or \$0.09 per hour
- Class two \$0.20 per hour
- Class three \$0.30 per hour
- Class four \$0.40 per hour
- Class five \$0.60 per hour
- Class six (programmes) \$0.20 to \$0.40 per hour, or employment rate if employed.

Further information regarding the prisoner incentive framework, can be found on the Department's website via the following link:

http://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/policy_and_legislation/inmate-employment-contents/section-c-inmate-employment-training.html

You have asked several questions regarding the refurbishment projects at Rolleston Prison and Spring Hill Corrections Facility. These have been addressed below.

1) The release states that "more than 40 houses" have been refurbished at Rolleston prison.

a) How many prisoners took part in this refurbishment?

On average, 65 prisoners per day worked on the 40 houses (based on a 5 day working week).

b) How many work hours were spent on the refurbishment?

For the 40 houses this equated to 51,960 prisoner (man) hours. Instructor and custodial officer hours are not included.

c) How many hours, on average, did it take for a house to be refurbished and how many prisoners worked on each house at any given time?

Based on the above figures of 51,960 hours across 40 houses, this equates to approximately 1,299 hours.

The number of prisoners that worked on each house varies throughout the project but the average is 10 prisoners across the different trades. Prisoners are split into four main categories Carpenters, Painters, Plasterers and Yard workers.

d) Were the prisoners paid for their work by Housing New Zealand? If yes, what was the hourly rate paid to prisoners? What was the total amount paid to prisoners for their labour on this project?

Prisoners working in the Construction Yard are paid by Corrections not Housing NZ and in line with standard Corrections incentive framework.

e) Was the Department of Corrections paid for the work done by prisoners by Housing New Zealand? If yes, what was the total amount paid to the Department of Corrections?

No. There is however an agreed contract price between Corrections and HNZ but is not related to prisoner labour.

f) Was any transfer of funds made between Housing New Zealand and the Department of Corrections in compensation for the labour hours of prisoners?

No.

2) The release states that at "Spring Hill Prison in Waikato, 71 have been refurbished since 2008."

a) How many prisoners took part in this refurbishment?

There are on average 25 prisoners working at the refurbishment yard. The prisoners will work alongside a qualified Instructor. This includes various trade work – building, carpentry, painting, plastering and plumbing. Since 2008, SHCF have employed approximately 500 prisoners.

b) How many work hours were spent on this refurbishment?

The prisoners work a 40 hour week, eight hours five days a week.

c) How many hours, on average, did it take for a house to be refurbished and how many prisoners worked on each house at any given time?

Each property takes on average six months to complete. Each trade will carry out the work at various times during the build, on average four to six prisoners and their Instructor will be working in each house at any given time. This works out to be approximately 6,240 hours on each build project.

d) Were the prisoners paid for their work by Housing New Zealand? If yes, what was the hourly rate paid to prisoners? What was the total amount paid to prisoners for their labour on this project?

Prisoners working in the Construction Yard are paid by Corrections not Housing NZ and in line with standard Corrections incentive framework.

e) Was the Department of Corrections paid for the work done by prisoners by Housing New Zealand? If yes, what was the total amount paid to the Department of Corrections?

No. There is however an agreed contract price between Corrections and HNZ but is not related to prisoner labour.

f) Was any transfer of funds made between Housing New Zealand and the Department of Corrections in compensation for the labour hours of prisoners?

No.

4) The release also stated that there are further refurbishment projects planned.

a) How much spending is budgeted in fiscal years 2016/17 and 2017/18 as a payment to prisoners for their labour, if any?

I can advise that \$51,956 has been budgeted as payment to prisoners for their labour for the 2016/17 financial year by Corrections.

Note this is paid while prisoners are engaged on an industry training programme ranging from basic skills training through to the attainment of an industry certificate or industry recognised qualification depending on the skill level of the participant.

There are no current forecasts for the 2017/18 financial year and therefore this is part of your request is declined under section 18(e) of the OIA, as the document alleged to contain the information requested does not exist or cannot be found.

b) How much spending is budgeted in fiscal years 2016/17 and 2017/18 as a payment to the Department of Corrections for the work done by prisoners, if any?

I can advise that \$588,602 has been budgeted as a payment to the Department of Corrections for the work done by prisoners during the 2016/17 financial year. Please note, this is not payment received for the work done by prisoners but for completed refurbishments under the agreement with HCNZ under a cost recovery basis. The refurbishments are carried out to appropriate specifications by prisoners undergoing skills training and supervised by appropriately qualified instructors.

There are no current forecasts for the 2017/18 financial year and therefore this part of your request is declined under section 18(e) of the OIA, as the document alleged to contain the information requested does not exist or cannot be found.

c) What is the hour rate, if any, budgeted to be paid to prisoners for their work on the upcoming refurbishment projects.

As mentioned earlier, prisoners are paid in line with the standard Corrections incentive framework.

d) What is the total number of work hours budgeted to be completed by prisoners on these projects in the fiscal years 2016/17 and 2017/18.

I can advise that the total number of work hours to be completed by prisoners on these projects in 2016/17 and 2017/18 are not budgeted. Therefore, this part of your request is declined under section 18(e) of the OIA, as the document alleged to contain the information requested does not exist or cannot be found.

I trust the information provided is of assistance. Should you have any concerns with this response, I would encourage you to raise these with the Department. Alternatively you are advised of your right to also raise any concerns with the Office of the Ombudsman. Contact details are: Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Yours sincerely



Jeremy Lightfoot
National Commissioner