

12 September 2018

C97381

Ti Lamusse  
[fyi-request-8079-6b04e016@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-8079-6b04e016@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Dear Ti

Thank you for your email of 14 June 2018, requesting information about double bunking. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

In the early 2000s, changes to policy, legislation, sentencing practice and offending rates meant that an increasing number of prisoners needed to be accommodated. In response, the number of double-bunked cells across the prison network was increased. Double bunking is common practice internationally, including in Australia and the United Kingdom. The prison population has recently decreased from a peak of 10,820 in March this year to 10,105 as at 30 August 2018.

In order to measure the impact of the practice of double bunking, two phases of research were undertaken. The resulting report is available on our website here: [http://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/research\\_and\\_statistics/prisoner\\_double-bunking\\_perceptions\\_and\\_impacts\\_2012.html](http://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/research_and_statistics/prisoner_double-bunking_perceptions_and_impacts_2012.html). The research found no measurable increase in the rate of incidents involving prisoners in those units during periods when the proportion of double-bunking increased. The research also found that while around 60 percent of prisoners preferred to be housed in single cell accommodation, others thought that sharing a cell could help with their literacy skills and provide some support, particularly for young prisoners accommodated together.

You have requested the following:

1. *The snapshot number and proportion of prisoners in double-bunking, based on the quarterly snapshot prison population figures available on the Corrections website. I.e. please provide the snapshot double-bunked population on March 31, June 30, September 30, and December 31 of each year*

2. *Please provide this data for as far back as records permit*
3. *Please provide the snapshot prison population for each of these dates.*

Please find the number of prisoners sharing cells and the total prison population, by quarter, for the past five years attached as Appendix One.

I hope this information is helpful. 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 raise any concerns with the Office of the Ombudsman, the contact details for which are, Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Yours sincerely



Rachel Leota  
National Commissioner

Appendix One

Number of prisoners sharing cells and the total prison population, by quarter, for the past five years

	30/09/13	31/12/13	31/03/14	30/06/14	30/09/14	31/12/14	31/03/15	30/06/15	30/09/15	31/12/15
Number of prisoners sharing cells	2,428	2,224	2,584	2,534	2,730	2,712	2,802	2,818	2,948	2,996
Total prison population	8,517	8,230	8,520	8,571	8,705	8,641	8,738	8,821	8,978	9,121
Percent of population double bunked (%)	28.5	27.0	30.3	29.6	31.4	31.4	32.1	31.9	32.8	32.8

  

	31/03/16	30/06/16	30/09/16	31/12/16	31/03/17	30/06/17	30/09/17	31/12/17	31/03/18	30/06/18
Number of prisoners sharing cells	3,172	3,384	3,816	3,966	4,034	4,162	4,372	4,346	4,538	4,372
Total prison population	9,273	9,495	9,798	9,914	10,035	10,260	10,470	10,394	10,645	10,646
Percent of population double bunked (%)	34.2	35.6	38.9	40	40.2	40.6	41.8	41.8	42.6	41.1