

Transforming women's imprisonment in Aotearoa by proposing an open prison model

Newsletter 2, November 2021

Open prison spotlight paper complete – brief Zoom kōrero proposed for December and January – comment papers – women's imprisonment spotlight paper complete soon - hui next year.

Kia ora tatou

Our first two papers, a statistical/ policy overview of women in prison and a spotlight paper (brief issues paper) on open prisons are now available for download on the main project site [here](#). Please download and share freely. Comments are always welcome. What questions have we not answered? What else do we need to know?

I have just received some official information material back from Corrections on two matters: the length of time women are held on remand (by year and most serious crime), including separate data for Māori women, and a snapshot of the security rating of women prisoners.

I will write these up this week as a couple of comments on the website and include also in the statistical paper. They raise quite a few issues.

Zoom kōrero on women's imprisonment: help needed

As part of this project, we are keen to host brief 60 minute 'zoom kōrero' on key issues that emerge. We are thinking perhaps fortnightly. With the permission of participants, these could be recorded and made available to others.

There are already several issues in the queue that might make useful and interesting kōrero. For example:

How many women sentenced prisoners should there be? Based on the UK Howard League's recent 'ten point programme' including the view that only a 'tiny' number of women should be in prison, see [our comment](#) here

Why have the numbers of women on remand grown so huge? Based on the figures in our first spotlight report, find it [here](#)

The proportion of sentenced women prisoners who are Māori continues to grow – up to nearly 70% in December 2020: why is this? Based on the figures in our first spotlight report, find it [here](#)

We want to know whether you are interested in participating in kōrero of this kind, what you think of the topics proposed so far, whether you have any other topics you would like to raise, and when would be the best time for you to participate.

Could you please ctrl-click the button below and answer a one-minute survey to determine the answers to these questions. Thanks.

[Click here for one minute survey re zoom chats](#)

Comment papers

There are now three comment papers on the newsletter page of the website, [here](#). Two more are being developed on recent OIA information, as noted above. Keep checking for new material.

One of the comment papers relates to issues raised by the discussants at the HRC's release of the Shalev report 'First do no harm'.

A couple of us also decided we needed to take a position on women's imprisonment, after Professor McIntosh declared she was an 'abolitionist', and we agreed that essentially we were too. The declaration explains that the goal of the project is not to inflict more prisons for women in Aotearoa, but to consider the benefits of a more restorative prison model, should some form of incarceration be necessary. We do intend that the project discuss other alternatives. Your views are welcome.

Women in prison spotlight paper

We are now working on this final spotlight paper. We are trying to keep it brief but there are huge issues. It will be out before Christmas.

Hui

We are still hoping to hold a face to face hui early next year.

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