

Rimutaka Prison

Introduction	<p>Rimutaka Prison is New Zealand's largest prison with capacity to accommodate up to 1216 minimum to maximum security male prisoners.</p> <p>The prison was opened in 1967 and was originally called Wi Tako. It has grown substantially in recent years to accommodate rising prisoner numbers. The prison opened New Zealand's first container-cell unit in 2010.</p> <p>Rimutaka Prison is located in Upper Hutt and employs around 540 staff. It is part of the Prison Services' Southern Region.</p>
Security	<p>Public safety is the Department's highest priority and this is accomplished through the secure incarceration of prisoners.</p> <p>The level of physical security at each prison varies and is dependent on the type of prisoner accommodated. Because Rimutaka Prison has a mix of minimum to maximum security prisoners, the level of physical security at the prison is high.</p> <p>Rimutaka Prison is surrounded by a highly secure perimeter fence topped with razor wire to prevent it being climbed. The area immediately surrounding the perimeter fence is equipped with lighting, surveillance and detection devices.</p> <p>The prison has a single point-of-entry, called the gatehouse. Everyone entering the prison, including staff, passes through a metal detector and their belongings are x-rayed. They are also liable to be searched at anytime; the prison uses a drug dog team to search vehicles, cells and prison grounds. This helps prevent contraband being smuggled into the prison.</p> <p>Electronic security devices and cameras, closed circuit TV, video motion detectors and microwave sensors are also used at Rimutaka Prison.</p>
Reducing re-offending	<p>Reducing re-offending is critical to meeting the Department's overriding objective of improving public safety. Reducing re-offending means fewer offenders commit crime after completing their sentence – resulting in fewer victims, a reduction in the cost of crime and safer communities.</p> <p>Rimutaka Prison provides prisoners with a range of programmes and interventions that are designed to address the primary causes of their offending and to prepare them for release.</p> <p>The most intensive interventions are targeted at prisoners who are assessed as having a high-risk of re-offending, that have severe needs that caused their offending and are motivated to make positive changes in their lives.</p> <p>Every prisoner entering Rimutaka Prison develops an offender plan with their case manager, which they are expected to comply with. The focus of the offender plan is on reducing re-offending on release and is developed following an assessment of a prisoner's risk, needs and motivation. This ensures they are placed on the most appropriate and timely programmes and interventions to address the underlying causes of their offending.</p> <p>Rehabilitation programmes and interventions provided at Rimutaka Prison fall into four main categories: motivational, cognitive-behavioural, employment and education, and reintegrative.</p>

Motivational programmes

Motivational programmes are designed to increase motivation and to encourage and prepare prisoners to confront the causes of their offending.

There are two primary motivational programmes used at Rimutaka Prison: the Tikanga Maori Programme and the Short Motivational Programme.

The **Tikanga Maori Programme** uses Maori philosophy, values, knowledge and practice to help prisoners increase their understanding of their Maori identity and their values, and improve their self-esteem so they become motivated to address the causes of their offending.

The **Short Motivational Programme** aims to increase motivation by increasing a prisoner's problem awareness and recognition, reduce ambivalence, address cognitive distortions, and help them consider options and formulate goals.

Cognitive-behavioural programmes

Cognitive-behavioural programmes aim to reduce re-offending by helping prisoners address the causes of their offending and teach them to identify, analyse and solve problems and make decisions to better their lives. Prisoners also learn how to understand the consequences of their actions and gain control over their own behaviour.

Rimutaka Prison provides two general cognitive-behavioural programmes to prisoners.

The **Medium Intensity Rehabilitation Programme** is designed for prisoners in the middle risk range – that is those not high risk but still enough of a risk to warrant rehabilitation. The programme increases problem awareness and recognition, reduces ambivalence, addresses cognitive distortions, and teaches prisoners to consider options and formulate goals.

The **Short Rehabilitation Programme** is a brief rehabilitation programme aimed at a smaller number of prisoners who require rehabilitation but do not have enough time in their sentence to complete a longer one. The programme is similar to the Medium Intensity Rehabilitation Programme, but is shorter and more intense.

Both the Medium Intensity Rehabilitation Programme and Short Rehabilitation Programme target a range of prisoners and are designed to cover the common elements of all offending.

Specialist units

Rimutaka Prison has a number of specialist units which provide long and intensive rehabilitation programmes aimed at specific causes of offending.

The prison's **Te Whare Manaakitanga** (formerly called the Violence Prevention Unit) provides specialist treatment to high-risk male prisoners with violent convictions. Prisoners in the unit learn the skills necessary to live without violence, including self-management and control of violent impulses, conflict resolution, time-outs and challenging violent thinking. The prisoners also actively learn to change their attitudes towards women and learn to control impulsive behaviours.

Rimutaka's **Drug Treatment Unit** provides a specialist 24-week residential drug and alcohol programme. The programme includes one-to-one and group cognitive-behavioural therapy, education on addiction and change, along with education about building new skills – especially social skills.

Rimutaka also has one of New Zealand's five **Maori Focus Units**. The unit, Te Whare Whakaahura, establishes a culturally appropriate environment in which prisoners can address issues relating to their offending. The Maori Focus Unit is constituted on tikanga Maori principles and operates within a tikanga Maori environment. Through the practice of Maori values and disciplines, and specialist Maori programmes, the Unit aims to bring about positive changes in thinking and behaviour. Te Whare Whakaahura also offers the **Maori Therapeutic Programme**, similar to the Medium Intensity Rehabilitation Programme, but drawing on Maori philosophy, values, knowledge and practice in its delivery.

Rimutaka Prison has New Zealand's only **Faith Based Unit – He Korowai Whakapono**. The unit provides a therapeutic community environment, characterised by prayer-centred daily routine and worship. Prison Fellowship New Zealand provides programmes in the unit that require prisoners to come to terms

with the consequences of their crime on victims, their family and the community.

Prisoner employment Prisoner employment, managed by Corrections Inmate Employment (CIE), plays an integral part in the rehabilitation of prisoners as it provides prisoners with essential work skills and habits. The last prison census in 2003 found that over half of all prisoners were not in paid employment prior to sentencing.

Prisoner employment increases the chance a prisoner will find sustainable work on release and research shows this will result in fewer prisoners being reconvicted.

Rimutaka Prison offers three main types of employment:

- internal activities, such as food preparation
- business-like industries, including a nursery, joinery and workshop.
- commercial work parties.

Prisoners are able to earn credits under the National Qualification Framework, allowing them to work towards qualifications whilst they are engaged in employment and training.

Minimum security prisoners who are nearing release may also be eligible to participate in Release to Work, a form of temporary release that allows prisoners to be in paid work in the community during the day. It provides prisoners with a stable work record and the job is often carried on after a prisoner's released from prison.

Education

There is a strong relationship between a lack of education and criminal behaviour. At the time of the last prison census in 2003, 51.7 per cent of all prisoners had no formal qualifications.

Educational achievement and participation can equip prisoners for self-sufficiency and reduce the barriers to living an offence-free life. A prisoner can enrol in any subject or education programme they consider themselves capable of achieving.

There are four main types of education offered to prisoners at Rimutaka Prison:

- **Foundation Skills** – allows prisoners to develop their reading, writing, speaking, listening, critical thinking, numeracy and problem solving skills
- National Certificate in Educational Achievement (NCEA) – run in conjunction with the Correspondence School
- **Industry Training Qualifications** – earned on-the-job with Corrections Inmate Employment
- **Self-Directed Tertiary Study** – distance learning initiated by prisoners and supported by the Department.

In addition, some computer and hobby classes are also available.

Reintegration

Reintegration programmes aim to reduce re-offending by addressing problems likely to increase a prisoners' risk of re-offending on release.

Being imprisoned can have significant social consequences for a prisoner. They are likely to have lost their job and accommodation, they are unlikely to be able to support their families and their relationships can be adversely affected in other ways. Combined, this can lead offenders into a cycle of institutionalisation.

Rimutaka Prison provides two reintegrative programmes:

- **Living Skills** – a broad-based programme to give prisoners skills and knowledge on how to function effectively in society on their release
- **Parenting Skills** – a group programme designed to teach parenting and relationship skills.

Case managers also work with high-need prisoners at Rimutaka Prison to address their specific reintegrative needs and help them prepare for release in the community.

Rimutaka Prison operates a specialist **Reintegration Unit** for male prisoners

serving the final 12 months of their sentence and who would benefit from specialist support before they return to the community. Prisoners held in these units are assisted to find accommodation and employment, as well as with practical life skills such as managing debt.

Rimutaka Prison also has **Self-Care Units** where longer-serving prisoners may be eligible to spend time as they near release. These are residential-style units inside the prison that let prisoners get used to living in a flatting type environment and give prisoners an opportunity to learn and practise the skills they will need to live independently after release. The Living Skills Programme is also delivered in the Self-Care Units and many prisoners participate on the Release to Work programme.

Prisoners who find sustainable employment on release are less likely to re-offend. Permanently based at Rimutaka Prison, **Work and Income work brokers and case managers** help prisoners nearing release to find suitable work before they are released.

Working with the community

The community has an important role to play in the rehabilitation and transition of prisoners back into the community by supporting and encouraging prisoners to live an offence-free life.

Many sectors of the community are involved in rehabilitating offenders and helping them move back into the community.

Rimutaka Prison has a close relationship with the Pasifika and Maori communities and works closely with local iwi.

The prison also works with a number of support agencies, including the Prisoner's Aid and Rehabilitation Trust (PART), Prison Fellowship and the Salvation Army, to support the successful reintegration of prisoners back into the community.

A large number of people also regularly donate their time, energy and expertise as volunteers with Rimutaka Prison.

Volunteers provide invaluable support for prisoners and their families and give prisoners the opportunity to spend their free time constructively through music, art or sport.

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