**Waikeria Corrections and Treatment Facility FAQs**

**Why is the facility needed?**

The Government’s goal is to reduce the prison population by 30% over 15 years.

To achieve this goal we need the right facilities to provide the treatment, programmes and training that prisoners need to help them start to turn their lives around.

The upper Waikeria prison is not fit for purpose and needs to be retired.

The new purpose-built facility will provide a modern environment to help deliver better education, employment and rehabilitation programmes for high security prisoners. This is a fundamental change and the design of the new facility supports this as well as addressing capacity pressures. In addition a new world class mental health facility will provide services to an additional 100 prisoners from across the network.

**How many beds are there going to be?**

The proposal is for a 500 bed facility at Waikeria. And additional 100 bed purpose-built mental health treatment unit.

**Why not more beds? Why was the scale of the facility reduced?**

Mega prisons don’t work. And although building a 1500 – 2000 prison facility would address many of the capacity issues facing the prison network from 2021/22 – it does nothing to address the real issue, which is too many people are entering the justice system and going to prison.

Instead this proposal provides the best balance between the certain capacity requirements and new purpose build mental health beds.

**Are you looking at building another prison?**

This Government has agreed that Corrections will look at adding an additional 1000 beds to the prison network to address some of the capacity issues. A 500 bed facility will be built in Waikeria to replace the old high security upper jail, as well as an additional 100 bed purpose built mental health treatment unit.

We are developing a prison network strategy, and part of the strategy will look at alternative ways to provide accommodation options for a further 400 prisoners. Rather than looking to build large scale prisons, we want to look at alternative options like transitional housing.

**What does this mean for staff and prisoners at Waikeria Prison?**

The existing operations at Waikeria Prison will continue. Our intention is to permanently retire the upper Waikeria jail it from service, but not until the building of the new facilities are completed.

Construction of the new facility will be planned to minimise disruption to existing operations and to the staff as much as possible. Corrections is working closely with the contractor to develop a construction management plan and staff will be kept informed of any updates. Waikeria Prison will be fully operational throughout the construction phase.

**What will the new facility look like?**

This will be a modern, built for purpose prison. There is a large emphasis on provision of education, vocational training, and rehabilitation in the new design. In addition a new world class mental health facility will provide services to an additional 100 prisoners from across the network.

**Why are specialist mental health services being provided?**

A 2015 Corrections study concluded that 36.3% of the prison population have had an mental disorder in the previous 12 months, and 46.4% of prisoners having a mental disorder at some point in their lifetime.

The concept of developing purpose-built treatment facilities on prison sites has been examined by Corrections as part of work on the design of a potential development at Waikeria, because of their comprehensive approach to mental health services and their focus on providing a more humane environment for people with serious mental health issues.

**What are the benefits of smaller prisons versus mega prisons?**

Recent international comparison by the Ministry of Justice found that one of the common characteristics of countries with low prison populations was the prevalence of prisons that were smaller and less crowded.

In the United Kingdom, Her Majesty’s Inspector of Prisons 2007-2008 Annual Report: *“Evidence shows that small prisons perform better than large ones…large prisons are more likely to be unsafe, and to need to rely more on force…taking into account other variables, size is the most influential predictor of performance against the tests of safety and respect, and overall, and that resettlement is best provided in prisons close to home.”*

International evidence indicates that larger prisons (greater than 500 beds) tend to have worse outcomes in terms of safety, misconduct, staff satisfaction, and rehabilitative outcomes, than smaller ones.

Stated benefits of small prisons include:

* + They can be built locally, allowing prisoners to be closer to their families
  + Staff morale is typically higher in small facilities, as management is more visible and people are more likely to know each other meaning social cohesion is higher
  + They rely on dynamic security features (e.g. greater use of guards) rather than automated systems, providing a better ability to monitor prisoner wellbeing.

Evidence suggests that large prisons can result in poor social environments and prisoner outcomes because they can be impersonal and focus on procedure rather than people. Relationships between staff and managers can also become distant in a large prison resulting in inadequate supervision and undesirable behaviours.

**How much will this cost?**

The final cost subject to negotiations with the preferred bidder Cornerstone Infrastructure Partners (CIP).

The total project cost, including other works Corrections have to carry out on the Waikeria site, is expected to be around $750m.

Negotiations with CIP are in an advanced state, and subject to finalisation of the design and cost over the next two months, the contract with CIP is expected to be ready to be signed in August 2018.

**When does construction begin?**

Work has already commenced on a number ancillary works required to support the Waikeria Corrections and Treatment Facility, which need to be completed prior to the facility coming into service.

These include the safety and access improvements on the local road, the intersection of State Highway, as well as other infrastructure.

The main earthworks will commence in August 2018 pending the signing of the contract with construction due to be complete in early 2022.

**When does the prison open?**

The first prisoner will be received in the first quarter of 2022.

**What other steps are being taken to address long term and medium prison population concerns? (Network Development Strategy)**

Given the current stretched state of the prison network, we are working on a strategy for developing the network that reflects and promotes the Government’s objectives within the justice system. This work will help guide long term plans as well as medium term decisions.

This network development strategy will be developed in the next six months. The strategy will:

* Clearly define the Government’s objectives for the corrections system, and its role within a safer and more effective criminal justice system.
* Assess the current state of the prison network – both its operating model and its infrastructure – and identify any gaps that must be bridged by the strategy.
* Analyse the full array of options available to address these gap and deliver on the Government’s objectives. This would include different operating models and different infrastructure, and be underpinned by a practical need to address capacity pressures.
* Present recommendations for change and investment based on the results, and outline funding requirements, how delivery would occur, how governance would be configured, and how benefits would be measured.

**What does this PPP contract include?**

For this project, a Public Private Partnership (PPP) means that a private sector consortium signs a contract with Corrections to finance, design, build and maintain the new facility for the duration of the contract, expected to be for a period of 25 years and hand it back in a specified condition. The consortium is likely to include investors, banks, building designers, constructors, and specialist AM/FM and electronic security providers. The operation of the prison and custody of prisoners will be carried out by Corrections.

**Why use a PPP?**

A PPP allows Corrections to use private sector expertise so that new ideas and innovations can be applied to this project, while delivering value for money. While this PPP will not include the operation of the new facility, innovations in building design and whole-of-life asset management will introduce fresh thinking. These innovations will benefit the new facility, and where possible could be transferred to the wider prison network.