

MAKING IT BETTER FOR OUR CUSTOMERS

Welcome to the third issue of Justice Matters. Chief Executive Andrew Bridgman discusses what we're doing, and need to do, to make sure our customers have a better experience of the justice system; we highlight how restorative justice and iwi panels are making a difference for our customers; and Justice Minister Amy Adams begins a regular column for us. In this issue, she discusses a new approach to protecting vulnerable New Zealanders.



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Our customers are key to every step we take



Simon and Garfunkel's 'Keep the customer satisfied' is a song title that resonates with what we're about at the Ministry of Justice.

In the March issue of *Justice Matters* I talked about the journey we're on to provide modern, accessible, people-centred justice services that deliver better outcomes for New Zealanders.

Our customers are central to that journey.

When we started to talk about customers in the Ministry of Justice we came in for some flak. It was as if talking about customers somehow took away from what was important about the courts. In fact, the reverse is true – the customer is our reason for being. And reframing our thinking about this has been very helpful in cutting through the complexity and focusing on our priorities.

While the principles of justice aren't negotiable, how they're delivered is.

Matariki and Rangatahi Courts, iwi panels, restorative justice, Drug and Alcohol Courts and greater use of less formal processes such as the Disputes Tribunal, arbitration and mediation are all good examples of delivering justice in a way that responds to our customers' needs.

Ensuring the system is people-focused is critical.

At the moment, our customers' experience in the justice system doesn't line up with their expectations of a modern service.

In reframing our thinking around the customer, it's clear that if we're to make changes, we need to improve collaboration across the justice sector and within the Ministry of Justice.

The justice system can be likened to a pie graph made of many segments. There are judges, tribunal members and other judicial officers, court and tribunal registrars, lawyers, Police, Corrections officers and Ministry staff.

It's too easy to focus on our slice of the pie as if we're independent of everyone else and the people we serve. Our customers don't see these distinctions.

When the system is working well, this reflects well on all of us. And the reverse is also true.

While the justice system is complex, it's our job to make it simple for our customers to navigate. We're working towards this in a number of ways.

We've already made many improvements and we're already seeing the benefits.

The upgrade and expansion of audio-visual links between 18 courts and 13 prisons, in partnership with the Department of Corrections, has reduced prison escorts by almost 25% and has improved the safety of the public and prisoners.

Centralised processing of probates has not only improved service to our customers but has reduced the application processing time from 31 to 15 days.

Smarter scheduling in district courts is reducing the time our customers have to wait for their case to be heard.

We've made some forms available online so it's now quicker and easier for our customers to apply to tribunals and licensing authorities.

We also need to look at ourselves to ensure we're best positioned to effect change.

In doing so, it's clear we have too many separate teams and lines of accountability. Also, many similar customer-facing tasks are carried out across multiple business units.

Our customers would be better served by a structure that takes a wider view, that starts with 'what are we here to achieve and for who' rather than 'this is how we do it'.

In April we brought 3 distinct groups – District Courts and Special Jurisdictions, Higher Courts, and Legal and Operational Services – together under a single senior leader. Carl Crafer will take up the position of Chief Operating Officer, Operations and Service Delivery in August. He will join us from the Ministry of Social Development where he is Deputy Chief Executive, Social Housing. In the interim Kevin Jenkins is filling the position.

We believe we've now got the right structural foundation that will allow us to be more adaptable and better able to respond to ongoing change, which is what a modern public service organisation should be able to do.

Further structural change is ongoing. This is a major step towards focusing our service delivery on better outcomes for our customers.

I'm excited about the changes ahead that will enable us to further focus on delivering people-centred justice services. Certainly, by 'trying to keep the customer satisfied' we'll ensure they have a better experience of the justice system.



Andrew Bridgman
Secretary for Justice and Chief Executive



Audio-visual links have reduced prison escorts by almost 25%



Centralising probates processing has reduced application time by 50%



'Smarter scheduling' in courts has reduced waiting times



‘We’re now focusing on what we can do to disrupt the cycle of offending’

**Minister of Justice and Courts,
Amy Adams**

From the Minister ...

Government agencies across the board are working together to help better protect vulnerable New Zealanders.

One of the best ways we can do this is to stop victims from becoming one in the first place, by addressing what causes crime, and how we can prevent it.

In early May, I announced how the government is planning to apply the social investment approach to the criminal justice system.

The Investment Approach to Justice will give justice sector agencies greater access to high-quality analytics and modelling which is designed to help organisations make better informed decisions about where to make investments for maximum impact.

We’ve invested \$2 million in additional funding from the Justice Sector Fund into the work programme to help agencies involved in crime prevention understand patterns of offending behaviour through assembling information on the integrated data infrastructure.

High-quality data means the government is not only able to predict risk and model how to reduce crime and victimisation, but to think differently about interventions and investment in the sector to get different results.

The government invests billions into supporting our most vulnerable people every year, but we simply don’t know enough about what will

make the most difference. We know the groups of people most at risk, but we’re now focusing on what we can do to disrupt the cycle of offending.

Under the Investment Approach to Justice, data and the ability to identify areas of greatest need in our society will help make a difference in reducing the burden of crime on New Zealand’s vulnerable.

I’m proud of the work the Ministry of Justice and the government has undertaken to prevent New Zealanders from being offenders and protect those from becoming victims in the future.

Read more about the Investment Approach to Justice on page 12.

New precinct designed with people in mind

Construction of Christchurch's Justice and Emergency Services Precinct is gaining momentum with about a year to go until the multi-agency building officially opens for business.

The end of the building's major structural work, and completion of the roof, was marked with a topping off ceremony in March attended by Justice Minister Amy Adams.

Exterior cladding of the building is nearing completion and work on the interior is well underway.

Ministry of Justice Chief Executive, Andrew Bridgman, says the building will make life easier for the people who work there and the 900 or so people estimated to visit every day.

'The precinct will embody much of what we're trying to achieve in our drive to modernise courts, and provide customer-focused services.

'With its 19 multi-jurisdictional courtrooms, the precinct will be well equipped to provide full court services for Christchurch with the built-in flexibility to meet changing demands for these services in the future,' Andrew says.

Like many other recently upgraded courts, broadcast quality video-conferencing will be available, allowing the clear presentation of evidence during hearings and remote participation in some types of court events. WiFi will also be available throughout the building.

As with the recently refurbished and extended Manukau District Court, the precinct will also have a one-stop-shop customer service centre with a team trained to provide assistance for all jurisdictions. This means people requiring court services will only need to visit one counter for all enquiries.

For more information, go to justice.govt.nz or check out the Christchurch Justice and Emergency Services Precinct on Facebook



Work from home initiative launched

The daily commute to and from work will end for more Ministry of Justice collections registry officers who will start transitioning to a new innovative working from home environment from 1 July 2016.

Collections General Manager, Bryre Patchell, says 100 collections registry positions will move permanently from the office to working from home over the next 13 months.

Collections officers handle and process fines and reparation enquiries and enforce payment when required.

'The vast majority of people now pay their fines online or over the phone, and these staff don't need to be in any specific location to do their job,' Bryre says.

'We began looking into having people work from home some time ago and, in 2013, began a pilot to test the practical realities of this. It turns out that people involved are happier and more efficient when they work from home.'

The Home Agents pilot found that when working from home, people found it easier to focus, which resulted in them feeling more engaged and being more productive.

'Technology is allowing people to work in ways that weren't previously possible. The ability to access and receive information from anywhere means people now have greater freedom to decide where, when and how they work,' Bryre says.

'It doesn't matter where these staff work so long as they have a suitable space at home and they've got access to broadband. It also opens up future work options for people who live away from the main centres, especially those in rural areas.'

The changes don't affect services to the public who will still be able to pay fines over the phone, online or in person at a Westpac branch, or at a District Court front counter. If they have any questions about fines, they can call 0800 4 FINES as most people do or go to their local court.

Systems have been put in place to make sure private information is securely and properly handled.



Collections officers work from secure computer systems in a paperless environment



Collections officers stay connected with the team and manager using videoconferencing tools and an online chat tool



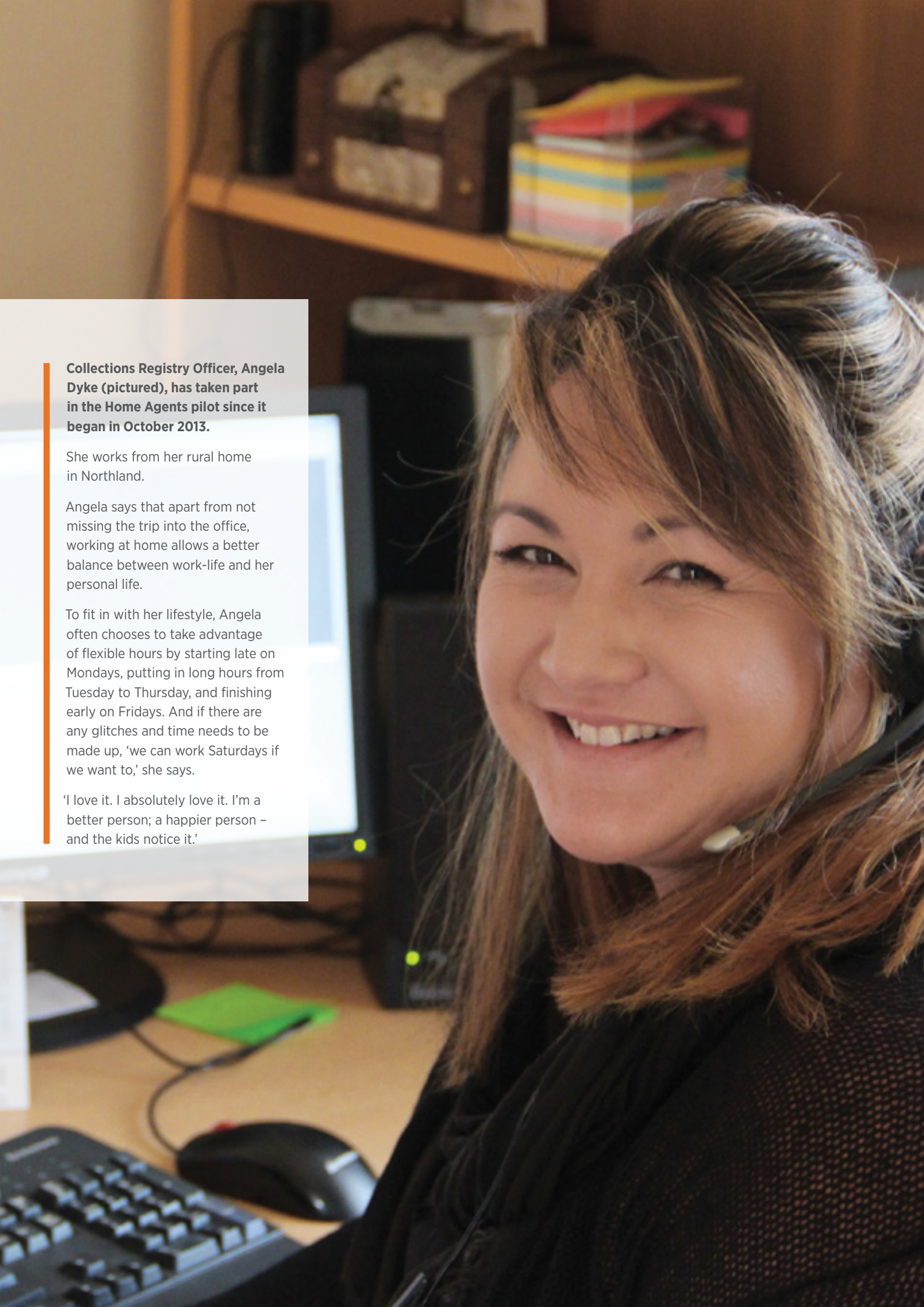
Collections officers can choose the hours they work

Systems are in place to make sure private information is securely and properly handled



The ministry supplies staff with the equipment needed to work from home, including a computer, phone and dedicated broadband





Collections Registry Officer, Angela Dyke (pictured), has taken part in the Home Agents pilot since it began in October 2013.

She works from her rural home in Northland.

Angela says that apart from not missing the trip into the office, working at home allows a better balance between work-life and her personal life.

To fit in with her lifestyle, Angela often chooses to take advantage of flexible hours by starting late on Mondays, putting in long hours from Tuesday to Thursday, and finishing early on Fridays. And if there are any glitches and time needs to be made up, 'we can work Saturdays if we want to,' she says.

'I love it. I absolutely love it. I'm a better person; a happier person - and the kids notice it.'



New website coming

The Ministry of Justice website, justice.govt.nz, will be replaced with a new, more customer-focused site mid-year.

Communication Services General Manager, Suzanne Boslem, says people need to be able to easily access information and resources online.

‘Our new redesigned website uses plain language, is easier to navigate, and will function well on mobile devices,’ Suzanne says.

Two new pilot sites were launched in April:

- **pds.govt.nz**
Public Defence Service
- **employmentcourt.justice.govt.nz**
Employment Court

We're on Twitter

The Ministry of Justice is now on Twitter. Follow us to keep in touch with what's happening in the justice area and share your thoughts.



Video for victims of crime

The Ministry of Justice has released an animated video that explains how victims of crime can expect to be treated and what happens during the criminal justice process.

Victims and Prevention Services Manager, Ingrid Jaegers, says the video is one of a number of ministry-led initiatives aimed at improving victims' experiences of the justice system.

‘We know there's a lot of information available for victims which is sometimes hard to take in, particularly at the time of the crime. The video simplifies complex information and reassures victims that support is available throughout the criminal justice process,’ Ingrid says.

The video supports the Victims Code which aims to increase victims' awareness of their rights, improve accessibility to information and make government agencies more accountable when providing services to victims.

It was developed in consultation with Police, the Department of Corrections and Victim Support.

You can watch the video at victimsinfo.govt.nz



Family violence bail pilot expands

A pilot initiative to give judges more information when making family violence bail decisions was expanded into Wellington, Wairarapa and Northland at the beginning of May.

Judges will get a summary report for every family violence bail application. The report will detail:

- if Police have previously received calls about family violence incidents involving the defendant
- if the defendant is subject to any police safety orders or protection orders or has breached any such orders
- if the defendant is involved in Domestic Violence Act or Care of Children Act proceedings.

The pilot, jointly managed by the Ministry of Justice and Police, has been running since September 2015 in Porirua and Christchurch District Courts.

It was developed in response to a Family Violence Death Review Committee recommendation and has been led by the judiciary who requested access to this critical information. The pilot has been expanded to provide more information to evaluate the initiative for a national rollout, including how it affects resourcing levels and the numbers of remand prisoners.



Nationwide protection for family violence victims

Victims of serious family violence can be better protected now the National Home Safety Service is available nationwide.

Building on a pilot programme that had been running in 3 centres, the National Collective of Independent Women's Refuges began a wider rollout of the service in July last year.

With the rollout complete, victims can get practical help to make their homes safer from attack. This may include:

- replacing glass-panelled doors with solid doors
- installing security lights and monitored personal alarms
- replacing locks and repairing broken windows
- linking victims to other agencies that can help.

Feedback from clients has been positive

'It's been a combination of the right information and support at the right time, or I'd still be putting up with abuse ...'

'The safety latches on windows and sensor lights were the best part of the service because we can now lock the house securely and light up the yard.'

Iwi panels trialled

Iwi panels are an innovative approach to improving outcomes for people who commit low-level offences. These panels have been trialled by the justice sector and iwi/Māori organisations as part of a Justice Sector Fund project since July 2014.

Manager Sector Strategy, Dr Saskia Righarts, says partnering with iwi and Māori organisations is a vital component of iwi panels.

'Iwi panels are made up of members of the Māori community with input from justice sector personnel, such as police officers, where appropriate,' Saskia says.

'The panels are for Māori and non Māori adults who commit low level offences. Common examples are shoplifting, careless driving or cannabis possession. Police refer these people to iwi panels after arrest.

'Iwi panels then work with offenders and victims to repair harm caused by offending. They also address the underlying causes of the offending and help get the offender's life on a more positive path.

'Offenders and victims are invited to participate in finding a solution or remedying the effects of the crime,' Saskia says.

The panels use tikanga Māori to get people to talk frankly about the root causes of the crime and hold offenders to account. Once this has been achieved, a realistic plan for preventing future offending is developed and monitored.

The Ministry of Justice is working with Police to enhance panels through policy and strengthen iwi panel processes through a range of operational improvements.

Iwi panels work with offenders & victims to repair harm caused by offending



Tauranga's 4-legged court helper

An 8-year-old black Labrador called Louie (owned by Victims Advisor, Gail Bryce) is proving to be invaluable at Tauranga District Court. Louie is helping young victims and witnesses by minimising the trauma of giving evidence in court.

Service Delivery Manager, Jason Strangwick, says it all started when Gail was looking for extra support for 2 traumatised young people who were about to give evidence.

'She quickly came up with the idea of using Louie who already had experience visiting children in hospitals and working with the elderly,' says Jason.

'The court environment can be intimidating and overwhelming for victims and witnesses, particularly children, and Louie has made a real difference helping them relax.

'Gail has also been working closely with the Police Child Protection Team who have arranged for Louie to be used for a number of trials.

'In a recent trial involving sexual offending, Gail and Louie spent most of the day with 2 young victims and their parents in the private interview room.

'The detective had high praise for Louie, commenting that he was a great distraction for the girls and had a very calming influence on everyone in the room.'



Restorative justice lowering reoffending rate

Restorative justice is proving effective at lowering crime rates by reducing reoffending, analysis shows.

Restorative justice conferences are face-to-face meetings where victims can tell offenders how the crime affected them and is a chance for offenders to take personal responsibility for their actions. Conferences are run by trained facilitators and only take place with the consent of both the victim and offender.

Sentencing and Rehabilitation Policy Manager, Anna Wilson-Farrell, says data from 2008 to 2013 shows the reoffending rate for offenders who participated in restorative justice was 15% lower over the following 12 months than comparable offenders, with 26% fewer offences per offender.

'Restorative justice appears to be particularly beneficial for young offenders aged 17 to 19,' says Anna.

'Their reoffending rates were 17% lower than comparable young offenders over the following 12 months and they committed 30% fewer offences per offender.

'It's also significant that, as well as helping to reduce crime, restorative justice is becoming increasingly popular.'

Figures for the 2015 calendar year show the number of cases referred for a restorative justice assessment tripled from around 4000 to just over 12,000, compared to 2014.

The increase follows a change to the Sentencing Act 2002 in December 2014 which requires courts to refer eligible cases for an assessment to see whether restorative justice is appropriate.

For more information, see *Reoffending analysis for restorative justice cases 2008-2013: Summary results* at justice.govt.nz

Significant progress with Treaty settlements

The past 12 months have seen significant progress towards completing Treaty settlements. Acts of Parliament for 5 separate Treaty settlements have passed into law and 8 additional bills have been introduced to the House.

The Office of Treaty Settlements (OTS) has 60 active negotiations underway as it continues to work with groups towards completing the settlements.

Director of the Office of Treaty Settlements, Doris Johnston, says the high workload reflects the desire of the Crown and iwi to complete the settlements.

'This year's achievements signal the closing stages of Treaty settlements

in the Wairarapa and the beginning of the last settlements in the Taranaki region,' Doris says. 'A focus for the Office now is settlements in Auckland, Hauraki and the Central North Island.'

Most recently, the Tauranga Moana Iwi Collective and Ngatikahu ki Whangaroa had first readings of settlement legislation read in the House (see photo) and in the Wairarapa a Deed of Settlement

was initialled with Rangitane o Wairarapa and an Agreement in Principle signed with Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa-Tamaki Nui-a-Rua.

Note: Doris Johnston is acting in the role of Director of the Office of Treaty Settlements while recruitment for the position is underway. Kevin Kelly left in May after he was appointed Acting District Court Judge and Chairperson of the Alcohol and Regulatory Licensing Authority.



BACK ROW (l-r): Rob Urwin (Ngati Ranginui), Spencer Webster (Ngai Te Rangii), Ron Hooper (OTS), Hamish Kirk (OTS).

FRONT ROW (l-r): Sue van Daatselaar (OTS), Rahera Ohia (Ngati Pukenga), Areta Gray (Ngati Pukenga), Kimiora Rawiri (Ngati Ranginui).



New approach to investing in crime prevention

As mentioned in the Minister's column (page 4), government agencies are taking a new approach to helping to better protect vulnerable New Zealanders. This inter-agency investment programme provides justice sector agencies with evidence and research to boost crime prevention.

General Manager Sector Strategy, Dean Rutherford, says the Investment Approach to Justice uses data and analysis to identify groups of people likely to enter the justice system and the best interventions for reaching them before they need justice services.

'It's about predicting where crime is likely to happen, who will be involved and the best approaches for preventing those crimes,' Dean says.

'It recognises there are many factors that influence the likelihood of future criminal behaviour and that understanding them is critical to the development of successful early intervention programmes.

'Recent studies have supported long-held beliefs that some of our most prolific criminals started young.

'One study, in particular, confirms the importance of early intervention. It looked at offending patterns of people born in New Zealand in 1978 and found 80% of convictions went to those who were first convicted before the age of 20.'

The shift to evidence-based investment is part of an all-of-government initiative that will see more anonymised data

sharing and analysis between government agencies.

'In practice, this means the justice sector working more closely with other government agencies, such as the Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry of Health, NGOs and community organisations to make sure the right interventions are available in communities to help vulnerable people,' Dean says.

For more information, see justice.govt.nz