

# Justice Sector Prison Population Projections

2019 - 2029



MINISTRY OF  
JUSTICE  
*Tabu o te Ture*

New Zealand Government



# Contents

<b>Disclaimer</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Executive summary</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>The prison projection model</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>The 2019 projection</b> .....	<b>9</b>
Total prison population projection 2019 - 2029 .....	9
The remand population 2019 - 2029 .....	10
The sentenced population 2019 - 2029 .....	11
<b>Understanding the impacts of future changes</b> .....	<b>13</b>
Extension of the Youth Court jurisdiction to include 17-year olds.....	13
The Family Violence (Amendments) Act 2018.....	13
Continued roll out of 1,800 additional Police officers .....	14
Additional judicial resource from Budget 2019.....	14
Operational improvements to address the growing remand population.....	14
<b>The prison projection reflects only one possible future</b> .....	<b>16</b>
The projection model is sensitive to change .....	16
Transformational change has the potential to create a different future .....	17
<b>Appendix 1: How the projections were derived</b> .....	<b>18</b>
Defining the seven model assumptions .....	18
Trends across the seven model assumptions.....	20
<b>Appendix 2: Sensitivity analysis</b> .....	<b>22</b>
<b>Appendix 3: Projection data</b> .....	<b>23</b>



# Disclaimer

## The 2019 Prison Projection does not consider the impact of COVID-19

Every year the Ministry of Justice looks at the long-term trends across the justice sector to estimate the prison population for the next ten years. As with any forward-looking projection, there is inherent uncertainty as it is dependent on the assessment of trends and assumptions made at the time of the projection.

The 2019 Prison Population Projection was completed in late 2019 with the intention to publish in March 2020. This was delayed due to the activation of New Zealand COVID-19 alert level 4. Therefore, this report provides insights into key drivers along the justice system without incorporating COVID-19 considerations.

As stated in this report, the prison projection provides one possible future, not *the* future. While the full effect of COVID-19 on the justice system is unknown, the 2019 projection provides a baseline to assess its impact.

There is analysis underway to understand the short and medium-term impacts from COVID-19 on the justice system. There will also be ongoing monitoring to understand this impact with quarterly monitor reports published onto the Ministry website. This analysis will also be incorporated into the 2020 Prison Projection to provide a better understanding of the current state of the justice system.

# Executive summary

Each year, the Ministry of Justice looks at long-term trends across the justice sector to estimate the prison population for the next ten years. This report details the results of the 2019 prison population projection, which runs from November 2019 to June 2029, and includes people held on custodial remand<sup>1</sup> and those sentenced<sup>2</sup> to imprisonment.

The projection is based on a model that has been refined over the last decade using insights from across the justice sector. It is founded on seven key assumptions that incorporate the latest data, current legislative, policy and operational settings. The projection is used to support prison capacity planning and to inform strategic decision-making by estimating the collective impacts of future policy, legislative and operational changes.

Justice Sector<sup>3</sup> Chief Executives have approved this report for public release.

## **The 2019 projection follows a similar trajectory to the 2018 projection**

Based on current assumptions, the 2019 projection estimates that the prison population will rise by 1,300 over the next ten years. This represents a rise in the total prison population from 10,100 in November 2019 to 11,400 in June 2029. The overall 2018 and 2019 projections follow a similar trend.

The 2019 projection indicates that the decrease in the prison population seen in 2018 cannot be sustained under current settings. Without coordinated systemic changes, this projection estimates that the prison population is unlikely to fall below 10,000 for a sustained period.

## **The remand population is the primary driver of growth in the 2019 projection**

Over the past year, there has been a shift in the trends between the remand and sentenced populations that is inconsistent with long-term historic patterns.

In 2018, the remand population dropped significantly due to a decrease in the time people spent on remand. The 2018 projection had assumed that this trend would continue over the short-term, however this did not materialise as projected. Instead there was an increase in the time spent on remand from December 2018 onwards, which was the primary driver of the increase in the remand population. People are spending longer on remand due to their cases taking longer to be resolved in courts. This is being driven by:

- later guilty pleas in the criminal court process requiring more court hearings;
- a lack of sufficient court resource to deal with these additional court hearings, along with the reallocation of judges from the criminal to the family jurisdiction;

<sup>1</sup> In this report, remand refers to people held in custody awaiting trial or sentencing.

<sup>2</sup> Sentenced refers to people in prison serving a custodial sentence in prison.

<sup>3</sup> The justice sector is made up of: Ministry of Justice, New Zealand Police, Ara Poutama Aotearoa: Department of Corrections, Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children, Crown Law and the Serious Fraud Office.

- an increase in the number of days to the next available court hearing due to workload pressures; and
- an increase in category three cases, which are more serious and generally require more court hearings

The increase in the remand population in 2019 far exceeds previous projections. Based on current settings, the remand population is now projected to surpass the sentenced population for the first time in 2026.

In contrast to the remand population, there is a continued decline in the sentenced population. This is due to a decrease in the proportion of the imposed sentence people are serving in prison before release. This result is attributed to changes within the Parole Board alongside the High Impact Innovation Programme's<sup>4</sup> 'Parole Ready' initiative to better support people with their rehabilitation and reintegration into the community. The 2019 projection assumes that this decrease in the proportion of sentences served will likely continue over the next few years. Also, the expected increases in time spent on remand will defer entry into and keep the sentenced population low.

### **Work to reduce the prison population over the long-term will impact this projection**

Significant change is underway across the justice sector. Many of these changes will impact the prison population over the next ten years, making it challenging to project the prison population accurately. However, this year's projection incorporates the following changes that will have an impact on the criminal justice system: extension of the Youth Court jurisdiction to include lower risk 17-year olds; the Family Violence (Amendments) Act 2018; continued roll out of 1,800 additional Police officers; additional judicial resource from Budget 2019; and operational improvements to address the growing remand population.

With all 10-year projections, there is a greater degree of uncertainty for years further into the future of the projection. Despite these unknowns, a projection is still beneficial to support investment, planning and policy decisions across the justice sector. The 2019 projection provides a starting point against which the impacts of any future changes can be assessed and evaluated. It represents only a possible future – not *the* future.

<sup>4</sup> The High Impact Innovation Programme is a cross-agency initiative making operational improvements to reduce the number of people going to prison, and the time they spend there. The Programme is delivered in partnership between Ara Poutama Aotearoa: Department of Corrections, New Zealand Police, and the Ministry of Justice.

# The prison projection model

Each year, the Ministry of Justice looks at long-term trends across the justice sector to estimate the prison population for the next ten years. This is used to support prison capacity planning, and to inform strategic decision-making by estimating the collective impacts of future policy, legislative and operational changes.

This report details the results of the 2019 prison population projection, which runs from November 2019 to June 2029, and includes people held on custodial remand and those sentenced to imprisonment.

The projection is based on a model that has been refined over the last decade using insights from across the justice sector. It is founded on seven key assumptions that incorporate the latest data, current legislative, policy, and operational settings. The seven assumptions are:

1. court inflow
2. remand rate
3. time on remand
4. proportion convicted
5. sentence mix
6. sentence length
7. proportion served.

Details of how the 2019 projection was derived can be found in *Appendix 1*.

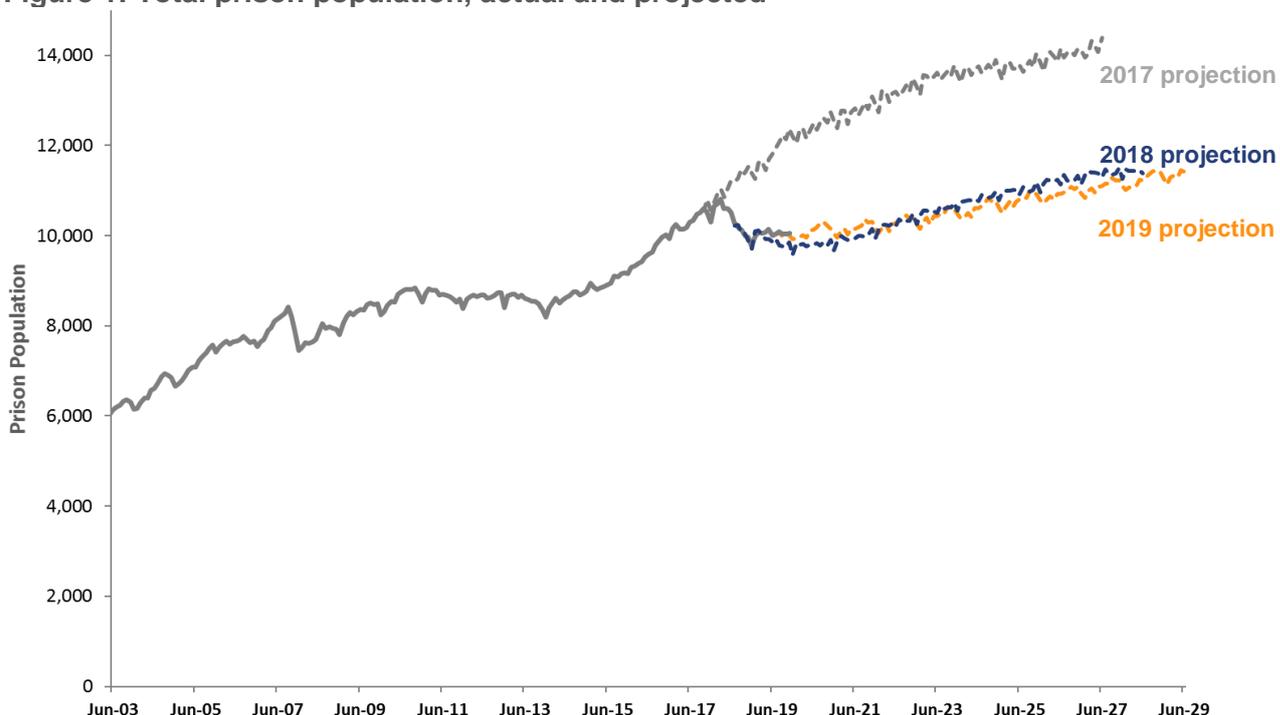
The projection does not try to estimate unknown future government policies, operational changes, societal behaviour, or other factors that might impact on the prison population. The prison projection model provides a view of what justice sector agencies believe will happen under current and known future settings.

# The 2019 projection

## Total prison population projection 2019 - 2029

The total prison population is projected to rise by 1,300 over the next ten years, based on current settings. This represents a rise in the total prison population from 10,100 in November 2019 to 11,400 in June 2029 (see *Figure 1*). This trajectory is similar to what was estimated for the 2018 projection.

**Figure 1: Total prison population, actual and projected**



The total prison population is made up of two components: the remand and sentenced populations. In 2018, both the remand and sentenced populations declined due to a drop in the time people spent on remand and an increased use of non-custodial sentences<sup>5</sup> instead of short-term imprisonment sentences respectively.

The 2019 projection indicates that the decrease in the prison population seen in 2018 cannot be sustained under current settings. Without coordinated systemic changes, this projection estimates that the prison population is unlikely to fall below 10,000 for a sustained period.

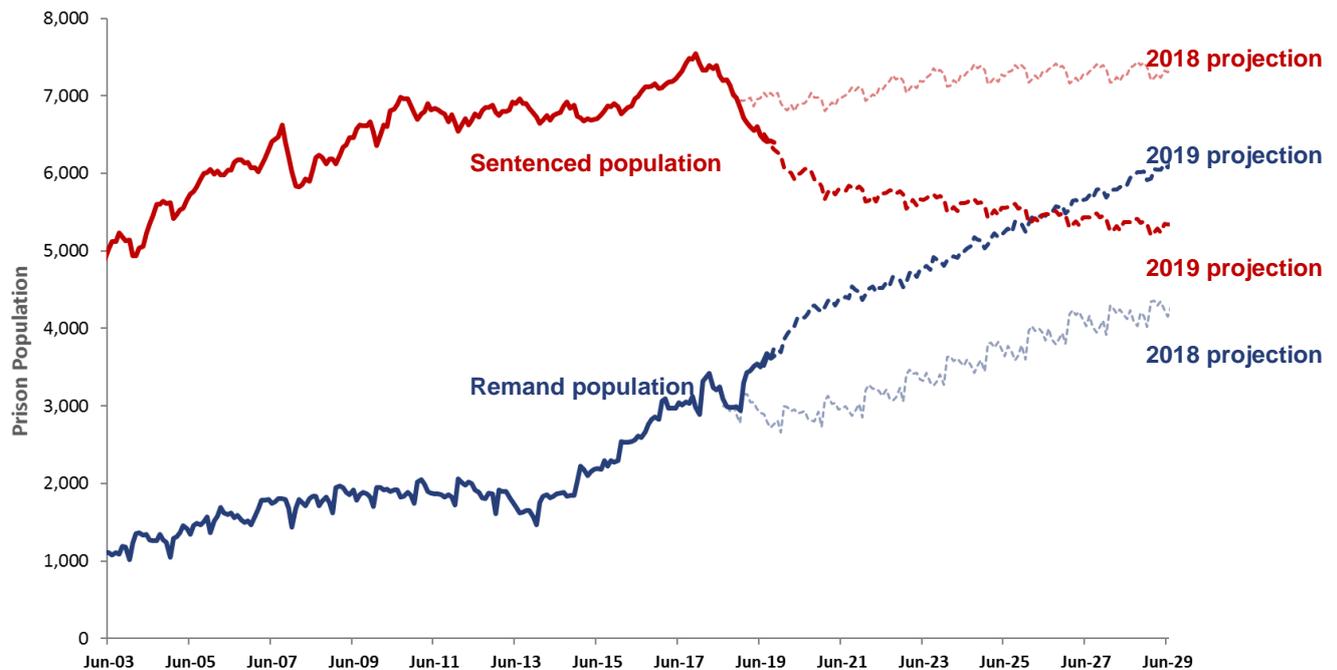
When the total prison population is split into the remand and sentenced populations (see *Figure 2*), both show different trends. This is because they are impacted by different aspects of legislation, policy, and operational settings. While the 2019 projection estimates that the

<sup>5</sup> A non-custodial sentence includes community sentences (e.g. home detention, intensive supervision, community work etc.), monetary sentences and other sentences.

sentenced population will continue to decline, growth in the remand population will continue to drive the total prison population upwards.

Based on current settings, the remand population is projected to increase over the next ten years and will exceed the sentenced population for the first time in 2026.

**Figure 2: Sentenced and remand populations, actual and projected**



## The remand population 2019 - 2029

The remand population is the primary driver of growth in the 2019 projection. The remand population has doubled since 2014. Over the last 12 months alone, the remand population has grown by more than 25%, reaching a historical high of 3,734 in November 2019. The 2019 projection estimates that the remand population will continue to grow (by approximately 2,500) and will make up 53% of the total prison population by 2029.

There are two main drivers that determine the size of the remand population: the number of people entering remand, and the time they spend on remand. Both have contributed to the growth in the remand population.

Since 2013, there has been greater growth in the remand population, primarily driven by an increase in the rate at which people are remanded into custody. This has been driven by two factors: an increased likelihood of people being remanded into custody despite similar charges, and a higher proportion of category three cases entering the courts. Category three cases are punishable by an imprisonment term of two years or more and include offences such as breach of protection order and burglary. People with category three charges are more likely to be remanded into custody due to the seriousness of these charges.

It is expected that the increase in the number of category three cases entering the court combined with an increase in the rate at which people with category three charges are

remanded in custody will continue, increasing the number of people entering remand. An upward pressure to reflect this increase has been incorporated into the 2019 projection.

In 2018, the remand population dropped significantly due to a decrease in the time people spent on remand. However, this trend did not continue. Instead, the average time on remand has increased sharply from December 2018 onwards.

The increase in the time people spent on remand from December 2018 is the primary driver of the increase in the remand population. People are spending longer on remand due to their cases taking longer to be resolved in courts. This is being driven by:

- later guilty pleas in the criminal court process leading to more court hearings and creating strain on court resources;
- the lack of sufficient resources to deal with the additional court hearings and the reallocation of judges from the criminal to the family jurisdiction resulting in further delays;
- an increase in the number of days to the next available court hearing due to workload pressures; and
- an increase in category three cases, which are more serious and generally require more resources compared to category one and two cases, adding further pressure to case workloads regardless of when the plea occurs.

Additional court hearings per case has a two-fold impact on the time it takes to resolve cases. First, if a case requires extra court hearings, it will take longer to resolve that case. Second, it will mean there is now less court time available for other cases, which further delays these cases.

Prolonged delays can lead to more court time being required which adds more pressure to an already strained system. For example, extra court hearings are sometimes required to review the status of cases that are unable to be scheduled.

Delays for people who are on bail increases the likelihood that they will change or breach their bail conditions. In addition, delays for people who are on remand can have unintended consequences as they do not have access to rehabilitation programmes and this can increase their likelihood of reoffending.

## **The sentenced population 2019 - 2029**

Like the remand population, there are two main drivers that determine the size of the sentenced population. The first is the number of people sentenced to imprisonment. The second is the time that people spend in the sentenced population, which is further influenced by the imposed length of a person's sentence and the proportion of that sentence they serve in prison.

The 2019 projection estimates that the sentenced population will decline from approximately 6,400 to 5,300 over the next ten years.

As seen in *Figure 2*, the sentenced population declined in 2018. This was due to an increased use of non-custodial sentences instead of short-term imprisonment. The 2018 projection assumed that this decrease would not be sustained as other upward pressures, such as growth in more serious cases entering the system, would gradually drive up the sentenced population.

As projected, the increasing use of non-custodial sentences instead of short-term imprisonment plateaued in 2019. However, the decline in the sentenced population has continued due to a decrease in the proportion of imposed sentences served. This is attributed to changes within the Parole Board alongside the High Impact Innovation Programme's 'Parole Ready' initiative. This initiative has enabled people to be better prepared for release on parole; for example, by ensuring access to rehabilitation programmes in time for their Parole Board hearings. People therefore serve a smaller proportion of their sentence in prison as they have successfully completed their rehabilitation programme. This is reflected in the increase in the number of people starting parole, which increased by 50% from 1,727 (year ended June 2017) to 2,602 (year ended June 2019). The 2019 projection assumes that this drop in the proportion of sentences served is likely to continue over the next few years.

The 2019 projection estimates that the Parole Ready initiative will reach the majority of people who would benefit from the initiative within the next two to three years. Therefore, the decline in the proportion of sentences served will plateau after this time.

## **The effect of remand on the sentenced population**

An increase in the average time people spend on remand impacts the sentenced population in two ways. Firstly, for people who are convicted and sentenced to imprisonment, it reduces the amount of time a person will spend in the sentenced population as every day spent on remand is credited towards their total time served in prison. An increased time in remand corresponds with decreased time in the sentenced population, leaving the overall prison population unchanged. More people, who are convicted and sentenced, will serve most or all of their sentence on remand.

Secondly, people on remand do not have access to rehabilitation programmes. For people who serve their entire sentence on remand they aren't able to access rehabilitation programmes which potentially increases their likelihood of reoffending. For people who do eventually transition into the sentenced population there is a delay in beginning their rehabilitation programme. They therefore serve a greater proportion of their sentence before being prepared for parole. Together, this increases the number of people and the time people spend in custody, increasing the total prison population.

If the sentenced population does not reduce as predicted, there could be wider implications for the criminal justice system. For example, strong upward pressures on both the remand and sentenced populations for Ara Poutama Aotearoa: Department of Corrections would likely impact on their high security accommodation capacity. The inability to separate prisoners who are on remand from those who have been sentenced, and to house people in an appropriate unit matched to their security rating, would compromise safety and Ara Poutama Aotearoa's ability to deliver effective rehabilitation services.

# Understanding the impacts of future changes

The most significant impacts within the criminal justice system arise from changes in operational processes, legislation and other developments in policy. It is therefore important to understand the likely impacts of planned changes.

There are currently a number of significant changes underway across the justice sector. Many of these changes will impact the prison population over the next ten years, making it challenging to accurately project the future prison population. Based on what is currently known, the following changes to the system will likely impact the prison population over the next ten years.

## Extension of the Youth Court jurisdiction to include 17-year olds

As of July 2019, the Youth Court Jurisdiction was extended to include lower risk 17-year olds<sup>6</sup>. The Youth Court offers young people greater access to targeted intervention, rehabilitation and wraparound support to address the underlying causes of their offending. It is estimated that fewer 17-year olds will reoffend going forward because of the additional support they receive in the youth justice system, reducing the number of young people progressing into the adult system.

## The Family Violence (Amendments) Act 2018

The Family Violence (Amendments) Act 2018 made changes to a number of Acts<sup>7</sup> to improve the responses to family violence in both criminal and civil law. Specifically, the Act introduced new criminal charges with longer maximum sentences, such as strangulation, which is expected to increase the length of prison sentences for those cases. In addition, amendments to bail laws provide greater protection for victims, which is expected to increase the likelihood of people being remanded in custody.

To date, only a small number of the new charges have reached resolution, so the full impact of this legislation change is unknown. In this year's projection, the impact of the Act contributes to a slight increase in category three charges entering the court.

<sup>6</sup> See <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/lower-risk-17-year-olds-included-youth-jurisdiction>

<sup>7</sup> Including the Bail Act 2000, Crimes Act 1961, Sentencing Act 2002, and Care of Children Act 2004.

## **Continued roll out of 1,800 additional Police officers**

In October 2017, the Government announced the target of 1,800 new Police officers. The additional Police officers increases Police presence in the community and the number of dedicated taskforces focused on preventing organised crime. In the 2018 projection, an upward pressure was included to reflect that there could be an increase in the number of category three charges being laid from the additional Police officers, impacting court inflow.

Over the last two years, Police have focused recruitment efforts on increasing their frontline presence, with an emphasis on crime prevention and community policing. Due to the lower than anticipated inflow of category three charges, the 2019 projection has reduced the impact of additional Police on court inflow.

The next phase of Police's recruitment will focus on drug harm and organised crime, with additional Police officers trained over the next two years. Organised crime-related charges are typically category three charges, and the scale and complexities of organised crime mean that investigations can take years. We expect there to be an increase in the number of category three cases entering the court from 2023/24 as a result.

## **Additional judicial resource from Budget 2019**

Funding for additional District Court judges was granted in Budget 2019 to help mitigate the growing pressures from increasing workloads and a reduced number of judges. The new judges are expected to be in place by mid-2020. However, decisions on where these judges will be placed has not yet occurred. It is anticipated that the majority of judges will be placed in the family jurisdiction. This is based on the prior reallocation of judges from the criminal to family jurisdiction that occurred in 2018<sup>8</sup> to help address backlog.

The impact of additional judicial resources has been incorporated as part of other operational improvements developed to address the growing remand population.

## **Operational improvements to address the growing remand population**

In late 2018, operational initiatives were implemented that enabled people to be better prepared for bail reducing the time they spent on remand. This drove down the remand population and the total prison population. This is indicative of how sensitive the prison population is to operational change. However, these gains have been overtaken by ongoing upward pressures.

<sup>8</sup> see <https://www.lawsociety.org.nz/news-and-communications/latest-news/news/pressures-spell-redeployment-of-judicial-workforce>

To address the growing remand pressures, justice sector agencies have developed a further set of operational initiatives. The 2019 projection includes some initiatives where their impacts are known and have funding confirmed. While these changes will have minimal impact on the number of people entering the remand population, it is anticipated that they will reduce the average time that people spend on remand. By 2028/29, the average time on remand is projected to be 112 days. Without these initiatives, it is estimated to be closer to 120 days.

It is estimated that the growth in the remand rate will eventually plateau, but there is no evidence to suggest it will decrease, based on current settings. Other upward pressures, such as the family violence legislation, are expected to continue to drive up the remand rate over the next two or three years.

# **The prison projection reflects only one possible future**

The purpose of developing a prison projection is to provide an estimate of the future prison population under current settings over the next ten years. With a 10-year projection there is a greater degree of uncertainty the further into the future the projection is. Despite the unknowns, a projection is still beneficial to support prison capacity planning and to inform strategic decision-making by estimating the collective impacts of future policy, legislative and operational changes.

The 2019 projection provides a starting point against which the impacts of any future changes can be assessed. There will be ongoing monitoring in conjunction with the New Zealand Police and Ara Poutama Aotearoa: Department of Corrections to ensure the real impacts are understood and incorporated into future prison projections.

## **The projection model is sensitive to change**

It is important to note that the 2019 prison projection represents only one possible future, which is heavily dependent on the current assessment of trends and known initiatives, and on these being maintained. Even if future changes were known, the actual future prison population may not align with what has been projected due to the high sensitivity and complexity of the criminal justice system. Therefore, other possible futures need to be considered.

The significant reduction in the remand population seen in 2018 demonstrates just how sensitive the system is to change. Operational improvements made by justice sector agencies focused efforts on specific initiatives that directly targeted areas of the system under pressure. For example, the High Impact Innovation Programme's 'Bail Ready' initiative enabled people to be better prepared at bail hearings and supported them in the community on bail, resulting in a direct reduction in the time people spent on remand. This reduced the remand population and contributed to the decrease in the total prison population.

A sensitivity analysis attached as *Appendix 2* has been completed to demonstrate how each assumption impacts on the total prison population.

# Transformational change has the potential to create a different future

The Government has made a commitment to create a more effective criminal justice system and a safer New Zealand; in particular, a system that sees proportionally fewer Māori caught up in criminal justice processes, a lower prison population and improved outcomes for victims. The Hāpaitia te Oranga Tangata – Safe and Effective Justice transformation programme<sup>9</sup> has consequently been established to coordinate the reform necessary to achieve and sustain these outcomes over the long-term.

Justice Sector agencies have also begun to implement long-term strategies that support this vision for change, including:

- Hōkai Rangī<sup>10</sup> Ara Poutama Aotearoa: Department of Corrections' strategy to address the disproportionate representation of Māori within the corrections system.
- Te Huringa o Te Tai<sup>11</sup>, NZ Police's refreshed Māori Strategy.
- The Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy<sup>12</sup>, which provides a framework for all of Government to work together to improve the outcomes for children and young people, including work to address family violence.

These initiatives and others expected to emerge from the transformation programme can be expected to affect the prison population (and other key indicators) over the next ten years. These changes have not been factored into the 2019 projection as they cannot yet be reliably estimated. Instead, the prison projection model will be a useful tool for helping to assess and evaluate the likely projected impact of new initiatives as they are developed and to measure change as new ways of working are embedded within the system.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.safeandeffectivejustice.govt.nz/>

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/strategic\\_reports/corrections\\_strategic\\_plans/hkai\\_rangi](https://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/strategic_reports/corrections_strategic_plans/hkai_rangi)

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.police.govt.nz/news/release/police-launches-te-huringa-o-te-tai>

<sup>12</sup> <https://childyouthwellbeing.govt.nz/our-aspirations/context/introduction-child-and-youth-wellbeing-strategy>

# Appendix 1: How the projections were derived

## Defining the seven model assumptions

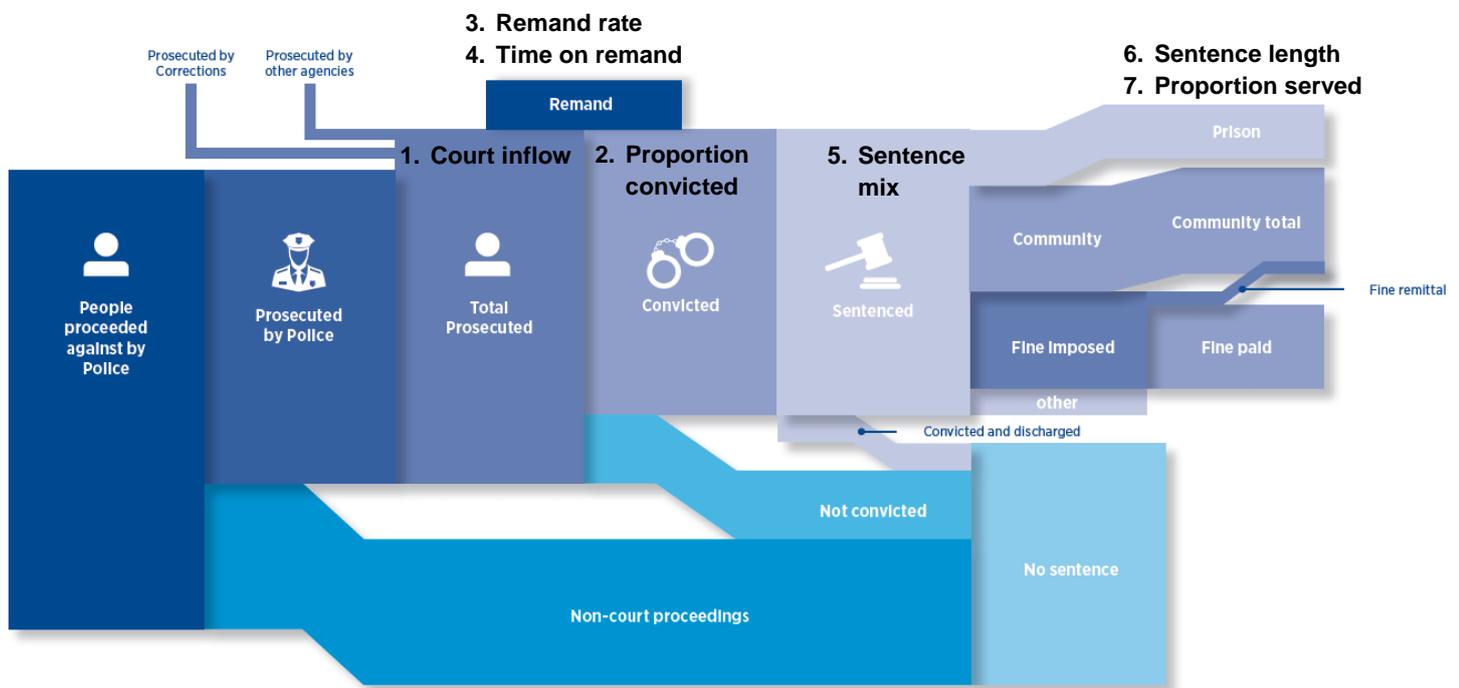
Each year, the Ministry of Justice looks at long-term trends across the justice sector to project the prison population for the next ten years. This is used to support prison capacity planning, and to inform strategic decision-making by projecting the collective impact of known future policy, legislative and operational changes.

The prison projection model is founded on seven key assumptions that incorporate current legislation, policy and operational settings. These seven key assumptions govern the flow of people through the system and the time they spend there, which ultimately impacts the prison population.

The seven key assumptions used in the prison projection model are:

1. **Court inflow:** Total number of new prosecutions entering court.
2. **Remand rate:** The rate of people entering custodial remand.
3. **Time on remand:** The average time people spend on custodial remand.
4. **Proportion convicted:** The proportion of people entering court who are convicted.
5. **Sentence mix:** The proportion of people convicted who receive a prison sentence.
6. **Sentence length:** The average number of days of imposed prison sentences; an average is calculated for imposed sentences that are two years or less, and for imposed sentences greater than two years.
7. **Proportion served:** The average proportion of an imposed sentence served in prison, where the imposed sentence is greater than two years (this includes time that may have been spent on custodial remand).

**Figure 1: The seven key assumptions used in the prison projection model and their place along the justice system.**



# Trends across the seven model assumptions

A workshop was held on 10 September 2019 to consult with experts from across the justice sector about the future trends for each assumption. This included involvement from The Ministry of Justice, New Zealand Police, Ara Poutama Aotearoa: Department of Corrections, Crown Law, the Chief District Court Judge's Chambers, the Parole Board and Treasury.

During the assumptions workshop, it was clear that there was broad agreement around the assumptions:

## 1. Court inflow

- Overall there has been a general decline in total number of people being prosecuted in court, which is attributed to a decline in less serious cases entering court. Between 2014/15 and 2018/19 this has decreased from 135,000 to 130,000 new prosecutions. However, the number of more serious (category three) cases has increased slightly. With the introduction of the Family Violence (Amendments) Act 2018 and the expected deployment of new Police taskforces dedicated to organised crime, this increase is expected to continue for at least the next few years.

## 2. Remand rate

- The remand rate is the number of people prosecuted in court who spend some time remanded in custody. The number of people who spend time in remand has increased from 11,200 in 2014/15 to 15,800 in 2018/19. Due to a decrease in category 1 and 2 cases entering court there has been an increase in the proportion of category three cases entering court, which are generally more serious in nature and more likely to result in a person spending time in remand.

## 3. Time on remand

- The average time a person spends on custodial remand has steadily increased over the last 20 years. For example, between June 2014 and June 2019, the average time on remand increased from 64 days to 81 days.
- The strain on the court system has led to people spending longer on remand. This strain is due to: an increase in more serious cases entering courts; people pleading guilty later leading to more court hearings; and a lack of court resources (both judicial and court) to handle these extra court hearings which prolongs the time between each court hearing.
- To reduce the time people spend on remand, justice sector agencies have developed a set of operational initiatives. Incorporating only initiatives where their impact is known, it is estimated that the average time on remand will be 112 days by 2028/29. Without these initiatives, it is estimated to be closer to 120 days.

#### **4. Proportion convicted**

- Justice sector agencies agreed that there was no reason to suggest why the proportion of people convicted would change, so this has been kept constant for the next ten years.

#### **5. Sentence mix**

- The proportion of convicted people who are sentenced to imprisonment has remained relatively stable at around 11% for the last five years. Justice sector agencies agreed that there was no reason to suggest why this would change and so it has been kept stable for the next ten years.

#### **6. Sentence length**

- Justice sector agencies agreed that the average length of sentences imposed is likely to remain constant over the next ten years.

#### **7. Proportion served**

- Between June 2018 and October 2019, the average proportion of sentences served has decreased from 77% to 73%. For a person with a three-year imposed sentence, this would be an average decrease of 44 days in prison. This decrease has been driven by the work done by the High Impact Innovation Programme such as the 'Parole Ready' initiative, and changes within the Parole Board. This collaboration has enabled people to be better prepared for release on parole; for example, by ensuring access to rehabilitation programmes in time for their Parole Board hearings. People therefore serve a smaller proportion of their sentence in prison as they have successfully completed their rehabilitation programme. It has been advised that this drop in the proportion of sentences served will likely continue for the next two to three years.

# Appendix 2: Sensitivity analysis

A sensitivity analysis was undertaken to better understand how each of the model assumptions impacts the total prison population. As seen in *Table 1*, a 5% reduction to each assumption has a significant overall impact on the prison population, resulting in a reduction of 1,300 people. This 5% reduction is not linked to any current or future policy, legislative or operational changes. It simply allows us to understand the sensitivity of each individual assumption.

**Table 1: The impact of each assumption on the prison population**

Assumption	2018/2019	2019 projection assumption (2028/29)	5% reduction compared to 2028/29	Impact on prison population
Court inflow	130,000	131,000	124,000	-370
Remand rate	12.10%	14.5%	13.8%	-230
Remand time	80 days	112 days	106 days	-190
Conviction rate	74%	74%	70%	-160
Imprisonment rate	10.9%	10.8%	10.3%	-160
Imposed sentence length	600	600	570	-80
Proportion served	73%	70%	67%	-110
Total prison population	10,100	11,400	10,100	-1,300

Considering each assumption in isolation, a reduction in court inflow would have the greatest impact on the prison population. This is because court inflow occurs at an early stage of the criminal justice system and has a flow-on-effect for the number of people entering both the remand and sentenced populations.

It is important to note that these assumptions are interrelated; changing one assumption can impact other assumptions. For example, a significant reduction in court inflow would result in reduced impacts from changes in the remand rate.

# Appendix 3: Projection data

Table 1 provides the estimated yearly prison population based on the 2019 prison projection model. The total prison population is based on the prison population at the end of the financial year, which is then broken down into the remand and sentenced populations (see Table 2 and Table 3 respectively).

**Table 1: Total prison population by financial years 2018/19 to 2028/29**

Financial year	Total population		
	Population	Annual change	Compared to 2018 projection
<b>2018-2019</b>	<b>10,004</b>	<b>- 4.9%</b>	<b>1.3%</b>
2019-2020	10,143	1.4%	3.5%
2020-2021	10,161	0.2%	2.2%
2021-2022	10,268	1.1%	0.6%
2022-2023	10,429	1.6%	-0.7%
2023-2024	10,612	1.7%	-1.5%
2024-2025	10,800	1.8%	-0.9%
2025-2026	10,920	1.1%	-1.9%
2026-2027	11,100	1.6%	-1.7%
2027-2028	11,224	1.1%	-1.5%
2028-2029	11,417	1.7%	n/a

**Table 2: Remand population by financial years 2018/19 to 2028/29**

Financial year	Remand population		
	Population	Annual change	Compared to 2018 projection
<b>2018-2019</b>	<b>3,508</b>	<b>7.9%</b>	<b>20.4%</b>
2019-2020	4,135	17.9%	42.1%
2020-2021	4,367	5.6%	47.2%
2021-2022	4,525	3.6%	44.4%
2022-2023	4,769	5.4%	43.4%
2023-2024	4,994	4.7%	41.9%
2024-2025	5,243	5.0%	43.9%
2025-2026	5,449	3.9%	41.8%
2026-2027	5,672	4.1%	40.6%
2027-2028	5,853	3.2%	42.1%
2028-2029	6,074	3.8%	n/a

**Table 3: Sentenced population by financial years 2018/19 to 2028/29**

Financial year	Sentenced population		
	Population	Annual change	Compared to 2018 projection
<b>2018-2019</b>	<b>6,496</b>	<b>-10.5%</b>	<b>-6.7%</b>
2019-2020	6,008	-7.5%	-12.8%
2020-2021	5,793	-3.6%	-16.9%
2021-2022	5,743	-0.9%	-18.8%
2022-2023	5,660	-1.4%	-21.2%
2023-2024	5,617	-0.8%	-22.6%
2024-2025	5,557	-1.1%	-23.4%
2025-2026	5,471	-1.5%	-25.0%
2026-2027	5,428	-0.8%	-25.3%
2027-2028	5,371	-1.1%	-26.1%
2028-2029	5,344	-0.5%	n/a

**Ministry of Justice**  
**Tāhū o te Ture**

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