Whilst holidaying in New Zealand during September 2008, I had the opportunity to visit Christchurch Men’s Prison which is part of the South Island Prison Region. The main part of Christchurch Men’s Prison was built in 1925 which includes the Paparua Remand Centre, which was built in 1999 to replace Addington Prison which now makes up the Christchurch Men’s Prison. This centre holds up to 900 sentenced and remand minimum to high security male inmates. It would appear that this centre is similar in size and design to the Metropolitan Remand and Reception Centre (MRRC) at Silverwater.

The Christchurch Men’s Prison operates on a 9 hour shift between 0800 am to 1700 pm seven days a week. The centre staff carries out a traditional let–go whereby staff go to their normal allocated work locations to commence work as compared to the Mid North Coast Correctional Centre (MNCCC) where, under the Way Forward, we conduct a rolling let-go across the main area of the centre. MNCCC currently operates on an 8 hour shift between 0800 to 1600 seven days a week.

Management at Christchurch Men’s Prison advised me the general makeup of the inmate’s population is mainly Anglo Saxons and Maori. I then posed the question relating to the entry of other nationalities into their systems and was advised that they started to have an Asian influx into Auckland Correctional Centre however they have very few of Lebanese origin in their system at present. Approximately 50 percent of the inmate population are Maori, even though the Maori people make up less than 10 percent of the adult population in New Zealand.

Inmate employment at Christchurch Men’s Prison includes: work in the community, gardening, forestry and horticulture, plus training opportunities in engineering, catering, farming and agriculture. At this present time only 20 to 30 percent of the inmate population are employed but management is hopeful of reaching 40 to 50 percent of inmates bring employed in the next 24 months. This is in contrast to MNCCC where some 80 percent of the inmate population are in employment.

Protection inmates at Christchurch Men’s Prison are employed in the catering area of the centre and I was advised by centre management that they and the rest of the centre population have no issues with these inmates working within the catering system.

Inmates who have served a long term period of incarceration of nine (9) years or more are placed in an honour unit prior to releases into the community. This unit is located outside the main part of Christchurch’s correctional centre in the minimum security section of the complex and set up to teach inmates independent living skills. In addition to the redintegrative focus in the unit, a special version of the living skills programme has been designed to meet the inmates’ needs prior to release.

Regional Reintegration Teams were established and implemented by the New Zealand Department of Corrections in 2006 to provide inmates with specialist support to help prepare them for release into the community. The Regional Reintegration Teams, consist of reintegration caseworkers, social workers and indigenous liaison workers, who all work collaboratively with case officers and other corrections staff to address inmates social living and redintegrative needs.

This centre also holds a Youth Unit, a high to medium facility with 40 beds, the unit accommodates youths under 17 and 17-19 year olds assessed as being vulnerable. This program provides a strong rehabilitative focus. I was advised by centre management that this unit has a concentration of very high labour and resources.

In April 2007, New Zealand Department of Corrections changed its security classifications system to give correctional managers more information about the level of risk inmates pose, both internally and externally of the correctional centre. The previous classification system of minimum, low-medium, high-medium and maximum security indicated the risk to the good order and security of the correctional centre, however it did not take into account the level of risk an inmate could pose in the community. Under the new system, correctional managers are able to make better
judgments about the suitability of each inmate for programmers, education and employment. The new system uses a two-letter code to identify both internal and external risk (see diagram). The first letter in each code denotes the internal risk a prisoner poses and the second letter denotes the external risk. There are three categories of internal risk (low, high and maximum) and two categories of external risk (low and high).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old system</th>
<th>New system</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internal risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High medium</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low medium</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: New Zealand Department of Corrections)

Classification of male inmates in the New South Wales Department of Corrective Services is categorised into maximum, medium and minimum security as shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maximum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E1 (Escapees)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E2 (Escapees)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
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<tr>
<td>C3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: New South Wales Department of Corrective Services)

While speaking with management at Christchurch Men’s prison they advised they were not able to provide the cost per inmate per day to run their 900 bed facility. I advised them that we are very conscious of the cost per day per inmate and that we are developing strategies to enable us to meet Departmental and government directives.

In relation to transport of inmates, I was advised by centre management that, when escorting inmates between the north and south inlands, the New Zealand Department of Corrections charter an aircraft to move inmates between the various correctional centres. The inmates are escorted by custodial staff during this flight which goes over all the north and south islands then returns to Auckland at the completion of the flight. Management informed me that this was a more cost effective and efficient method of moving inmates between the various
correctional centres across New Zealand instead of
the traditional method whereby inmates are moved
by vehicle transportation, which however still occurs
between correctional centres located within the
same area.

A few years ago a movie called “Con Air” was
released and the community and correctional staff
considered it was a bit of a joke moving inmates via
aircraft transportation, but a number of states in the
United States of America along with New Zealand
move inmates via this form of transportation on a
regular basis.

I believe it would be a worthwhile exercise for the
NSW Department of Corrective Services to look at
a cost analysis of moving inmates across the state
from various correctional centres via other forms
of transportation as it would appear that some
countries think that transporting inmates via aircraft
over a large area is more beneficial to their cost
centre.

In conclusion it would appear that running a
correctional centre does not differ greatly between
different countries. The general philosophies of
managing inmates appears to be the same, the only
differences appear to be related to the make up of
the inmate population.

As the NSW Department of Corrective Services is
currently undergoing a review to try and achieve
more time out of cell for inmates. We may need to
look at which is the best proposal which suits the
majority of stakeholders within our system instead of
taking the easy opinion for quick fixes. We need to
show integrity, leadership, vision and a commitment
to the future.

As managers of corrective services into the future
we need to review our operational procedures
continually to make sure that we are effectively and
efficiently using our resources. We need to keep
watchful of how other countries are doing business
but we also need to take a far greater leadership
role in correctional management in the Oceania
region.

It does not matter in which country we live, when
dealing with individuals that have been incarcerated,
it would appear that we all have similar issues in
managing these individuals whilst in custody. So the
better we liaise with each other on how to manage
and improve our profession the better we are able to
deal with any issues that may arise in the future.

This Report was compiled by Stephen Taylor, Chief Correctional Officer, MNCCC,
with information supplied by Management and Staff from Christchurch Men’s