

Smart on Crime

Prevention – Rehabilitation – Victim focused – Reintegration

Smart on Crime is Opportunity's plan to reduce offending and reoffending, reduce victimisation and protect victims of crime.

Being smart on crime means funding and supporting interventions that are proven to work, and redirecting money from programmes that have failed to produce results, into those that do.

We need to be smarter with our investment in the Justice and Corrections systems, so that they produce the outcomes we need and lead to real crime reduction. The fence at the top of the cliff, not the ambulance at the bottom - which is where current investment is focused.

Prevent offending before it starts

Intervention comes too little and too late for far too many. Many children and young people with risk factors for offending come to the attention of the care and protection system long before they offend.

We should not wait for a child or young person to commit their first offence before we step in. Opportunity will:

- Offer voluntary interventions, starting with the very first Oranga Tamariki Report of Concern, where there are established risk factors for offending.
- Expand the capacity and reach of programmes that demonstrate results, including:
 - Parenting courses, such as Incredible Years, with proven impact on risk factors of offending.

- Youth mentoring programmes.
- Trauma counselling services.
- Expand the Te Pae Oranga programme for low-level adult offenders to include more offences, widen mentoring support to include peer-to-peer, and increase overall capacity.

Target the drivers of crime

As with all social issues, many factors influence criminal offending. The links between criminal offending and issues like addiction, undiagnosed or untreated conditions like ADHD and Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, past family violence and family dysfunction are clear in previous studies.

Opportunity will target investment into the drivers of crime, including:

- Progressively expanding specialist courts and practices designed to address specific types of offending:
 - The Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Court (currently limited to three sites);
 - The New Beginnings Court/Te Kooti o Timatanga Hou and the Court of Special Circumstances for addressing offending related to homelessness (currently only available in Auckland and Wellington);
 - The Matariki Court, a Māori customary and community-oriented process (currently only in Kaikohe)
 - The Young Adult List (an approach that provides supports to reduce reoffending among young adults) (currently four locations)
 - Te Ao Mārama - the Chief District Court Judge's initiative to universalise key lessons from specialist jurisdictions
- Expand the availability of drug-treatment programmes within the health system to support police discretion provisions in the Misuse of Drugs Amendment Act 2019
- Expanding trauma-focused programmes such as Rākau Ora beyond pilot scale.
- Funding trauma-informed care, parenting support, addiction treatment, and dedicated pathways to economic independence for women in custody, projected to be the fastest-growing part of the prison population.

- Consistently funding and expanding intensive, whānau-centred interventions for an identified core of persistent young offenders.
- Support moves to legalise and regulate recreational use of cannabis

Put victims at the centre of the process

Restorative justice works, and victims say so: the Ministry of Justice's 2025 survey found 82% satisfied with their conference, 82% would recommend it, and it's linked to lower reoffending. But victims' own top two complaints are fixable: no follow-up on what happened to the offender, and long delays ahead of a first meeting.

Opportunity will:

- Identify roadblocks to timeliness and fund additional restorative justice capacity to reduce wait times between referral and first contact, and ensure victims are followed up and told what happened to the offender after the process concludes.
- Complete expansion of specialist sexual violence courts nationally that pilots showed cut time to trial start by around a third, and reduced anxiety and re-traumatisation for complainants.
- Specifically review victims rights, legal processes, and public reporting used in sexual violence complaints to reduce revictimisation.

Reintegrate people into work, housing and community

A prisoner leaving custody without a job, stable accommodation or support is more likely to return to the justice system. Prison education and vocational training already exist, but the pathway from training in prison to sustainable employment after release is weak. We will support partnerships with employers, iwi, and community organisations to provide accommodation, employment and practical support after release.

To better reintegrate former prisoners into a productive role in society, Opportunity will:

- expand proven vocational and trade training and build structured partnerships with employers willing to employ people on release, creating a direct pathway from prison qualification to paid work in the community
- invest into specialist holistic case management services to manage solutions beyond the justice system
- increase investment in mentoring programs post-release to provide wrap around support over a sustained period post release.

Success will be measured by engagement in training, sustained employment, stable accommodation and, ultimately, reduced reoffending, not simply by the number of people completing programmes.

Smart on Crime – Frequently Asked Questions

How will this be funded?

The cost of maintaining our ever growing prison population is substantial: up to \$200,000 per prisoner annually. An achievable funding mechanism would be to start by redirecting funding from demonstrably ineffective programmes like the current government's "boot camps", and committing to allocate a portion of ongoing cost pressure growth in the Corrections budget to rehabilitation and prevention measures