



Media Release

1st November, 2010

The following media release is provided by ATCA member, CareNZ. The full figures from the Corrections Annual report can be found at www.carenz.co.nz and provide continuing evidence of the effectiveness of therapeutic community (TC) treatment within the prison system. The ATCA includes members who are operating 12 TCs in prison settings in Australia and New Zealand, with the New Zealand Government providing sound evidence of the benefits of the treatment model and actively seeking the establishment of TCs within prisons for both male and female offenders.

CareNZ has been helping New Zealanders recover from addictions since 1954. It runs 10 community clinics in South Auckland, Waikato, Kapiti, Porirua, Lower Hutt, Wellington City and Christchurch, offering a diverse range of treatment services. This includes personal counselling, group programmes, intensive outpatient programmes and a school-based service for teenagers in trouble with alcohol or drugs. It also runs Drug Treatment Programmes in prisons in conjunction with the Department of Corrections. CareNZ's head office is in Wellington.

Prison TC programmes help cut crime

CareNZ has welcomed the announcement that it has been awarded funding to continue its drug treatment programmes in prisons, saying the funding is recognition of the results its work is achieving.

CareNZ, which provides services for people with addiction issues, is continuing a partnership with the Department of Corrections to provide drug treatment services in six New Zealand prisons.

CareNZ once again won the tender to deliver its unique drug and alcohol treatment programme in Drug Treatment Units at Waikeria Prison (Waikato), Spring Hill Corrections Facility (South Waikato), Hawke's Bay Regional Prison, Rimutaka Prison (Hutt Valley), Arohata Prison (Wellington), and Christchurch Prison.

CareNZ CEO Tim Harding says the funding is testament to the programme's effectiveness which has also been validated by recent research results.

Department of Corrections analysis show prisoners who have completed one of CareNZ's programmes can reduce their reoffending rates by up to a third compared to similar offenders who don't do the treatment. The research also shows a 31 percent drop in the severity of re-offending by graduates of the CareNZ programme.

Harding says the icing on the cake is that all the figures are better for Maori rather than non Maori participants in its programmes.

"Our programmes are working particularly well for Maori which is encouraging given their over representation in prison statistics," says Harding. "We're also very encouraged by the drop in the

severity of re-offending which is evidence of the way we are changing behaviours in our programmes.”

Corrections General Manager of Rehabilitation and Reintegration Services Alison Thom says the Department is very pleased to be working with CareNZ in addressing the Government’s priorities around rehabilitation of offenders. She says these results are world-class.

“Corrections’ priority is to improve public safety, and effective rehabilitation programmes are a key component to providing offenders with pathways out of offending. Together with CareNZ, Corrections has been running the Drug Treatment Unit programmes for 10 years, and our recent analysis results show that they work to turn prisoners’ lives around, reduce addictions and keep the public safer.”

Each year, nearly 500 prisoners benefit from CareNZ’s programmes, which are based on an internationally proven ‘therapeutic community’ model. The idea of a therapeutic community is that as individuals get on top of their addiction they are then able to mentor those coming in to the programme. Two further Drug Treatment Units (DTUs) are due to open in the next twelve months effectively doubling the annual capacity.

“This is a tough programme – it’s not hug-a-thug,” says Harding, “and it’s about more than just stopping drug abuse. “Prisoners in these programmes are constantly confronted over their lifestyle, behaviour and viewpoints.”

“It’s designed to help prisoners make transformational changes that will lead to them rejecting entrenched criminal behaviours and taking on board more positive and pro-social beliefs.”

Prisoners are screened for their suitability before being offered a place on the programmes, which are voluntary. Traditionally, the DTU programmes have been six months long. However, with the Government committing to increasing the number of prisoners being treated through DTUs, CareNZ and Corrections have worked to develop a three month intensive course for shorter serving prisoners.

CareNZ has been developing the programme it runs in the DTUs for 11 years and, says Harding, and has built up a solid bank of knowledge about what works.

“I’m particularly proud of my staff. We have a highly skilled and very passionate team of people who are delivering this programme across the country in very challenging environments.”

“We are delighted to be able to continue work that is clearly cutting the costs to society of addiction and crime. One of the most rewarding aspects of what we do is that we know we are changing lives, not just for the prisoners but also their families and those who will no longer be their victims.”

Further Information

Tim Harding, CEO CareNZ

Tel 04 384 2058 or 021 240 6669

Email tim.h@carenz.co.nz

Web www.carenz.co.nz