PRIVILEGING THE VOICE OF THE INCARCERATED WOMEN IN THE DECARCERATION CONVERSATION

I advocate space for the incarcerated women's voice to be privileged, included, and recognised for its 'expert status' in the correctional change conversation

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ABSTRACT

In this study, four women who are participating in (or previously have participated in) the RAW programme, and who have extensive histories of repeat incarceration participate in an anonymous interview process. The interviews facilitate sharing about their birthright experiences and observations against their incarcerated journeys. This study prioritises their voices; acknowledging the privilege that was bestowed to enable this study to be critically informed. It is important that the women upon completion, and when reading their words, recognise themselves. For this reason, their contributory quotes have largely been left in full. This assists the reader in better understanding the depth and breadth of the participants' knowledge as experts, who are fully accomplished in respect of being able to co-design, co-deliver and co-determine their own outcomes within a detained space.

The key findings from this research are presented under five thematic headings: addressing patriarchy; prison as a disabling, safe place; the importance of rehabilitation programmes; community sentencing; and, transformative change through incarcerated voices.

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Introduction

In 2013 after an approach from the Waikato Women's Refuge (WWR) to assist them commercialise their operations to advance public acceptance, understanding and support of their mahi (work), I was inspired to establish my own social organisation RAW* (Reclaim another woman). RAW was founded to advance change, as opposed to providing crisis care. Acknowledging the very vital contribution organisations like the Refuge were making, I also noted the absence of platforms for supported social change that eventually advanced self-determination.

RAW was initially established, as a staggered approach, delivering change support within the WWR crisis care model. RAW quickly moved from offering change support to women using the Refuge services, to the New Zealand women's prisons. Detainment offered reflection, stability and a reduction in day-to-day dysfunction, not afforded to women in external crisis mode, and therefore inside the prison became a well-suited platform to launch our care model. Explained simply, RAW is a model of lifelong out-of-prison care that walks alongside high and complex offending women to advance self-determining life outcomes.

After 10 years the learnings have been significant; the RAW model has evolved substantively and now places a huge onus on wāhine informed collaborative research to privilege the incarcerated voice and expertise while holding the correctional model of detained care to account. RAW recognises that incarcerated women, as good faith actors, are experts in their own condition and are best placed to inform correctional change models that are intended to detain and reform their behaviours[1].

Informed by the ten years of our RAW mahi advancing correctional institutional improvement, I am now seeking to ensure the voices of incarcerated women are included and privileged in the New Zealand correctional change conversation. These are the expert voices, and good faith actors, that hold the knowledge required to get self-determining, positive outcomes from an incarcerated journey. RAW has witnessed repeated implementation failures of proposed humanising inside changes. The status quo is not working. To improve desirable life outcomes a different approach is needed. The evidence generated by RAW is that incarcerated women hold the answers to transformational and purposeful inside change.

This study will look at how Corrections can begin to navigate a 'different' delivery of prison care, by including women who are (or have been) detained, through a privileging of their voices. This will recognise their expert status, garnering information from them that contributes to programme content for delivery during imprisonment. Transformational prison reform will be achieved through culturally aligned education that is supported by role

[1] See the appendix, note1, for more detailed information on the RAW mahi.

models and informed by incarcerated women. This is the means to achieve positive transformational self-determining outcomes that marginalised women who have experienced or are experiencing incarceration deserve.

I acknowledge that there can be a ‘societal objection’ to advancing what may be deemed as ‘special treatment’ to women who have been harmed and have been sentenced to prison in respect of their harm. I have however, through the RAW mahi, witnessed the huge community and whanau benefit that occurs when women elect to positively and legally self-determine, and therefore suggest that the correctional recognition of their voices in the co-design and co-delivery of their care, will offer benefit that extends far beyond an individual.

This study will look at how we begin to advance some very real inside solutions by utilising prisons differently, to enable an outcome that creates sustainable self-determining, collaborative and desired opportunities. Outcomes that will eventually enable women to make an informed change to the way they nurture and support their families. It will also assist them in setting relationship boundaries and frameworks, and make partnership choices that keep them and their children safe on the outside.

I intend to show the valuable contribution that attaches to the inclusion of an informed and experienced user voice, to enable Corrections to co-design and co-deliver systems of penal care, enablement and rehabilitation for women.

Intended outcomes

My research will be presented to the CEO of Corrections and the Corrections Minister as part of the ongoing RAW mahi in support of any proposed transformational de-carceral inside change, being credibly informed by an incarcerated woman’s voice.

It is my observation within the RAW mahi, and my work inside the prisons, that academics and sector experts have always been the ‘go-to’ people to discuss a correctional transformational change proposal. Trusting the voice of the inmate goes against correctional thinking. I am aware that I am ‘talking back’ to the previous methods of strategising transformational change, in that these have previously not included, nor privileged the incarcerated woman’s voice or acknowledged her expert status, and I am creating an important space that is generative toward an incarcerated woman’s survivance and futuring.

The best outcome for this study would be to give content and direction and provide culturally aligned co-designed and co-delivered solutions, informed by good faith actors (inmates) within the penal system, given its continuing immersion in Western dominant legal practice derived from Victorian punishment practices, that denote imprisonment as the preferred method of accountability for criminal activity. Therefore, advancing different

outcomes and opportunities, that reflect a co-design and co-delivery, that seeds a woman's self-determining power, from within the penal space (that to date, I have witnessed, results in large amounts of 'wasted time' and negative disassociation, increasing the likelihood of re-offending and returning), appears to be an immediate solution.

I acknowledge my positionality concerning the use of Māori language in my study, and I note the many misappropriations that have occurred where Māori names have been implemented in the correctional space to evoke a 'Tikanga skin', to introduce transformational change models that remain aligned with the normative corrective process. Language is tricky and it is contested, and therefore becomes problematic concerning our different histories. Therefore, I will walk carefully and meaningfully as a partner in research and discovery, while keeping the women's voices paramount. I do however acknowledge that in terms of Kaupapa Māori practice, the centrality of voice is important, and my study is to create a space for those who do not speak.

These women, while detained have their ears to the ground, they are hyper-vigilant, always scanning, yet powerless to create change. They are incarceration experts and have the experience and the expertise to demonstrate a true treaty partnership within the correctional space. Therefore, I intend to elevate their voices within this study, to give insight through the deep and extensive expertise that they have chosen to share, confirming the value of including them in the co-design and co-delivery of inside programmes.

Literature Review

The painful legacy of colonisation for both Māori and Western women

The impact of colonisation is entrenched in New Zealand, and becoming extremely difficult to address collaboratively, to advance and enable equal platforms of opportunity, understanding and inclusiveness. In my opinion, our lifestyle frameworks have now become increasingly separatist, distanced, opinionated and misunderstood.

Moreover, criminal outcomes have taken centre stage in some communities, as an acceptable and normalised intergenerational way of living, supported by state financial support and entitlements that remove any remaining self-determining purpose, advancing separatist and opinionated communities, and a resulting marginalisation.

The colonisation of Aotearoa by the British, through structural violence and dispossession has left a painful legacy of marginalisation, poverty and distrust for Māori, and today Aotearoa faces social challenges at crisis levels, that remain unattended and misunderstood, and these are largely framed within a Western lens (McIntosh & Coster, 2017).
The Treaty of Waitangi, a pivotal founding document In New Zealand (where Māori assert their rights to self-govern), is consistently avoided by Corrections. (Stanley & Mihaere, 2018). Māori effectively became a servant class to the colonisers, who destabilised and removed opportunities, imprisoning Māori to maintain their capitalist Western power and advance extreme inequality and its resultant disadvantage for Māori (Stanley & Mihaere, 2018).

It is well documented that Māori account for just over 50% of the New Zealand prison population, with 63% being held in female prisons (Ara Poutama, Department of Corrections 2016, 2017). Māori penal capture is at chronic proportions and has become normalised by the state and New Zealand public, in that in the context of neo-colonialism, Māori have become culturally, socially and economically precarious (Stanley & Mihaere, 2018).

Colonisation depends on the construction of ignorance about culture, language, beliefs and the being of 'the Other'. In New Zealand, the colonial history of violence, suppression and incarceration of 'the Other' remains largely ignored, and the state construct is that Māori offend in terms of social pathology and deficit (Stanley & Mihaere, 2018). The state has developed strategies and programmes to remedy Māori offending behaviour that essentially assert Pāhekā power with an intermingling of indigenous culture (Stanley and Mihaere, 2018).

Māori wāhine lose their rights under Western Coverture Law

Wāhine in traditional Māori society played a key part in linking the past with

the present. Both men and women were key parts of the Māori collective whole, where each person in the group had their intrinsic value. The impact of Christianity relegated Māori women to 'chattels or possessions', whereas previously women were free to retain their own names and their children were able to choose their kinship linkage, even when born out of wedlock (Mikaere, 2023). Abuse against women was taken extremely seriously and became a whānau concern.

Whānau was the primary source of a woman's support, and marriage still left her with her independence, her material possessions and her and her husband's full whānau support (Mikaere, 2023).

The Christian insistence on a nuclear family, where a woman became a possession of her husband under Victorian law, removed the flexibility of her Māori societal social organisation and support. Being relegated to child rearing and homemaking as her main life framework (Westernised to assist opportunity and assimilation), was to become a Māori women's new normal.

According to English law, women and children were chattels to be used and abused by paterfamilias (husbands) as he chose (Mikaere, 2023). The effect of this was to incapacitate Māori women, who now had no rights, to her children, no rights to end her marriage, to regain her former property, or to get any upkeep support from her husband, should she want to end her marriage. She became 'in service' to her husband.

The impact for Māori women, as they were reduced to the servitude levels of their European counterparts, was that they were forced to accept a patriarchal legal system, denoting them as the property of their fathers and husbands. Māori women lost the ability that they had had under their Māori Law of Coverture, where they were able to manage property and enter into contractual relationships. Their legal status, roles and responsibilities were eroded by Christianity and Western laws, leaving them last in line, behind, Pāhekā men, Māori men and Pākehā women (Quince, 2010).

The whānau collective

Pre the existence of Native Schools, knowledge was passed onto children through the whānau collective (largely kaumatua/elders), who were charged with the raising and knowledge growth of tamariki (children). Tamariki were prized and valued, a living embodiment of those who had gone before, and the essential element to the ongoing survival of the people. Whakapapa became a key aspect of their education, and oral culture was a primary means of knowledge transmittal to maintain the survival of Iwi history. These moulded a child's worldview and established their place within the whanau group (Smith & Tinirau, 2019). Within traditional Māori society, parenting and the development of a child were the responsibility of the whānau as a whole, this collective approach also enabled the

parents to remain contributing members of the wider society, delivering well-being to both the parents, the whānau and the community. Neglecting, dishonouring or abusing a child was considered a crime and dealt with within the whānau collective (Smith & Tinirau, 2019).

Therefore, colonisation's impact was qualitatively different for Māori women, where the traditional balance between men and women, as prescribed in tikanga, was destroyed. Māori men took on the patriarchal values and behaviours of Pāhekā men, and their women were offered a lesser positioning in colonised societal hierarchies, as opposed to their traditional Māori societies. Māori women were stripped of their economic and legal powers, and provided with racist and gendered educational opportunities through Native Schools, which would set them up for a modern-day life of poverty and racially and gender-driven disadvantage, that went on to intergenerationally amplify.

There was also a significant change to the day-to-day social structure of Māori communities, as the Western nuclear family, with the male at the head, became the norm. There was a deconstruction of the Māori collective approach to life, and ownership was eroded.

Incarcerable beginnings

Early incarceration which prioritised Māori, was a result of a changing platform of Western legislation and was introduced to dispossess Māori from their land and ensure they assimilated within the settlers' lifestyle and educational frameworks (Stanley & Mihaere, 2018). Imprisonment simply enabled settler outcomes to be achieved, it quelled resistance and developed an inclusionary culture among Pākehā, with Māori becoming increasingly known as the 'Other' that required deeper state controls and discipline. Māori were seen as urban misfits, culturally maladapted and economically retarded (Stanley & Mihaere, 2018).

Urbanised lifestyles also disconnected Māori, and placed them at the bottom of the wage economy, subjecting them to stigmatisation and discrimination.

Imprisonment had become silenced through its normalisation, and there has been little acknowledgement of 180 years of discriminatory Western legislation that enabled illegal land acquisitions, advanced state violence and subsequent imprisonment for Māori. Today's penal punitiveness has refocused the problems away from inequalities, and systemic discrimination, and towards violent and non-responsible individuals, and ultimately Māori, who bear the brunt of the socio-economic disadvantage, structural dislocation and institutional discrimination, all introduced through colonial dispossession and maintained through their legislation and policies of exclusion (Stanley & Mihaere, 2018).

Māori Wāhine become New Zealand's most incarcerated

The colonised agenda that was set to cancel culture and assimilate Māori into Western frameworks, left Māori women at the bottom of the heap (Quince, 2010). The impact of this has been catastrophic for Māori lifestyles that relied on wāhine to balance and restore their cultural ecosystem.

Wāhine non-acceptance of a nuclear family framework has become tagged non-gendered in behaviour, and an easy target to justify their ongoing penal outcomes, increasing their marginalisation and invisibility (Quince, 2010). Failure to acknowledge the intersectionality that attaches to them, by focusing on an individual's behaviour, fails to acknowledge and address the source of the social disruption and therefore promotes the continuance and amplification of their criminal behaviours and an acceptance of the state's ongoing patriarchal colonial power. These behaviours have become a way to overcome wāhine poverty, under-education, lack of job opportunities, and discriminatory government social policies, in housing, health and education.

The use of drugs and alcohol masks the pain of the lifestyles the wāhine experience, and repeat detainment becomes normalised and intergenerational, and in many instances, ironically, a break from the outside difficulties of their disadvantage and lifestyle barriers to self-determination.

Māori women have become one of the most disadvantaged and over-criminalised demographics in New Zealand. This can be explained through a myriad of intersecting factors. Structural intersectionality, poverty, undereducation, limited job skills and family responsibilities, are all directed through the forced adoption of Pākehā values. These factors are compounded by the racism of government policies, relating to housing, employment and health. The loss of their legal power, under tikanga Māori and gendered racist education, and the forced adoption of patriarchal values, have established a continuing cycle of underachievement and poverty for a Māori wāhine. This advanced her positioning to one that marginalised her from her culture, given her lack of reo and tikanga, and from mainstream society given her poverty, undereducation and perceived 'non-gendered' promiscuity (Quince, 2010).

An outcome of this intersectional injustice is the increasing Māori wāhine prison population, that has been normalised within a Western lens. Māori women have been forced into lives that have been characterised by structural violence, Western patriarchal behaviours and enforced borders, where the state has now become the 'intimate other' and the ongoing perpetrator of the harm (Mcintosh, 2018). Where Māori women experience far worse public discrimination and oppressive state behaviours and injustices than Māori men and non–Māori women, resulting in their over-incarceration in Aotearoa with the prison population now at 65% for Māori women (Quince, 2010., Cornish, 2022).

Western women in the penal system

Whilst acknowledging that Māori wāhine are certainly statistically overrepresented within our prison system, my study also provides insights into the theory behind Western women's incarceration. To achieve this, the lens of Feminist Theory becomes important, however, it will be difficult not to include the dynamics of intersectionality, as they also apply to Western women caught up in disadvantaged lifestyles, determined through the patriarchal impact of colonisation.

If we consider the journey of the English settlers arriving to colonise New Zealand, we perhaps start to understand and unpack the origins of the lifestyles that pre-determined incarcerable pathways for Western women.

Some of the boats arriving in the 1800s contained passengers that had been effectively 'transported' to the colonies to endeavour to mitigate their problem motherland behaviours. Ironically their deportation would also assist the new countries to colonise through their enforced labour (Davis, 2003). Where the deportees originated from poor working-class environments, and had been forced into petty criminal activities to survive, 'transportation' to the colonies, both Australia and New Zealand, was offered instead of English penitentiary time.

Whether Western women can trace their criminal norms back to their colonial origins would be an interesting study and one that is not the intent of this paper. It is however well noted that the coloniser's arriving in New Zealand adopted the same class system that they had experienced and accepted in their previous English lifestyles. Therefore, those who had origins within the working classes may have arrived with a diversity of value sets, both illegal and legal, to create the foundations of their new lives. As each opportunity arose these values would have influenced the actions they took and the lifestyles they lived.

Therefore if the transportation of criminal labour alongside working and upper-class people were a part of the colonisation of New Zealand, it is logical to assume that the continence of the respective lifestyles would have been normalised and intergenerational. And just as Māori women encountered the intersectional difficulties of class, race and sexism, so did women caught up in this working-class relocation and colonisation.

It is however understandable that if the 'transportation' to the colonies came about as a result of negative behaviour patterns in the United Kingdom, the normalisation of these lifestyles may have continued. The accepted patriarchal dominance of the time meant it was men who were largely involved in the day-to-day activities and decision-making (legal and illegal), with women being relegated to their service. Therefore, in these subservient models of life, where women had so little jurisdiction or ability to transact or self-determine they

were unlikely, initially, to be directly active in behaviours that would see them detained (Davis, 2003).

The relegation of white women to domestic economies prevented them from playing a part in the emergent commodity realm. Wage labour was gendered as male, and racialised as white. Women, once married had no legal protection and therefore punishment tended to be for revolting against her domestic duties and was punishable by her husband. The persistence of domestic violence as an increasing social problem today painfully attests to these gendered modes of historical punishment (Davis, 2003).

As women slowly begin to gain their equal place with men outlined within Feminist Theory activity, by challenging the patriarchy of men, their ability to earn income in the same way as men (both illegally or legally) appears to have been normalised. The effect of this, for women caught up in the cycle of poverty and intergenerational disadvantage is that they were exposed to the same social challenges as their men. Their ever-growing drive to gain equal recognition and positioning with men amplified the social challenges that sat alongside them.

Are prisons obsolete?

The story of prison development through an American lens is well told in Angela Davis's book, "Are Prisons Obsolete?", where Davis gives a detailed account of how prisons came into existence and the impact they had on a diversity of demographics over time. The book makes for compelling reading for those interested in this sector, especially regarding the journey of inside education, one that has been well advocated by RAW, but continually meets internal barriers of resistance in New Zealand prisons. Activists in the United States prison space have repeatedly advanced the benefits of assisting "religiously informed self-reflection and self-reform time" claiming that advancing educational knowledge will effectively enable prisoners to move away, upon release, from punishable behaviours (Davis, 2003).

This however continues to be ignored, and the activists have been unable to introduce education sustainably and reliably, that can be accessed by all inmates.
The reasons for this absence of educational pathways appear to be more located in the theory of the continence of the "prison industrial complex" (Davis, 2023), and the involuntary servitude that ensures there is a good supply of prison returns, and new recruits, to support the supply of self-disciplined individuals capable of performing the requisite industrial labour for the developing capitalist system (Davis, 2023).

Prisoners from very early on recognised the fact that they needed to be better educated, the more education they had the better so that they would be able to deal with themselves

and their problems, the problems of the prison, and the problems of the communities from which they came. (Davis, 2003).

RAW has certainly witnessed this in the New Zealand prisons, in that the inability to advance any sustainable educational or vocational endeavours inside the prison, that will enable outside self-determination, are constantly at the mercy of the “working prison‘, where the reliance on inmate labour is a non-negotiable platform of prison income, achieved through a diversity of service delivery.

Education, a key social determinant of marginalised lifestyles

As New Zealand has evolved its political system, and developed its justice policies, the impact on those that had limited education, was to establish further barriers to advance their inequality and resultant disadvantage. Education became a key social determinant of the life outcomes being experienced, concerning access to health and housing, and was the determinant of political, social and economic success outcomes for individuals and their families. Native schools have predetermined the pathways of inequality and subsequent disadvantage for Māori.

Successive governments, in response to increasing criminal behaviours (born out of poverty and inequity), legislated through tough-on-crime policies, which led to an amplification of the prison population for both men and women. Women, now gradually freeing themselves from a colonial patriarchal dominance begin to navigate lifestyles of independence, and some found themselves caught up in the justice system, through their perpetuation of dysfunctional patriarchal behaviours that they too had mastered and normalised.

Ironically, New Zealand’s latest 2023 government election promises, once again, prioritised being ‘tough on crime’, a key focus for the centre and far-right political parties. However, their solutions appear to remain solely in detaining more people for criminal behaviours. Regardless of the proposed 21st-century enlightenment around the failure of prison to rehabilitate, we continue to return to correctional societal removal to avoid further harm.

The poem that follows was written by Maia, an inmate at, Auckland Women’s Regional Correctional Facility. (McIntosh, 2018, p.285).

> *Then the disposed*
> *Disappear*
> *Behind the wire*
> *Concentrated as one blemished body*
> *Where the truth of dispossession is*
> *Destroyed*
> *Till only the crim remains*

This poem illustrates how New Zealand's prison system fails women's inmates. An alternative approach would include looking at the social determinants of the offending and how these influence the offender's behaviour.

Frustratingly, RAW believes, as detailed in Davis's book, that all it would have taken when prisons were first established, was to focus on advancing education as part of the sentencing and detainment. By removing the impact of one key social determinant, under-education, we eventually advance the ability to live equitably within society without supplementation through criminality.

Methodology

Approach to the research

My positionality has been continually self-acknowledged and mitigated throughout the process in respect of the dual relational hats I wear, as a provider of care and opportunity within RAW, and an academic researcher. The methods I will use will reflect a respectful and reciprocal research process, acknowledging my privilege and my positionality where I am interviewing within the marginalised Indigenous and Pākehā communities. Rather than research ON, my approach is to research WITH the RAW community. This research will have clearly defined and agreed rights, responsibilities, and obligations, ensuring that the dominant society power is not expanded and the women are not excluded. This approach aligns with Bishop (Bishop,1988).

My study will draw from the diverse pool of women who have elected to come to RAW. I have invited two Māori and two Pākehā women to contribute, and while I acknowledge the higher percentage of detainments that attach to Māori women, I am also interested in the total growing prison population, and the limited academic research that has been completed with an increasing Pākehā female population.

The input from four repeatedly incarcerated women will reflect on the intersectionality of their life journeys and hopefully give insight into the lost opportunity experienced through

Ara Poutama, failing to listen or include the incarcerated voices to increase the effectiveness of their inside programmes, an acknowledgement of the colonial injustice that sits in behind a woman's repeated detainment.

Researcher as 'insider' and 'outsider'

As a Pākehā outsider/insider researcher, I will incorporate practices of respectful engagement, honesty, and integrity, with Kaupapa Māori research methods influencing my approach; of whanaungatanga (relationship building), tika (honesty in research design), manaakitanga (hospitality and care, and social responsibility), and mana (integrity and justice).

Russell Bishop explains how a Western researcher can conduct research on indigenous in his 1998 article, Freeing Ourselves from Neo-Colonial Domination in Research: A Māori Approach to Creating Knowledge (Bishop,1998).

RAW (reclaim another woman), is a therapeutic model of care, set up in 2014 by myself and my sister (a registered mental health nurse, with 25 years of practice). Within RAW we had a vision of reaching some of the hardest-to-reach women (high and complex female offenders), through supportive Western educational pathways. The work originated from my connection and governance support for the Waikato Women's Refuge, where I became perplexed at an abused woman's expectation to return to a violent relationship. I simply thought they deserved better, and that I could do better for them. I had not stopped to assess whether my better was the women's vision of better.

Now, I know that the 'saviour' I saw myself as was ingrained through years of colonial superior thought pathways. I believed the women had lost their way and RAW was established to get them back on track by immersing them in Western self-determining ways, the faster the better.

I quickly learnt that all that I knew and had lived, and thought that I could achieve, meant nothing to these women. They had very little interest in RAW, headed up by two very white naïve, albeit passionate females. The learnings were significant and over ten collaborative years, we have substantively evolved the model of care alongside the women.

Ethical considerations

I have received Waikato University Ethics approval to interview these four RAW women. The women have been actively engaged in the RAW model and have experienced at least two terms of incarceration, with a minimum of five years in total detained inside the prison as part of their sentencing. Repeated incarceration was an important criterion to enable continuum comparisons to be drawn**.** Active engagement in the RAW model allowed for relationality and reciprocity.

The relational positioning that I have with the women I have chosen to include, sets this research apart in its ability to establish a truism of intent and content when in many cases previous research on these women has been positioned to deliver to the researcher what the women believe is required (given the lack of relational trust), rather than speak freely about a system that has continually detained them.

I wrote interview summaries for each of the four participants' conversations from my rough notes taken when we met and presented these back to the women via email, they have advised me on any corrections or edits they wish to make, which I have affected.

Participant selection

As I have evolved my understanding of inequality and its resultant disadvantage, I have been able to increase my connection to and understanding of incarcerated women. Therefore, I am comfortable that the women I have chosen will share information that will assist in increasing the reader's understanding of the complexities of the criminal journey and the importance of privileging their voices.

I have also witnessed many Government conversations that occur with these women that do not deliver information that is accurate and therefore useful. This distilled information is based on a lack of trust in a system and people who continue to exploit and harm them through research, as they are incredibly desirous and coveted in this process. I'm therefore respectful of this privilege that has been afforded me through the RAW work.

I selected four women who are representative of the diversity that is the women's prison estate in New Zealand. They are women that I have trusted relationships with that have been tested and proven over many years.[2]

Participant profiles

The heart of the study is the voices of four RAW women, two Māori and two Pākehā, (MW, KM, SS, SK), whom I have high-trust and long-standing relationships with.

SS, is Pākeha, forty-four years of age, and has no children. She has spent 11 years inside over two separate sentences, she has been part of RAW for the last seven years, both inside and outside the prison. I have a long-standing relationship with SS and we meet weekly to connect. SS has been studying at Waikato University for the past two years (and is about to embark on a master's in applied sociology), where she has achieved a 98% grade average.

[2] See Appendix 3 for more comprehensive insights into each of the women's correctional journeys.

To affect this specific work, for my study, we met twice, for two hours. Her story is in the RAW book (published in 2019).

KM is forty-one years of age and identifies as Māori, she has been an active part of the RAW alumni (women who have transitioned out of the day-to-day model if located at Te Aroha), for over five years, and works with disadvantaged youth for Pathways in the Waikato. KM has been in Australian detainment for most of her teen and adult life, where she served close to 10 years inside, over eight separate sentences, before she was finally deported to New Zealand as a 501. She has five children (two who now live in New Zealand, and three that remain in Australia), and two grandchildren. Her son, who is 16, is now caught up in the Australian youth justice system. KM and I are in contact both face-to-face and digitally regularly, and to affect this study we met twice for two hours to enable KM to reflect on the specifics of my study and her contribution. KM's story is also in the RAW book.

SK is fifty-three years of age and English descent, she has four children and four grandchildren. She has spent five years inside the prison over two sentences and has been part of the RAW alumni group for the last seven years. I have unfortunately not had as regular contact with SK as I have had with the other RAW women involved in this study, given the criminal disruption that continues to exist in her life. Experience has demonstrated that RAW women returning to criminal lifestyles will limit their connection with RAW so as not to get us involved in untrue conversations.

I met with SK for three hours, and she elected to come to the RAW head office to spend time with me. We have had two follow-up phone conversations that indicate that her struggles are real, however, her conversation was candid and open and reflected the relationship we continue to have, regardless of the difficulty that she is experiencing. Her story is in the RAW book.

MW, is a Māori wahine, who has just turned fifty years old. She has one child (who is also in the justice system and is presently detained,) and three mokopuna. MW is a relatively new member of the RAW whānau, who came to RAW three years ago when she transferred from Christchurch Women's Prison to Auckland Women's Prison to await her parole hearing and possible exit to RAW. MW has been in the prison system most of her life and her time with RAW has been the longest she has ever been outside of the prison. She lives at the RAW home in Te Aroha and works full-time in a distribution role in Morrinsville. MW met with me twice for two hours at the RAW head office, this location was chosen by her given her work proximity and commitments.

My study will utilise Crenshaws 'Intersectionality Theory' and 'Feminist Theory to explain why Māori and Western women today are experiencing an amplification of their incarceration in New Zealand.

Intersectionality Theory

‘Intersectionality’, is a term used by Crenshaw, to explain the interplay of ethnicity and gender, concerning the positioning and experiences of minority women. Where the gender expectations of homemakers, and the experiences of unskilled educational offerings, explain the resultant poverty for Māori and Western women, these are further compounded by state racist policies, in respect of class, employment, health and housing. This inequity has been further compounded and advanced by imprisoning people in Western capitalist patriarchal power structures that amplify and sanction the barriers of disadvantage (Crenshaw, 1991).

Intersectionality theory lends itself well to this study, furthermore, aspects of intersectionality found in Feminist Theory illustrate the advancement of marginalisation and inequality for all women. The four women that I have chosen to participate in my study have demonstrated how the intergenerational impact of compounding and intersecting factors continues to amplify their disadvantage through race, class and oppression of opportunity, this has had a huge impact on their life choices and direction and has effectively normalised the incarceration process for themselves and their families.

*Refer to the appendix, note 4 for a deeper analysis of Crenshaw's Intersectionality theory, concerning Structural, Political and Relational intersectionality.

Feminist Theory

Feminist Theory is a body of thought that emerged in the late 20th century in response to social, political and economic inequalities experienced by Western women. It assisted them to shake free from the shackles of patriarchy to achieve equal footing and opportunity with men. Feminist Theory advocated for gender equality and the dismantling of patriarchal systems that perpetuated gender-based discrimination and oppression. Intersectionality identified the various forms of social identities, race, class, and sexuality alongside gender, arguing that individuals experience multiple, intersecting forms of discrimination and privilege at the same time, that must be accounted for when addressing inequality. Of late Intersectional Feminism has been accommodated within Feminist theory.

Therefore, both Feminist Theory and Intersectionality Theory provide frameworks to assist in understanding the over-incarceration of Māori and Pākehā women in Aotearoa. However, Intersectionality Theory is possibly more so, given it identifies that the intersection of gender, ethnicity and class is required to comprehend the complexity of social factors that underpin the over-incarceration of women, especially for Māori wāhine who are today still experiencing the ongoing negative impacts of the colonial dispossession and culture

cancelling (racism), as against Feminist Theory that more aligned with the breaking down of patriarchal frameworks of power.

Therefore, it becomes important in this study, which includes two Western and two Māori women, to begin to understand their pathways to prison when caught up in repeat cycles of detainment. While prison pathways for Māori and Western women are acknowledged as different, it requires investigation and insight through the women's voices to gain knowledge as to the particular lifestyle circumstances, framed as social, political and economic, that apply to each of them for repeated criminal preferences and their resultant incarceration when lensed through Feminist and Intersectional Theories.

Discussion

As the twenty-first-century advances, New Zealand continues to navigate a myriad of complex Western social challenges, many rooted in the devastating footprint of colonisation. Recent New Zealand Governments have become better at consulting with and listening to individuals and the communities that are most negatively impacted, to inform their social change conversations when designing taxpayer-funded solutions. No longer do we believe that sector experts and academics have all the answers and therefore, they should not retain the influential roles in social policy contenting.

One example was when Harry Tam in 2021, established a 2.7 million Labour government-funded Hawkes Bay drug rehabilitation programme, in support of the Mongrel Mob. There was some public outcry about the two Mongrel Mob leaders, Tam and Fatupaito being authorised by the Police to cross the Auckland/Waikato Covid lockdown barrier, to advance the covid vaccination of the gangs (Wallis, 2021). The scepticism surrounding the initiative included thoughts that it was little more than a sanctioned and assisted way for gangs to run their drugs (Walls, 2021).

Another example happened in July 2022 when the then Labour Government divided the health sector in two, creating Te Whatu Ora as the Māori Health Authority. Informed by the views of iwi and Māori health professionals, the intent was to create greater equal opportunity and relevant health care for Māori people.

At that time it appeared that New Zealand was largely on a pathway that acknowledged the relevance and importance of 'user inclusion' in designing differing approaches to social care, for our culturally diverse population (with no one approach being dominant or preferred), as being the best way to achieve outcomes for those most impacted. However, recognising the importance of co-designed, and co-delivered culturally inclusive social care for Māori is precarious and at best subject to the agenda of the government of the day.

The Justice and Corrections Ministries, however, had not demonstrated any meaningful partnership initiatives. It appears that they continued to seek solutions for increased community crime and public concerns through the use of sector experts, consultants and academics and that this was not accompanied by the voices of people who were or had been incarcerated.

Cultural tokenism introduced to negate ongoing state power

Ara Poutama (Corrections) has implemented a myriad of tikanga-infused programmes over the years. These were largely framed to suit correctional interests and were aimed at addressing and reducing both re-offending and imprisonment. Yet despite these, there was no significant change to the percentage of Māori offenders detained in New Zealand prisons

(Stanley & Mihaere, 2018). And, while Corrections evoked their 'mantle of culture', the subjugation of Māori to correctional imperatives has remained in-tact, and the 'Māori cultural model of rehabilitation, continues to be re-branded, re-developed and rolled out time and time again (Stanley & Mihaere, 2018). Māori culture has become the correctional methodology of engaging Māori inmates in Pakeha programmes, evoking a cultural spin that ensures Corrections remains the 'expert' in rehabilitation programmes (Stanley & Mihaere, 2018).

There is little if any evidence that user (inmate) experience has been given weight when informing the development and review of correctional policy and prison programmes. This is despite evidence that users of policy and programmes in other settings can provide a much stronger insight into how to co-design an effective service that meets the actual end needs of the user, rather than one that is' thought' to meet the user's needs (Harding et al, 2020).

As McIntosh & Curcic (2020) explain,

> Recognising incarcerated women as experts in their own condition provides a platform to inform decarceration strategies. The privileging of this status and the need to engage with systemicracialised injustice means we may be able to move beyond simply describing a condition towards creative new possibilities for sustained transformative change that helps create and sustain community flourishing. (p.223)

Haea te Ata: A Day Done Differently

In an attempt to develop a response that supports women who are incarcerated, that uses the voices of those most impacted and that draws on previous work with women's prisons the author has been developing a proposal for Haea te Ata: A Day Done Differently (HTA). HTA is a transformational model of prison care that prioritises culturally educative programmes supported by self-determining and independent role models in New Zealand women's correctional facilities. HTA is now in discussion with Ara Poutama (Corrections) to partner for programme delivery. As there is a lack of evidence about user experience in this space, this paper will add to the body of evidence about why the voices of incarcerated women are crucial to include in correctional female prison change conversations.

This research will contribute to the development of HTA by providing an evidence base about the benefits of making space for the voices of incarcerated women's voices.

Making space for the incarcerated women's voice

This research seeks to answer the question: Can incarceration be transformed to provide purposeful community opportunity that will eventually lead to decarceration and a preference for self-determining decriminalised lifestyles? This is based on the hypothesis

that the current prison abolition approach is not effective and is harmful to marginalised recidivist women caught up in intergenerational criminal cycles.

Listening to the voices of incarcerated women requires the creation of **space**. In this space voices will be listened to, prioritised, and used to make meaning; and in turn to inform recommendations about future approaches to informing how incarceration is shaped for women.

I have witnessed many challenges over a decade of connection to the prison system. A key wondering is if a ‘time out ’ space, even when it occurs to create societal accountability, may advance an educational change opportunity that some supportive outside organisations have endeavoured to initiate. Out-of-gate providers, including RAW, have struggled at times to support and encourage self-sustaining lifestyles for women who have been incarcerated. Societal barriers, marginalisation, stigmatisation, and lack of drive to do things differently are too entrenched, and therefore, women defer to a criminal normal (McIntosh & Curcic, 2020). Despite this, while incarcerated there is a platform of possibility and a lack of anti-social distraction, that if used purposefully to educationally empower rather than punish, may be the catalyst for sustainable self-determining change on the outside.

While Ara Poutama has had an open approach to considering change, there has also been a tendency to dilute and stall new content. Moreover, there appears to be an ongoing appetite to re-invent, yet a reluctance, or unsurety of how to implement. Therefore, very little sustainable self-determining activity occurs for women caught up in repeat cycles of offending and incarceration.

Tough on crime an ineffective solution

New Zealand has just been through a general election that resulted in a centre-right win, where ‘tough on crime’ became a focus. Simply, right-wing, neo-liberal political parties proposed tougher criminal justice policies as part of their election promises. These policies advocate that locking people up for extended periods is the best way to address and reform criminal behaviour (ACT New Zealand, 2023). This is despite research and sector experts who see prison as a ‘systemic failure’, housing the marginalised and advancing inequity within New Zealand’s demographics. The preferred approach is to advocate abolition as being the primary way forward, advancing community solutions of care in response to criminal activity (Lamusse & McIntosh, 2022). These voices, in most cases, have not been to prison, and whilst their research reflects time spent with incarcerated persons, it has failed to guide Corrections into a platform of sustainable, self-determining and humanised detained care, resulting in little change for the incarcerated, when Corrections remain the ‘experts’ in rehabilitation programmes (Stanley & Mihaere, 2018).

"People are sent to prison as punishment, not for punishment, deprivation of liberty is the punishment, and a human rights framework that recognises dignity and value can add a corrective measure to this." (McIntosh, 2018. p.292)

Given the lack of exploration of alternatives that could achieve improved outcomes, research that includes the voices and recognises the expertise of the RAW women (a cohort now 90 strong) is timely. Kaupapa Māori research methods will influence my method of approach, to ensure inclusion, participation, observation and listening, to identify and privilege the incarcerated women's voices. These are women who have experienced the impact of and possibility of making a self-determining change within the penal system.

The RAW Model

Today the RAW model thrives, as an out-of-gate therapeutic community that is located outside of Te Aroha. A rural homestead with a capacity for eight women, that supports their individualistic integrative journey in a culturally aligned and time-unlimited way. Many of the RAW women have experienced similar historic childhood trauma, an intergenerational result of colonised activity, both past and present. Their trauma often begins with early sexual intervention, and extreme levels of violence, that introduce drug and alcohol consumption to mitigate and normalise the pain, followed by drug trading and other criminal pursuits to earn income. As the women age, the criminal pathways become more diverse, often a result of the incarcerated experience, where women are introduced and enticed into a myriad of criminal opportunities.

Many of the women that RAW works with have never integrated within mainstream society, they live on the fringe of not only Western but also Māori society (McIntosh, 2006). The Māori wāhine have disconnected from their culture (or never connected), with all that is important to Māori in Tikanga.

The marginalisation of our RAW women from mainstream society is extremely high and their desire to function in a sustaining self-determining way is extremely low. They have normalised violence, sexual, drug and alcohol abuse, and functioning within this framework. Having located myself inside the prison, for one day a week for the last ten years, I have now gained the trust of many of the incarcerated women. I acknowledge this trust as a massive privilege that took a substantive amount of time, understanding, and behaviour and thought correction at my end. However, I now see an opportunity to offer choice to women (who lack choice by their own admission) through an innovative culturally aligned platform of care.

RAW believes there is a moral duty to reclaim a woman's ability to self-determine through in-carceral intervention, and reducing the influence from disruptive influences and criminally normalised communities can be the most effective way to assist a woman in

breaking a destructive and intergenerational cycle of criminality. If we re-frame the reclaiming from their normal, as the beginning of a journey that provides a collaborative cultural and educational opportunity, we may begin to deliver a participatory transformational change model that provides incarcerated women opportunities to break down societal barriers and offer sustainable lifestyle choices outside of criminal activity on their release.

Culturally aligned higher education, stolen from Māori women through the colonised process, could replace criminal lifestyle outcomes, alter thinking and restore mana and Tino rangatiratanga. Education could enable self-determining integration (should a woman choose to) and could break cycles of intergenerational disruption, disadvantage and criminal preferences for children and grandchildren.

However, as you 'don't know what you don't know', elective detained education becomes just that. Therefore, where education is an elective offering inside the prison, even with no cost attached, most women will likely elect, NOT to be educated.

Self-determining outcomes from detainment

Making a journey of detainment purposeful and sustainable may enable self-determining life capabilities that a woman has had taken from her, through her birthright, to be restored. Providing a partial restoration of her mana has not previously been afforded to her, given her marginalised lifestyle, a direct result of the trauma and loss that have occurred through her tupuna's colonisation. This may eventually encourage Māori wāhine to partake in their own decolonising journey of substance.

I acknowledge that detainment does not sit well with abolitionist and decarceration theory (Lamusse and McIntosh, 2022). I have, however, observed from my lived experience, participating as a woman who has not been incarcerated, but who has been given privileged access to incarcerated women inside and outside the prison, and through my involvement in delivering an outside model of care to 90+ RAW women, that in many cases community sentencing fails to progress change and address accountability. Addressing accountability by way of 'indentured' community work may not assist in self-determining sustainable re-integrative behaviours and create positive outcomes for women who have had 'choice' forcibly removed through a colonised birthright. Therefore, an abolitionist approach, advancing a community solution of care, may not serve the women as well as a staged and transformational educative approach activated inside the prison to progress self-determining opportunities.

Findings

The conversation with the four women, and extracts from published RAW literature, presented me with five common themes to explore within this section. The themes are addressing patriarchy; prison as a disabling, safe place; the importance of rehabilitation programmes; community sentencing; and, transformative change through incarcerated voices.

Addressing Patriarchy

One of the themes that became most apparent in the discussion with all of the women was the impact of patriarchy, this was identified as a birthright determiner of their resultant life outcomes and had pre-set their frameworks of dysfunction.

"What is patriarchy, men are in control, but what did they control? He controlled where I went, who I could see, and how I felt. He controlled access to other family members, he could hurt anyone who threatened his existence, and he was in control of whether I was allowed to live another day. Some days I lived like a princess and other days I wished I was dead." SS.

Their voices identified the absolute and damaging effects of Victorian patriarchal domination. The outcome of this patriarchal influence leads them all to make similar negative life choices. These choices depict and explain their current and ongoing marginalisation and under-education, where they have remained at the mercy of Victorian values, and the behaviours and control of men.

"We were socialised into submissive roles due to economic pressures and role models demonstrating patriarchal beliefs. Even in healthy relationships I observed, the man ruled the roost." SS.

The women's stories demonstrate that the resultant criminality is the gun that nurture has fired, given the patriarchal control that has held their opportunities to ransom. And for all of them, early education has been undermined or lost in the violence and chaos of their resultant life pathways, which place criminality at the forefront, to enable the means to survive. These intergenerational lifestyles of dysfunction eventually become normalised, and ironically the coloniser's Western patriarchal frameworks of control remain.

"The hypocrisy of the Government is the cause of most of the crimes. We get labelled criminals for selling meth to the community and get longer lags than a murderer, yet the liquor companies are never standing in the courts getting long sentences for the harm they are doing to the community (drunk drivers causing death, family violence, murders and assaults robbery and child abuse). They are selling it, yet it's NOT their responsibility.

The Government can't stop people from doing what they have to do to survive. While prices go up people struggle. SK.

Given the women lack the educational skills to advance differently, or self-determine without illegal activity, they have simply survived the best way they know how. Bringing children into the mix adds another layer of complexity, as none of them wanted this life for their kids, yet they are unable to break free from their social, political and economic confines.

"I'm trying to be a mother. I'm fighting alone against myself to do the right thing. But who I am escapes me. My addictions, my dark thoughts, and my need to escape are too overwhelming for me to be the parent my daughter needs. My Mother agreed to look after my six-month-old daughter. For years, I kept telling myself that this decision was the best one. For my daughter. But the reality is that I'm not there, watching her fall asleep at night. I'm with drugs and alcohol. The lowest point in my downfall." RAW woman.

The common thread here is the substance addiction to manage pain and the amplification of criminal behaviours to pay for the substances, a result of earlier gendered lifestyle disadvantage, inequality and ongoing economic and social barriers that have been initiated within patriarchal frameworks, that even today, have continued to influence and shape their life choices and opportunities.

Prison is a disabling, safe place

Ironically imprisonment has provided a safe haven for all the women, broken a cycle of criminal activity, yet underplayed the possibility to deliver a 'make good' on their missed life opportunities.

"Outside prison, my life is chaotic" In prison I go round in circles. I liked prison too. It's the only place in my life with a routine, structure, rules and limits. A safe place. Outside prison, I don't know if I'm going to make it through the day, or how I'm going to get my next dose of drugs. In prison, I know exactly what's going to happen from day to day. I like knowing what to expect. At night, my cellmate and I often talk. About our dreams, our visions, our goals." RAW woman.

Inside, the women are generally safe from their abusers, however, this was not the case for KM, who experienced ongoing sexual abuse while detained. They are forced to halt their criminal activity, they are distanced from their anti-social activators and the controllers of their outside lifestyles. The women are reflective and learn to really place value on non-material things, and they are detained with other women who are also reflecting. No one wants anything materially from them, acquisitions are a thing of the past.

“Prison was the safest I had ever felt in my life. I missed my kids like crazy, but I knew he couldn’t get me anymore.” SK.

However, their periods of detainment are anything but positively opportunity-laden, they simply serve as respite crisis care or enable an amplifying connection to black market behaviours and increased intergenerational criminality on the outside.
The prison also amplifies a woman’s inability to negotiate her life within societal legal frameworks, in that all her power to ‘life transact’ is taken away while she is detained. There is no accountability to the outside world for her mounting debts, both material and societal, and all her ongoing wellness and medical needs are attended to, albeit in a clumsy, limited and untimely way. The inability to learn how to navigate pro-sociably, make good choices, understand behaviours, and invest in their wellness, simply perpetuates and advances the ongoing systemic inequality that exists on the outside.

“I learnt how to unlearn, how to function normally out there, just to do the most simple things that became difficult, paying bills, going to and making appointments taking control of my own life, it was all done for me.” SK

Within the incarcerated period the opportunities are limited and there is a large amount of time wasted that is used negatively, this is common in all the women’s commentaries, where they identify that the ability to fill this time differently would deliver multi-faceted and positive outcomes. As opposed to detained time creating opportunities to amplify criminal behaviours and skills.

“At Arohata, there are two of us per cell. We have to be up before the guards unlock our doors. So I wake up early, take a shower and wait for the doors to open. I go to the refectory, I queue up to get a breakfast ration. I wash up. Then it's empty. Until lunchtime. We're locked up again so that the staff can eat. Then we go out into the courtyard for an hour. Then nothing more until dinner. We return to the refectory for dinner, go back to our cells and they lock the doors for the night.” RAW woman

The working prison and its impact on educational and self-determining opportunity
The New Zealand prisons are actively involved in contractual work where inmates are pivotal to keeping operational costs down and getting the jobs done, this in turn limits inmate involvement in other inside educational or correctional programmes. Work is prioritised by the prison and the inmates. The inmates to keep out of trouble, pass the time quickly, earn some income, and the prison get their jobs done quickly and affordably.

“I get bored. It's also my first period of sobriety in ages. I spend time with other inmates, we talk, and we get to know each other. But outside, no one supports me. I'm putting pressure on myself to be able to work. Here, you can be hired in the laundry, the central kitchen or

the gym. You start at 20 cents an hour. The most you can earn, after a very long time, is 60 cents an hour. That's right. But hey, 10 dollars a week is better than nothing. That's enough to buy medicine, shower gel, shampoo, conditioner and food". RAW woman.

The irony here is that the inmates often perform the jobs more effectively and efficiently than outside contractors, in that inside, away from distraction and dysfunction they simply get on with the task at hand to pass time as quickly as possible. This requirement for 'indentured labour' negates the opportunity to make a self-determining individualistic change, that Corrections continues to claim they advance. The state once again takes further advantage of a cohort that is endless and easily replaceable to meet a very real financial operational need. The tragedy of this is that this detained time could be the platform of lifestyle, small business and academic learning that could actually make a difference to a woman if used differently to empower and enable self-determining outcomes, and restore mana.

As KM expressed,

> Learning how to adapt your lifestyle to earn pro-socially to meet a financial need, would be a great skill to learn inside. I recently needed more money than my salary provided given the decision by my partner to quit his job, which created an inability to serve our current debt. So I set up a small business, selling home-cooked food on social media, It was a huge hit, and I even had to refund some people. This small business venture became an easy and immediate solution to my money challenge, I did not have to go back to crime.

The negatives of being inside include the priority that is placed on low-level work, which diminishes the ability and desire to learn. The loss of being with those you love, the guilt, the wasted time, and the anxiety.

"All they wanted from you was to be stupid, be controlled, do the jobs they needed you to do to keep the prison running and to do the courses that they have talked everyone into believing are rehabilitative and fix people." SK.

The introduction of purposeful education in the lifestyle, vocational and academic space, is a common talking point for the four women. They are aware of the dysfunction that exists in the lifestyles that they continue to advance on release. They also acknowledge that they don't know what they don't know, and are unlikely to effect change when imprisoned in environments that reflect the abuse, power and dysfunction, that they have normalised on the outside.

"Educating their staff, and enforcing the prison rules, without further punishment and degradation. HOLDING PEOPLE ACCOUNTABLE, INMATES, STAFF AND MANAGEMENT." MW.

When asked about how prison compared to their outside lives, all the women maintained that these were very different, with the only similarity being the low-level work opportunities available to them, these were similar inside and outside. However, on the inside many of the women felt valued, especially if they were good at the work they chose to do. The challenge for them all was the lack of value they placed in themselves and the disbelief that existed in being able to be anything other than who they were now, active in criminal lifestyles.

“Really, I have never valued myself, so why would anyone else.” SK.

“Criminals never turn their back on you, they always offer you the opportunities you need to get on your feet, those of us who only have ourselves to rely on, we find it much harder to sustain crime-free lives”. SS.

Therefore, reducing a prison’s work focus, and making prison less about the ‘ an industrial working complex’ that requires indentured labour, to a space of educative rehabilitation has been the focus of many passionate change advocates to date. To truly effect this transformational change offers a ‘make good’ remedy to the women who have been intergenerationally caught up in the gendered and systemic racism of the state.
The working prison relies heavily on inmates as a labour force and delivers too much wasted time for those choosing not to work. **Smart prisoners don’t suit the business of Corrections** (operationally and sustainably).

The women’s voices detail that the actuality of the inside operations is very unlike the correctional public speak, which would have their audience thinking that individual and culturally targeted rehabilitative opportunities were endless and highly successful for those who wanted to engage.

“More education opportunities, life skill courses, behaviour courses, job opportunities, and realistic employment opportunities for everyone not just those who tick all the boxes so to speak, because that is a small minority of the prison population. CONSISTENCY.” MW.

The importance of rehabilitation programmes
All the women heralded the structure of DTP (Drug Treatment Programme), as providing the tools for lifestyle change, by being delivered in non-negotiable environments, where they were housed with inmates who were all experiencing the outcomes of the same programme. SM talks to DTP as being the perfect way to run the prison in totality, she reflects on its non-negotiable programmes of lifestyle and behavioural learning, which assisted her in building and understanding ‘possible’ foundations and providing tools for her life success on the outside, without having to resort to criminality.

Ironically this highly advocated and coveted programme, which has been run in Arohata (Wellington) prison for years, has now been discontinued with the closure of the main Arohata prison (through staff shortage), and the reallocation of female inmates to Auckland and Christchurch. In Auckland, there have been some clumsy attempts to re-commence DTP, however, the positive power of the content delivery has been mitigated with the small numbers of attending, and inmates being celled with run-of-site prisoners that are not attending DTP. Therefore the value that the women gain from this programme has been reduced.

DTP became the one place, time and programme where the women felt extremely valued. As to whether they were able to attend the DTP depended on the length of an inmate's sentence and the proactiveness of prison staff to push them forward in timeframes that aligned with their paroles and their offending types.

"If I were Minister of Justice, I would offer a reintegration programme to all prisoners. Regardless of the length of their sentence, their behaviour or whether they re-offend. If the programme coaching offers techniques to give women self-confidence, if they are based on mentoring by solid people, then they will work. Women will want to change. These programmes stop us from believing that we are worthless. That's what our families, the courts and the prison system keep telling us". RAW woman.

"I would like to see the prison run like DTP from the time you walk into the time you leave. If I had done four years of learning about health, wellbeing, how important food sleep and exercise are, the words we speak and how we are spoken to, I would have left the place with a foundation to succeed." SK.

It is, however, alarming that Corrections places so little value on a programme that had so much value and benefit for the RAW women. This once again demonstrates that prison has the possibility within, yet continually fails to deliver or prioritise, the self-determining outcomes, so desperately sought by the inmates.

Community sentencing

Over the past three-year term of the Labour Government, community sentencing has found favour by the Ministry of Justice and has been prioritised in an attempt to address historic trauma, inequality and disadvantage. Community sentencing has also reduced the numbers detained in prisons and increased the Government's ability to talk to rehabilitative success. Interestingly, today, New Zealand grapples with increasing community harm that has been amplified through youth offending, with more and more young offenders being community-sentenced to reflect a trauma-based Justice approach to accountability and keep them out of an adult prison system. This effectively places the youth back into their

intergenerationally marginalised living environments where they have normalised criminal lifestyles. Therefore, prisons may not be the answer for offending youth, nor is a return to an environment caught up in a cycle of intergenerational criminality.

"I offended while on bail so facing charges whilst in the community wasn't good for me, I would self-sabotage. I have never served a sentence in the community. Addiction was a confounding variable for me, until I had cleaned myself up I couldn't make any rational decisions and I couldn't see long-term. I needed incarceration to disrupt my offending, to regain health and to distance myself from antisocial peers so that I could start to form my own identity. This took a lot of time because I had been in that world for so long, I only knew what I had come to know so well. A normative life was absolutely foreign to me." SS

RAW however has and does support this community method of accountability for first-time offenders. In that access to educative, therapeutic and restorative elements delivered to support correction and understanding of harmful behaviour is preferred to correctional detainment alongside inmates who are increasing their criminal capabilities. This will, however, require distancing from the environments that activate and encourage the harm, given their normalisation of criminal activity and thinking.

Transformative change through incarcerated voices

The final question the survey asked the women to comment on was, 'What was needed to advance the transformative change inside?' SS answered in a way that reflected the consensus of the four women.

"The current system is designed to mitigate risk and in doing so it restricts the opportunity for growth and reduces the likeliness of recovery from a criminal past. An environment that cultivates learning builds trust and recognises positive relationships as valuable is necessary to lift women like myself out of the hole we find ourselves in. For me, the sentence would need to deliver improved treatment (rehumanising) and more tailored education to muster the enthusiasm, build the strength and enact the self-belief required to overcome the challenges of reintegration." SS.

The four women in this study have spent considerable time in detainment, enabling them to reflect continually on their lost opportunities. Now that they are outside the prison and endeavouring to navigate legal lives, their outside struggles are real, and some of the women have been more successful than others at breaking down intersectional societal barriers and exiting from all criminal behaviours.

The insight from the four women, repeatedly delivers education (lifestyle, vocational and academic), as the preferred outcome, whilst also noting the limited resources, the lack of

digital connection and the low appetite from correctional staff to advance this as a preference inside.

“Engagement in underworld activities requires mechanisms of self-talk to morally disengage. Once you practice them often enough you can no longer relate to people in a “normal world”. When the misery becomes apparent, so does the huge disconnect from a functional society. How can anyone help you when you’ve created an “us” and “them” mindset?

I would not have been able to desist from crime if it wasn’t for the disruption imprisonment enabled, with forced self-reflection providing an intersection for change. I served four years for B Class offences, and then another seven years when the classification had risen to A Class. It’s obvious our old solutions don’t work, but to make a change, you have to trust that those supporting you will be there when obstacles arise to show you a different way, and that’s a LOT to ask of someone. Severing relationships from an offending career is difficult when they’ve played the role of family to you. And then believing that you’re worth investing in, after all the pain you’ve caused others, is another gigantic hurdle to leap. Education (better suited to being introduced and activated on the inside for women who have been criminally marginalised) contributes exponentially to a pathway of high reward that offers sustainable fruition as opposed to the remunerations of crime. Crime is building a house of cards, whereas educating in investing in solid foundations for you and everyone you love.” SS.

Often the benchmarks for a purposeful legal life are initially set low, as there is so little trust in themselves and the system. The return to their normal living environment looms over them and their whānau who are often located within this, continually encourage their criminality to return with their ongoing material requests. The key to their success in living within legal frameworks is to find purpose and joy (simplistic, but true). A lot of the joy determinants sit within their children and grandchildren, joy is also in finding their purpose in work or educational/ vocational pathways that stimulate and motivate them.

SK stated that her return to prison would be a cancelling of the daily connection she now has with her three grandchildren, as her son has made it very clear they will not be participating in prison visits, should she be detained again.

The barriers that exist for anyone who endeavours to navigate change are large, and even more so when they carry the stain of criminality. Therefore, all change has to be supported with relevant and culturally aligned role models committed to 360 wrap-around ‘life models’ of care and advocacy.

“As soon as I walk through the exit doors, all that evaporates. Some mates are waiting for me with drugs. They think they're helping me. I'm caught in a dilemma. I want to continue the healthier, sober existence I have in prison. I know that this alternative is possible. But my steps take me straight back to my unstable life before prison. And there's no one there to stop me. The authorities don't offer any accommodation to repeat offenders. The only people I can crash with are my drug-addict friends. And there I go again. My life is like a trajectory from which I can't extricate myself. At what point could it have taken a different path? If my family had believed me and supported me after the rapes, I think. Exactly at that moment. Instead, my whole world fell apart. My family didn't give a shit about me, the system didn't give a shit about me. So I didn't give a shit about myself.” RAW woman.

Finally, sustainable change requires outside environmental change, and this is not always possible or even suitable for a woman on release. Old normals are a much more comfortable proposition, and re-locating back with family and past associates is a natural and expected destination, that engenders an immediate sense of belonging, purpose and acceptance.

Discussion

This study intended to demonstrate the knowledge and the value of the incarcerated voice, the importance of and why Corrections should include these voices, and acknowledge their lived expertise to inform their transformational prison reform conversations. I referred, in my introduction, to the two main options that are reflected in the New Zealand public conversations to address increasing criminal behaviours. Those that want tougher sentencing, versus those that want abolition. Both voices are navigated within a justice system that acknowledges the historical injustice of incarcerable pathways, yet struggles to come up with solutions that find favour with either group. Moreover, they fail to provide self-determining outcomes to those repeatedly detained, given Correction’s ongoing failure to implement the humanising strategies they profess to advance.

As I worked through the interview process with four RAW women, there has been no reference to abolition being the answer to self-determining life outcomes for those caught up in intersectional and intergenerational cycles of criminality. Quite the opposite, the women’s voices have advocated for the safe haven and the opportunity that does and could exist inside the prison if a day were to be done differently.

21st-century sentencing outcomes that reflect the intersectional trauma of colonised lifestyles have prioritised (through community sentencing) an offender's return to their normal communities, often the very same environment where the crime occurred, and therefore advancing a return to the criminal business that has been intergenerationally

preferenced. Crime does pay and can pay, especially when the fear of incarceration has been removed by repeated and intergenerational incarceration cycles, and where criminally enriched lifestyles enable the material means to survive and then thrive within marginalised communities.

"They desensitise you to the justice system and offending. Once you have seen it's not as bad as you imagined, taking the risk isn't so scary." SS.

The four women, whether Māori or Pāhekā, all started in lifestyles that were saturated with negative intersectional patriarchal influence. Eventually, they were incarcerated for advancing their own means of survival, a reflection of their patriarchal nurture. Educational outcomes were low or non-existent for them all, therefore, survival required criminal activity. Prison increased their criminal connection and amplified their ability to offend. The prison also created an interruption to illegal behaviour, and violent lifestyles and brought a time of respite, that could, should it have been used differently, have empowered these women to advance their lives in a more pro-social self-determining way.

"Yeah, it's true: seven times in my life, in prison, I've had the opportunity to sit back and think. But with hindsight, I think these repeated sentences were stupid. Yeah, they were. It didn't stop me from re-offending six times. They think that by locking us up in a place, we're going to get better. But in reality, they lock us up with people who tell us how they've committed much worse crimes. You can build up an address book of criminals all over New Zealand here. If there's no rehabilitation programme, prison is useless. I had support when I was first incarcerated. After that, there's nothing for repeat offenders. Because the system thinks it can't do anything for you. And that's how the system holds together. Without returning prisoners, there would be no work for the prison guards." RAW woman.

Humanising programmes become a correctional focus

I acknowledge that Ara Poumata has made some inroads into how prisons are operated, especially in the men's estate, with a diversity of vocational, cultural and educational opportunities and increased treatment programmes being made more widely available (Ara Poutama/ Department of Corrections, n.d.). However, I still revert to '**you don't know what you don't know'**, therefore, the selection of these programmes (that are not participant-informed), is voluntary, and best suited for those who understand and believe in, or can activate the 'possible outside work opportunities' that may attach to them.

Those who are positively life-supported to navigate ongoing community barriers, and to secure and be included in self-determining opportunities once released, have a much better chance at being able to implement and engage, utilising the outputs of correctional programme input.

Te Mana Wāhine (TMW), is an example of a women's inside correctional programme that attempts to address the cultural gaps and acknowledge the intersectional elements of disadvantage, advanced through colonised structural violence and dispossession. TMW was established in Christchurch Women's Prison in mid-2022. The programme was intended to be 'business as usual' in all New Zealand prisons moving forward, but for now, it is being delivered via a pilot exclusively at Christchurch Women's Prison. I have added more detail on this programme and its outcomes in Appendix Note 5.

"I am not even sure that it's possible to restore wāhine mana in prison when their tapu is being breached on a daily basis, with being strip-searched whilst menstruating and subjected to verbal physical mental abuse from their peers as well as staff. To get the full results of te ao Māori as a whole and the mana a woman holds in te ao Māori, this can only be fully achieved on the outside on the Whenua.
You can start some of this process in prison, however, te ao Māori isn't living in a concrete facility governed by another culture's laws, similar in some aspects and completely opposite in others." MW.

The ongoing irony of a programme being implemented inside a prison that professes to restore wāhine mana through its namesake, Te Mana Wahine, is another example of the misunderstood applications of Māori lifestyles and tikanga practices, that can never be suited for a Western justice practice that detains Māori women.

Mana Wahine is a term that encompasses our own tikanga and upholds and eludes this mana that is inherent in our lives as hine. It embeds our well-being and our ways of being within particular cultural understandings, beliefs and practices, that affirm who we are within our whakapapa, whanaungatanga our roles, our positioning, our responsibilities and our understanding (Pihama et. al, 2019).

Further challenges lie within the day-to-day operational processes of a prison, these are geared up to mitigate risk and advance punishment and behaviour correction, rather than promote opportunity. While management may be well intended to enact a more humanising and enabling cultural platform of care within detainment, some inside staff deliver strong resistance to change.
An example of policy framed in this more humanising way, is **Hōkai Rangi,** developed to recognise the cultural and humanising failings of Corrections for people in their care.

Hōkai Rangi and Te *Ara Poutama* are metaphors for growth, potential and transformation, which is reflected in our transformation journey described in Hōkai Rangi.

- Rangatira (Leadership) We demonstrate leadership and are accountable.
- Manaaki (Respect) We care for and respect everyone.

- Wairua (Spirituality) We are unified and focused in our efforts.
- Kaitiaki (Guardianship) We are responsive and responsible.
- Whānau (Relationships) We develop supportive relationships.

(Ara Poutama, Department of Corrections, n.d.)

Hōkai Rangi, whilst transformational and culturally infused in its content, also reflects another example of a tikanga skin, where Māori names have been misappropriated to mask normative correctional practice. Hōkai Rangi was largely left to be implemented on the prison floor by an entrenched cohort of staff that have become disenfranchised, exhausted and unbelieving in the possibilities of positive inmate change. Therefore business as usual quickly returned after some clumsy efforts to appear to be implementing the next 'shiny new thing'.

SS reflects on the announcement of the Hōkai Rangi, and its subsequent implementation challenges.

"I remember so clearly being in DTP (Drug Treatment Unit) in Arohata prison and listening to the concept of Hōkai Rangi as it was delivered by one the senior correctional head office Māori staff members.

WOW, WOW, WOW, I thought as I sat there and listened. We were all incredulous at the new awareness that was unfolding before us in his passionate conversation. If they actually manage to implement this, it will be a game-changer for us all. Two years later, nothing, as always Corrections have overpromised and failed to deliver, and realistically, how were they ever going to implement this within the prisons if they stayed within the existing system of care, where there is a deflated culture amongst the staff? The hierarchical system places the biggest observers of recidivism in positions that bear the greatest influence. Sadly, these officers minimise and impede the introduction of initiatives that may have an auxiliary negative effect to avoid engaging in mitigation. In other words, they don't want to increase anyone's autonomy because they will have more work to do." SS.

Conclusion

All of the four women in this study are advancing in years.

All of these women **should have had** the opportunity while detained, through a diversity of available options (other than the two they currently have, offending or struggling) to make a real change.

All of these women should have been supported through educational/ vocational pathways to make positive and empowering choices, taken from them through patriarchal institutional behaviours and lifestyles.

Their lives, denoted by birthright and intersectional patriarchal control, were later advanced through their own anti-social behaviours, that had spiralled out of control. They all acknowledged they had no skills, inclination or positive role models to support or encourage them to make self-determining changes. Even when they knew they had put their children in danger, they were unable to make corrections, such is the grip of addiction, disadvantage, patriarchal control and poverty.

All of these women with similar stories of oppression, neglect, undereducation and patriarchal domination have been repeatedly incarcerated, and rather than look at the intersecting social determinants of 'why' they are incarcerated, we simply treat their individualistic and current crimes, release them and await their return, advancing the objectives of the 'patriarchal correctional economics'.

"For those of us caught in the system, it is crucial to obtain a comprehensive set of new values to guide decision-making processes during pivotal moments, alongside not underestimating the magnetism of reverting to what we've always known. I wish it were as simple as carrying the 'tools' to activate better decisions during challenging times. Conversely, the current correctional model appears to be inadequate to establish the amount of self-determination and enrichment required for sustainable change. Detainment bestows a useful platform to stimulate growth and build character despite current regimes allowing the "ostrich effect" (burying our heads somewhat) because significant change is unbelievably hard." SS.

Their voices are valid and knowledgeable, they remain as good faith actors, and yet remain unheard and of little interest to the failing correctional system that is charged with punishing and correcting them. Detained they are provided with a personal safe haven, with a re-location from their disadvantaged and violent lifestyles. However, the tools to create their own safe haven outside prison, remain elusive, as these rely on a co-design and co-delivery of education, not only academically but in lifestyle, wellness and relationships.
To prioritise building safe, sustainable and self-determining co-designed lifestyle frameworks for each of them, is logical and deserved. It remains nonsensical that Corrections fail to adopt and launch sustainably and consistently in the educational/ vocational space. Ironically, women, both Māori and Western remain captured within a

patriarchal capitalist system that has mitigated their life's chances and fails to acknowledge the intersecting educational and societal debt that urgently needs addressing. Incarcerated men, given their higher numbers continue to be the focus of correctional change programmes and if they are lucky, the women's prisons will be thrown the 'scraps' of any long-term programme successes, that are 'unlikely' to eventuate.

Therefore the resulting proposal, Haea te Ata, that RAW has created with the assistance of sector experts, Māori and Iwi, delivers a how-to pathway for Corrections concerning women's detainments, based on lived experiences (informed by the RAW women's voices and acknowledging their expert status), re the activation of purposeful and sustainable self-determining educational inside pathways.

"If you want to know how to fix a global social problem, you need to establish who is profiting from it, rather than who is suffering from it". Author Unknown.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Reclaiming Another Woman (RAW)

RAW 2014 Ltd, is a ten-year-old national charitable social enterprise, based in the Waikato, that has been effecting their programme across the three Aotearoa female prison estates. To date, we have had over 90 wāhine choose RAW as their prison exit pathway. All of these wāhine, if not residing at the main home in Te Aroha, are now part of a **lifelong cohort** that makes up the RAW alumni.

RAW was initially established in response to the many charitable crisis organisations that co-exist within New Zealand, here we had identified a gap in services, where I provided governance support to the Waikato Women's Refuge.
RAW identified that while crisis care was a necessary and immediate intervention, it also tended to be a **temporary** intervention, not long-term. And that offering crisis support as the only viable solution to assisting people in difficulty further erodes mana and fails to enable individuals to gradually sustainably self-determine.

Therefore, RAW's mantra has always been to support and teach our wāhine to fish, enabling them to provide for themselves and their whanau, rather than continue to supply them with fish.

Today RAW is acknowledged as one of Correction's most successful and resilient wāhine care models. We operate from a large therapeutic homestead, He Haumaru, located on a block of rural land 10 minutes from Te Aroha.

The model is heavily aligned and active within local Iwi community operations and is supported by several community groups, we have also established relationships with several community providers.

RAW's model has been one of continuous change, constantly reworked to deliver and amplify a more relevantly partnered and collaborative service to marginalised intergenerationally criminally connected wāhine Māori, our main cohort.

As RAW's CEO, I have embarked on a journey of academia completing my master's in public policy and I am presently engaged in my master's in Māori and Indigenous studies at the Waikato University. My sole aim within my study is to privilege the voice of the incarcerated wāhine in the decarceration correctional change conservation, acknowledging that those that have been impacted and are the most detained, have the most to offer, towards creating purposeful change solutions inside the prison. RAW now acknowledges, after 10

years of working inside and outside the prison, building trusted and collaborative relationships with our wāhine, that our wāhine holds the key to the solutions the country so desperately seeks.

RAW through our model of care, our wāhine, and my academia, now have the CE of Corrections, Jeremy Lightfoot's attention. This is enabling us to advance a change conversation, via Haea te Ata, that details an action plan to advance culturally purposeful and inclusive outcomes on the inside, and dilute a preference, amplification and normalisation of criminal activity on the outside.

Haea te Ata, (HTA), is a transformational change proposal of inside care written by RAW, that de-prioritises penal activity and amplifies supported cultural, educational and vocational opportunities, all within the existing detainment frameworks.
HTA is proposed to be structured within the existing correctional frameworks of care, utilising current therapeutic programmes and the employment industries on offer inside. By enhancing and re-shaping existing frameworks, HTA assists in cementing correctional transformational goals, limits additional funding requirements, and also doesn't risk becoming another "shiny new thing', presented to a cohort of staff that have seen too many of these proposed changes fail to launch as intended.

Today RAW has two very diverse parts to our model. Part one is a therapeutic care model, based at Te Aroha that advances lifelong individualistic journeys supported by role models to enable eventual sustainable self-determination and enhance mana. Part two is a change model (always the destination of RAW's mahi) that privileges the voice of the wāhine, and recognises her expert status in a decarceration conservation, now backed up by the academic study. RAW's HTA, has now been cleared to form part of the operational framework at AWRCF and is intended, once successfully piloted, to roll out across all New Zealand prisons both male and female. www.raw.org.nz

Appendix 2: Questions and themes for the participants

Questions
How many years have you served inside a prison?
How many separate sentences have you completed?
When was your first sentence?
How old are you now?
How many children/ grandchildren do you have?
Do you have a child inside?
How useful is incarceration in reducing anti-social criminal behaviours?
Have you ever been involved in research inside?
How different is prison life from your normal life on the outside?
What was your expectation on your first point of entry into a prison?
What have you learnt while sentenced inside, versus what could you have learned?
Do you have any life goals?
Do you know what your life's passion is?
How hard was it on the outside, to thrive or even survive?
How valued do you feel inside?
How valued by the community does it feel on the outside?
How hopeful are you off prison advancing positive change that will enable you to sustainable self-determine outside, without criminal outcomes to assist?
Is community probation or sentencing as effective as incarceration?
What are the positives of being inside?
What are the negatives of being inside?
What are the positives of being outside?
What are the negatives of being outside?
Would you choose to educate inside if you could, what are the barriers to achieving/advancing this?
Would you choose to align closer with your whakapapa inside , Te Ao Māori?
What would a prison sentence need to deliver to consider a permanent self-sustaining outside change, that was not supported by criminal activity?
How do you react when I refer to prison lags as a 'hospital stay' .. time out?

What else would you like to include in our korero with respect to your time served and its ability to assist with wāhine mana restoration?

Appendix 3: The women's stories

Nature loads the gun and nurture pulls the trigger.

The four women who have agreed to be part of this study, reflect on the intersectional difficulties that have continued to play out in their lives, often resulting in an ongoing poverty of opportunity. None of these women have ever been asked to be a part of any correctional change research in the past. Their voices and expertise have never been included, valued or listened to.

MW, a Māori wahine, born into a gang lifestyle, located in a complex and overcrowded whanau living arrangement, has today disconnected from her culture, believing it to be the instigator of her distress and abuse. MW's life has been immersed in the negative constructs of colonisation and urbanisation.
MW, as a child resided in the overcrowded conditions of her grandmother's living room, and largely attended to her own needs, making her own decisions from the age of four, when her sexual abuse began.

Our lounge was the main bedroom, a 'sleepout' for up to 18 whānau. There was a lot of 'drinking' each night, that quickly shifted into violence and then sex, where no one was left out, regardless of their age. I remember being six years of age and peeping through the windows after being on the street all night, to see whether they were all asleep and if it was safe to come inside.

Her survival framework was defined early, and she found her tribe in whatever living situation she encountered, the street, foster homes, state girls' detention homes and eventually prisons.

'At primary school, I found my tribe, I was smoking and drinking early, and punk rock music was my favourite. Being on the streets was fun, I set my own rules, and I had no one telling me what to do.'

Medical intervention, initiated to address her child sexual abuse, amplified her ability to survive. Later prescription drugs enabled her to not only mask pain but also earn income. Violence became her main means of protection, and disruptive behaviours maintained her mana on the street. MW had normalised criminality and disadvantaged frameworks of life, and within these prison became intergenerationally expected. MW accepted her disrupted life outcomes from an early age and did her best to navigate them through violent behaviours and marginalised associations. State institutions that continued to detain and harness her behaviour, had little impact until the death of her father. This left her son

unattended, and subject to a value set that MW had normalised and engaged in, but also disliked and distrusted and simply did not want for her son.

‘When dad died in 2002, this was my game changer, as my son, whom I’d had left in dad's care, knowing that if dad was alive he would be protected by the values of a good man. When dad died everything changed, my son was now unprotected.’

However, ironically even when MW demonstrated an appetite for change, the process was still remarkably difficult and distrusted her.
When living on the outside under the conditions of her parole, MW’s social and economic life barriers were huge. Whilst her goals are simple and in mainstream life frameworks, that should have attended to her educational advancement, easily navigable. However, the journey was a lot harder for MW, as it required a strong belief and trust in those she chose to support her. Distancing herself from her normal environments, she now needed to reset, re-think, and re-learn to implement the positive value set initiated by her dad, her greatest motivator being her mokopuna. Witnessing her son's eventual incarceration and her mokopuna’s disrupted journey to date, made her change drivers more urgent and real. Yet there was a system to navigate, one that had little trust and confidence in MW’s motives and therefore her every action took an extended time, and while MW acknowledges this process, it is challenging. A house to rent and a full-time job that she loves which enables her to live without criminality, are her initial goals. She has just turned 50 years of age and unusually, celebrated this milestone out of jail. Inside, MW has experienced some re-integrative educational input, largely through ‘corrective programmes’ of which there were many. She has a valuable voice and is an expert in the correctional space with a very real motivation to contribute, however, the value the correctional system places on MW is yet to be seen.

KM, a Māori wahine, whose life has been intergenerationally criminal, her parents embraced criminality to support and enable the family’s lifestyle and they encouraged KM to develop these skills from an early age.

“I soon realised that the only way to get the love and affection that I so desperately craved was by stealing stuff to give to people.”

KM’s living framework was one of poverty, disadvantage and criminality when viewed through a Western privileged lens. However, her conversation normalises her life of re-location, parties, drugs and alcohol.

“I remember one town we went through; we enrolled in the school one day and then the next day we had packed up and moved on again.”

"Us kids would be serving the adults alcohol from the shed and helping ourselves to whatever was going."

This was a lifestyle that KM then went on to repeat and amplify until she finally came to the attention of the child safety authority, and was detained in a myriad of Australian state care homes, where KM fell prey to institutional corruption and frequently became the victim of sexual abuse.

"I was a kid in an adult's rehab centre getting sexually abused by the staff and other residents."

Youth detention centres morphed into adult prisons, as her age increased. Criminality and detainment were accommodated and expected, they had been normalised within KM's life framework.

"The number of times that Child Safety and police knew I was in these at-risk environments and yet they just left me there. I wasn't capable of making good choices, and they could have done better. I didn't even go to school. No one forced me to go to school. No one went to Mum and Dad and said why isn't your daughter in school."

When eventually deported back to New Zealand as a 501, without her five children and later imprisoned in New Zealand, this became an opportunity to engage in her own self-determining outcomes, supported through a religious connection she'd encountered inside. The intersectional impact of KM's disadvantage is demonstrated throughout her life, was initiated through birthright, and then advanced through the controlling activities of men. Men who initially sold her as a young prostitute and drug mule, men who sexually abused and raped her, and then partners that subjected her to violence and amplified her ongoing drug and alcohol abuse.

"He was falling over, screaming abuse and punching me. He called my 10-year-old daughter a slut and threatened to throw her over the veranda, and then he took off with our 18-month-year-old son."

There has never been an incidence or intent for KM to take control of her own life outcomes. Even when prison vocational training was offered, enjoyed and completed, she was unable to sustain this on the outside, given the normalisation of past lifestyles and her own expectation of returning to them.
KM's role models (parents, partners and co-offenders) were contrary to her desire to change, the intersectional factors of her disadvantage, class, race and poverty, simply

endorsed the need to stay criminally connected. Intergenerationally there had become a normalisation and acceptance of criminal pathways and social barriers.

Today KM, an active alumnus of RAW, is studying towards a bachelor's in bi-cultural social work at the Wananga. She works full-time as a youth counsellor for disrupted teens (12 to 18 years), for Real, in Hamilton. KM has also brought her own home through the Habitat from Humanity scheme with her partner and has two of her five children in her day-to-day care.

SS, a Pāhekā woman, her story is one of a patriarchal childhood, when her mum died she was just one year old, and her dad became her carer. Her life framework was extremely patriarchal and Victorian in its partnership values. This had a huge influence on her pathways and choices in respect of men that she chose to 'do service' for later. Ironically her first real relationship saw her heavily involved in the world of methamphetamine, which naturally led her on a pathway to prison.

I thought he was the best thing that had ever happened to me. He was stimulating, and he looked after every aspect of our lives which was lovely. I wasn't really into drugs, but he told me to put them into my drink, and almost immediately I felt more social and vocal, and I felt like cleaning the house. My productivity was amazing!"

As a model prisoner the first time around, no one, including Corrections, expected her to re-offend. However, her accepted lifestyle normal placed her right back into the spaces she drew comfort and understanding from**,** and when her partner decided he no longer wanted her, SM was in the driving seat of her own life for the first time. Determined not to end up in the gutter, she saw no other choice but to compete in the methamphetamine trade she knew so well.

"I believed I had to operate within that "man's world" (because I had no alternative skills) which was risky business. They were ruthless and wouldn't hesitate to get rid of me if they felt threatened. It was well known as no place for a girl to be.

SS embarked on her own journey of methamphetamine distribution. Her life became framed in the only way she knew how to achieve, through monetary gains.

"I had spent my whole life thinking I was going to die young from a medical issue, now it seemed more likely that I would die from being shot! Not that I really cared too much anymore. I saw no value in my own life. I was massively addicted to meth, and life was just chaos."

“I so wanted to prove him wrong, prove that I could make it on my own but I couldn’t get a job, I didn’t know who to ask for help and I no longer cared. I had ruined my life.”

Relationships had been unyielding for SS in attaining monogynous life pathways of support. Therefore material gains become her yardstick, and she activated and achieved within the world of gangs and methamphetamine, normalising the societal accountability, and a possible return to prison.

“I felt like my entire life’s purpose was to be the best wife I could be for him. It was my role to support him and make him happy. I had chosen this life so of course, I did it.”

“I had invested my entire life in him. I had no family, no friends, no cat. I hated the fact that I had destroyed my life.”

SS comes from a working-class family that was devoted to Victorian principles of Queen and country. Her Dad constantly told her if war broke out he would have to go and fight. These working-class principles did not include criminality, in fact, her dad had a huge distaste for this method of success, given the living struggles they encountered daily. Monogamy was key to building strength and values in a family. Education was valued, and SS was schooled out of her life comfort zone, so her attendance was never going to be sustainable, however, education had an impact and ironically assisted her advance independently, albeit criminally. Education and working-class values also influenced her choices inside the prison, once detained she continued to seek educational opportunities, and she made sure she was part of an inside working crew.

“Being a solo parent Dad included me in conversations about the costs of living expenses. He made bitter statements like “anybody with money has not earned it legally.” He couldn’t afford for us to live in the house he purchased with my mother, he rented it out to pay the mortgage and we boarded with my grandparents. He made it very clear he couldn’t afford education beyond college for us. It seems like he felt restricted by social structure and class.

What was presented to me as a developing female within the lower class was that society was not structured for me to thrive, I would be lucky if I could survive. This is where patriarchy comes into it I guess. Rather than developing myself, I aimed to find someone who would provide for me and in return I would be the most loyal, devoted, loving, supportive partner any man could ever wish for. I would make sure he couldn’t live without me.” SS.

SS's life demonstrates the intersecting factors of Feminist and Intersectionality Theory as she struggled to adhere to the patriarchal value set that she grew up with, and in her late teens 'do service' to the man she had chosen to partner with.

"I had no real criminal intention or motivation within myself, but I had created this criminal life and become a criminal to impress him."

Therefore, SS, conditioned to accept patriarchal frameworks automatically and unquestionably becomes caught up in criminal lifestyles, and offers an absolute duty of service.
Today SS has almost completed an undergraduate degree at Waikato University and will go on to do her masters in applied sociology in 2024, she has a 98% grade average. SS demonstrates the true power of being able to transition your skills from one life to another, where well supported by positive life role models.

SK is a Pākehā woman, and her story is entrenched in the rigours of patriarchal colonial norms. Her dad arrived from the United Kingdom to take up residence on an orchard in the North Island, where a spraying incident tragically wiped out the family's lifestyle. This forced the family into town, where SK's parents took up lodgings and employment in a hotel. The hotel life re-enforced her dad's anxiety and depression (a result of the hardship endured during his English childhood, where he was working from the age of seven, to look after his mum, when his dad was killed in the war), giving him ready access to drugs and alcohol, to mitigate his symptoms. This cocktail of prescription drugs and alcohol amplified their family violence.

SK's mother was raised and adhered strictly to the religious patriarchal norms of this time, personally was not subjected to her husband's violence, she witnessed the beatings administered to her children by her husband when he was charged with caring for them, while she worked to ensure the family had income. Her husband remained in a permanent state of ill health, altering him mentally and advancing his use of alcohol, violence and prescription drugs.

SK's life became dominated by the addiction habits of her father and her brother, who also fell prey to his dad's demons. SM was unable to focus at school given the disruptive home life, and she also began to enter the world of drugs to mask her pain and increase her ability to cope.

"I remember always being frightened and unsure of what was going on, and I could never settle at school because I was always scared about what was going to happen when I got home."

“I didn’t feel like I could learn. I was tested for ADHD, but I think it was just all the stress and anxiety. My mind was always somewhere else.”

Removed from school for disruptive behaviours at 15, SK was substance and alcohol-dependent and also immersed in the economics of the drug trade. At 17 she met a man that would father her four children, and inflict and amplify the violence and pain she was nurtured within.
Her partner, also raised in patriarchal conditions administered often, the violence he had experienced and normalised as a child. A life of violence, drug and alcohol abuse, and drug dealing was advanced between them, with their kids becoming another weapon of abuse to ensure he retained total control over SK. Ironically SK’s mum, who tried to support her and her kids during these turbulent times, was also an endorser of SK remaining in the relationship no matter how bad the abuse got.

“You’ve got kids together you have to stay “

“Maybe I was a sucker for punishment? I’d seen my mum do it all those years, so it was normality to me, and when you are using drugs and alcohol as much as we did, it was always better in the morning.”

Her chaotic and anxious life eventually resulted in two prison lags, and on each release, there was absolute intent to stay clean, work legally and support and protect her kids from their father, the man who continued to hunt, threaten and harm her, to retain his control over her life.

“As a child [myself] I didn’t want to be in that lifestyle, and now I could see that same cycle repeating with my kids. I used to get really angry with their dad for beating me up in front of them as I had to watch them being sad but he didn’t care, he would do it in front of them.”

The frameworks of a legal life, and the pressure of the violent and frightening patriarchal control continued to challenge her and became way too hard to manage on her own, especially when a carer for her kids, while she worked, subjected them to sexual abuse. It just felt easier and safer for her kids, to deal in drugs.

“I used alcohol and drugs to feel normal. When I’m clean, I have really bad anxiety, and it cripples me. I can’t eat, can’t think, can’t focus, I just feel like I’m in a different world.”

Working involved minimum wage jobs and paled in comparison to the income she was able to earn illegally. Working in a black market also enabled her to provide care and protection for her kids, it did however carry the weight of possible prison sentences.

"The whole time I was in there was heartbreaking and soul-destroying – just knowing what I had put them through and now what their dad was putting them through again."

SK was trapped in the cycle of "poverty of opportunity' that had been advanced through her undereducation, her violent upbringing and her relationship choices. Her detainment created a temporary safe haven, that if used purposefully may have enabled a different outcome on SK's release, instead on each release, she is continually thrown back into a life of criminality and violence.

Today the birth of three grandchildren (with another on the way), has altered SK's criminal focus. Living with her son and his partner she has an extreme connection to this family and is often the principal carer of the grandkids. She laments about the relationship behaviours that she is forced to witness within her sons' partnership, a repeat of the patriarchal violence of the past. She endeavours to have input but is reminded by her son, that she lacks the positional credibility. Ironically she is changing, as she craves the connection with her grandchildren, and knows that another prison sentence will remove this. Yet, SK grapples with life's inequity and poverty barriers, crime is always an option, and at the moment she lacks clarity on how to determine a future without it.

Appendix 4: Intersectionality Theory

Crenshaw explains ‘intersectionality’ in three parts which are explained below.

Structural Intersectionality

Explains the social and economic factors that result in minority women having qualitatively and quantitively different experiences from minority men and non-minority women.
I observe this structural disadvantage within the mahi that attaches to my Women’s Refuge governance role. Women seeking the support of Refuge are often unemployed, sole carers of children and caught up in poverty-driven lifestyles, they are unable to afford the luxury of choice, even within the basics of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. They normalise the difficulty of living with negative life barriers, and therefore this hinders their ability to leave a violent relationship or seek support within their own cultural frameworks. This ongoing burden has come about through race, gender, class oppression, under-education and patriarchal domination, compounded through discriminatory employment and state housing allocation choices.

This demonstrates how intentionally produced subordination intersects, where the consequence of the imposition of one burden (whānau violence), intersects with pre-existing vulnerabilities (poverty, racism and undereducation), to generate another dimension of disempowerment (Crenshaw, 1991).

Political intersectionality

This is where belonging to two insubordinate groups may result in a torn loyalty. Such as where Māori women are forced to choose between the conflicting political agendas of feminism and racism. This is demonstrated when Māori women choose not to speak out against the violence of Māori men, in fear of a racist response from mainstream society. Or when Western women absorb their violence as part of their religious patriarchal conditioning. Any attempt to make domestic violence a political action may serve to confirm stereotypes and undermine efforts to combat negative beliefs (Crenshaw, 1991). However, suppression of these issues in the name of antiracism and class shapes the perceptions of seriousness and imposes some very real social costs on the women, where there is a tendency to disregard the problem of violence against Māori or Western women, given the stress men are under within the dominant society.

Representational Intersectionality

Where marginalisation occurs through constructions of Māori and lower-class Western women (prostitutes) through mass media and cultural imagery. Traditional artistic representations depicted them as women of dubious morals, sexualised and fallen, these perpetuate the stereotypes that often get attached to Māori wāhine and non-gendered Western women today, where a range of acceptable behaviour is broadened by the

propagation of misogynistic imagery and learnt patriarchal behaviours (Crenshaw,1991). When this is carried over into the justice system, as the women filter through, it creates a distinct sentencing disadvantage to their gendered Western counterparts.
Where the treatment of women in the justice system is influenced by society's expectations of 'gender-appropriate' behaviour (Quince, 2010). Māori and Western women whose ideology of the Western nuclear family has broken down, become categorised as 'unregulated women', living without men and on welfare. Intimating that some female offenders are women without family, sociability, femininity and adulthood, and therefore, not gender compliant, and more likely to be imprisoned for offences, as against gender regulated women, that have offended, and are still seen as retaining a commitment to the family ideal (Carlen & Worrall, 1987).

Appendix 5: Te Mana Wahine: Advancing cultural knowledge and practice inside Christchurch Women's Prison.

An example of a women's inside correctional programme that attempts to address the cultural gaps, advanced through colonised structural violence and dispossession, is Te Mana Wāhine (TMW), established in Christchurch Women's Prison in mid-2022. This culturally infused programme is intended to be 'business as usual' in all New Zealand prisons moving forward, but for now, it is being delivered via a pilot exclusively at Christchurch Women's, where there is a muster of 130 women (Ara Poutama/ Department of Corrections, 2021). To effect this exclusively Māori women's programme, Corrections has set up a separate unit, Huritini, within the prison that is presently home to 16 female inmates, who have elected to solely take part in this culturally enriched programme for the duration of their sentence. Admission criteria apply for those looking to be involved in the programme does not extend to those with a high classification within the prison. These women must endeavour to get themselves reclassified (this is done six monthly) before they can apply to be on the TMW pathway. There are difficulties regarding the recruitment of women into Huritini and TMW, in that Christchurch Women's is a working prison (serving the Rolleston men's prison as a catering unit, requiring 500 lunches each day). This, in turn, generates challenges for Corrections who need the women's labour to effect these contracts, and the women who require the paltry remuneration offered (60c per hour) to save up for their outside life or make small prison acquisitions (it is their sole income stream).

The appetite for TMW is therefore low, and admission criteria have been reduced to entice more women. The programmes offered, have also been slow to commence. There were women in the unit who chose not to attend the programmes, for fear of losing work opportunities, however, chose to work, but live in Huritini.

There is a plethora of rich cultural content in TMW, that involves a treatment course, Nā wai au (AOD, alcohol and drug), alongside other offerings that include, Kapahaka (delivered to the total prison muster), Rongāi (traditional Māori plants for wellness), Mahi toi (art), Tikanga and Marakai (planting by Māori moon). Past inmates are also called on monthly, to share their outside journeys of success and they offer ongoing mentoring to women close to release or struggling to manage prison life. This all takes place over the five weekdays and each individual programme runs for ½ a day.

My recent visit to Christchurch Women's to get a deeper understanding of the programme advances many questions for me. It would appear that there are struggles with maintaining and delivering contracted (paid) and volunteer content regularly, the day I was there the art teacher failed to arrive. Many of the inmates are required and want to hold prison jobs that are prioritised and interrupt learning. Food (wellness and diet) as a big part of the learning is NOT supported by an operational kitchen. The building that houses the unit is new and

highly functional, however, underutilised, and detained women find even with the work and scripted TMW content, that they still have a lot of time on their hands. To use this time purposefully, they seek educational top-up to support the TMW cultural content, but this fails to be delivered. The unit is part of a 40-bed complex with half the beds being filled through TMW. The application process has been softened to justify numbers and four women on remand are included. Remand women have very different priorities, in that they are highly focused on minimising any possible sentencing outcomes.
The heartening observation was the intent to isolate and culturally enrich an incarcerated woman's time served. The frustration and the ongoing challenges for Corrections are the 'business-as-usual' methodologies, the entrenched staff mindsets, ongoing staff shortages and the inability and non-necessity to commercially rethink operational models to build in obvious efficiencies and add-ons.

This is a great pilot initiative that could be fit for purpose (a model for all prisons to activate) yet it is incomplete and poorly managed and is likely to go the way of so many other 'shiny new things' correctionally advanced inside. The set-up is educational (school) like in its presentation and could be well suited to delivering educational content, both lifestyle (budgeting, parenting, relationships, wellness) and academic (literary, advanced secondary and tertiary). The discussions that I had with women in the unit who were participating in the programme reflected the reoccurring difficulties experienced by the women across the NZ prison estates, these ultimately amount to Corrections being underequipped to advance the transformational change models and unwilling to include the incarcerated women's voices in any of the processes. Therefore they struggle to get the outcomes the women deserve while detained, and 'criminal business' as usual returns when they are released. Another point of interest is the women who elect to reside in TWM, they are also enticed with a small monetary payment given the opportunity cost of being unable or limited to work. A reflective moment for myself while speaking with staff and inmates involved in TMW, was around the money paid to either work or secure TMW attendance. I have long since had difficulty with the 'indentured labour 'that occurs in prison as a result of punishment and acknowledge the inability to negotiate a fair rate in return for work completed. However, these prison jobs are real and if inmates don't do them commercial contractors on minimum wages (and more) will be required. To pay inmates at $10 an hour (well under market rates), advances the ability, especially for a long lagger to save for a home deposit. I speculate on the ability to set up a Kiwi Saver-like saving programme to assist women on release and reflect fair contribution and some accountability within the detained framework.

NN is residing in Huritini, she works seven days a week, 12 hours a day to meet the catering needs of the men's prison. She prefers to do this amount of work as it takes her mind off her six kids and the life she has lost. She had endeavoured to do a small tikanga programme

inside but when the kitchen replaced her, she decided to drop the programme and return to work to secure her long-term work opportunity.

If this was paid at $10 per hour, NN would earn $840 a week x 52 weeks = $43,680 pa. Over 6 years of NN's lag, $262080 could have been earned towards a home deposit. And if we attached this to the principles of Haea te Ata, self-determining outcomes that don't require criminal lifestyles, become possible.