

# The New Zealand Herald

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### Transgender prisoner moved to women's jail



Jade Follett was being held in the men's-only Rimutaka Prison in Upper Hutt, Wellington. Photo / Mark Mitchell

A transgender prisoner has been moved to a women's jail, hours after transgender advocacy group began a hunger strike highlighting her plight.

The Corrections Department confirmed this afternoon its chief executive "approved the transfer request by a transgender prisoner".

The prisoner is Jade Follett, who was being held in the men's-only Rimutaka Prison in Upper Hutt, Wellington.

"Corrections has a duty of care to all prisoners. We are very much aware and sympathetic to the particular needs of transgender prisoners including the issues surrounding their placement and safety," the prison's director Chris Burns said.

A new Transgender and Intersex prisoner policy took effect in February last year and since then Corrections' chief executive had approved the transfer of five transgender inmates, including Follett.

Members of transgender advocacy group No Pride in Prisons began a hunger strike in Auckland today over Follett's plight, but called it off when they heard about her transfer.

"We have exclusive word from Jade herself that she was moved today just after lunch," the group's spokeswoman Jennifer Shields said.

"We are absolutely thrilled that Corrections has taken our demands seriously. They can no longer ignore the very real danger that Jade was in.

"We hope that now that Jade has been officially transferred, she will be able to serve out the rest of her sentence in a far safer environment."

Ms Shields said placing transgender prisoners in men's prisons by default showed more change was needed.

In June, Follett was jailed for 21 months for stabbing a man who stalked and threatened her after they met through a dating website.

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