

## Gospel singer lifts prisoners' spirits

An offender has described a gospel singer who took leave without pay to tour the country's prisons as a "blessing from God".

Hamilton gospel singer-songwriter Nicky Moran has performed 30 concerts at 11 prisons in 16 days; including shows at Rimutaka and Arohata last week.

A part-time mental health nurse at the Henry Bennett Centre in Waikato Hospital, Moran took leave without pay to entertain prisoners on her tour of prisons in the South Island and lower North Island.

Moran said she found the work to be rewarding, performing tracks by the likes of Joe Cocker and Bob Dylan as well as self-composed songs with a spiritual theme.

She "received a strong reception in the female units and a warm and enthusiastic reception in Rimutaka".

In between songs she shared the meanings behind her lyrics and offered words of encouragement to the audience.

A Rimutaka prisoner, who cannot be named, described the concert as "a blessing from God".

Rimutaka Prison principal corrections officer Bruce Edwards said, "she had them smiling, laughing and some chose to sing along while others tapped their feet".

"Each song had a strong inspirational message for all of us here, prisoners including staff."

Having just completed touring South Island prisons Mrs Moran will perform in Whanganui, Manawatu, Hawkes Bay Regional and Tongariiro/Rangipo prisons before her tour concludes on Monday 25 January.

She has released a new album of songs for children to help raise funds for her prison tours.