

## Ombudsman releases Spring Hill Corrections Facility inspection report

2 August 2017

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Chief Ombudsman Peter Boshier today published his report on an unannounced inspection of Spring Hill Corrections Facility, as part of his commitment to publish reports from an intensified monitoring programme.

A nine-person inspection team visited Spring Hill from 20 to 28 February 2017, examining facilities and interviewing staff and prisoners.

The inspection was undertaken under the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture (OPCAT), which puts international obligations on New Zealand to ensure people held in detention are treated humanely and with decency and dignity.

“Publishing these reports supports our strengthened OPCAT programme and is part of my push for greater transparency across the public sector”, said Peter Boshier. “People in detention are among our most vulnerable citizens and we must meet international standards for how they are treated.”

The Spring Hill inspection found the prison was working hard to meet new challenges such as the introduction of remand prisoners and a significant increase in prisoner population, and double-bunking in cells designed for one prisoner.

Key recommendations concern improvements to first night in custody arrangements, improved systems for documenting the use of force, and completing a Shared Accommodation Risk Assessment (SACRA) before putting prisoners into double-bunked cells.

A copy of the report is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz).

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## Additional information: New Zealand and OPCAT

In 2007, New Zealand ratified the United Nations Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT).

OPCAT establishes a system of regular visits by an independent body to places where people are detained, to ensure the prevention of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

New Zealand's Ombudsman is a National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) for places of detention including prisons and court cells, inspecting and making recommendations for improvement in the treatment or condition of detainees.

We've received funding from Parliament from 2017/18 to increase our number of OPCAT inspectors from three to eight full-time staff, enabling us to increase the intensity and frequency of prison inspections.

Our OPCAT team does in-depth thematic reports as well as site inspections. In March this year the Chief Ombudsman released '*A Question of Restraint*', the results of OPCAT enquiries into care and management for prisoners considered to be at risk of suicide and self-harm.