



Media statement

Inspection finds Tongariro Prison ‘safe, well managed’

12 September 2019

An unannounced inspection at Tongariro Prison has found a safe and well-managed prison, with a clear sense of purpose and striving for continuous improvement.

The five-day inspection was undertaken in May by the Chief Ombudsman’s OPCAT (Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture) inspections team.

Chief Ombudsman Peter Boshier found little violence or anti-social behaviour at the prison, with good relationships between prisoners and staff, and low levels of self-harm and drug use among the prisoners.

“Cultural provision across the site is well embedded”, Mr Boshier says.

“In particular, I consider the Prison a centre of excellence in terms of establishing and embedding the Department of Corrections’ Te Tokorima a Māui values of rangatira/leadership, manaaki/respect, wairua/spirituality, kaitiaki/guardianship, and whānau/relationships”.

Seventeen recommendations were made, mostly concerning improvements to induction processes, record keeping, and case management. The Department of Corrections has accepted 14 of these recommendations, and the Chief Ombudsman will monitor their implementation.

For more information, contact Mark Torley on 027 275 5733 or mark.torley@ombudsman.parliament.nz

More information

Our function

New Zealand signed up to the United Nations’ Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT) in 2007. The Chief Ombudsman is a ‘National Preventive Mechanism’ (NPM) under OPCAT, meaning he monitors prisons and other places of detention (like health and disability facilities) to ensure they meet international human rights.

The Chief Ombudsman’s focus is on making sure prisons have sufficient safeguards in place to prevent any human rights violations. If not, he recommends practical improvements to address any risks, poor practises, or systemic problems that could result in a prisoner being treated

badly. Follow up inspections are conducted to look for progress in implementing previous recommendations. Reports are written on what is observed at the time of inspection.

Find out more about the Chief Ombudsman's role in examining and monitoring places of detention, and read our other OPCAT reports, at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

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