

## Ombudsman and IPCA are visiting court facilities

*Update: August 2020*

Staff of the Chief Ombudsman and the Independent Police Conduct Authority (IPCA) are visiting court facilities throughout New Zealand. They have the legal right to enter court facilities, request information and speak to staff and detainees about the treatment and conditions of people detained in those facilities.

### **Purpose of these visits**

New Zealand has made an international commitment under the *United Nations Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment* (OPCAT), to establish a system of regular inspections undertaken by independent national bodies to places of detention, where people are unable to leave at will. The purpose of these inspections is to prevent torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. They provide Parliament and the public with independent oversight of how some of our most vulnerable people are treated and what, if any, improvements need to be made.

The Chief Ombudsman and the IPCA share the responsibility to inspect the treatment and conditions of people detained in court facilities.

### **Update**

The first step is to visit a number of facilities to become familiar with them and gather relevant information. They will view the physical environment, speak to staff and detainees, and request information such as policies and practices.

These orientation visits will help inform development of the inspection process and criteria the Chief Ombudsman and the IPCA will use to assess the treatment and conditions of people in court cells. Reports will not be produced on these orientation visits. Rather, the visits will inform the inspection programme, which is expected to start in 2021. The Chief Ombudsman and the IPCA intend to seek feedback on their inspection assessment criteria before reporting on inspections.

### **More information**

Find out more about the Chief Ombudsman's and the IPCA's OPCAT roles online:  
[ombudsman.parliament.nz/opcat](http://ombudsman.parliament.nz/opcat) and [ipca.govt.nz/Site/about-us/Monitoring-places-of-Police-Detention](http://ipca.govt.nz/Site/about-us/Monitoring-places-of-Police-Detention)