

Prison unnecessarily holds inmates in secure unit

Legislation	Ombudsmen Act 1975
Ombudsman	Anand Satyanand
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Date	1996

Placement of minimum secure inmates in maximum security conditions

A group of seven inmates with a classification of minimum security risk who were being transferred from Mt Eden Prison to a central North Island prison farm complained when they found themselves in 'D' Block at Auckland Prison East for ten days. 'D' Block has rather spartan conditions and is normally used to house inmates who are difficult to manage. The inmates complained that they had not done anything to warrant being held in such conditions.

The Department explained that an unexpected muster crisis had resulted in a shortage of minimum secure beds and this was the reason the inmates had been placed in 'D' Block. The Department also insisted that the 'D' Block regime be maintained irrespective of the security category of the inmates being held there.

The Department agreed that the placement of minimum secure inmates in 'D' Block was not desirable and, in the event of future muster crises, such inmates would be held for short periods in other parts of the prison. It was also acknowledged that if in an emergency situation 'D' Block had to be used again for this purpose, minimum secure inmates would be afforded additional privileges to those placed there for security reasons.

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