



Media statement

Follow-up inspection report into Christchurch Women's Prison

4 April 2018

Chief Ombudsman Peter Boshier has released his report into a follow-up inspection of Christchurch Women's Prison, noting that five of seven original recommendations have been fully or partially achieved.

The Ombudsman's OPCAT (Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture) Inspectors made a full, unannounced inspection of Christchurch Women's Prison in December 2014. Their recommendations concerned the material conditions and treatment of women in the Prison.

The unannounced follow-up inspection in November last year found the Prison's management cells had been brought up to standard, record keeping and laundry processes had improved, and privacy screens had been installed in the wings.

'We still have strong concerns about the use of cameras in the cell toilet areas, and the lack of privacy screens in those areas', Peter Boshier says. 'I acknowledge this is an issue across the prison system, and that Corrections is working to find possible solutions'.

Peter Boshier says that at the follow-up inspection, Inspectors found Christchurch Women's Prison was clean and tidy, with a relaxed atmosphere and generally good relationships among staff and prisoners. There was a range of constructive activities available for low-security prisoners, and a job expo about to be held.

'Low-security prisoners did, however, express concern that they may be moved to Arohata Upper Prison, in the grounds of Rimutaka Prison in Trentham. Some other prisoners had already been transferred to Arohata Upper Prison due to muster pressures'.

Women were particularly concerned about being further separated from their families by being moved to a North Island Prison, which would greatly increase the expense and difficulty of family visits.

The Chief Ombudsman says that prisoners and staff also expressed their concerns about proposals to introduce double-bunking in the Prison's Self-Care Units.

'Each Self-Care Unit at Christchurch Women's is a small unit designed for four people', he says. 'Double-bunking in this case would mean eight women in a space designed for four. This isn't the best way to prepare for their return to society'.

Read the follow-up inspection report on Christchurch Women's Prison [here](#).

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