



Australian NPM Joint Statement Critical torture prevention work again underfunded

Members of the Australian National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) express our deep concern that once again the federal Budget does not include more funding to support our torture prevention work in detention environments, and Australia-wide implementation of the *Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment* (OPCAT). This comes despite the high numbers of people deprived of liberty in the custodial system and in other detention environments in Australia.

The Australian NPM's [recently released annual report for 2023–24](#) highlights some of the serious and ongoing issues in detention across Australia, including the overly punitive state of youth justice, the over-incarceration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, population pressures in prisons and youth detention, and the over-use of isolation practices.

A properly functioning NPM Australia-wide is more important than ever. This is so that we can oversee what is happening to people in places of detention, identify risks before they manifest as torture or other ill treatment, and provide expert advice to governments and those charged with the care of people in detention.



“Australia can improve treatment and conditions in a wide range of environments where people are deprived of their liberty” said Iain Anderson, Australia’s Commonwealth Ombudsman and NPM Coordinator. “Australia has significant shortcomings in the treatment of many people deprived of their liberty. Mistreating people in detention is inconsistent with human rights and has no positive benefit for the broader community” Mr Anderson added.

We want to work with governments and detaining authorities to support them to chart a better way forward on issues in detention. But to do this, we need to be adequately resourced for our work. We again call on all Australian governments to, where they have not done so, appoint NPMs, legislate their role and powers, and adequately resource them so that all members of the Australian NPM can work to prevent the mistreatment of people in detention.

This joint statement is made on behalf of the following Australian NPM members:



Aaron Cooke
South Australian Official Visitor

