

2013

**THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**ADDENDA TO
JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY DIRECTORATE
ANNUAL REPORT 2012-13**

**Presented by
Mr Rattenbury MLA
Minister for Corrections**

1 Addendum to Output Class 2.1 – Corrective Services

The following information relating to the official visitor was omitted from Output Class 2.1 – Corrective Services, starting at page 105. It should be inserted on page 112, before the major heading of ‘Community Engagement’.

Official Visitors

The *Corrections Management Act 2007* provides at section 57 for the appointment of one or more official visitors to undertake independent inspections of adult corrections facilities in the ACT. The ACT has two Corrections Official Visitors: Mr Ivan Potas and Ms Tracey Whetnall, who is the Indigenous Official Visitor.

The Official Visitors are appointed by the Minister and report directly to the Minister on a quarterly basis. The functions of an Official Visitor are to inspect correctional centres and places outside correctional centres where detainees have worked, or have been directed to work or participate in an activity. In addition, Official Visitors receive complaints from detainees about any aspect of their detention and must investigate all such complaints. The Official Visitors may make recommendations to the JACS Director-General or report to the Minister in regard to the outcome of such complaints. The Official Visitors also meet with the Minister from time-to-time. The Official Visitor Guidelines and Conditions of Employment Policy can be found at the ACT Legislation Register – www.legislation.act.gov.au/ni/2011-142.

Annual Report by Official Visitor – Ivan Potas

During the year, I made regular visits to the Alexander Maconochie Centre, where I interviewed detainees of all security classifications. This included remand and sentenced detainees of both sexes. I made myself available to any detainees who wished to complain or express any concern about their conditions or treatment in custody. Likewise I visited offenders who were serving weekend detention at the Periodic Detention Centre (PDC) at Symonston. I also inspected the conditions under which detainees were held when in the custody of the Court Transport Unit (CTU) and interviewed detainees in the court cells situated under the Magistrates and Supreme Court buildings.

Complaints were multifarious and covered a broad range of issues. The most common related to the frequency of unscheduled lockdowns, a circumstance aggravated by the increasing number of detainees coming into the AMC and the number of incidents requiring detainees to be escorted and sometimes detained for extended periods of time (days, weeks and in rare cases, months) outside the confines of the AMC (eg. in hospital).

Other complaints were typically about health matters, food (both quality and quantity), the heating or cooling in cells, shortage of cleaning materials, maintenance issues, buy-ups, entitlements with regard to visits, classification issues, access to haircuts and other activities. There were also complaints about boredom, access to meaningful work as well as access to or availability of education and programs.

With regard to the latter it may be observed that both the programs and educational contingents of the AMC worked hard in attempting to fill the demand for courses provided at the gaol.

Complaints against the behaviour of individual corrections officers were not common. When asked, detainees generally reported that they related well to the majority of corrections officers and to the contract staff.

**Total number of official visits undertaken by location during the period
1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013**

NUMBER	AMC	PDC	CTU	TOTAL
Official Visits	50	12	12	74

Annual Report by Indigenous Official Visitor – Tracey Whetnell

I generally visit on a weekly basis. The majority of the visits are with male Remand and Sentenced detainees, with regular visits into the women’s area when Aboriginal female detainees are there. I also visit the Crisis Support Unit and Management Unit when the numbers of Aboriginal detainees in these units requires it.

My interactions with detainees are often one-on-one, but also occur with groups of detainees. It is often just to have a visit and a chat. I find that detainees just like someone to visit them as some don’t have family who come and see them.

My interactions with staff and management have been good and the staff are very willing to assist me if required.

One of the main issues of complaint in the past year has been around the provision of medication, including methadone. Detainees have complained about a lack of consultation in regard to changes in medication. This is a matter for ACT Health.

Other complaints have been in regard to such issues as receiving mail, visits being declined, availability of escorts to programs such as education and art, access to case managers, getting timely feedback in regard to prisoner request forms and access to the gym and to the oval. Some detainees have had partners who are also detainees and have complained about not being able to visit with their partner.

**Total number of official visits undertaken by location during the period
1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013**

Areas	Sentenced	Remand	Women’s	CSU/Mgmt Unit	Edu/Art	Hospital
	16	16	13	6	5	1