

National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) Network

NPM Network Communiqué no 2, 2022

Meeting – 12 August 2022

On 12 August 2022, the Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman, as NPM Coordinator, convened the second meeting of Australia's NPM Network.

The NPM Network is the collection of bodies and people currently appointed as NPMs by Australian jurisdictions, to give effect to Australia's obligations under the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT). The agencies and individuals currently nominated as NPMs have diverse remits, background and experience. A list of the agencies and individuals currently nominated as NPMs can be accessed from our [website](#) under 'National Preventive Mechanisms'.

OPCAT requires a system of regular visits by NPMs to places where people are or may be deprived of their liberty, to support the prevention of torture and other ill treatment.

This meeting brought NPM Network members together for the second time to discuss OPCAT developments, including:

- the United Nations Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture's visit to Australia from 16 to 27 October 2022 (previously rescheduled due to the COVID-19 pandemic).
- the United Nations Committee against Torture's (Committee) [decision](#) to grant the Australian Government an extension of time for the implementation of its obligations under Part IV of OPCAT until 20 January 2023.
- the Committee's subsequent invitation to the Australian Government to give an oral progress report on measures taken to establish its NPM at its 75th session in November 2022.
- the Commonwealth Ombudsman's private plenary meeting with the Committee (alongside the Australian Human Rights Commission) on 14 November 2022.
- the Australian Human Rights Commission's National OPCAT Symposium held on 9 September 2022

Dual role NPMs and Annual Reporting under OPCAT

In order to assist with their preparatory work, the NPM Network discussed:

- dual role NPMs and the importance of functional separation
- the requirements for annual reporting under OPCAT

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As Australia's NPM Coordinator, the Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman supports meetings of the NPM Network.

More information on OPCAT developments in Australia can be found [here](#).

Online information-sharing platform

The NPM Coordinator presented a pilot version of a new online IT platform that would allow centralised and easily updated information to be readily accessed by all NPMs.

Meeting participants noted such a platform would be an excellent resource for NPMs and would foster opportunities for collaboration between Network members.

Establishing the NPM mandate and approach

Meeting participants discussed the importance of distinguishing the preventive mandate under OPCAT from existing reactive oversight responsibilities such as complaint handling.

Meeting participants noted the importance of NPMs having internal written guidance, practices and policies that clearly define their functions under OPCAT and considered methods of sharing information including accompanying other NPMs on monitoring visits.

The NPM Network intends to meet again in late 2022.