

# COMMUNIQUÉ No. 1, 2025

Meeting of the OPCAT Advisory Group

29 May 2025

On 29 May 2025, the Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman's OPCAT Advisory Group (OAG) held its first meeting for 2025. The meeting was chaired by the Commonwealth Ombudsman, Iain Anderson.

OAG members discussed various matters including:

- proposed changes to the OAG's Terms of Reference for 2025
- updates on the recent work of the Commonwealth National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) including observations on the immigration detention service provider transition, visits to seagoing vessels capable of being used as places of detention and proposed expansion of activity into other detention settings
- specific concerns arising in various jurisdictions, including the detention of children and young people in watch houses, increased rates of remand and overcrowding in prisons.

Discussions during this meeting demonstrate the value of OAG members' expertise, not only in supporting the Commonwealth Ombudsman, but also the broader Australian NPM as it continues to navigate the challenge of fulfilling its obligations under OPCAT without adequate resourcing to do so. The concerns voiced by OAG members continue to highlight the importance of effective, preventive oversight of places of deprivation of liberty, where there are real risks of torture, cruelty and other forms of ill treatment.

In 2020, the Commonwealth Ombudsman established the OAG to provide expert advice and guidance to the Ombudsman about their functions and responsibilities as the Commonwealth NPM and as the Coordinator of the Australian NPM. The OAG's terms of reference are available [here](#).

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

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