

Media release – 6 March 2025

Torture watchdog exposes inhumane detention at sea

 FOR MEDIA

Today the Commonwealth National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) published a summary of their visit to two seagoing vessels that may detain people when they are picked up at sea by the Australian Border Force.

While they were assigned to border protection operations, both vessels had been retrofitted with facilities to accommodate people detained at sea. The facility on MV *Besant* was used twice for durations of less than two weeks at a time before being decommissioned. The facility on ADV *Guidance* had not yet been used. There is no prescribed time limit for how long a person could be detained at sea.

Statement attributable to Head of the Commonwealth NPM, Mr Iain Anderson:

“Although efforts were made to progressively upgrade the detention facility onboard MV Besant throughout its use, and the facility has now been decommissioned, the facility was never appropriate to detain people at sea. The accommodation and ablution facilities were not acceptable, and there were no appropriate interview, dining, or recreational facilities.”

The Commonwealth NPM made 5 recommendations for improvement that are relevant to any vessel used to detain people at sea.

The Department of Home Affairs has accepted all recommendations and suggestions and has already commenced work to implement them.

The full report is available on [our website](#).

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