



Commonwealth
National
Preventive
Mechanism



ACT National
Preventive
Mechanism

Assessment of Implementation of Past Suggestions

ACT Watch House and Police Stations

March 2026

Table of Contents

Why did we write this report?	4
Numbers at a glance	6
Next steps	7
ACT Watch House	8
All Facilities (excluding Jervis Bay Police Station)	20
Belconnen Police Station	27
Gungahlin Police Station.....	28
Tuggeranong Police Station	29
Woden Police Station	31
Jervis Bay Police Station	32

Acknowledgment of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the ACT and recognise any people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region. We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region.



Why did we write this report?

On 24 June 2024, the ACT and Commonwealth National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) published the first [Post Visit Summaries report on the ACT Watch House and Police Stations](#).

The report made 21 suggestions specific to the ACT Watch House, 11 suggestions across all facilities (excluding Jervis Bay Police Station), with 1 additional suggestion for the Belconnen Police Station, 1 for the Gungahlin Police Station, 3 for the Tuggeranong Police Station and 1 for the Woden Police Station.

On 22 October 2024, the ACT and Commonwealth NPMs published their first [Post Visit Summary report on the Jervis Bay Police Station](#). That report made 15 suggestions.

In response to these Post Visit Summaries, ACT Policing:

- noted two of the ACT Watch House suggestions (suggestions 8 and 19), partially accepted one (suggestion 1) and accepted the remaining 18 in full
- partially accepted 1 of the suggestions (suggestion 8) across all facilities and fully accepted the remaining 10
- fully accepted all 6 facility specific suggestions, and
- fully accepted all 15 Jervis Bay Police Station suggestions.

In total, of the 53 suggestions made across both Post Visit Summaries, 49 (or 92.5%) were accepted, 1 was partially accepted and 2 were noted.

Guidance provided by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights suggests that 'NPMs should set up procedures for regular follow-up of their recommendations'.¹ The UN Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment also recommends that NPMs engage in a meaningful process of dialogue and actively seek to follow up past recommendations.²

¹ United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (2018). Preventing Torture: The Role of National Preventive Mechanisms, 27. <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/NPM_Guide_EN.pdf>.

² United Nations Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (9 December 2010). Guidelines on national preventive mechanisms, CAT/OP/12/5 [38]





Between 23 May and 23 June 2025, the ACT and the Commonwealth NPM conducted a joint program of visits to the ACT Watch House, Belconnen Police Station, Gungahlin Police Station, Tuggeranong Police Station, Woden Police Station and Jervis Bay Police Station.

As part of the preparation for this program of visits, ACT Policing was asked to provide a self-assessment on its implementation of past suggestions made by the ACT and Commonwealth NPMs during their 2024 visits to these facilities. The visiting team then reviewed documentation and made their own observations to confirm if the suggestions had been actioned according to their intent, or if progress was being made to action them.

In this report, the ACT and Commonwealth NPMs have assessed ACT Policing's implementation of the suggestions. It complements the Post Visit Report, which can be found on [our website](#).



Numbers at a glance

	Implementation Status			
	 Fully implemented	 Partially Implemented	 Not Implemented	 Superseded
ACT Watch House	14	5	2	-
All Facilities (excluding Jervis Bay Police Station)	4	5	2	-
Belconnen Police Station	1	-	-	-
Gungahlin Police Station	-	-	-	1
Woden Police Station	1	-	-	-
Tuggeranong Police Station	1	-	2	-
Jervis Bay Police Station	5	5	5	-

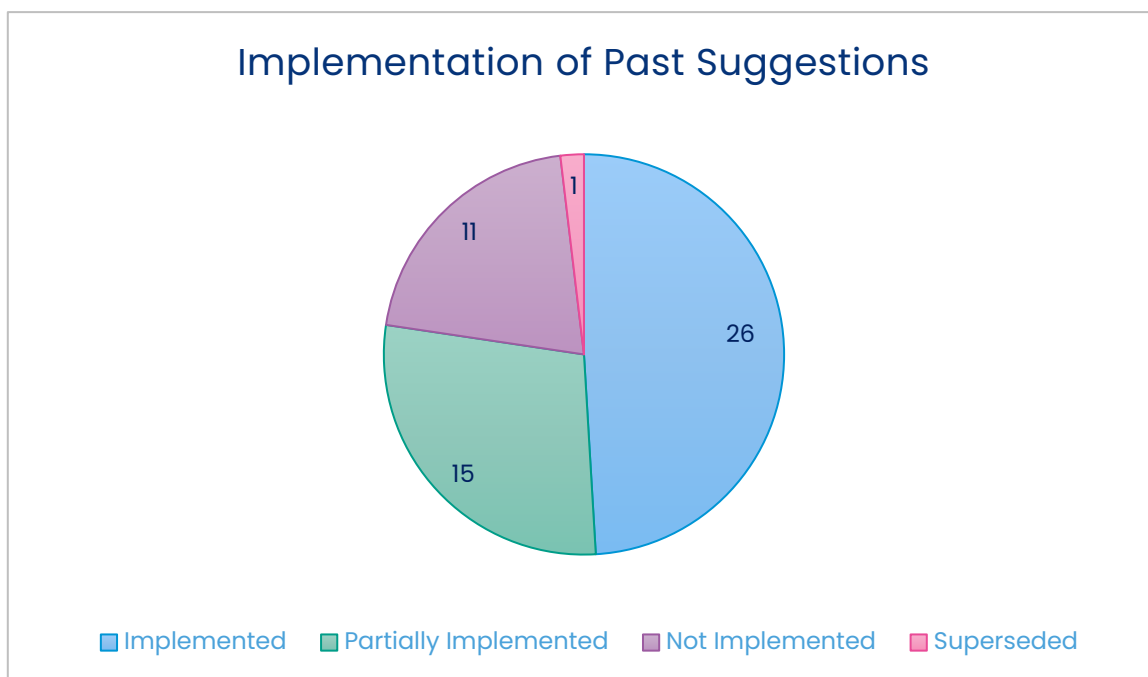


Next steps

We were pleased to observe that ACT Policing has made substantial efforts to address our past suggestions. While there has been a focus on the ACT Watch House remediation works, we encourage ACT Policing to also prioritise the infrastructure concerns identified at the other Police Stations.

Of the 53 suggestions made in total across both Post Visit Summaries in 2024, the ACT and Commonwealth NPMs assessed:

- 26 (or 49%) to be fully implemented
- 15 (or 28%) to be partially implemented
- 11 (or 21%) to be not implemented, and
- 1 (or 2%) to be superseded.



The ACT and Commonwealth NPMs will continue to monitor the implementation of these past suggestions.



ACT Watch House

Of the past 21 suggestions made about the ACT Watch House, the visiting team found 14 had been fully implemented, 5 had been partially implemented and 2 had not been implemented.

14 fully implemented



5 partially implemented



2 not implemented



The visiting team noted that many of the past suggestions had been addressed, or were in the process of being addressed, through the remediation work that was being undertaken at the time of the visits. The visiting team were also pleased to find the previously noted suggestion of ensuring a female officer was on shift for every shift (suggestion 19) had become part of the standard staffing practice within the ACT Watch House.

The only suggestions to not have been implemented were about the introduction of personal duress alarms (suggestion 4) and addressing the design deficiencies of the sallyport (suggestion 8). While ACT Policing recognise the sallyport as a vulnerability, the ACT Government funding required to address this concern is unlikely to be provided given the current consultation on a new Canberra City Police Station and Police Headquarters.



Suggestion 1: Partially Implemented

All signage regarding emergency and evacuation procedures including muster points be placed in strategic locations throughout the facility in plain view of both staff and people in detention.

ACT Policing advised that emergency and uninterruptible power supply (UPS) lighting upgrades were implemented in May 2024, but that emergency exit signage upgrades were still underway and would be addressed by the AFP's Emergency Procedures Advisor. At the time of our visit, we observed the emergency and UPS lighting upgrades. However, we did not see emergency exit signage.



For the ACT and Commonwealth NPMs to consider this suggestion implemented, we would need to see signage placed in strategic locations throughout the facility in plain view of both staff and people in detention.



Suggestion 2: Partially Implemented

A review of firefighting equipment be undertaken:

- a. to identify whether the use of CO2 fire extinguishers is appropriate in confined places such as cells or if they should be replaced with a more appropriate extinguisher such as water, foam, or dry chemical
- b. to ensure staff receive training in the use of firefighting equipment and fire extinguisher identification
- c. where a range of fire extinguishers are available for use, fire extinguisher charts outlining the different types of fire extinguishers and their uses be located in areas highly visible to all staff.

ACT Policing advised that AFP had engaged a contractor to undertake an assessment to identify whether the use of CO2 fire extinguishers is appropriate in confined places such as ACT Policing's Watch House. The review in October 2024 concluded that water extinguishers should be provided for Watch House members to use in the event of a fire located in the detention cells. ACT Policing advised that the location and placement of the fire extinguishers had occurred and complies with AS 2444-2001.

ACT Policing also advised that it was seeking additional training for Watch House members. However, this was hampered by the capacity of the AFP's sole Emergency Procedures Advisor. Additional fire warden training had been tentatively scheduled for May-June 2025 pending the Emergency Procedures Advisor's availability. To bolster capability ACT Policing will be leveraging ACT Corrective Services firefighting training, while using ACT Policing resources and equipment. ACT Policing is also considering seeking an external vendor to deliver training to manage the capacity issues with the Emergency Procedures Advisor.

At the time of our visits, the firefighting review was underway with assistance being sought from ACT Fire and Rescue Service and ACT Corrective Services. We were advised that a new training package is being designed and will include basic firefighting and the use of smoke hoods/Breathing Apparatus (BA). We observed there was a combination of water and CO2 fire extinguishers in the control room, however, noted that only CO2 fire extinguishers are still in fire cupboards in the detention areas.



For the ACT and Commonwealth NPMs to consider this suggestion implemented, we would need to see water extinguishers placed in the fire cupboards in the detention areas. Additionally, we would need to see the new training package completed and delivered to all existing and onboarding officers.



Suggestion 3: Fully Implemented

Faults with the duress alarm system be identified and rectified and a daily testing regime be implemented to ensure the system is operational at all times.

ACT Policing advised that as part of its ACT Watch House Remediation Project a new duress system would be installed as part of the program of works.

During our visits, we tested the duress alarm system and found it was working at the time of the visits. The duress alarm now goes directly to central communications in Belconnen, who contact the ACT Watch House directly in the event of an alarm activation. If no answer is received, road crews will be directed to attend the ACT Watch House immediately.



Suggestion 4: Not Implemented

Personal duress alarms which can be activated immediately should be provided to watch house staff as opposed to duress alarms on walls which require a staff member to be in a position to physically get to it.

ACT Policing advised that personal duress alarms would be reconsidered as part of its ACT Watch House Remediation Project in June 2025. During our visit, we did not observe personal duress alarms being used nor available to officers.



Suggestion 5: Fully Implemented

Appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as helmets, gloves, leg, and arm protectors be made available to assist in resolving violent incidents quickly and lessening injury to both staff and people in detention.

ACT Policing advised that PPE appropriate for use within the ACT Watch House has been purchased and is available to Watch House members. A training package for the use of this equipment has been developed and is included as part of induction training for the



Watch House. The training was endorsed for delivery to ACT Policing in 2024 and endorsed as an ACT Policing delivered program in April 2025.

The visiting team observed that staff PPE had been purchased and is now accessible for staff to assist in resolving incidents quickly whilst lessening injuries to people deprived of liberty and staff. At the time of the visits these were located in an unused cell but following remediation works were relocated to a central and accessible location within the staffing area.



Suggestion 6: Fully Implemented

Appropriate training in cell extractions/insertions be provided to Watch House staff to assist in resolving violent incidents quickly and lessening injury to both staff and people in detention.

ACT Policing advised that a training package for cell extractions/insertions has been developed and is included as part of induction training for the Watch House. The training was endorsed for delivery to ACT Policing in 2024 and endorsed as an ACT Policing delivered program in April 2025. ACT Policing has also developed refresher training for members, via micro learnings (short videos) that are available on the AFP Hub for refresher training. There are three micro learning videos: 1. Watch House training - Padded cell without OC foam 2. Watch House training - Standard cell without OC foam 3. Watch House training - Padded and Standard cell with OC foam.

The visiting team reviewed training documentation and records to confirm that officers at the ACT Watch House now receive training in cell insertions and extractions. The visiting team also reviewed the micro learnings and found them to be appropriate.



Suggestion 7: Fully Implemented

Emergency battery operated lighting be installed throughout the facility to provide adequate lighting in the event of a complete power failure.

ACT Policing advised that emergency and uninterruptible power supply (UPS) lighting upgrades were implemented in May 2024. The visiting team observed emergency battery operated lighting had been installed throughout the facility.





Suggestion 8: Not Implemented

A review be undertaken into the infrastructure and operation of the sallyport to address its design deficiencies.

ACT Policing originally noted this suggestion. It advised that it is unlikely ACT Government funding would be available given the scale of works required. ACT Policing recognise this as a vulnerability, which cannot be addressed through the Remediation Project but will be cognisant of this suggestion during the design consultation of the new facility.

While this suggestion remains unaddressed, the visiting team observed that the vehicle turntable in the sallyport has had steel vehicle stops welded to prevent vehicles from moving too far on the turntable. However, they were difficult to see and presented a trip hazard. We noted these needed to be painted yellow for visibility, which has subsequently been done.

The visiting team also observed that 2 additional CCTV cameras had been installed in the sallyport, which now gives complete coverage of the area when people deprived of their liberty are being escorted to and from vehicles.

The ACT and Commonwealth NPMs recognise that it is unlikely that this suggestion will be fully implemented, but nonetheless, we consider it important for health and safety of the officers and people deprived of liberty that the remaining design deficiencies of the sallyport are addressed or a new Watch House facility is built with an appropriate sallyport.



Suggestion 9: Fully Implemented

The use of the sallyport as a pedestrian access and for the release of people in detention should cease immediately due to the risk of injury from vehicles accessing and egressing the Watch House and the steep uneven surface of the driveway.

ACT Policing advised that procedures around the use of the ACT Watch House sallyport have been amended and communicated to members. A non-slip spray surface path on one side of the driveway was estimated to be completed by June 2025.

The visiting team observed that sallyport pedestrian access has ceased for everyday activity but can still be utilised in the event of an emergency. This is reflected in the



Watch House Operations Manual. We additionally observed the non-slip spray surface path on one side of the driveway had been installed.



Suggestion 10: Fully Implemented

Install an appropriate screen covering the entire charge counter to prevent people in detention from:

- a. spreading transmissible diseases in the event of spitting or the throwing of other bodily fluids and/or excrement
- b. accessing the officer's area and having access to improvised weapons
- c. using the current screen as an improvised weapon, and
- d. committing acts of self-harm.

ACT Policing advised that the installation of a screen at the charge counter would occur as part of the ACT Watch House Remediation Project and is expected to be finalised in June 2025. At the time of the visits, remediation work to the charging counter and screen were underway. The visiting team attended the ACT Watch House in September 2025 and confirmed the remediation work had been completed and the screen was appropriate.



Suggestion 11: Partially Implemented

The ACT Policing chaplain assist in developing a framework to educate ACT Watch House staff to better cater for the religious needs of people in detention.

ACT Policing advised they have engaged with the AFP Chaplain Network and plan to engage with a broad range of ACT faith leaders to ensure current practices meet the diverse needs of the people deprived of liberty. To support ACT Policing members, the Australian New Zealand Police Advisory Agency's (ANZPAA) Religious and Spiritual Diversity Guide for Operational Police is also made available to all members working within the Watch House. This document provides current and approved information on religious observations from a wide range of major religions.

The visiting team reviewed the ANZPAA guidance and updates to the Watch House Operations Manual. The visiting team also observed prayer mats and religious texts were available for use.



For the ACT and Commonwealth NPMs to consider this suggestion implemented, we would need to see evidence of further engagement with ACT faith leaders to ensure current practices meet the diverse needs of people deprived of liberty.



Suggestion 12: Fully Implemented

Compasses for the most common religions (e.g., Judaism, Islam) be purchased to assist staff indicating the direction of prayer for people who request religious observance.

ACT Policing advised that while they initially had proposed to paint directional prayer markings on cell walls within the ACT Watch House, scoping of this proposal identified possible safety issues for people affected by drugs or alcohol, neurodiverse people, and/or people experiencing a mental health crisis who may focus on the markings. ACT Policing has actioned this recommendation through Watch House members using their work issued phones to identify the direction of prayer for people in custody seeking to undertake religious observance. The use of a digital compass removed the chance of user error. This practice will be included in the next update to the Watch House Manual.

The visiting team observed these updates in the Watch House Operations Manual and confirmed with officers that they were aware of how to use the digital compass to locate Mecca.



Suggestion 13: Fully Implemented

That information regarding complaints bodies and mechanisms for making a complaint be mounted on walls in prominent places for people in detention to see and provision of information on making a complaint be provided at the point of transfer or release from custody. This information should also be accessible to persons with language or understanding difficulties.

ACT Policing advised the ACT Watch House has information posters displayed that contains complaints bodies and mechanisms for people deprived of liberty. A Post Custody Flyer has also been created to inform people deprived of liberty on why information has been collected, its use, legislation governing use, access, storage, and complaint mechanisms. A flyer must be provided to each person deprived of liberty and is included within their personal property when it is returned to them. The Post Custody Flyers have been translated into the 5 most commonly spoken languages in



the ACT (Punjabi, Mandarin, Vietnamese and Arabic). For other languages, Watch House staff will provide a translation service as required.

The visiting team observed that all cells and common areas now have signage for what people deprived of liberty can expect whilst in custody, and information about complaints mechanisms including the ACT NPM. This information was difficult to read on the posters that were A2 is size. However, after raising this at the time of the first visit, all posters were resized to A3.



Suggestion 14: Fully Implemented

That cleaners undertake formal training in forensic cleaning and be provided appropriate products.

ACT Policing advised that it engages specialist forensic cleaners on an as required basis to supplement the current cleaning contract. In addition, ACT Policing is exploring expansion of the current cleaning contract to maintain a clean and hygienic workplace, as the current cleaning contract is insufficient for the Watch House facility.

The visiting team were advised that a new cleaning contractor and subcontractor had taken over cleaning of the ACT Watch House. We were advised that all cleaning personnel are now trained in forensic cleaning. The visiting team observed cleaners on site who were all wearing biohazard PPE.



Suggestion 15: Fully Implemented

All clutter and signage on the windows in front of the charge counter and at-risk cells be removed to improve direct surveillance of these cells from the staff workstation to be compliant with rule 139 of the RCIADIC.

ACT Policing advised that the ACT Watch House Remediation Project work includes redesigning the charge counter area, and removal of clutter. At the time of the visits, remediation work to the charging counter and screen were underway. The visiting team attended the ACT Watch House in September 2025 and confirmed the remediation work was completed and confirmed all clutter and signage has been removed.





Suggestion 16: Fully Implemented

To recognise the cultural and religious diversity of the population, meals properly certified as halal and kosher be made readily available.

ACT Policing advised that meals properly certified as halal and kosher are readily available when requested by people deprived of liberty. All vegetarian meals are certified halal and are readily available upon request. If kosher meals are not readily available when requested, they will be purchased as required, as are any other dietary requirements such as gluten or dairy free.

The visiting team observed that vegetarian, vegan and halal meal options were available during the visits. We were advised that kosher meals are brought in on an as needed basis as they were not typically required. The visiting team observed the options available on the order form included vegetarian, vegan, halal and kosher options.



Suggestion 17: Fully Implemented

ACT Policing works with the ACT Office for Disability or similar agency to identify reasonable adjustments for people with a disability in at least one cell that has clear lines of sight from the staff workstation. Any adjustments should also be compliant with the CRPD.

ACT Policing advised that the ACT Watch House Remediation Project included the design of the reasonable adjustment cell.

During the visits the visiting team observed work underway to construct the reasonable adjustment cell adjacent to the secure staffing area. The visiting team reviewed documentation to evidence that ACT Policing had consulted with the ACT Office for Disability on its construction.

The visiting team attended the ACT Watch House in September 2025 and observed the cell is wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair and will have two intercoms fitted (one on each side of the cell, one of which is by the bed for ease of use for those who are mobility impaired and unable to easily reach the second intercom). The cell includes a grab rail which cannot be used as a ligature point, lowered bed, toileting facilities and has the ability to have lighting dimmed.





Suggestion 18: Partially Implemented

That a review of the current static staffing model be undertaken to assess the numbers of staff required to cope with all aspects of Watch House operations during regular busy periods (Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights), as well as for special events and holidays. Adequate numbers of staff must be available to deliver an appropriate level of care to all people in detention at all times.

ACT Policing advised that the suggestion has been addressed in its entirety. The visiting team was advised that the staffing model had been reviewed with appropriate staffing numbers at all hours with at least on 1 staff on shift being female. Staff placements at the ACT Watch House are 6 monthly for constables which are staggered to retain corporate knowledge; and 12 monthly for sergeants with options for extension available.

The visiting team observed and heard from officers and staff that there was a heavy reliance on overtime and was informed that at times there were insufficient numbers to staff the ACT Watch House.

For the ACT and Commonwealth NPMs to consider this suggestion implemented, we would need to see further evidence that the Watch House staffing model had been reviewed to ensure the efficient and effective operation of the ACT Watch House at all times and especially during peak periods. This evidence would include less reliance on overtime to fill shift shortages.



Suggestion 19: Fully Implemented

That a female staff member be on duty at all times irrespective of whether a female is in custody.

ACT Policing advised that each Watch House team now contains female members. In the event of planned or unplanned leave, ACT Policing ensures a female member is rostered for every shift in each of the operational patrol zones, ensuring availability of a female member, should there be no female member available within the Watch House.

The visiting team observed at least 1 female constable on duty at every visit to the ACT Watch House. During the semi-announced visit, the visiting team observed the ACT Watch House being managed by a majority female constable shift.





Suggestion 20: Fully Implemented

ACT Policing, with assistance from the AFP's First Nations Liaison Officers, engage Canberra Health Services to develop a framework for the provision of culturally appropriate health care for First Nations people in detention including information sharing between the ACT Watch House and appropriate agencies.

ACT Policing advised there was a misunderstanding of information sharing arrangements already in place at the time of the last visit. ACT Policing continue to ensure where possible, best practice is implemented in relation to First Nations people in detention.

Clinical Forensic Medical Services and Canberra Health Services have confirmed existing protocols are sufficient and do not compromise the privacy of individuals – noting individual consent is still sought for third party notifications.



Suggestion 21: Partially Implemented

The ACT Government (via Canberra Health Services) and ACT Policing review the use of referrals for emergency mental health assessments and how people referred are dealt with when sent for assessment (including any causes of delay) and identify and implement appropriate solutions.

ACT Policing advised this suggestion remains a top legislative reform priority for ACT Policing. ACT Policing continues to advocate for process improvements to mental health assessments, and a reform proposal is with the ACT Government (ACT Health and the Justice and Community Safety Directorate) for consideration.

The visiting team observed that the emergency mental health assessment referrals process had improved since our last report, however, further work needs to be done. The visiting team were advised that there is now an online assessment with better drop downs and free text. There is also a section 309 (Crimes Act) workshop underway for all staff working in the ACT Watch House.

ACT Policing advised that they prefer for assessments to be conducted in the cells, so people deprived of liberty are not transferred from the ACT Watch House to other facilities and back again resulting in unnecessary transport and searching. This practice also requires staff to be taken from the ACT Watch House or other duties to perform these tasks which take significant amounts of time.



The ACT and Commonwealth NPMs recognises that there are systems issues to be worked through and would encourage ACT Policing continue to work with the ACT Government to improve the mental health assessment process including by removing the need for transfers to and from hospital, restraint in a medical setting, and unnecessary detention.



All Facilities (excluding Jervis Bay Police Station)

Of the past 11 suggestions, the visiting team found 4 had been fully implemented, 5 had been partially implemented and 2 had not been implemented.

4 fully implemented



5 partially implemented



2 not implemented



The visiting team noted that the past suggestions relating to infrastructure had not progressed to completion due to priority being placed on the ACT Watch House remediation works.

The visiting team were pleased to find that most non-infrastructure suggestions had progressed, and some could be fully implemented with minor additional work. For example, installing suitable fire extinguisher signs or charts in the Tuggeranong Police Station detention area (suggestion 1 of all facilities) and using a consistent and appropriate property locker across the Police Stations (suggestion 9 of all facilities).

The suggestions that had not been implemented related to CCTV systems being reviewed and updated or replaced where necessary (suggestion 2 of all facilities), displaying signage regarding emergency and evacuation procedures being placed in prominent locations (suggestion 8 of all facilities).



Suggestion 1: Partially Implemented

A review of firefighting equipment be undertaken by a suitably qualified person to:

- a. assess the suitability of CO2 fire extinguishers for use in confined places such as cells or if they should be replaced with a more appropriate extinguisher such as water, foam or dry chemical;
- b. appropriate fire extinguishers be placed in the detention area with appropriate signage; and



- c. where a range of fire extinguishers are available for use, fire extinguisher charts outlining the different types of fire extinguishers and their uses be located in areas highly visible to all staff.

ACT Policing advised they had engaged a contractor to undertake an assessment to identify whether the use of CO2 fire extinguishers is appropriate in confined places such as ACT Policing's Watch House. The review concluded that water extinguishers should be provided for Watch House members to use in the event of a fire located in the detention cells. The location and placement of the fire extinguishers across all of ACT Policing facilities is an ongoing task and a specialist fire engineer will be engaged to review ACT Policing's facilities.

At the Belconnen Police Station, the visiting team observed there was 1 x dry powder fire extinguisher with signage in the charging counter area. We were advised that a review of fire hoses has been undertaken and confirmed that they reach all areas of the facility.

At the Tuggeranong Police Station, the visiting team observed there was 1 x CO2 fire extinguisher and 1 x 36 metre fire hose reel located in the sallyport for use in the detention area. However, no suitable fire extinguisher signs or fire extinguisher charts were located in the facility.

At the Jervis Bay Police Station, the visiting team observed that fire/smoke detectors were installed throughout the facility except for the padded cell which had no fire early warning system in place. The visiting team observed there were different types of fire extinguishers available with appropriate selection charts in place.

For the ACT and Commonwealth NPMs to consider this suggestion implemented, we would need to see the specialist fire engineer review completed and suitable fire extinguishers, signs and/or fire extinguisher charts situated at each facility.



Suggestion 2: Not Implemented

Current CCTV systems be reviewed and updated or replaced where necessary e.g. larger screens to enable effective monitoring, particularly with split screens, cameras with a wider field of view or a second camera be installed to eliminate all blind spots.

ACT Policing advised their CCTV system is being upgraded by internal Radio & Technical Services technicians. Due to capacity of this team, the Watch House installation is the priority as part of the Remediation Project. Once the Watch House is



completed, CCTV upgrade works will be rolled out incrementally across all remaining sites as the technicians' capacity allows.

The visiting team did not observe any CCTV upgrades at the Police Stations at the time of the visits.



Suggestion 3: Partially Implemented

A first aid kit and defibrillator be permanently installed with suitable signage in the detention area.

ACT Policing advised that first aid kits and defibrillators are installed in each station and are readily available to members near detention areas. Placement of these items requires careful consideration as to how these items are affixed to walls, such that frames or laminated charts are not accessible in a potential security situation where people deprived of liberty are non-compliant, as these items could readily become weaponised and rapidly escalate risk to ACT Policing members and other people deprived of liberty.

Contents of the first aid kit could easily be concealed and either weaponised or used as ligatures etc. for people deprived of liberty to attempt self-harm. Any installation of this type of equipment should be located within secure staff station areas.

The visiting team observed first aid kits, defibrillators and signage available in secured areas of most Police Station.

At the Belconnen Police Station, the visiting team observed 1 x defibrillator was in the corridor adjacent to where interview rooms are located. A first aid kit was located behind the charging counter.

At the Tuggeranong Police Station, the visiting team observed 1 x first aid kit in the detention area and 1 x defibrillator located in the secure staff area.

At the Jervis Bay Police Station, the visiting team observed 1 x first aid kit in the storage cupboard next to the visitor's room. The visiting team did not observe a defibrillator in the detention area.

For the ACT and Commonwealth NPMs to consider this suggestion implemented, the visiting team would need to see evidence of a defibrillator in the detention area of the Jervis Bay Police Station.





Suggestion 4: Fully Implemented

OC foam be made available for use in the detention area to avoid overspray and over deployment of streamer type chemical agents that may affect other people in detention who are not the subject of the deployment.

ACT Policing advised that foam OC spray is available to members near the detention areas at all stations. The visiting team observed a Mk 9 canister of OC foam available to officers at the Belconnen, Tuggeranong and Jervis Bay Police Stations.



Suggestion 5: Partially Implemented

A privacy screen be installed around the toilet to provide privacy for people in detention from both the peephole and cameras but still allowing sight lines to the upper body for officers to maintain visibility for security and safety purposes.

ACT Policing advised that once ACT Watch House Remediation Project is completed, the agreed privacy screen design will be rolled out to other ACT Policing's facilities.

The visiting team observed that privacy screens have been installed in all the at-risk cells in the ACT Watch House, which provide privacy from viewing windows, however there is still nil privacy from CCTV cameras. All other cells at the ACT Watch House remained unscreened.

At the Belconnen Police Station, the visiting team observed that each cell had a privacy screen which gave privacy from both the cell door viewing window and CCTV.

At the Tuggeranong and Jervis Bay Police Stations, we observed there was no privacy screening in the cells.

For the ACT and Commonwealth NPMs to consider this suggestion implemented, the visiting team would need to see privacy screens installed in every cell at every facility. Additionally, privacy squares on the CCTV system to block out footage of a person using the toilet should be implemented at each facility.



Suggestion 6: Fully Implemented

Cleaners undertake formal training in forensic cleaning and be provided appropriate products.

ACT Policing advised that they engage specialist forensic cleaners on an as required basis to supplement the current cleaning contract.



The visiting team were advised that a new cleaning contractor and subcontractor had taken over cleaning of the ACT Watch House. We were advised that all cleaning personnel are now trained in forensic cleaning.

The visiting team observed cleaners on site at the ACT Watch House who were all wearing biohazard PPE.



Suggestion 7: Fully Implemented

Information regarding complaints bodies and mechanisms for making a complaint be mounted on walls in prominent places for people in detention to see. This information should also be accessible to persons with language or understanding difficulties.

ACT Policing advised that the information posters displayed in the ACT Watch House that contains complaints bodies and mechanisms for people deprived of liberty would be installed at all facilities by early May.

The visiting team observed A3 signage for what people deprived of liberty can expect whilst in custody, and information about complaints mechanisms including the ACT NPM, and legal services, in all locations except Gungahlin and Woden Police Stations where people are not placed into custody.

Posters are placed in both cells and common areas in Tuggeranong and Jervis Bay Police Stations and only in common areas adjacent to the cells in the Belconnen Police Station as placement within cells would block the viewing windows.

The visiting team observed complaints pamphlets available in various languages.



Suggestion 8: Not Implemented

All signage regarding emergency and evacuation procedures including muster points be displayed where it can easily be seen by people in detention as soon as possible after completion of refurbishment.

ACT Policing advised that despite recommendations by the NPMs, best practice with custodial facilities is not to place emergency egress locations and plans in view of persons in custody. In light of this, it will be incumbent on ACT Policing members to maintain competency in evacuation procedures, and this is regularly tested.



Emergency Exit Signage upgrades are still underway and will be addressed by the AFP's Emergency Procedures Advisor.

The visiting team did not observe signage at the time of the visits.

The ACT and Commonwealth NPMs accept ACT Policing's reasons for not placing emergency egress locations and plans in view of people deprived of liberty, however, the signage should still be placed in clear view of officers.



Suggestion 9: Partially Implemented

A lockable room or lockers be provided for property management for people in detention.

ACT Policing advised that each facility has the ability to secure people deprived of liberty's belongings, however once the ACT Watch House Remediation Project is completed, the agreed method for securing belongings will be rolled out to other ACT Policing facilities to ensure consistency.

The visiting team observed that some form of property locker was available at all of the Police Stations. However, their location and size varied. At the Belconnen Police Station, the visiting team observed property lockers within general custody area beside the drug and alcohol testing room. At the Tuggeranong Police Station, the visiting team observed property lockers within the secure staffing area. Finally, at the Jervis Bay Police Station, the visiting team observed a small lockable cupboard under the charging counter to store property.

For the ACT and Commonwealth NPMs to consider this suggestion implemented, the visiting team would need to observe an agreed method and appropriate location for securing belongings across all facilities.



Suggestion 10: Partially Implemented

ACT Policing works with the ACT Office for Disability or similar agency to identify reasonable adjustments for people with a disability in at least one cell that has clear lines of sight from the staff workstation. Any adjustments should also be compliant with the CRPD.



ACT Policing advised that the ACT Watch House Remediation Project includes the design of a reasonable adjustment cell that has been endorsed and once complete it will be considered for other facilities depending on need and available funds.

The visiting team observed and reviewed documentation to evidence that that ACT Policing had consulted with the ACT Office for Disability on the construction of the new reasonable adjustment cell at the ACT Watch House.

At the time of the visits, the visiting team did not observe nor were advised of any plans to create reasonable adjustment cells in the Belconnen, Tuggeranong or Jervis Bay Police Stations.



Suggestion 11: Fully Implemented

Information regarding ALS, legal aid, Ombudsman services and the NPM be displayed in a prominent place where it can be easily seen by people in detention.

ACT Policing advised that the information posters displayed in the Watch House that contain complaints bodies and other mechanisms for people deprived of liberty, will be installed at all facilities by early May.

The visiting team observed A3 signage for what people deprived of liberty can expect whilst in custody, and information about complaints mechanisms including the ACT NPM, and legal services, in all locations except Gungahlin and Woden Police Stations where people are not placed into custody.

Posters are placed in both cells and common areas in Tuggeranong and Jervis Bay Police Station and only in common areas adjacent to the cells in the Belconnen Police Station as placement within cells would block the viewing windows.



Belconnen Police Station

The visiting team found the one suggestion directed at Belconnen Police Station had been fully implemented. The visiting team was pleased to find that a review of fire hoses had been undertaken and confirmed that they reached all areas of the facility.

1 fully implemented



Suggestion 1: Fully Implemented

A review of firefighting equipment be undertaken to ensure fire hoses can reach all areas of the detention facility.

ACT Policing advised it is seeking a specialist fire engineer to review ACT Policing's facilities, current firefighting equipment and if fire hoses can reach all areas of the detention facility. At the time of the visits, the visiting team was advised that a review of fire hoses had been undertaken and confirmed that they reach all areas of the facility.



Gungahlin Police Station

The visiting team found the one suggestion directed at Gungahlin Police Station had been superseded. The visiting team observed that the holding cell had been re-purposed to an administrative workstation. Gungahlin Police Station no longer has the capacity to hold someone in custody.

1 superseded



Suggestion 1: Superseded

People with disabilities should not be detained at Gungahlin Police Station until appropriate facilities have been installed or existing facilities modified to ensure accessibility.

ACT Policing advised that Gungahlin Police Station's holding cell has been decommissioned. Persons in custody are taken to either Belconnen Station or the ACT Watch House.

The visiting team observed that the holding cell had been re-purposed to an administrative workstation. Gungahlin Police Station no longer has the capacity to hold someone in custody.



Tuggeranong Police Station

Of the past 3 suggestions directed at Tuggeranong Police Station, the visiting team found 1 had been fully implemented and 2 had not been implemented.

1 fully implemented 2 not implemented



The visiting team were pleased to find a defibrillator and signage placed in the secure staff station area. However, a review of the duress alarm response time and installation of an appropriate screen covering the entire charging counter at the Tuggeranong Police Station had not yet occurred.



Suggestion 1: Not Implemented

A review be undertaken to identify and reduce the length of time it takes for Police communications to respond to a duress alarm and a testing regime be implemented to ensure the system is operational at all times.

ACT Policing advised that consultation has occurred within ACT Policing to implement this suggestion. The outcomes of the ACT Watch House Remediation Project's review of Watch House duress response training regime may be tailored to other ACT Policing facilities. The visiting team observed cells have a duress alarm, which sounds an alarm in the control room, and a blue flashing light is activated above the door of the individual cell. At the time of the visits, a testing regime had not yet been implemented.



Suggestion 2: Fully Implemented

A defibrillator be permanently installed with suitable signage in the detention area.

ACT Policing advised that defibrillators are installed in each station and are readily available to members near detention areas. The visiting team observed a defibrillator and signage placed in the secure staff station area.





Suggestion 3: Not Implemented

Install an appropriate screen covering the entire charge counter to prevent people in detention from:

- a. accessing the officer's area and having access to improvised weapons
- b. spreading transmissible diseases in the event of spitting or the throwing of other bodily fluids and/or excrement
- c. using the current inappropriate screen as an improvised weapon
- d. committing acts of self-harm.

ACT Policing advised that Belconnen Police Station has replaced Tuggeranong Police Station as the selected alternative work location for the ACT Watch House. Once the ACT Watch House Remediation Project is completed, the agreed privacy screen design will be rolled out to Belconnen Police Station.

The visiting team observed the charging counter remains unshielded. It would be difficult to manage a situation if someone jumped over the counter. There is also an extension in the counter which acts as a privacy screen for the computer, however, the extension has hard corners and could be used for self-harm.



Woden Police Station

The visiting team found the one suggestion directed at Woden Police Station had been fully implemented. The visiting team were pleased to find that the previous sewage smell had been addressed. However, the visiting team also notes the cells have not been used for over ten years and are not deemed to be fit for purpose due its outdated design.

1 fully implemented



Suggestion 1: Fully Implemented

Any use of the cells be discontinued until the source of the smell of raw sewage has been investigated, identified and rectified.

ACT Policing advised that Woden Police Station's holding cells have been temporarily decommissioned. Persons in custody are taken to either Tuggeranong Station or the ACT Watch House. Cleaners are addressing the smell by flushing water through drains regularly.

The visiting team observed that the previous sewage smell had been addressed. The visiting team notes the cells have not been used for over ten years and are not deemed to be fit for purpose due its outdated design. Most of the cells are used for storage.



Jervis Bay Police Station

Of the past 15 suggestions directed at Jervis Bay Police Station, the visiting team found 5 had been fully implemented, 5 had been partially implemented and 5 had not been implemented.

5 fully implemented



5 partially implemented



5 not implemented



As with the suggestions made about the other Police Stations, the visiting team noted that the past suggestions relating to infrastructure had not progressed to completion due to priority being placed on the ACT Watch House remediation works.

The visiting team were pleased to find that the majority of non-infrastructure suggestions had progressed, and some could be fully implemented with minor additional work. For example, the Jervis Bay Person in Custody Handbook being updated to specify a minimum time out of cell for people detained over 24hrs (suggestion 10) and a supply of underwear being made available upon request for people deprived of liberty (suggestion 9).

The suggestions that had not been implemented related to CCTV coverage gaps in the sallyport (suggestion 2), rectification of intercom faults (suggestion 5), replacing all commercial drain assemblies (suggestion 11), including an on-call provision within the cleaning contract (suggestion 13) and the installation of air-conditioning in the transportation vehicle pod (suggestion 15).



Suggestion 1: Fully Implemented

Where a range of fire extinguishers are available for use, fire extinguisher charts outlining the different types of fire extinguishers and their uses should be located in areas highly visible to all staff.

ACT Policing advised that Jervis Bay Police Station has had commercially available charts printed, laminated and mounted on the wall next to the station fire extinguishers. The use of fire extinguishers has been added to the station Watch House procedures.



The visiting team observed that there were different types of fire extinguishers available with appropriate selection charts in place.



Suggestion 2: Not Implemented

The sallyport camera be replaced with a camera that has a field of view that covers the entire sallyport area, or a second camera is installed to eliminate blind spots with the current system.

ACT Policing advised that due to the capacity of the internal Radio & Technical Services technicians, the ACT Watch House CCTV installation is the priority as part of the Remediation Project. Once the ACT Watch House installation is completed, CCTV upgrade works will be rolled out incrementally across all remaining sites as the technicians' capacity allows. The visiting team observed that CCTV coverage of the entire sallyport area remains incomplete.



Suggestion 3: Partially Implemented

All duress alarms be inspected with all faults being rectified and that they be tested, and results recorded, as part of a regular inspection regime, whether the cells are in use or not.

ACT Policing advised that internal Radio & Technical Services has undertaken initial station visits to identify issues with detention area cameras, intercoms and alarms. They are currently awaiting development of Statement of Requirements and cost estimate for development of procurement request. Jervis Bay Police Station has added regular inspection of equipment to the station Watch House procedures. Following the completion of the Watch House Remediation Project, a quote will be sought from the Watch House supplier, subject to their availability and available funds.

The visiting team observed duress alarms in several areas of the Jervis Bay Police Station. The visiting team observed that existing intercoms are still not working. The visiting team also reviewed relevant updates to the Jervis Bay Person in Custody Handbook.





Suggestion 4: Fully Implemented

Oleoresin Capsicum (OC) foam be made available for use in the detention area to avoid overspray and over deployment of streamer type chemical agents that may affect other people in detention who are not the subject of the deployment.

ACT Policing advised that foam OC spray is available to Jervis Bay Police Station members, and the use of foam OC spray has been added to the station Watch House procedures. The visiting team observed a Mk 9 canister of OC foam was now available to officers. The visiting team also reviewed relevant updates to the Jervis Bay Person in Custody Handbook.



Suggestion 5: Not Implemented

All intercoms be inspected with all faults being rectified and that they be tested, and results recorded, as part of a regular inspection regime, whether the cells are in use or not.

ACT Policing advised that due to the capacity of the internal Radio & Technical Services technicians, the ACT Watch House CCTV installation is the priority as part of the Remediation Project. Once the ACT Watch House installation is completed, upgrade works including the intercoms will be rolled out incrementally across all remaining sites as the technicians' capacity allows. The visiting team observed that the intercoms are still not working.



Suggestion 6: Partially Implemented

Measures be taken in the holding cell to provide privacy for people in detention from both the cell window and cameras when toileting, while still allowing sight lines to the upper body for officers to maintain visibility for security and safety purposes.

ACT Policing advised that the ACT Watch House Remediation Project includes an agreed privacy screen design which will be rolled out to other ACT Policing facilities.

The visiting team observed that a roller blind has been fitted to the cell window which can be pulled down (from the officer's side) to allow for privacy from the officer's workstation. The window is also tinted.

The visiting team also observed that the basin in the cell blocks the inward view of the toilet. However, a proper privacy screen has still not been installed.



For the ACT and Commonwealth NPMs to consider this suggestion implemented, the visiting team would need to see a privacy screen installed in the holding cell. Additionally, a privacy square on the CCTV system to block out footage of a person using the toilet should be implemented.



Suggestion 7: Fully Implemented

Information regarding access to legal advice, complaints bodies and mechanisms for making a complaint be mounted in prominent places for people in detention to see. This information should also be accessible to persons with language or understanding difficulties.

ACT Policing advised that the Jervis Bay Police Station has information posters displayed that contains complaints bodies and mechanisms for people deprived of liberty. A Post Custody Flyer has also been created to inform people deprived of liberty on why information has been collected, its use, legislation governing use, access, storage, and complaint mechanisms.

A flyer must be provided to each person deprived of liberty and is included within their personal property when it is returned to them. The Post Custody Flyers have been translated into the 5 most commonly spoken languages in the ACT (Punjabi, Mandarin, Vietnamese and Arabic). For other languages, staff will provide a translation service as required.

The visiting team observed an A3 poster in the main cell with information on what people deprived of liberty can expect whilst in custody, and information about complaints mechanisms including the ACT NPM. The visiting team also observed the charging counter contained complaints pamphlets in the various languages.



Suggestion 8: Fully Implemented

The AFP Compliments and Complaints brochure be given to all persons in detention upon leaving custody.

ACT Policing advised that a Post Custody Flyer has been created to inform people deprived of liberty on, why information has been collected, its use, legislation governing use, access, storage, and complaint mechanisms. A flyer must be provided to each person deprived of liberty and is included within their personal property when it is returned to them.



The visiting team observed the charging counter contained complaints pamphlets in various languages.

The visiting team also reviewed the Jervis Bay Person in Custody Handbook which stipulates that the complaints pamphlet should be provided to everyone who comes through the Jervis Bay Police Station.



Suggestion 9: Partially Implemented

A supply of clothing for males and females of different sizes be held on site for the use of people in detention.

ACT Policing advised Jervis Bay Police Station has a clothing store that contains basic clothing of differing sizes.

The visiting team observed a range of appropriate clothing in various sizes was available. However, no underwear was available.

For the ACT and Commonwealth NPMs to consider this suggestion implemented, the visiting team would need to observe a range of underwear placed in storage at the Jervis Bay Police Station.



Suggestion 10: Partially Implemented

Minimum exercise requirements be allowed for all persons held in custody with appropriate supervision.

ACT Policing advised that there is a small exercise area available to persons held in custody. The provision of allowed exercise requirements has been added to the station's Watch House procedures.

The visiting team reviewed the Jervis Bay Person in Custody Handbook. The handbook allows for people held in custody for 24hrs or longer to access exercise/fresh air at the judgement of the officers but does not specify the minimum time out of cell in conformity with the requirements of the Mandela Rules.

For the ACT and Commonwealth NPMs to consider this suggestion implemented, the visiting team requests an update to the Jervis Bay Person in Custody Handbook to stipulate that persons deprived of liberty for 24 hours or more are entitled to at least one hour of suitable exercise in the open air daily in conformity with Rule 23 of the Mandela Rules.



 **Suggestion 11:** Not Implemented

A review should be undertaken to remove all potential ligature points including replacing all commercial drain assemblies with assemblies of a Crocodile Roll Resistant (CRR) design.

ACT Policing advised that the Jervis Bay Police Station submitted a work order for installation of Crocodile Roll Resistant (CRR) design drain assemblies. The visiting team observed that the floor drains are currently still of a commercial variety and not of CCR design.

 **Suggestion 12:** Partially Implemented

All contracted cleaners and police (if they are required to clean cells) undertake formal training in forensic cleaning and be provided with the appropriate products.

ACT Policing advised that they engage specialist forensic cleaners on an as required basis to supplement the current cleaning contract.

The visiting team was advised that cleaning at the Jervis Bay Police Station is carried out by a contractor who attend 3 days per week. However, there is a new cleaner on site who has not yet been security cleared so officers are currently still required to do the cleaning of the cells. Officers have no training in forensic cleaning.

 **Suggestion 13:** Not Implemented

Cleaning contracts include an on-call provision to allow for cleaning to be undertaken at short notice in the event of self-harm or soiling incidents.

ACT Policing advised they engage specialist forensic cleaners on an as required basis to supplement the current cleaning contract. The visiting team reviewed the cleaning contract and found that Jervis Bay Police Station appears not to have Watch House cleaning services that would provide for on request removal of bodily fluids and contaminants services.

 **Suggestion 14:** Fully Implemented

Use of the Princes and Kings Highways for the transport of people in detention to and from the ACT be incorporated into a policy document. This policy should also address other considerations and requirements when transporting people in

detention from Jervis Bay Police Station to Canberra, including frequency of comfort stops, monitoring requirements, pre-departure checks of vehicle, post transport cleaning and restocking of the vehicle, etc.

ACT Policing advised that Jervis Bay Police Station has added a section on the considerations and requirements when transporting people in detention from Jervis Bay Police Station to Canberra to the station Watch House procedures. A check list has been included for easy reference of members, given the infrequent nature of these transports.

The visiting team reviewed the Jervis Bay Person in Custody Handbook. The visiting team also observed a pre-Canberra travel checklist had been created and placed on the wall next to the sallyport door – this is to support completion of all important steps prior to departure.



Suggestion 15: Not Implemented

An air conditioning unit be fitted to the detainee pod of the primary transport vehicle.

ACT Policing advised that Jervis Bay Police Station has received a new vehicle and transport pod, which has a fan installed. The visiting team observed that the transport vehicle still has no air conditioning for the rear pod.



Disclaimer

This document is intended and suitable for public release and publication.

The Commonwealth owns the copyright in all material produced by the Ombudsman. With the exception of the Commonwealth Coat of Arms, the Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman's logo, any material protected by a trade mark, and where otherwise noted, all material presented in this publication is provided under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 licence.

The details of the relevant licence conditions are available on the Creative Commons website (creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/deed.en) as is the full legal code for the CC BY 4.0 licence.

The Commonwealth's preference is that you attribute this report and any material sourced from it using the following wording:

Source: Licensed from the Commonwealth Ombudsman under a Creative Commons 4.0 licence. This report is available from the Commonwealth Ombudsman website at www.ombudsman.gov.au.

Use of the Coat of Arms

The terms under which the Coat of Arms can be used are set out on the It's an Honour website www.pmc.gov.au/government/its-honour

Contact us

Enquiries regarding the licence and any use of this report are welcome at:

Commonwealth Ombudsman

Level 5, 7 London Cct

Canberra ACT 2601

Tel: 1300 362 072

Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au