

COMMUNIQUÉ No. 2, 2023

Meeting of the OPCAT Advisory Group

16 November 2023

On 16 November 2023, the Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman's OPCAT Advisory Group (OAG) held its second meeting for 2023. The meeting was chaired by Iain Anderson, Commonwealth Ombudsman.

OAG members discussed various matters including:

- updates from the Commonwealth NPM, including progress on drafting its 2022–23 Annual Report, and its move to preparing post-visit summaries for each of its visits
- the recent findings and recommendations on OPCAT and detention matters from the *Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability*
- developments in immigration detention in Australia, including the High Court's decision on indefinite immigration detention, and the recent transfer of asylum seekers to Nauru
- a planned Australian NPM response to the United Nations (UN) Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture's report on its 2022 visit to Australia, and a potential submission to the UN Committee against Torture's follow-up procedures
- the importance of oversight bodies being alert to vicarious trauma when working in challenging environments
- the continuing lack of full implementation of OPCAT across all Australian jurisdictions.

The OAG reiterates its ongoing concerns with the treatment and conditions of children and young people in detention in Australia. Developments since the previous OAG meeting highlight the need for further action from governments. We call on governments to consider advice and recommendations made by various oversight bodies and experts, and take the necessary steps to improve youth detention conditions and address broader youth justice system challenges.

In 2020, the Commonwealth Ombudsman established the OPCAT Advisory Group (OAG) to provide expert advice and guidance to the Ombudsman about the 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](#).

For more information visit ombudsman.gov.au or call 1300 362 072.