

# No action from Department to identify complex mental health needs in Villawood

The Commonwealth National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) made 9 recommendations and 1 suggestion to the Department of Home Affairs and Australian Border Force following their visit to Villawood Immigration Detention Centre (VIDC) and Miowera Village in November 2024.

The visit focussed areas which pose the greatest risks for ill treatment including the experience of persons with a suspected or diagnosed disability, use of force, and the use of High Care Accommodation for 'respite' purposes.

Head of the Commonwealth NPM, Mr Iain Anderson, said:

*'There have been several cases of concern regarding the mental health of persons held in immigration detention in our most recent visiting cycle, reflecting the negative impacts prolonged detention can have on individuals.'*

*'Ensuring appropriate supports are in place for people with complex needs can make significant differences to their experience of detention. Individuals should be comprehensively assessed at the earliest opportunity to ensure the most appropriate placement and care.'*

The report identifies key areas for agencies to improve, including the need to:

- Address the needs of individuals with complex mental health needs in a timely fashion, consistent with the [Convention on the Rights of persons with Disabilities](#)
- Develop and implement consistent policies for the respectful treatment and placement of transgender or gender-diverse persons

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- Provide onsite medical services at the Miowera village
- Eliminate the excessive use of routine pat searches on persons housed in the Miowera village
- Develop appropriate infrastructure to support 'respite' to avoid isolating high needs individuals in High Care Accommodation units.

We found during this visit that communication between the stakeholders had remained consistently positive. However, changes in service providers and ongoing contract negotiations resulted in uncertainty regarding the future of many staff – which poses a risk to the quality of service delivery.

*'I encourage the Department of Home Affairs to work closely with the new Health Services Provider to ensure that the Australian Government is meeting its obligations as a signatory to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, regardless of their immigration status.'* said Mr Anderson.

VIDC consists of several accommodation compounds, which vary in capacity, style, and function, including Miowera Village which houses family groups and transgender people. There were 386 people detained at VIDC at the time of the visit.

You can read the [full Post Visit Summary on our website](#).

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