

**Annual Report to the Minister for Corrections
For the year ending 31 December 2021**

Prison Official Visitors

Prison Official Visitors are appointed by the Minister in accordance with *s10 of the Corrections Act 1997*.

The Minister may appoint a Coordinator of Official Visitors who is responsible for ensuring that each prison is visited at least once a month and to provide the Minister as soon as practicable after 31 December in each year a report:

- on the inquiries or investigations made under subsection (4); and
- on the visits to prisons by official visitors; and
- on the activities of official visitors at prisons in that year

The Coordinator of Official Visitors is currently the Ombudsman.

The Office of the Ombudsman provides general administrative support to Prison Official Visitors as well as hosting the Mental Health Official Visitors program.

Whilst Official Visitors may report to the Minister or Director at any time, in practice Official Visitors provide a report to the Office of the Ombudsman after each visit, reporting on complaints and issues raised in the course of the visit. In most instances, Visitors manage to resolve complaints and issues in the course of the visit through discussion with Correctional Staff and Correctional Managers and report on this in their reports.

A staff member of the Office, (the Manager Official Visitors) is available to assist Visitors with complaints that cannot be resolved on the day of the visit.

Official Visitors meet with the Director of Prisons every three months and use this forum to report on issues to the Director and receive feedback on general prison issues from the Director. Visitors can also meet with the Minister in person during the year to raise any issues with and provide feedback to the Minister.

Reports provided by Official Visitors assist in informing the Ombudsman of complaint trends and specific issues.

Visitors also raise specific issues with the Director's Office and other senior managers in person at the conclusion of a visit and by email where appropriate.

Visitors make their own arrangements to visit a prison which are as a rule unannounced. Visitors also email each other to time their visits.

At the time of writing, there are seven Prison Official Visitors. Following the resignation of Ms Elizabeth Little, Mr Jeremy Gleeson was appointed as an Official Visitor on 25 November 2021 for a period of three years.