



Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety

Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2022-2023 ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

Asked by Mr Peter Cain MLA on 17 November 2023 Peter Muir, ACT Official Visitors took on notice the following question(s):

Reference: Hansard [uncorrected] proof transcript 17 November 2023 [page no 11-12]

In relation to: Corrections complaints

THE CHAIR: So is Ms Quinn the only one who will be answering questions? That question; okay. So just talking about the increase in the number of complaints. We seem to have about three and a half per detainee, and as the detainee population has shrunk it seems the complaints have increased. I am just wondering what have you concluded as to what is producing that? What insights have you about what is driving this increase?

Ms Quinn: In the past quarter in the annual report, the increase will be around awareness of the Official Visitor role. So the detainee population can be quite sceptical on who they work with, and for that annual report period we had a consistent Official Visitor population staff workforce, and so I would believe it would be trust gathered for the Official Visitor and their role.

THE CHAIR: Do you have a breakdown of the complaints you received about Corrections that you can provide to us?

Mr Muir: We will take that on notice.

ACT Official Visitors: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

Official Visitors are required to report on the number and kinds of complaints received. Reporting does not require further breakdown, however we have grouped the kinds of complaints commonly received in 22-23. Please note that the complaints are very varied and many of them are complex and therefore could be categorised in multiple ways.

SERVICES:

- Access to and issues with health services and medication, including mental health support
- Access to programs / education / activities
- Access to / concerns regarding support services
- Case management
- Access to work / employment
- Smoking – concerns related to cessation of smoking and support available

PERSONAL WELLBEING:

- Cultural support
- Maintenance issues
- Cleaning and hygiene
- Access to exercise / recreational areas
- Clothing / personal items
- Food / nutrition issues
- Access to and issues with buy-ups (process for detainees to purchase limited items on weekly or monthly basis)
- Accommodation issues

CONTACT:

- Visits and phone calls, including inter-jail contact and mail distribution
- Access to computers / e-mails / phones / audio visual links
- Lockdown / lock in issues, including some related to COVID

STAFFING:

- Issues related to discipline and incentives / privileges as well as classification reviews, particularly regarding consistency
- Staff behaviour, including inappropriate behaviour, misconduct or discrimination

ADMINISTRATION:

- Lost paperwork
- Issues relating to detainee delegates
- Financial issues
- Access to personal information, records and privacy issues
- Lack of information or miscommunication from staff / provider

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety

Signature:



Date: 27 November 2023

By Mr Peter Muir, Chair of the Official Visitors Board, ACT Official Visitors