

MEDIA RELEASE

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CCC report exposes systematic weaknesses in prison security procedures and alarming vision of unsupervised prisoners in the community

The Corruption and Crime Commission (CCC) has today tabled a report in Parliament which highlights some serious failures in the supervision of prisoners in the community.

The [Report into inadequate supervision of prisoners whilst in the community](#) follows a cooperative investigation by the CCC and Department of Justice (DoJ).

The Commission makes a series of significant recommendations to help address the Department of Justice's failure to identify and manage serious misconduct risks associated with prisoners. They relate to matters including:

- driver safety;
- the ability to track and monitor DoJ vehicles;
- staff training;
- the selection, and rotation, of staff appointed to these high-risk duties; and
- random searches of DoJ vehicles after delivery runs.

The weaknesses in the Department of Justice's systems and procedures and, in particular, its failure to identify and manage serious misconduct risk associated with prisoners who were on community reintegration programs after serving long sentences, allowed prisoners to groom and exploit Mr Northing, which ultimately resulted in a failure by Mr Northing to adequately supervise the prisoners.

In his former role, Mr Northing would leave Karnet Prison Farm (Karnet Prison) every morning in a DoJ vehicle to deliver fresh food products produced at the prison to other DoJ facilities, and to collect goods needed at Karnet Prison. He would be accompanied by a number of minimum security prisoners who were there to assist him in loading and unloading the vehicle.

The report details multiple incidents which illustrate how DoJ's procedures made Mr Northing a target for grooming by prisoners. He was often alone with the same prisoners for extended periods of time, giving prisoners the opportunity to develop a relationship with him and to gain, and later abuse, his trust.

The Commission found that Mr Northing often made unauthorised stops when he had prisoners under his supervision and, on numerous occasions, left them unsupervised – thereby enabling them to have interactions with members of the public who were known to the prisoners. It also revealed Mr Northing was in telephone contact with ex-prisoners.

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The Department of Justice's failure to properly supervise the prisoners, meant there were little protections in place for staff or safeguards to stop prisoners engaging in a range of crimes, including:

- escaping;
- taking control of a DoJ vehicle;
- attacking Mr Northing or members of the public;
- obtaining drugs, weapons or other contraband;
- introducing drugs, weapons or other contraband into Karnet Prison or other DoJ facilities;
- exchanging information with criminal associates in the community or in other DoJ facilities; or
- committing further offences.

The investigation also revealed that Mr Northing had a history of inappropriate contact with prisoners and of failing to adequately supervise prisoners in his charge. It exposed that DoJ knew of this history and, while Mr Northing was given verbal cautions, small fines and eventually a demotion, no processes and procedures were put in place to prevent them from reoccurring, and nor was there any further or ongoing monitoring of Mr Northing's conduct.

The Department of Justice will be required by the Commission to report on progress, including to what extent its recommendations have been implemented and whether any other improvements to the supervision of prisoners in the community have been made, in a year's time.

The Commission proposes to release further reports relating to prison security and other matters in the coming months.

ENDS

Related resources

- [*Report into inadequate supervision of prisoners whilst in the community*](#)
- [Vision - Hungry Jacks CCTV](#)

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