

The port phillip prison

[Law](#), [Justice](#)



The Port Phillip Prison is under bad management. The prisoners trashed one of the sections of the prison in frustration to the treatment they are getting, the prisoners caused around \$100, 000 of damage and nearly killed a guard. This came about because of the lack of staff in the prison and bad management, which meant they had to shorten the visitation time. The visits are what keep most prisoners going. The Prison has had five deaths in custody in the last nine weeks. The Government also has is to blame for part of this problem.

The Port Phillip Prison is under bad management at the moment. The prison started receiving men in mid September 1997 and in just five months the prison has proven to have very many serious problems. In the past nine weeks there have been five deaths in custody at the prison. In addition to these deaths in custody there have been reports of at least one incident of self harm and/or suicides since the prison opened.

The Port Phillip Prison has been built with intergral hanging points in 580 of their cells. Five people have died because of it. Correctional Services Commissioner, John van Gronigan has stated, after the fifth death in custody at Port Phillip, that he is " satisfied with the prison's management".

The Government is claiming that because Muirhead Cells (strip cells) have no obvious hanging points, thus they have complied with recommendation 165. This is a distortion of the content, intent and nature of recommendation 165. (Recommendation 165 of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody explicitly states that " Corrective Services authorities should carefully scrutinize equipment or facilities provided at institutions with a view

to eliminating and/or reducing the potential for harm. Similarly steps should be taken to screen hanging points in police and prison cells".) Numerous coroner findings in Victoria, South Australia and Queensland have also recommended the removal of hanging points in both prison and police cells. Yet the Government is claiming that it has implemented recommendation 165.

In Port Phillip prison the shower screens provide additional hanging points - it was from the shower screens that two men (George Drinken and Adam Irwin) were found hanging. It is plainly obvious that if the prison was built without the intergral hanging points there would not have been five deaths in the Prison.

These people have died at Port Phillip Prison:

- 30 October 1997 George Drinken aged 28 years, on remand, was found hanging from the shower fitting in his cell. This was an unnecessary death if they had of build the Prison without the hanging points.
- 16 December 1997 Adam Irwin aged 20 years, on remand, was found hanged with an electrical cord from the shower fitting. This also was an unnecessary death.
- 4 January 1998 Vienh Chi Tu aged 20 years, on remand died on Sunday afternoon. Believed to have died of an overdose. This death could have been avoided if the guards enforced the rules.
- Another two men have died in the prison allegedly of `natural causes'.

How can eight staff control Port Phillip prison during the night. Eight staff to monitor and respond to emergencies in a prison with almost six hundred male prisoners consisting of remand, high security, sentenced, intellectually disabled and vulnerable prisoners and protection prisoners. Is this serious? Unfortunately 'Yes', furthermore the vast majority of staff have no related experience in corrections. This is just ridiculous.

You could say what the prisoners did was stupid but the prisoners had no other way of showing their anger and frustration of the bad conditions they had to face. Group 4 have even contracted a private detective, John Barclay, Cobra Executive Protection, to undertake an " independent" investigation into the deaths of the first four men to die in custody at Port Phillip. But this is all pointless if they don" t change the management and get rid of the intergral hanging points.

The guards who work there are now taking action to get the Prison fixed up and make the place safer for the workers and the prisoners. Group 4 Correction Services will have to do something to fix the problem, or they will have a real bad name about their company. Which will then cause people to think of them as the bad ones when ever something comes up in the media about them. That will cause a lot of problems for the company if they don" t act.

In conclusion I have to say that at the moment Port Phillip Prison is under very bad management. Something must be done to stop the amount of deaths in the prison. They must get rid of all the intergral hanging points in the prison to try and stop some of the deaths. They must change their

management also. They must crack down on the prisoners using drugs and the people who bring them into the prisoners must be told that NO drugs are allowed. Port Phillip prison is a sham at the moment and it must be fixed.