

Ministers may appoint 'Official Visitors' to each prison, and this role is overseen by the Office of Corrective Services Review. They serve for five years and visit their assigned prison to inspect the facilities, usually one day each month. The Official Visitor can move freely about the prison to observe how the prison works and discuss any topic with staff or prisoners. If the prison has 24 hours notice of the visit they must post a notice so that both you and the staff are aware of the visit, and the visitor must be made aware of anyone who has requested to meet with them.

The visitor is expected to report their observations to prison management, and to report periodically to the Minister for Corrections through the Office of Correctional Services Review. It should be noted that their report includes the views of those they speak to, and they are also asked to identify any 'good news' in relation to the prison.

How the visitor sees their role will vary between individuals, however generally speaking prisoners do not view Official Visitors to be very effective in resolving issues of complaint. They can bring issues to the attention of prison management and to the Minister. They are an avenue of complaint that is available so you should use that avenue. If you are going to make a complaint to an Official Visitor, think about doing it in writing – see fact sheet '[Complaints](#)'.

Further information

This fact sheet contains general information only and is not a substitute for obtaining legal

advice. If you would like advice regarding a specific problem please contact one of the legal services listed in [contacts](#) or contact the Law Institute of Victoria's Legal Referral Service on 9607 9311.