

News

**Prisoner's rights abused: Ombudsman**

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A PRISONER was assaulted and marched naked through the controversial Melbourne Custody Centre in an incident that breached his human rights, the Ombudsman has found.

The August 2008 incident, revealed in the Ombudsman's recent annual report, led to the punishment of several officers from the prison's operator, the private company GEO Group Australia.

Ombudsman George Brouwer found officers had used excessive force on the prisoner. The inmate, who had soiled himself, was moved naked through the centre to the showers. "I considered this treatment not to be in accordance with the values enshrined in the **Charter [of Human Rights and Responsibilities]**," Mr Brouwer said in his report.

The incident is the second use of excessive force against a prisoner in as many years at the custody centre.

Victoria Police said GEO had reviewed its operating policies after the incident and implemented new measures to ensure there were no further breaches. The police would not say how the GEO officers were disciplined or if the company was fined, as when officers failed to protect an inmate bashed in 2005. The Sunday Age was unable to contact GEO Group Australia for comment.

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