

Australian Capital Territory

# Corrections Management (Conflict Resolution) Policy 2009

Notifiable instrument NI2009-123

made under the

***Corrections Management Act 2007*, section 14(1) (Corrections policies and operating procedures)**

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## 1 Name of instrument

This instrument is the *Corrections Management (Conflict Resolution) Policy 2009*.

## 2 Commencement

This instrument commences on the day after it is notified.

## 3 Policy

I make the

CONFLICT RESOLUTION POLICY

attached to this instrument, to facilitate the effective and efficient management of correctional services.

James Ryan  
Executive Director  
ACT Corrective Services  
25 March 2009



Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC)



## CONFLICT RESOLUTION POLICY

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### **Purpose**

To outline the policy to ensure that conflicts are resolved quickly and effectively and that all staff and prisoners have ready access to constructive means of resolving conflicts that arise within the AMC.

### **Authority**

#### Legislation

*Corrections Management Act 2007*, section 14.

### **Policy**

#### Principles

Conflicts in prisons can arise suddenly and for apparently little reason. This may simply be a reaction to stress and frustration, or could relate to events that have occurred outside the prison.

In a prison environment disputes can escalate rapidly. Instead of resorting to threats or violence, conflict between prisoners, or prisoners and staff, should be resolved (wherever possible):

- openly, promptly, and calmly;
- by negotiation without the need for threat or overt pressure;
- in a manner that allows all concerned to have their say and feel heard; and
- by allowing dignity and self respect to be maintained.

#### Staff awareness

In their daily dealings with and observation of prisoners, corrections officers will become aware of current or potential conflicts between prisoners. Where these arise staff should:

- attempt to discuss the issues with either or both parties so as to understand the issues and seek to resolve the conflict. This should be done separately and privately. As some disputes arise from criminal activity, the prisoner/s may refuse such offers;
- offer to mediate between the parties, or be present while the matter is discussed;
- ask the parties to identify a person whom they believe may help with the resolution of the conflict and if possible refer the matter to such a person.

Prisoners should be encouraged to discuss matters with a staff member if appropriate;

- reinforce with all parties, as frequently as possible, that most disputes can be resolved, but that threats or violence will lead to disciplinary sanctions whatever the rights and wrongs of the matter; and/or
- seek to clarify with both parties exactly what they are seeking to achieve and what they think the other party is seeing to achieve.

Corrections officers who are aware of prisoners who are experiencing difficulty in resolving conflict appropriately should raise the possibility of a self-development course with the prisoner and his/her case manager. This can be negotiated as part of the prisoner's rehabilitation plan.

### **Preventative action**

While resolving the conflict is the most desirable aim, some conflicts present a serious risk to the security and good order of a correctional centre and corrections officers may need to consider whether some form of preventative action is needed.

This might involve (where the conflicting parties are prisoners):

- a change of location for one or more parties;
- moving one or other party to the Management Unit; and/or
- disciplinary action against one or more parties.

These actions must be in accordance with the Segregation Policy and Discipline Policy and Procedure.

### **Disciplinary action**

Corrections officers should be mindful that conflict resolution is not a substitute for disciplinary action. Behaviour that constitutes a disciplinary breach should be addressed in accordance with the *Discipline Policy* and *Procedure*. However, the conflict resolution process should be used as a parallel process used to discuss the prisoner's conduct openly.

### **Related Policies/Procedures**

Incident Response Policy

Incident Report Policy

Use of Force Policy

Use of Force Procedure

Segregation Policy

Prisoner Discipline Policy

Prisoner Discipline Procedure