



Ombudsman's Foreword

I am very pleased to present the 2014-15 Annual Report of the Western Australian Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is an independent, impartial statutory officer that reports directly to the Western Australian Parliament.

The office of the Ombudsman (**the Office**) has four principal functions, which are to:

- Receive, investigate and resolve complaints about State Government agencies, local governments and universities;
- Review certain child deaths and family and domestic violence fatalities;
- Improve public administration for the benefit of all Western Australians through own motion investigations and education and liaison programs with public authorities; and
- Undertake a range of additional functions, including statutory inspection and monitoring functions.



The Ombudsman also concurrently holds the roles of Energy and Water Ombudsman and State Records Commissioner.

Timely and efficient resolution of complaints is a critical role for the Office. During 2014-15, the continuation of our major complaint handling improvement program, introduced in 2007, resulted in 98 per cent of complaints being finalised within three months.

Overall, since June 2007, the average age of complaints has reduced from 173 days to 21 days. Over the same period, the cost of handling complaints has reduced by 37 per cent.

This year, we continued to undertake important work in relation to our child death and family and domestic violence fatality review roles, including undertaking significant work on a major own motion investigation into issues associated with Violence Restraining Orders and their relationship with family and domestic violence fatalities, as well as commencing a major own motion investigation into ways to prevent or reduce child deaths by drowning.

In November 2014, the Office co-hosted the 4th Australasian Conference on Child Death Inquiries and Reviews with the Department for Child Protection and Family Support (**DCPFS**). This important biennial conference, hosted for the first time in Western Australia, brought together a diverse range of professionals responsible for conducting reviews of child deaths, serious child injuries and family and domestic violence fatalities.

The Office has an important role to undertake a range of statutory inspection, monitoring and reporting functions, including the inspection of telecommunication interception records and the Ombudsman's monitoring functions under the *Criminal*

Organisations Control Act 2012. In March 2015, we also commenced a new role to monitor the Infringement Notices provisions of *The Criminal Code*.

In 2007-08, we introduced a new program aimed at significantly enhancing awareness of, and accessibility to, the Office for regional and Aboriginal Western Australians. The program continued this year with visits to Kalgoorlie-Boulder and Northam.

Last, but no less importantly, I take this opportunity to thank each member of my staff team for their outstanding work during the year.



Chris Field
Western Australian Ombudsman

