

What is the Ombudsman's role in handling complaints?

The Ombudsman is an independent and impartial person who investigates and resolves complaints about the decision making and practices of Western Australian public authorities. The Ombudsman reports directly to the Parliament of Western Australia, not to the government of the day.

The *Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1971* describes the role of the Ombudsman and the Ombudsman's jurisdiction – what we can and cannot investigate.

Public authorities include State Government departments and authorities, local governments and universities.

Can a decision about a complaint be reviewed?

We offer complainants an opportunity for the handling of their complaint to be reviewed by a senior officer, who was not involved in the original investigation of their complaint.

The purpose of a review is to consider whether the complaint was handled in accordance with the *Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1971*.

The decision to undertake a review is not automatic and it is not sufficient to merely disagree with the view formed by the case officer. The handling of a complaint is only reviewed once.

Will the reviewer be independent?

The decision about whether a matter should be reviewed, and the review itself, will be undertaken by a senior officer not involved in the original investigation.

Requesting a Review

Requests for review should be made in writing, addressed to the Assistant Ombudsman Assessment and Resolution, and set out the reasons why the complaint was not handled fairly, in accordance with the *Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1971*.

Outcome of a Review

A review may determine that:

- The handling of the complaint was in accordance with the *Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1971*;
or
- The handling of the complaint was not in accordance with the *Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1971*. In this case, we will apologise, take action to improve our processes and, where appropriate, we will re-open and reconsider the complaint.

What happens at the conclusion of a review

We will always inform you of the outcome of the review and the reasons for our decision.