

The Ombudsman

**PRESENTATION TO A DELEGATION FROM THE
WESTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT**

**CHRIS FIELD
OMBUDSMAN**

11 October 2018

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Welcome

- The Honourable Speaker, Deputy Chief Whip, Leader of the Opposition and Member of Provincial Parliament, I am absolutely delighted to have this opportunity to address Honourable members and staff of the Western Cape Provincial Parliament.
- There is great friendship between South Africa and Western Australia.
- As Ombudsman, but also Second Vice President of the International Ombudsman Institute, I join with others here today in warmly welcoming you to Western Australia.

International Ombudsman Institute

- The office of the Ombudsman is over 200 years old, originating in Sweden in 1809.
- Since then, more than 100 countries have created an office of the Ombudsman and more than 190 Ombudsman institutions are members of the International Ombudsman Institute.
- I am delighted that the Western Cape Police Ombudsman, Ombudsman of the City of Cape Town and the Public Protector South Africa are all members of the International Ombudsman Institute and very valued colleagues.

The Ombudsman

- Western Australia led Australia in introducing the office of the Ombudsman in 1972.
- The Ombudsman is an independent and impartial officer who reports directly to the Western Australian Parliament.
- The Ombudsman concurrently holds the roles of Energy and Water Ombudsman and Chairman, State Records Commission.

Investigation of complaints

- The Ombudsman investigates government agencies, local governments and universities.
- In undertaking investigations, the Ombudsman has all the powers of a standing Royal Commission.
- At the end of an investigation, the Ombudsman can make recommendations.
- Every recommendation made in the last eleven years has been accepted.

Reviews of child deaths and family and domestic violence fatalities

- The Ombudsman reviews child deaths and family and domestic violence fatalities, reports an extensive amount of information about these reviews and makes recommendations to public authorities about ways to prevent or reduce child deaths and family and domestic violence fatalities.

Ombudsman-initiated investigations

- The Ombudsman may initiate an investigation by their own motion. Recent Ombudsman-initiated investigations include:
 - *Investigation into ways to prevent or reduce deaths of children by drowning (2017).*
 - *Investigation into issues associated with violence restraining orders and their relationship with family and domestic violence fatalities (2015).*
 - *Investigation into ways that State government departments and authorities can prevent or reduce suicide by young people (2014).*

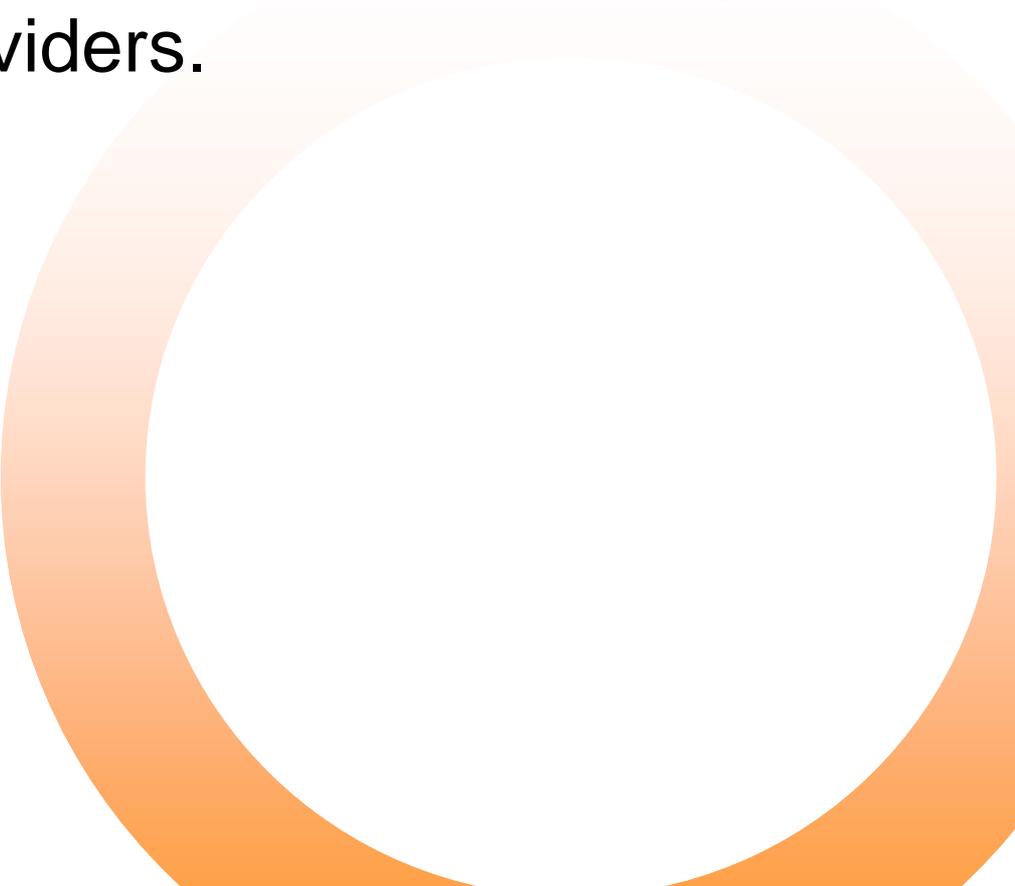
Ombudsman-initiated investigations (cont.)

- The Ombudsman also reports to Parliament on the steps taken to give effect to recommendations arising from investigations:
 - A report on giving effect to the recommendations arising from the *Investigation into issues associated with violence restraining orders and their relationship with family and domestic violence fatalities* (2016).

Scrutiny, inspection and other complaint functions

- Complaints or appeals by overseas students.
- Disclosures of public interest information.
- Complaints from persons detained under terrorism legislation.
- Inspections with regard to telecommunications interception legislation.
- Inspections with regard to criminal infringement notices.

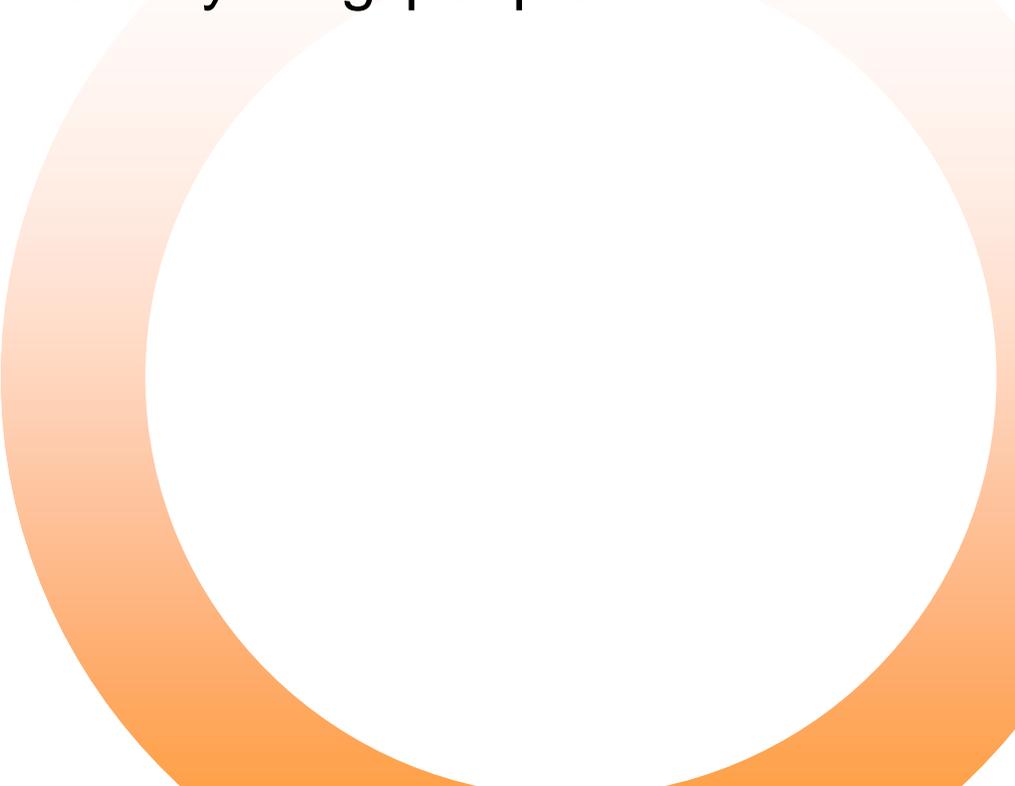
Energy and Water Ombudsman

- The Energy and Water Ombudsman Western Australia resolves complaints about electricity, gas and water services providers.
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Awareness and accessibility

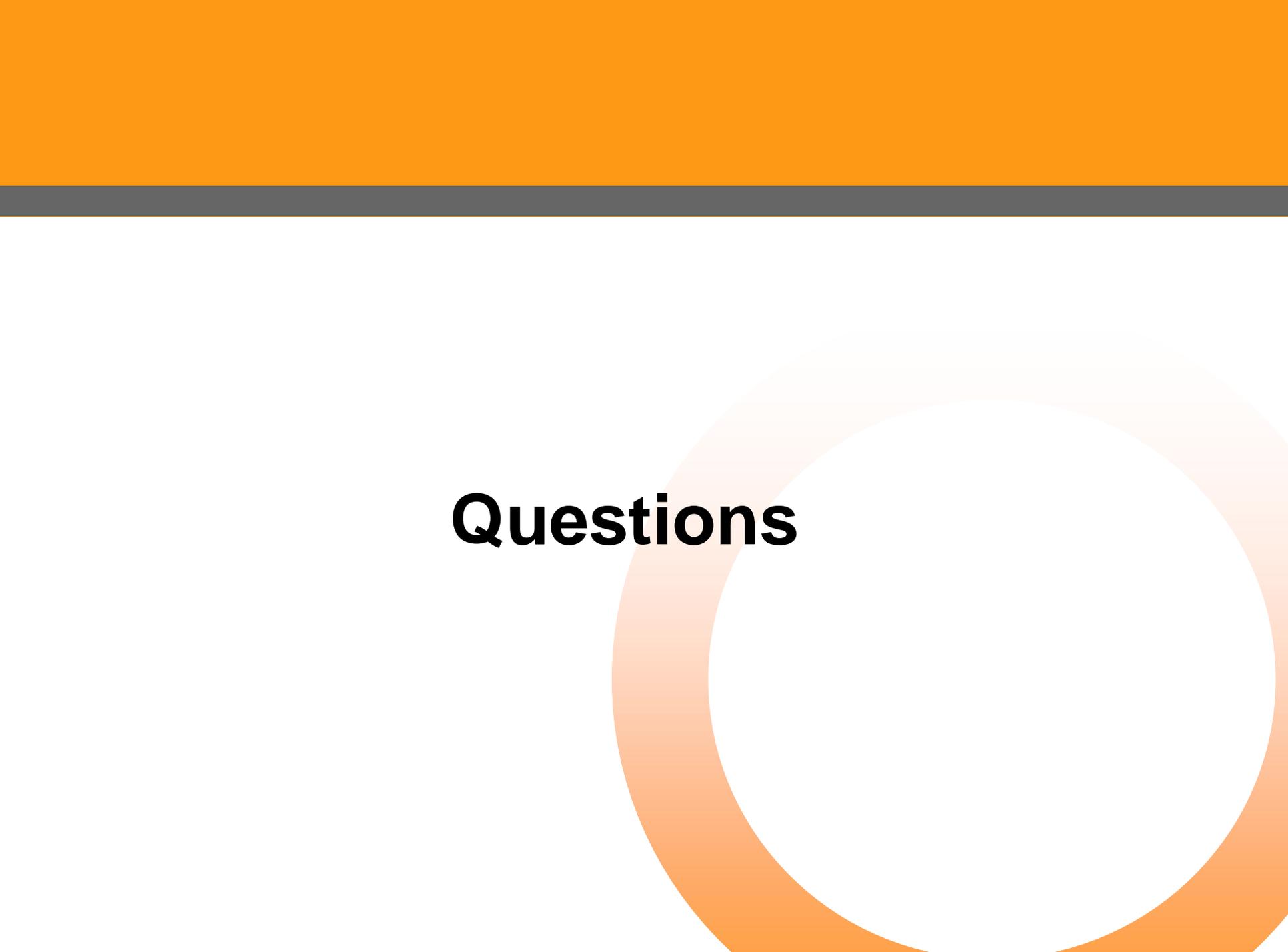
- Western Australia is a vast state, and the Ombudsman's office regularly visits regional Western Australia, including undertaking complaints clinics, meetings with Aboriginal community members and liaison with community groups and public authorities.
- The Ombudsman's office has a profound commitment to listening to, working with, and for, Aboriginal Western Australians. Our Aboriginal Action Plan includes a wide range of strategies and actions to enhance our services for, and engagement with, Aboriginal Western Australians.

Awareness and accessibility (cont.)

- The Ombudsman's office is also committed to enhancing awareness of, and accessibility to, our services for children and young people, including a dedicated visiting program to vulnerable groups of children and young people in the child protection system.
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Serving Parliament

- The Ombudsman is an officer of the Parliament, reports directly to Parliament, is independent of the government of the day and has a solemn responsibility to undertake their role impartially in service of the Parliament and its Committees.



Questions