

## About the Ombudsman

The Ombudsman is an independent and impartial officer who reports directly to Parliament. The Ombudsman receives, investigates and resolves complaints about State Government agencies, local governments and universities, undertakes own motion investigations, reviews certain child deaths, reviews family and domestic violence fatalities and undertakes inspection, monitoring and other functions.

The Ombudsman concurrently holds the roles of Energy and Water Ombudsman and Chair, State Records Commission.

## Ombudsman's Overview

The Ombudsman investigates and resolves complaints from Western Australians. In 2019-20, we received 12,560 contacts from Western Australian citizens, comprised of 10,579 enquiries and 1,981 complaints.

Complaints must be resolved effectively and efficiently. In the last year, 95% of complaints were resolved within three months. The average age of complaints as at 30 June 2007 was 173 days. As at 30 June 2020, it is 47 days. In that same time, the cost of resolving complaints has reduced by 37%, from \$2,941 in 2007-08 to \$1,858 in 2019-20.



A vital role undertaken by the Ombudsman is the review of certain child deaths and family and domestic violence fatalities. In 2019-20, we made 16 recommendations about ways to prevent or reduce child deaths and family and domestic violence fatalities. Timely review processes have resulted in 60% of all reviews being completed within six months.

At the completion of investigations and reviews the Ombudsman has the power to make recommendations. In 2019-20, for the thirteenth consecutive year, 100% of my recommendations were accepted. Importantly, after making recommendations we report to Parliament on the steps taken to give effect to these recommendations. To this end, in 2019-20, we undertook significant work on 'A report on giving effect to the recommendations arising from the Ombudsman's *Investigation into ways that State Government departments and authorities can prevent or reduce suicide by young people 2014*'.

A review of the steps taken to give effect to the recommendations arising from the review of child deaths and family and domestic violence fatalities has also been included in this annual report.

The Ombudsman serves all Western Australians living and working in our vast State. To enhance awareness of, and accessibility to, our services by Aboriginal Western Australians and those living or working in the regions, we visited Kalgoorlie and Leonora in December 2019 as well as a range of other engagement and collaboration initiatives.

I take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude for the tireless contributions of my outstanding staff team. Their level of professionalism, integrity and commitment to public service continues to be of the very highest order.

The Ombudsman serves Parliament and its Committees. It is a very special honour to serve as an officer of the Parliament and a privilege to present to Parliament the report of our work in 2019-20.



Chris Field  
**Ombudsman**