

## International Ombudsman Institute

The International Ombudsman Institute (**IOI**), established in 1978, is the only global organisation for the cooperation of more than 205 independent Ombudsman institutions from more than 100 countries worldwide. The IOI is organised into six regional chapters: Africa; Asia; Australasia & Pacific; Europe; the Caribbean & Latin America and North America.



In May 2021, the Ombudsman commenced his four-year term as President of the IOI at the Closing Ceremony of the 12<sup>th</sup> quadrennial World Conference of the IOI held (virtually) in Dublin.

In the 43-year history of the IOI, the Ombudsman is the only Australian that has been elected President. It was also the first time a President was elected by a vote open to all members of the IOI. Historically, the President was elected by a majority vote of the World Board of the IOI.

The IOI is governed by a World Board, of which the Ombudsman has served as the President since May 2021, following a term as the Second Vice-President between 2016 and 2021. Before this, the Ombudsman served as Treasurer of the IOI from 2014 to 2016 and President of the Australasian and Pacific Ombudsman Region (**APOR**) of the IOI from 2012 to 2014.

### 2021-22 initiatives

#### Secretary General of the IOI undertakes an official visit to the President of the IOI

On 13 March and 14 March 2022, the Secretary General of the IOI and Ombudsman of the Republic of Austria, Mr Werner Amon, undertook an official visit to the President of the IOI Mr Chris Field, in Perth. The Secretary General was accompanied by the Executive Director of the IOI Secretariat, Mr Meinhard Friedl.

This was the first in-person meeting of the President and Secretary General. In addition to a lengthy exchange of official business matters at the offices of the Western Australian Ombudsman, and an opportunity to showcase our wonderful city, a formal lunch was held in the Secretary General's honour by the President at Parliament House and attended by the Honorary Consul of Austria, Mr Wilfried Wimmeler.



Top left: The President of the IOI, the President's Chief of Staff, former Executive Director of the IOI, and former Secretary General of the IOI; Centre: Former Secretary General of the IOI and the President of the IOI; Right: Former Secretary General of the IOI and the President of the IOI.

## World Board Meeting in New York

In May 2022, the World Board of the IOI met in New York. New York was chosen as it provided the opportunity, following the adoption by the United Nations of Resolution 72/186 on *The role of Ombudsman and mediator institutions in the promotion and protection of human rights, good governance and the rule of law*, to meet with Ambassadors to discuss further strengthening the relationship of cooperation and collaboration between the IOI and the United Nations.

### President meets the Australian Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York

The President met with the Australian Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York, the Hon. Mitch Fifield. The Ambassador and the President were able to undertake an extremely useful dialogue regarding strengthening the relationship of cooperation and collaboration between the IOI and the United Nations. The President is exceptionally grateful to Ambassador Fifield and the Australian Government for their ongoing support of his role as President of the IOI and for the institution of the Ombudsman in its work in promoting good governance, the rule of law and human rights.



Left to right: Australia's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York and the President of the IOI.



## President meets Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations in New York

The President was delighted to meet with Ambassador Richard Arbeiter, Deputy Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations in New York and Paul Dube, Ombudsman for Ontario and IOI Regional President, North America to discuss the relationship of the IOI and the United Nations.



Left to Right: Ontario Ombudsman, Canada's Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York and the President of the IOI.

## President attends official dinner at the New Zealand Official Residence of the Ambassador to the United Nations in New York

The President was delighted to attend an official dinner at the residence of the New Zealand Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York, Ms Carolyn Schwalger, together with the Second Vice President of the IOI and Chief Ombudsman of New Zealand, Mr Peter Boshier and a number of distinguished guests, including the Secretary General of the IOI, Mr Werner Amon.



Left to right: Former Secretary General of the IOI, New Zealand's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York, and Chief Ombudsman New Zealand, and the President of the IOI.

## President and Austrian Consul General in New York invite IOI World Board members to a Reception at the Austrian Consulate General

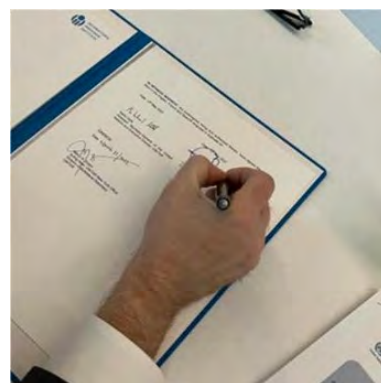
The President hosted, with the Austrian Consul General in New York, Ms. Helene Steinhäusl, and the Secretary General of the IOI and Ombudsman of the Republic of Austria, Mr Werner Amon, a Welcome Reception in New York at the Consulate for the IOI World Board.



Left to right: The President of the IOI, former Secretary general of the IOI and Austrian Consul General.

## United Nations Assistant Secretary-General and United Nations Institute for Training and Research Executive Director and President of the IOI sign an MoU

On 12 May 2022, at the meeting of the IOI Board of Directors in New York, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General and UNITAR Executive Director Mr. Nikhil Seth, who joined the virtual ceremony from Geneva, and the President signed a Memorandum of Understanding (**MoU**) between the IOI and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (**UNITAR**). The work of UNITAR makes a vital contribution to better outcomes for citizens globally, particularly those in developing nations. There is significant alignment in the work of the IOI and UNITAR. Furthermore, the IOI is forging even closer ties with the United Nations by signing this MoU, following on from the United Nations Resolution



The President of the IOI signs the MoU.

on *The role of Ombudsman and mediator institutions in the promotion and protection of human rights, good governance and the rule of law*. This MoU is a strong foundation upon which the IOI can, and will, continue to learn from each other to provide the most informed and effective work for the communities we have the privilege to serve.

## United Nations Ombudsman attends IOI World Board meeting in New York

The President, Secretary General and World Board of the IOI were delighted to host United Nations Ombudsman Shireen Dodson. Ms Dodson briefed the IOI World Board on her important work, including ensuring that all of her offices and staff globally are responsive to the most important human rights and equality for all.



Left to right: Former Secretary General of the IOI, the United Nations Ombudsman, the President of the IOI, the President's Chief of Staff and First Vice President of the IOI.

## Farewell Reception hosted by Australia's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York

On 12 May 2021, His Excellency, the Honourable Mitch Fifield, Australian Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York, hosted a Farewell Reception for the IOI World Board on the occasion of the President's visit to New York.



Left to right: Former Secretary General of the IOI, the President of the IOI, and Australia's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York.



Left to right: Former Secretary General of the IOI, Public Protector South Africa, Chairperson of the Commission on Administrative Justice (Office of the Ombudsman) Kenya, the President of the IOI, Public Protector Zambia and Provedoria de Justiça de la República de Angola (Ombudsman of the Republic of Angola).



## Official visit to Graz and Styria on the occasion of the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Austrian Ombudsman Board

### President meets Governor of Styria

On 4 June 2022, it was the President's honour and privilege to meet His Excellency Mr Hermann Schützenhöfer, Governor of Styria. It was a genuine pleasure for the President to discuss with His Excellency the vital work of the IOI in protecting and promoting human rights, good governance and the rule of law. The President also discussed the very valued friendship of Austria and Australia, including our recently entered Strategic Cooperation Arrangement. His Excellency has made an extraordinary contribution to public life over five decades. It was particularly generous of him to receive the President as one his last acts in office.



Left to right: The President of the IOI, Federal Chancellor of Austria, the Ombudsman's Chief of Staff, the Personal Assistant to the former Secretary General of the IOI, the former Secretary General of the IOI and the former Executive Director of the IOI.

### President provided guided tour as part of official visit to Graz

As part of the President's official visit to Graz, on 4 June 2022 the President was provided a guided tour of the Landeszeughaus in Graz, the world's largest historic armoury. The President was very grateful to the Director and guide for sharing with us this superb museum.



Left to right: The President's Chief of Staff, the President of the IOI and Director.

The President also undertook a private tour of the Grazer Landhaus, an exceptional Renaissance Palace dating back to 1527, and home to the Parliament of Styria.

On 5 June 2022, the President was provided a private tour of the Feuerwehr Verband (Fire Brigade Association and Museum St. Florian). The President was very grateful to the wonderful Directors of the Museum for being such generous hosts.



Left to right: The President of the IOI and former Secretary General of the IOI.



Left to right: The President of the IOI and former Secretary General of the IOI.

## President meets Chancellor of the Republic of Austria

It was a singular honour for the President to meet the Chancellor of Austria, His Excellency Karl Nehammer on 9 June 2022. The President had the opportunity to discuss with His Excellency the role of the Ombudsman institution internationally in promoting and protecting democracy, good governance, the rule of law and human rights. His Excellency was exceptionally gracious to provide time to meet with the President given his extraordinarily busy schedule. The President was deeply grateful for their exchange.

## President attends meeting with Federal President of the National Council of the Republic of Austria

It was a great honour for the President to meet with the Federal President of the National Council of the Republic of Austria, Wolfgang Sobotka on 9 June 2022. His Excellency and the President discussed the work of the Ombudsman institution internationally with regard to its role in upholding democratic principles, good governance, the rule of law and human rights.



Left to right: Federal President of the National Council of the Republic of Austria, the President of the IOI and former Secretary General of the IOI.

## President provides addresses at the Parliament at the Hofburg

The President was deeply honoured to be the international guest speaker on the occasion of the 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Austrian Ombudsman Board held at the Parliament at the Hofburg on 8 June 2022. His Excellency, Doctor Alexander Van der Bellen, Federal President of the Republic of Austria; Magister Wolfgang Sobotka, President of the National Council; Magister Christine Schwarz-Fuchs, President of the Federal Council and the three members of the Austrian Ombudsman Board also addressed the ceremony.



President of the IOI.

The following is an extract of the address:

Guten morgen. It is a great honour to join you in the Parliament at the Hofburg to commemorate the forty-fifth anniversary of the Austrian Ombudsman Board and for your Presidents to allow me to address you in this wonderful Parliament. Today is, in my view, a celebration of the democratic state, of this great Republic of Austria and of a treasured and trusted institution ... There can be no question that the Austrian Ombudsman Board embodies the very essence of the Paris Principles, Venice Principles and the United Nations Resolution ... The Austrian Ombudsman Board is both an Ombudsman with all the gravitas that its history bestows upon it, but absolutely a modern Ombudsman institution committed to human rights, good governance and the rule of law ... As mentioned by the President of the Federal Council, no proper recognition of the many accomplishments of the Austrian Ombudsman Board could be complete without acknowledging the contribution that it makes to the international

Ombudsman community and the citizens they serve. Since 2009, the Secretariat of the International Ombudsman Institute, or IOI, has been based in the Austrian Ombudsman Board. The IOI represents over two hundred Ombudsman institutions from more than 100 countries worldwide across six global regions - Africa, Asia, the Australasian and Pacific, Europe, the Caribbean and Latin America and North America ... It is of note that I consider the Austrian Ombudsman Board, the Secretary General and the IOI Secretariat first and foremost as friends. They are, of course, also enormously valued colleagues and I take the opportunity today to thank them for their exceptional work in service of the international Ombudsman community – it is inconceivable to me that anyone could do more, or better, than the IOI Secretariat. I thank all three members of the Austrian Ombudsman Board for their unfailing support. This is also a propitious time for one other remark. I take great pleasure, both publicly and privately, and all around the world, to acknowledge the support that makes the IOI Secretariat possible. But I have never had this opportunity in the one place that it is most meaningful to do so – this Parliament. On this auspicious occasion, I wish to acknowledge, and formally thank, the Parliament of the Republic of Austria and successive Austrian governments for their generous support of the IOI Secretariat. Austria is, of course, a domicile of a number of supranational bodies. It is the contribution of a true international citizen that you provide this support. I, for one, am certain that the IOI would not exist in any meaningful way without your commitment. Before concluding it would, I think, be remiss of me not to mention one other matter. In 2021, I was the first Australian to have the privilege of being elected President of the IOI. As such, I want to recognise the Republic of Austria is a longstanding and very valued friend of my country. Apart from nearly sharing the same name, we enjoy annual bilateral trade of two billion dollars and, as like-minded countries, we cooperate on a range of issues of mutual interest, particularly in multilateral institutions. In September 2021, Australia and Austria signed a Strategic Cooperation Arrangement to deepen our collaboration. On the occasion of my visit to this magnificent city, and the wonderful province Styria, I thank you personally for the warmth and hospitality you have shown me and my Chief of Staff Rebecca Poole. To conclude, it is a testament to the wisdom of the Parliament of the Republic of Austria forty-five years ago, that we are here today to celebrate this anniversary. The institution of the Ombudsman upholds the great principles of democracy, human rights, good governance and the rule of law. I thank the Austrian Ombudsman Board for being a champion of these principles for four and a half decades. The Austrian Ombudsman Board is an institution woven into the very fabric of the democratic state with a constitutional mandate to protect human rights. Your work in service of this Parliament, the citizens of this great country and, of course, in supporting the global institution of the Ombudsman, is an achievement of which you ought to be extraordinarily proud and, for which, I am profoundly grateful.

The President was also honoured to provide an address at the Parliament of the Republic of Austria on the occasion of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Austrian Ombudsman Board's Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (OPCAT) mandate on 7 June 2022.



President of the IOI.



## President appears before the People's Advocacy Committee of the Parliament of the Republic of Austria

The President was given the great privilege to appear before the People's Advocacy Committee of the Parliament of the Republic of Austria on 8 June 2022. After providing an introductory statement, the President was delighted to answer a series of deeply thoughtful questions from the Honourable Members of the Committee.



Left to Right: The former Secretary General of the IOI, the President of the IOI.

## Peter Tyndall awarded Golden Order of Merit of the Republic of Austria

Former IOI President and Ombudsman and Information Commissioner for Ireland, Peter Tyndall, travelled to Vienna to attend the celebrations of the 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Austrian Ombudsman Board. On 8 June 2022, he also became the first ever recipient of the Golden Order of Merit, recognising his exceptional service to the IOI and the institution of the Ombudsman.



Top left: The President of the IOI; Top right: the President of the IOI, former President of the IOI and Ombudsman and Information Commissioner of Ireland and former Secretary General of the IOI; Bottom left: Golden Order of Merit; Bottom right: former President of the IOI and Ombudsman and Information Commissioner of Ireland.

## President provided private tour of the Parliament of the Republic of Austria

The President was given a private tour by His Excellency Alexis Wintoniak, Vice Director of the Parliament of the Republic of Austria on 9 June 2022. This magnificent Parliament is under renovation and restoration. While the program of works is being undertaken, the Parliament is presently located at the Imperial Palace (Hofburg). The President was accompanied on the tour by Mr Werner Amon, Secretary General of the IOI, and prior to his appointment as Ombudsman, a very longstanding and senior member of the Parliament.



Left to right: The Ombudsman's Chief of Staff and the President of the IOI.

## President meets Secretary-General of the OECD

It was the President's privilege to meet with the Secretary-General of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Mr Mathias Cormann. The Secretary-General was incredibly gracious to meet with the President in Paris coinciding with the President's official visit to Graz and Austria.



Left to right: Secretary-General of the OECD and the President of the IOI.

Economic co-operation and development are absolute cornerstones of human dignity. Without them, the institutions of democracy cannot be funded, nor essential civic infrastructure, nor vital social justice programs.

The President discussed with the Secretary-General the work of the IOI, and its more than 200 members from over 100 countries, in supporting good governance and the rule of law through work on anti-corruption measures, integrity, transparency and good governance. Adherence to the rule of law reduces sovereign risk and encourages the private capital investment that is essential to strong economies and caring, successful societies.

## President meets Australian Ambassador to France, Her Excellency Ms Gillian Bird

As part of the President's official visit to meet the Secretary General of the OECD, the President met with the Australian Ambassador to France, Her Excellency Gillian Bird. Given that the President was in Paris for a very short time, it was particularly gracious of Her Excellency to accommodate their meeting. Her Excellency has extensive senior Ambassadorial experience, and it was very kind of her to offer so much thoughtful and helpful insight into the work that the IOI is currently undertaking with supra-national and other bodies. The President was greatly honoured by the very kind offer to host the President on the occasion of his next visit.



Left to right: The President of the IOI and the Australian Ambassador to France.

## President meets Australian Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the OECD

The President was delighted to meet Ambassador Brendan Pearson, Permanent Representative of Australia to the OECD. The Ambassador and President had a very productive discussion regarding the work of the IOI and the OECD. The Ambassador very kindly offered to engage in further exchange about these matters. The President was very grateful to the Ambassador for the perspectives he was able to bring to discussions which will assist the IOI's ongoing approach to these matters.



Left to right: The President of the IOI and Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Australia to the OECD.

## President's addresses

In 2021-22, the President:

- Delivered a statement, by video, in support of the Fifth International Conference, *Human rights protection in Eurasia: exchange of best practices of Ombudspersons*, held in Moscow on 12 October 2021;
- Delivered a Welcome Address, by video, to the working seminar on the Manchester Memorandum hosted by the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman of the United Kingdom from 9-10 November 2021;
- Delivered a Keynote Address, by video, at the Plenary Session of the Forum for Institutions Supporting Democracy inaugural Virtual Conference on Constitutional Democracy, *The need for collaboration on the promotion of good governance and ethical leadership in responding to the impact of Covid 19 and corruption on constitutional democracy*, held in South Africa on 11 November 2021;
- Joined, by videoconference, a Ukrainian Network of Integrity and Compliance panel discussion "Compliance as a necessary component of investment protection in Ukraine", on 17 November 2021, as part of the Ukraine Business Integrity Month;
- Addressed the Caribbean Ombudsman Association webinar *How to be effective as a small Ombuds institution*, on 25 November 2021;



Top: The President of the IOI; Bottom: Deputy Business Ombudsman of Ukraine.



- Provided an opening greeting, by video, to delegates at the international conference on *Advancing the Rights of the Elderly in an Age of Longevity*, on the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the State Comptroller and Ombudsman of Israel, on 1 December 2021;
- Provided an opening address, by video, to the XII Virtual Assembly and Seminar of the Latin American Institute of the Ombudsman, *Human Rights and Transition: The Ombudsmen and their contribution to the future*, held on 2 December 2021;
- Attended a webinar jointly organised by the African Ombudsman Research Centre and the IOI on 25 January 2022. The webinar focussed on the benefits of membership of both the African Ombudsman and Mediators Association and the IOI for Ombudsman institutions in Africa;
- Provided a Welcome Address, by video, to the General Assembly of the European Region of the IOI on 26 May 2022;
- Provided an Address at the Parliament of the Republic of Austria on the occasion of the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Austrian Ombudsman Board's OPCAT mandate in Vienna, Austria, on 7 June 2022; and
- Provided an Address at the Parliament of the Republic of Austria on the occasion of the 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Austrian Ombudsman Board in Vienna, Austria, on 8 June 2022.



Ombudsman and President of the IOI.



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Video recorded and written speeches by the Ombudsman as President of the IOI are available on the [President's Speeches and Engagements page of the Ombudsman's website](#).