



# Introduction

This section provides an executive summary of the Office's performance, general information about the Office and the Office's Performance Management Framework.

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## Overview

### The Institution of the Ombudsman



The institution of the Ombudsman is more than 200 years old. The institution of the Ombudsman promotes and protects human rights, good governance and the rule of law as recognised through the adoption in December 2020 by the United Nations General Assembly of Resolution 75/186, *The role of Ombudsman and mediator institutions in the promotion and protection of human rights, good governance and the rule of law.*

The International Ombudsman Institute (IOI), established in 1978, is the global organisation for the cooperation of 235 independent Ombudsman institutions from more than 100 countries worldwide. The IOI is organised in six regional chapters - Africa, Asia, Australasian and Pacific, Europe, the Caribbean and Latin America and North America.

### Ombudsman Western Australia



Ombudsman Western Australia is one of the oldest Ombudsman institutions in the world. 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 child deaths, reviews family and domestic violence fatalities, undertakes the Reportable Conduct Scheme, is the Western Australian Charitable Trusts Commission and undertakes inspection, monitoring and other functions. The Ombudsman concurrently holds the roles of Energy and Water Ombudsman and Chair, State Records Commission.

In May 2021, the Ombudsman, Chris Field, commenced a four-year term as the President of the International Ombudsman Institute, the first Australian to be elected President in the 43-year history of the Institute. His appointment also marks the first time that a President has been elected by International Ombudsman Institute members. Historically, Presidents were elected by the International Ombudsman Institute World Board. A new voting system, applicable for the first time in the 2020 election, provided the opportunity for every member globally to vote for the position of President. Chris received 94% of the vote. He has previously served on the World Board as Second Vice President between 2016 and 2020, Treasurer between 2014 and 2016 and President of the Australasian and Pacific Ombudsman Region between 2012 and 2014.

## Ombudsman Western Australia: Proud of Diversity

The office of the Western Australian Ombudsman (**the Office**) takes pride in diversity and equal opportunity. The Office stands with the LGBTQIA+ community. The Ombudsman's pronouns are he/him/his.

## The Ombudsman Western Australia and Aboriginal Western Australians

Ombudsman Western Australia acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Australia as the traditional custodians of this land. We recognise and respect the long history and ongoing cultural connection Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have to Australia, recognise the strength, resilience and capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and pay respect to Elders past, present and future.

Key initiatives in 2022-23 to work with, and for, Aboriginal Western Australians include appointing three Aboriginal staff including the inaugural Assistant Ombudsman Aboriginal Engagement and Collaboration, Mr Laurence Riley. Mr Riley is connected to the Wilman, Ballardong, Menang and Kenang clan of the Noongar Nation, as well as the Nanda clan group of the Yamatji Nation. This is the first time in the 50 year history of the office of the Ombudsman that an Assistant Ombudsman position, and member of Corporate Executive, has been dedicated to Aboriginal Western Australians. The Office also welcomed Jodie Wyatt, Principal Consultant Aboriginal Engagement and Collaboration and Justyne Eades, Senior Advisor Aboriginal Engagement and Collaboration. The Office is committed to working in a collaborative and transparent manner and respecting Aboriginal people's right to self-determination. The Office is committed to working with, and for, Aboriginal Western Australians to build understanding of the unique vulnerability and disadvantage faced by Aboriginal people due to past wrongs.

In 2017-18, Ombudsman Western Australia commissioned Aboriginal artist, Barbara Bynder, to create an artwork to be reproduced by the Office in its publications, including this Annual Report.

This initiative is part of the Office's *Aboriginal Action Plan*, a comprehensive whole-of-office plan that has been guided by the Office's Aboriginal staff led by its Principal Aboriginal Consultant.

By incorporating the artwork into publications and communications with Aboriginal people, the Office aims to further facilitate this understanding, as well as enhance accessibility to, and awareness of, the Office for Aboriginal Western Australians.

## Artist's Statement

This painting represents the idea of fairness, mediation and accessible services where just decision making is promoted and founded on unbiased outcomes for all parties as well as promoting development of sustainable relationships with Aboriginal people and their communities.

The Ombudsman Western Australia aims to develop and maintain sustainable relationships with Aboriginal communities and people of Western Australia.

To understand how relationships are developed and maintained in contemporary Aboriginal society, I have researched the topic to develop and create an artwork that represents the idea of relationship building, mediation and fair decision making between the Ombudsman Western Australia, Government Departments and Aboriginal people.

During our discussions we came to an agreement that this would be best represented showing three specific elements in the painting thus representing the Ombudsman, agency and Aboriginal people. I have represented these three elements equally, as hills that come to a point where they meet with a river flowing between them representing independence.



In Noongar and other Aboriginal cultures research demonstrates that there is similarity in the way that building and maintaining strong relationships occur. Following the processes of historical cultural practice and relationship building and how this is developed through the idea of kinship law is embedded in the background of this painting. Although this practice has adapted, changed and evolved due to the impact of colonization, relationships remain core elements of contemporary Aboriginal culture and is maintained through understanding of and through the idea of culture. The linear work in the painting is representative of contemporary Aboriginal culture and the idea of songlines that traverse the Australian continent connecting Aboriginal people to each other. Although the songlines appear invisible if you look closely you can see that the linear work beneath the surface is visible. Relationship protocols in Aboriginal cultures today, continue to influence cultural values and protocols of contemporary Aboriginal society.

In more traditional areas of Australia, decision making is applied through senior men and women who come together to discuss conflict and disputes within their communities. Basil Sansom, Anthropologist (*The Camp at Wallaby Cross: Aboriginal fringe dwellers in Darwin*, 1979), studied conflict resolution in the Northern Territory. Sansom observed dispute resolution in three different camps who lived in a neighbourhood that shared the same area of land. Each camp was managed by senior men separately, yet they came together to discuss the rules for sharing the same space and how outsiders would be managed whilst staying or visiting the camps because they wanted to maintain good relationships with fellow country men and women and because they wanted to keep the peace in the camps. Sansom sketched a drawing of his understanding for the mediation of dispute process which has influenced and

informed this painting because the protocols that Sansom talks about in his research remains prevalent in today's Aboriginal society.

Research also determines that the best practice for mediation and fair decision making in today's Aboriginal society is driven by 'insider knowledge' therefore being a primary method in resolving conflict and disputes and is found to be the most effective approach to resolving disputes (Turner-Walker, 2010, *Clash of the Paradigms: Night Patrols in remote central Australia*). The results of Turner-Walker's (2010) research concurs with Sansom's (1979) research and highlights the importance of understanding the relationships that exist between Aboriginal people and how this is relational with the idea of culture therefore maintaining cultural values through practicing culture.

To promote the vision of the Ombudsman Western Australia the painting represents the following characteristics; fairness, transparency, acting independently, providing accessible services and promoting fair decision-making processes. The process for implementing this vision of the Ombudsman Western Australia is to develop, maintain and sustain relationships between the Ombudsman, agency and Aboriginal community and people.

**Barbara Bynder**  
Karda Designs

## Ombudsman's Overview

The Ombudsman investigates and resolves complaints from Western Australians. In 2022-23, we received 14,042 contacts from Western Australian citizens, comprised of 11,680 enquiries and 2,362 complaints.

Complaints must be resolved effectively and efficiently. In the last year, 96% of complaints were resolved within three months. The average age of complaints as at 30 June 2007 was 173 days. As at 30 June 2023, it is 37 days. In that same time, the cost of resolving complaints has reduced by 47%, from \$2,941 in 2007-08 to \$1,547 in 2022-23.



A vital role undertaken by the Ombudsman is the review of certain child deaths and family and domestic violence fatalities. In 2022-23, we made 10 recommendations about ways to prevent or reduce child deaths and family and domestic violence fatalities.

At the completion of investigations and reviews, the Ombudsman has the power to make recommendations. In 2022-23, for the sixteenth consecutive year, 100% of my recommendations were accepted.

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 the East Pilbara in November 2022 and the West Pilbara in May 2023, as well as a range of other engagement and collaboration initiatives.

In 2022-23, the office of the Ombudsman commenced three critical new functions.

First, we commenced a major new function to monitor, oversee and review investigations into allegations of, and convictions for, child abuse.

The Western Australian Reportable Conduct Scheme (**the Scheme**) makes Western Australian children safer. The Scheme compels heads of organisations that exercise care, supervision or authority over children to notify allegations of, or convictions for, child abuse by their employees to the office of the Ombudsman and then investigate these allegations. We will monitor, oversee and review these investigations.

The Scheme implements key recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and provides that child abuse in organisations will be notified to an impartial and independent body; investigated fully; and dealt with to ensure children are protected from abuse within institutions.

Along with our jurisdictions to investigate child deaths and family and domestic violence fatalities, this is a major human rights function and very much in keeping with a modern Ombudsman institution and the United Nations General Assembly resolution on *The role of the Ombudsman and mediator institutions in the promotion and protection of human rights, good governance and the rule of law*.

Second, we established the Western Australian Charitable Trusts Commission following the proclamation of the *Charitable Trusts Act 2022*. There is a particular

importance to charitable trusts in Western Australia given many are established for the purpose of advancing the interests of Aboriginal Western Australian communities and can amount to tens of millions of dollars arising from settlements and determinations of Native Title claims. This new law is not just welcomed on the basis that it will significantly assist to ensure that monies are spent lawfully for their intended beneficiaries, but also because it will advance the inalienable and fundamental human rights of Aboriginal Western Australians.

Third, the *Liquor Control Act 1988* (**the Liquor Control Act**) was amended to provide for the establishment of Protected Entertainment Precincts and for the exclusion of people from a precinct who behave in an unlawful, anti-social, violent, disorderly, offensive, indecent or threatening way, or are convicted of specified serious offences, which occurred in the precinct. Under the Liquor Control Act, my office must keep under scrutiny the operation of, and the exercise of powers under the relevant provisions of the Liquor Control Act and regulations, and report on our monitoring work and activities. Importantly, the report must, if we identify any group in the community that is particularly affected by the operation of, or the exercise of powers under the provisions of this new law, include a review of the impact of the operation of, and the exercise of powers under, those provisions on that group.

In May 2021, I commenced my four-year term as President of the International Ombudsman Institute (**the IOI**) at the Closing Ceremony of the 12th quadrennial World Conference of the IOI held (virtually) in Dublin. The IOI represents 235 Ombudsman institutions from more than 100 countries. This marks the first time in the 45-year history of the IOI that an Australian 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.

During the year, I have had the extraordinary privilege of working with my deeply valued colleagues on the IOI World Board, fellow Ombudsmen, Public Protectors, and Human Rights Commissioners from all around the world, the IOI Secretary General and IOI Secretariat staff. I have been involved in a range of initiatives to advance the protection and promotion of human rights, good governance and the rule of law, including visiting Ukraine in December 2022. This work is set out in detail in the Annual Report.

As President, I am also deeply committed to advancing the strategic, investment, trade and jobs interests, and cultural relationships, of Western Australia globally, and particularly in the Asia Pacific, a region so vital to Western Australian interests.

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. I consider it the highest honour to serve as an officer of the Parliament and a great privilege to present to Parliament the report of our work in 2022-23.



Chris Field PSM  
**OMBUDSMAN**

## **Year in Brief 2022-23**

- We received 2,362 complaints and 11,680 enquiries.
- We finalised 96% of complaints within 3 months.
- Since 2007, we have:
  - Decreased the age of complaints from 173 days to 37 days; and
  - Reduced the cost of resolving complaints by 47%.
- 100% of our recommendations were accepted for the sixteenth consecutive year.
- In relation to our important function to review child deaths and family domestic violence fatalities, we:
  - Received 56 investigable child deaths;
  - Received 16 reviewable family and domestic violence fatalities; and
  - Made 10 recommendations about ways to prevent or reduce these deaths and fatalities.



- We commenced three critical new functions:
  - The Reportable Conduct Scheme, providing independent oversight, and undertaking investigations, of how organisations that exercise care, supervision or authority over children handle allegations of, and convictions for, child abuse by their employees;
  - As the Western Australian Charitable Trusts Commission, investigating complaints about charitable trusts; and
  - Keeping under scrutiny the operation of the Protected Entertainment Precincts legislation and the exercise of powers by the WA Police Force under that legislation.
- We tabled three major investigation reports in Parliament: *Investigation into family and domestic violence and suicide*, *A report on giving effect to the recommendations arising from the Investigation into the handling of complaints by the Legal Services and Complaints Committee* and *A report on giving effect to the recommendations arising from An investigation into the Office of the Public Advocate's role in notifying the families of Mrs Joyce Savage, Mr Robert Ayling and Mr Kenneth Hartley of the deaths of Mrs Savage, Mr Ayling and Mr Hartley*.
- We enhanced regional awareness and access to the Office, including a visit to Northam, Jigalong, Tom Price and Paraburdoo in the East Pilbara Region, and Karratha, Roebourne and Port Hedland in the West Pilbara Region.

## Operational Structure

### The Role of the Ombudsman

The Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations – more commonly known as the Ombudsman – is an independent and impartial officer of the Western Australian Parliament. The Ombudsman is responsible to the Parliament rather than to the government of the day or a particular Minister. This allows the Ombudsman to be completely independent in undertaking the Ombudsman’s functions.

### Functions of the Ombudsman

The Office has six principal functions derived from its governing legislation, the *Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1971*, and other legislation, codes or service delivery arrangements.

### Principal Functions

<b><u>Investigating and resolving complaints</u></b>	Receiving, investigating and resolving complaints about State Government agencies, local governments and universities.
<b><u>Reviewing certain deaths</u></b>	Reviewing child deaths and family and domestic violence fatalities.
<b><u>Undertaking own motion investigations and promoting improvements to public administration</u></b>	Improving public administration for the benefit of all Western Australians through own motion investigations and education and liaison programs with public authorities.
<b><u>Reportable Conduct Scheme</u></b>	Monitoring, overseeing and reviewing investigations undertaken by organisations into allegations of, and convictions for, abuse of children involving any of the organisation’s employees.
<b><u>Charitable Trusts</u></b>	The Western Australian Charitable Trusts Commission, constituted by the Ombudsman, can receive and investigate complaints about charitable trusts.
<b><u>Other functions</u></b>	Undertaking a range of additional functions, including statutory inspection and monitoring functions.

## Other Functions of the Ombudsman

<u><a href="#">Complaints and appeals by overseas students</a></u>	Under the relevant national code, the Ombudsman can receive complaints or appeals by overseas students.
<u><a href="#">Public Interest Disclosures</a></u>	The Ombudsman can receive disclosures of public interest information relating to matters of administration, and public officers.
<u><a href="#">Complaints from residents of the Indian Ocean Territories</a></u>	Under a service delivery arrangement between the Ombudsman and the Australian Government, the Ombudsman can investigate complaints about public authorities in the Ombudsman's jurisdiction that provide services in the Indian Ocean Territories (Christmas and Cocos (Keeling) Islands).
<u><a href="#">Complaints from persons detained under terrorism legislation</a></u>	Persons detained under relevant terrorism legislation can make a complaint to the Ombudsman.
<u><a href="#">Inspection of Telecommunications Interception records</a></u>	The Ombudsman inspects the records of the Western Australia Police Force ( <b>WA Police Force</b> ) and the Corruption and Crime Commission to ascertain the extent of compliance with relevant telecommunications interception legislation.
<u><a href="#">Scrutiny of police powers in relation to unlawful consorting and prohibited insignia</a></u>	The Ombudsman keeps under scrutiny the exercise of powers by the WA Police Force to ascertain the extent of their compliance with unlawful consorting and prohibited insignia legislation.
<u><a href="#">Scrutiny of powers in relation to Protected Entertainment Precincts</a></u>	The Ombudsman keeps under scrutiny the operation of, and exercise of powers under, the Protected Entertainment Precincts provisions of the relevant liquor control legislation.
<u><a href="#">Energy and Water Ombudsman</a></u>	The Energy and Water Ombudsman Western Australia resolves complaints about electricity, gas and water providers. The Ombudsman undertakes the role of the Energy and Water Ombudsman. The costs of the Energy and Water Ombudsman are met by industry members.

A full list of legislation governing these functions can be found in the Appendices Section in [Appendix 2](#).

## Our Vision, Mission and Values

### Our Vision

Lawful, reasonable, fair and accountable decision making and practices by public authorities.

### Our Mission

To serve Parliament and Western Australians by:

- Receiving, investigating and resolving complaints about State Government agencies, local governments, universities and charitable trusts;
- Reviewing child deaths and family and domestic violence fatalities;
- Overseeing and monitoring that relevant organisations are accountable for, and are, preventing, notifying and dealing with reportable conduct;
- Improving public administration for the benefit of all Western Australians through own motion investigations and education and liaison programs with public authorities; and
- Undertaking a range of additional functions, including statutory inspection and monitoring functions.

### Our Values

- **Fair:** We observe the requirements of our legislation at all times, use a 'no surprises' approach in all of our work and provide our services equitably to all Western Australians.
- **Independent and impartial:** The Ombudsman is an officer of the Parliament, independent of the government of the day and impartial in all of our work.
- **Accountable:** We should be, and are, accountable for our performance and proper expenditure of taxpayers' money. Being accountable means being:
  - **Rigorous:** We undertake work that is important to the community and our decisions are supported by appropriate evidence.
  - **Responsible:** All recommendations for change to public administration are practical and proportionate to the problem identified and have a net public benefit.
  - **Efficient:** We undertake our work in a timely way at least cost. We value working with other agencies that further good public administration but we never duplicate their work.

## Our Strategic Focus

- Complaint resolution that is high quality, independent, fair and timely, with an emphasis on early resolution, practical remedies for members of the public and improvements to public administration.
- Improved public administration through own motion investigations, making practical recommendations for improvement and monitoring their implementation.
- Review of child deaths and family and domestic violence fatalities, identifying patterns and trends and making recommendations to public authorities about ways to prevent or reduce these deaths.
- Protect children from harm by ensuring that organisations are preventing abuse of children involving any of the organisation's employees, and notifying the Ombudsman and taking appropriate action in response to allegations.
- Keep under scrutiny the operation of, and the exercise of powers of relevant agencies under, specific legislation, and inspect the records of the WA Police Force and the Corruption and Crime Commission in relation to telecommunication interceptions to ensure statutory compliance.
- Collaboration with other Ombudsman and accountability agencies, raising community awareness, making our services accessible and promoting good decision making practices and complaint handling in public authorities.
- Strong and effective governance and attracting, developing and retaining a skilled and valued workforce with a culture that supports high quality, responsive and efficient service.

## Management

Management of the Office is undertaken by the Ombudsman and the Office's Corporate Executive which includes each member of the Executive Management Group and the leaders of the teams in the Office.

The role of the Corporate Executive is to:

- Provide leadership to staff and model the Office's values;
- Set and monitor the strategic direction of the Office and monitor and discuss emerging issues of relevance to the work of the Ombudsman;
- Monitor performance, and set priorities and targets for future performance; and
- Ensure compliance with relevant legislation and corporate policies.

For more information, see the [Disclosures and Legal Compliance section](#).

# Executive Management

## Chris Field PSM Ombudsman

Chris Field PSM is the Western Australian Ombudsman. He concurrently holds the roles of Energy and Water Ombudsman, Charitable Trusts Commissioner and Chair, State Records Commission. He is an Adjunct Professor in the School of Law at the University of Western Australia.



Chris was awarded a Public Service Medal in the 2023 Australia Day Honours List for "outstanding public service as Ombudsman and President of the International Ombudsman Institute". Also in 2023, in a formal ceremony in Taipei, he was awarded the highest honour of the Control Yuan, the First Grade Medal. The Medal was granted in honour of "His extraordinary contribution to the promotion of international ombudsman and human rights work". He was the 2022 recipient of the *Justitia Regnorum Fundamentum* Award granted by the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary for "those who have achieved extraordinary, exemplary results in the field of protecting fundamental rights".

Chris is currently Australia's longest serving ombudsman, having been appointed in 2007 at age 39 by a Labor Government, reappointed twice by a Liberal Government and then reappointed by a Labor Government. In May 2021 Chris commenced his four-year term as IOI President at the 12th quadrennial World Conference and General Assembly of the IOI in Dublin. It is the first time in the 45-year history of the IOI that an Australian has been elected President. The IOI is the global organisation for the cooperation of 205 independent Ombudsman institutions from more than 100 countries, organised in six regional chapters - Africa, Asia, Australasian and Pacific, Europe, the Caribbean and Latin America and North America.

He is the author of journal articles on the ombudsman and teaches an advanced administrative law unit at the University of Western Australia. He commenced his career as a lawyer at one of Australia's leading law firms, Arthur Robinson and Hedderwicks (now Allens Linklaters). Chris holds Arts and Law (Honours) degrees from La Trobe University, graduating in 1996.

## Mary White

### Deputy Ombudsman

Mary was appointed to her current role in April 2014 and concurrently holds the role of Deputy Energy and Water Ombudsman. Prior to her appointment, Mary worked in a number of senior executive roles in the Office, from February 2008. Mary has more than 35 years of experience in the public sector, including strategic and corporate leadership roles in line and accountability agencies.



## Rebecca Poole

### Principal Assistant Ombudsman Head of the Office of the Ombudsman and President

Rebecca joined the Office in 2006 and commenced in her current role in April 2022. Prior to this, she was an Assistant Ombudsman from 2018 and a Director from 2010. She has extensive experience managing strategic research, policy and projects and intergovernmental and international engagement on issues of good governance.



## Lynsey Warbey

### Principal Assistant Ombudsman

Lynsey joined the Office in November 2022 and leads the Reportable Conduct, Charitable Trusts, Special Investigations and Legal Services Teams. Lynsey is a senior government lawyer with more than 20 years of experience at the State Solicitor's Office. Her career spans seven Royal Commissions, both in Western Australia and Victoria, and several years as Legal Counsel to the Police Commissioner of WA.





**Morgan Marsh**  
**Senior Assistant Ombudsman**  
**Operations**

Morgan joined the Office in December 2022. She comes to the Office with extensive experience in the management and oversight of corporate services with a focus on governance, risk and compliance. Morgan is responsible for providing leadership for the Office’s strategic planning, policy development, corporate services, communications and executive functions.



**Belinda West**  
**Senior Assistant Ombudsman**  
**Own Motion Investigations and Monitoring**

Belinda joined the Office in 2008 and commenced in her current role in March 2020. Prior to this, Belinda was an Assistant Ombudsman from 2014. She has more than 30 years of experience working in the public sector in financial and performance auditing and leadership roles in both line and accountability agencies.



**Natarlie De Cinque**  
**Senior Assistant Ombudsman**  
**Reviews**

Natarlie joined the Office in 2009 and commenced in her current role in July 2019. Prior to this, Natarlie was an Assistant Ombudsman from 2016. She has worked in the State public sector for over 25 years, and has extensive experience working with the issues of child safety and wellbeing, and family and domestic violence.



## **Marcus Claridge**

### **Assistant Ombudsman**

### **Energy and Water**

Marcus joined the Office in 2011 and commenced in his current role in April 2018. Prior to this, Marcus was Director, Energy and Water Ombudsman and has worked in other investigatory roles. Marcus has over 35 years of regulatory and investigations experience, both within Australia and Asia.



## **Laurence Riley**

### **Assistant Ombudsman**

### **Aboriginal Engagement and Collaboration**

Laurence joined the Office in August 2022 as the Office's first Assistant Ombudsman for Aboriginal engagement and collaboration. Laurence is from the Wilmen, Menang, Kenang and Ballardong Clan groups of the Noongar nation, and Nanda Clan of the Yamatji nation. Laurence has 24 years of experience in government and non-government sectors in the areas of education, health, social and emotional wellbeing, mental health, justice, housing, employment services and corrective services.



## **Christina Anthony**

### **Assistant Ombudsman**

### **Assessment and Resolution**

Christina joined the Office in 2008 and commenced in her current role in July 2022. Prior to this, she worked in a number of roles in complaint resolution and executive services including as a Director from 2015. She has more than 15 years of public sector experience in investigations and complaint handling.



**Alison Cameron**  
**Assistant Ombudsman**  
**Investigations and Resolution**

Alison joined the Office in 2017 and commenced in her current role in December 2022. Prior to this, Alison was a Director, and worked in a number of roles in Complaint Resolution. She was admitted to legal practice in 2009 and has extensive experience working in the public sector, both within Australia and Canada.



**Emma Obst**  
**Assistant Ombudsman**  
**Reportable Conduct**

Emma commenced in her current role as Assistant Ombudsman Reportable Conduct in March 2023. Prior to this, Emma held several senior roles in the Office, including in the Investigations and Legal Services and Own Motion Investigations teams. Emma was admitted to legal practice in 2014 and has significant experience in legal and policy evaluation, law reform and dispute resolution across a range of areas, including public sector governance and accountability, child protection, administrative law, and regulatory investigations.



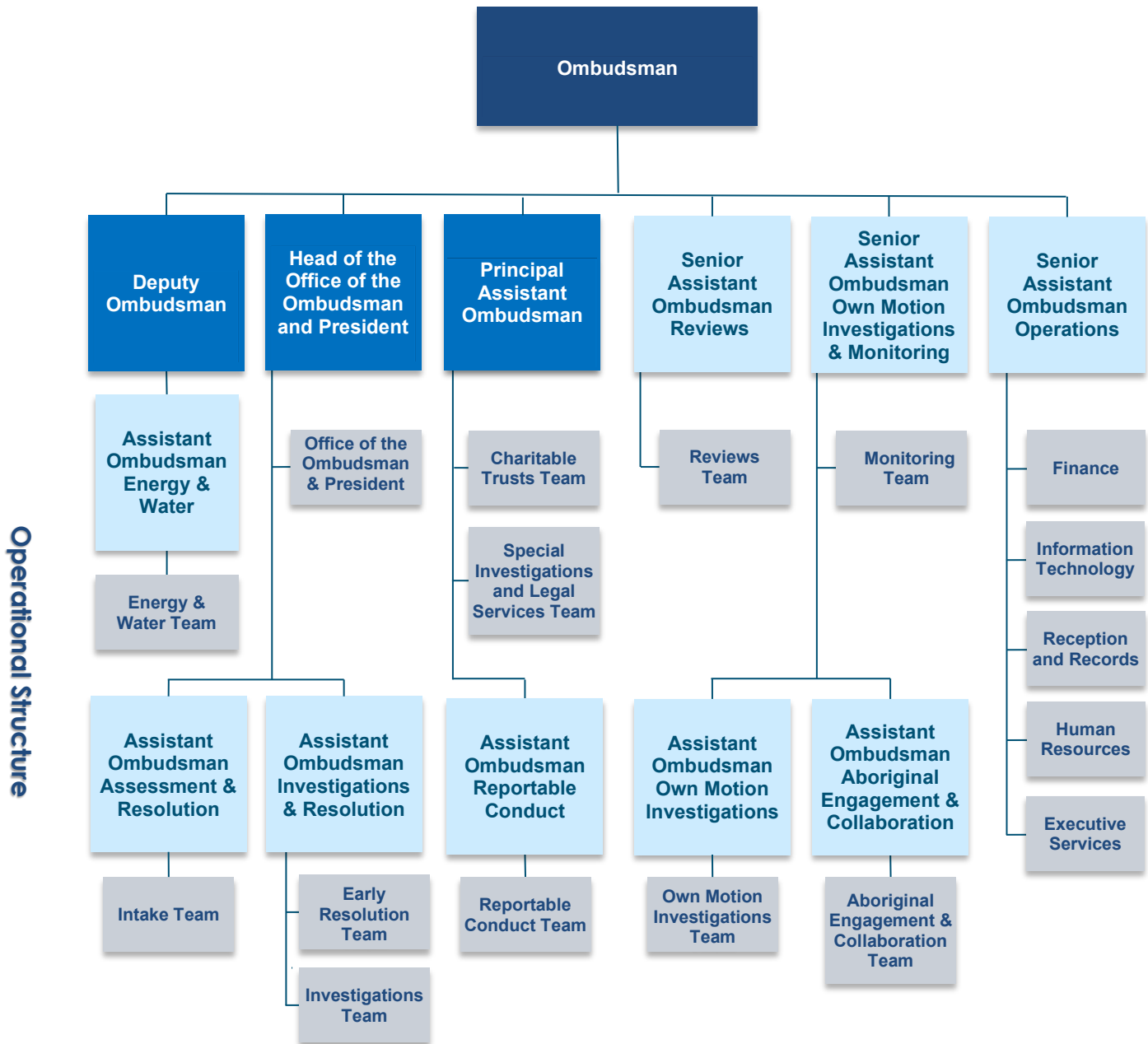
**Kyle Heritage**  
**Assistant Ombudsman**  
**Own Motion Investigations**

Kyle joined the Office in 2016 and commenced in his current role in May 2023. Prior to this, he worked in a number of senior project management, research and international relations roles. He has over 10 years of experience in the public sector in both accountability and central agencies.



# Our Structure and Teams

## Organisational Structure as at 30 June 2023



## Team Responsibilities

- The **Office of the Ombudsman and President** is responsible for national and international relations, executive services to the Ombudsman, corporate communications and strategic research, policy and projects.
- The **Intake Team** has responsibility for handling enquiries, receiving and assessing complaints and undertaking the early resolution of complaints, where appropriate.
- The **Early Resolution Team** undertakes the early resolution of complaints through informal investigations.
- The **Investigations Team** handles the investigation of complaints that are lengthy or complex.
- The **Reviews Team** reviews child deaths and family and domestic violence fatalities, identifies patterns and trends arising from these reviews and makes recommendations to relevant public authorities to prevent or reduce these deaths.
- The **Own Motion Investigations Team** undertakes own motion investigations and other strategies aimed at improving public administration.
- The **Monitoring Team** undertakes the inspecting, monitoring, and reporting functions as outlined in specific legislation. This includes:
  - the inspection of records relating to telecommunication interceptions;
  - monitoring the exercise of police powers as outlined in legislation relating to unlawful consorting notices, prohibited insignia, and consorting contrary to dispersal notices; and
  - keeping under scrutiny the operation of, and the exercise of powers as required by legislation relating to protected entertainment precincts.
- The **Aboriginal Engagement and Collaboration Team** provides expert advice and support to each of the Ombudsman's functions including continuing to promote high levels of awareness and accessibility for Aboriginal Western Australians to the Office.
- The **Operations Teams** are responsible for Finance, Information Technology, Records and Reception, Human Resources and Executive Services. These teams support the Office in providing governance, business services, ensuring integrity and compliance of corporate services and are responsible for community outreach and engagement programs and publications.
- The **Reportable Conduct Team** monitors, oversees and reviews investigations undertaken by organisations into allegations of, and convictions for, abuse of children involving any of the organisation's employees, and provides education and advice to organisations about identifying and preventing reportable conduct.
- The **Charitable Trusts Team** receives complaints about charitable trusts and undertakes investigations as required.
- The **Special Investigations and Legal Services Team** handles the investigation of more complex allegations and complaints and provides legal services across the Office.
- The **Energy and Water Ombudsman Team** has responsibility for handling enquiries and receiving, investigating and resolving complaints about electricity, gas and water services providers.

## Performance Management Framework

The Ombudsman's performance management framework is consistent with the Government goal of *Safe, Strong and Fair Communities: Supporting our local and regional communities to thrive*.

### Desired Outcomes of the Ombudsman's Office

The public sector of Western Australia is accountable for, and is improving the standard of administrative decision making and practices, and relevant entities are accountable for, and are, preventing, notifying and dealing with reportable conduct.

### Key Effectiveness Indicators

- Where the Ombudsman made recommendations to improve practices or procedures, the percentage of recommendations accepted by agencies.
- Number of improvements to practices or procedures as a result of Ombudsman action.
- Where the Ombudsman made recommendations regarding reportable conduct, the percentage of recommendations accepted by relevant entities.
- Number of actions taken by relevant entities to prevent reportable conduct.

### Service Provided by the Ombudsman's Office

Resolving complaints about the decision making of public authorities, improving the standard of public administration, and to oversee and monitor that relevant entities are accountable for, and are, preventing, notifying and dealing with Reportable Conduct.

### Key Efficiency Indicators

- Percentage of allegations finalised within three months.
- Percentage of allegations finalised within 12 months.
- Percentage of allegations on hand at 30 June less than three months old.
- Percentage of allegations on hand at 30 June less than 12 months old.
- Average cost per finalised allegation.
- Average cost per finalised notification of death.
- Average cost per notification of reportable conduct.
- Cost of monitoring and inspection functions.