

Deputy Ombudsman's Overview

The Ombudsman's primary role is to investigate and resolve complaints. In 2023-24, we received 14,516 contacts from Western Australians, comprising 12,079 enquiries and 2,437 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 on 30 June 2024 was 41 days. The average cost of resolving complaints in 2023-24 was \$1,314.

The Ombudsman also reviews certain child deaths and family and domestic violence fatalities.

At the completion of investigations and reviews, the Ombudsman has the power to make recommendations. In 2023-24, we made eight recommendations about ways to prevent or reduce child deaths and family and domestic violence fatalities. This year, all our recommendations were accepted.

2023-24 was the first full year of the Reportable Conduct Scheme (**the Scheme**). The Scheme aims to make Western Australian children safer. The Scheme requires 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 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 and dealt with to ensure children are protected from abuse within institutions.

We also continued work on two other relatively new functions; scrutinising the exercise of powers under the Protected Entertainment Precincts provisions of the *Liquor Control Act 1988* and, as the Western Australian Charitable Trusts Commission, receiving and investigating complaints about charitable trusts.



The Ombudsman serves all Western Australians. To increase awareness of, and accessibility to, our services by those living in the regions, we visited the Gascoyne region in August 2023, the Esperance region in December 2023 and the Mid West region in May 2024. The office also conducted a range of other engagement and collaboration initiatives in the metropolitan area and as part of the regional outreach program. Members of the Ombudsman's Aboriginal Engagement and Collaboration team played an important role in this work ensuring that the office was accessible to Aboriginal people in the areas we visited.

I would like to thank all staff for their professionalism and commitment to the work of the office over the last 12 months. This annual report shows only a small part of the hard work they do every day in the service of all Western Australians.



David Robinson
DEPUTY OMBUDSMAN