

## Ombudsman's Foreword

It gives me great pleasure to present my third annual report as Western Australian Ombudsman. The twelve month period documented in this annual report has been the most significant period of activity in my time of office. In last year's annual report I indicated that, despite very significant improvements in our performance in recent years, there was still:

much work to be achieved in reducing the time taken to resolve complaints, eliminating aged complaints, reducing the cost per complaint investigation, increasing our accessibility and awareness, particularly to regional and indigenous Western Australians, and enhancing our contribution to administrative improvements and accountability.



This year, I am very pleased to report substantial progress in each of these areas. A range of new complaint handling processes has improved the timeliness and quality of our investigations, resulting in a 61 per cent reduction in the average time to finalise complaints this year. Indeed, over the last three years the average time to resolve complaints has reduced from 271 days to 72 days and we have now nearly eliminated aged complaints with only 6 cases older than twelve months, down from 97 cases three years ago. In doing so, we have exceeded every Key Efficiency Indicator forecast for the year and at a lower cost per finalised complaint.

The creation of our Administrative Improvement Team, and the development of systems to improve our identification of themes that may require further investigation, has led to two major projects - the first examining management of personal information by public authorities and the second looking at complaints management by public authorities.

This year we commenced a major new initiative – the Ombudsman Regional Awareness and Accessibility Program. As part of the program we visited the Goldfields and Mid West regions and undertook complaints clinics for the public as well as workshops for public authorities, community groups and Indigenous Western Australians.

We also established an important new jurisdiction reviewing child deaths. The Child Death Review Team will be responsible for reviewing certain child deaths and, where appropriate, recommending improvements to the way that public authorities operate to help prevent deaths of children.

Our successful work this year is the result of the combined achievements of a very dedicated, professional team. I take this opportunity to thank each of them for their contribution.

Western Australian citizens have a right to expect us to act independently to deliver fair, timely and effective resolution of complaints, achieve improvements to the standard of public administration over time and contribute to government services hallmarked by integrity, accountability and responsiveness. This year I am very pleased to say that we have delivered in each of these areas more effectively and efficiently than last year.

A stylized, handwritten signature of Chris Field in black ink.

**Chris Field**  
Western Australian Ombudsman