



## Our Office

This section provides an overview of the Ombudsman's office and a discussion of the significant issues impacting on the office during the past year and into the future.

- The Role of the Ombudsman
- Performance Management Framework
- Operational Structure
- Strategic Focus

### The Role of the Ombudsman

The Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations – more commonly known as the Ombudsman – is an independent 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 the investigation and resolution of complaints about public authorities (State Government agencies, statutory authorities and boards, local governments and universities).

### Functions of the Ombudsman

The Ombudsman's office has three principal functions under its governing legislation, the [\*Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1971\*](#) and a range of other functions derived from other legislation, codes or service delivery arrangements.

#### Principal Functions

<a href="#"><u>Resolving complaints</u></a>	Receiving, investigating and resolving complaints about the decision making and administrative practices of public authorities.
<a href="#"><u>Reviewing child deaths</u></a>	Reviewing and investigating the deaths of certain Western Australian children.
<a href="#"><u>Recommending and promoting administrative improvements</u></a>	Improving public administration for the benefit of all Western Australians through own motion investigations, and education and liaison programs with public authorities.
<a href="#"><u>Other functions</u></a>	Undertaking a broad range of integrity and oversight functions as detailed under 'Other Functions of the Ombudsman'.

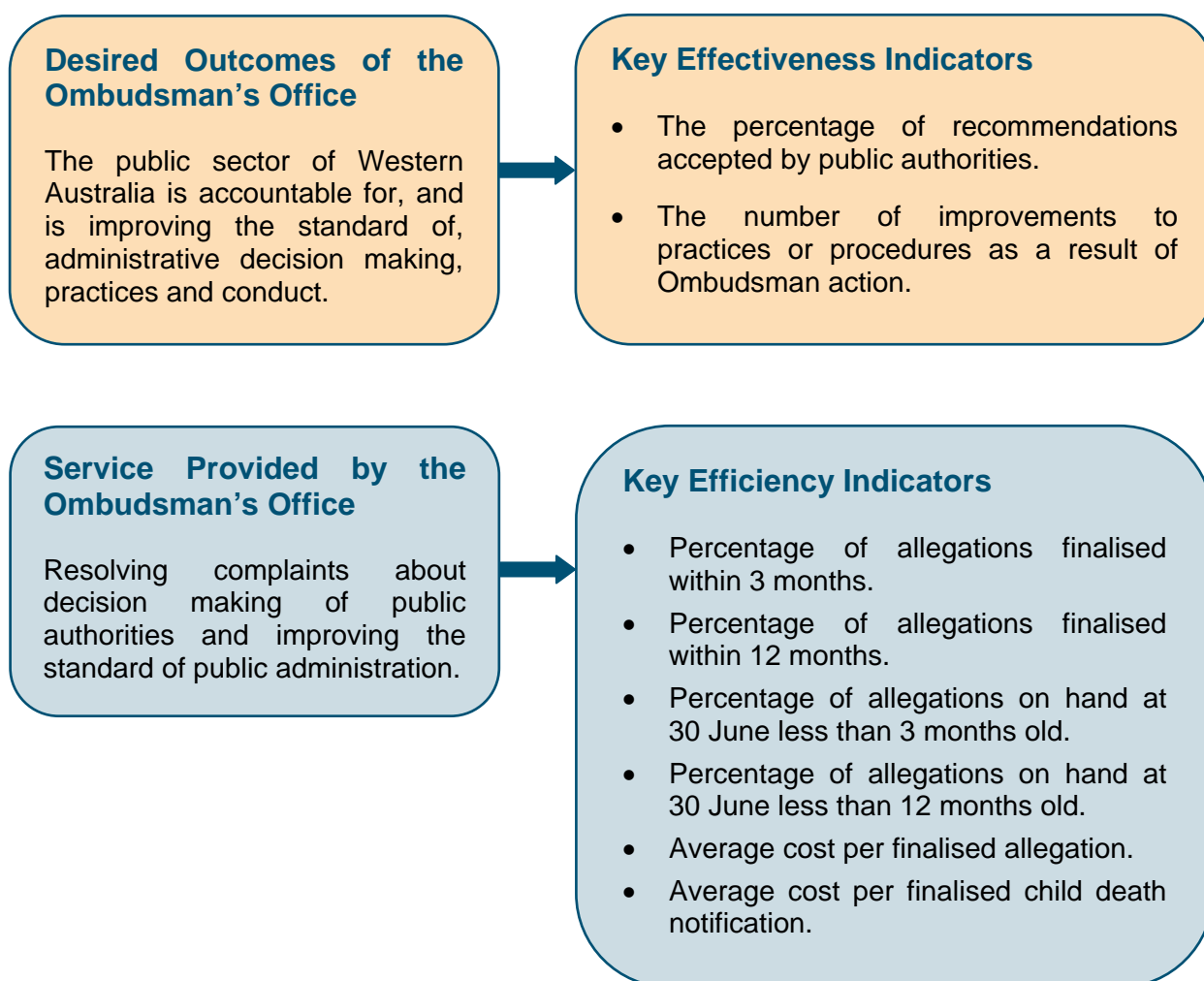
### Other Functions of the Ombudsman

<a href="#"><u>Telecommunications Interception</u></a>	The Ombudsman inspects the records of the Western Australia Police and the Corruption and Crime Commission to ensure compliance with telecommunications interception legislation.
<a href="#"><u>Reviewing appeals by overseas students</u></a>	The <a href="#"><u>National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2007</u></a> gives overseas students a right to make a complaint to an external, independent body, such as the Ombudsman, if their internal appeals are unsuccessful at school, college or university level.
<a href="#"><u>Public Interest Disclosures</u></a>	The Ombudsman receives public interest disclosures about matters of State and local government administration that affect an individual.
<a href="#"><u>Indian Ocean Territories</u></a>	Under a service delivery arrangement between the Ombudsman and the Commonwealth Government, the Ombudsman handles complaints from residents of the Indian Ocean Territories (Christmas and Cocos (Keeling) Islands) about public authorities in the Ombudsman's jurisdiction.
<a href="#"><u>Terrorism</u></a>	The Ombudsman can receive complaints from a person detained under the <a href="#"><u>Terrorism (Preventative Detention) Act 2006</u></a> about administrative matters connected with his or her detention.
<a href="#"><u>Energy Ombudsman</u></a>	The Energy Ombudsman Western Australia was formed in 2005 and deals with complaints about electricity and gas. The Ombudsman undertakes the role of the Energy Ombudsman. The costs of the Energy Ombudsman are met by industry members.

A full list of legislation governing these functions can be found in [Appendix 2](#). See more in the [Report on Operations](#) section about these functions.

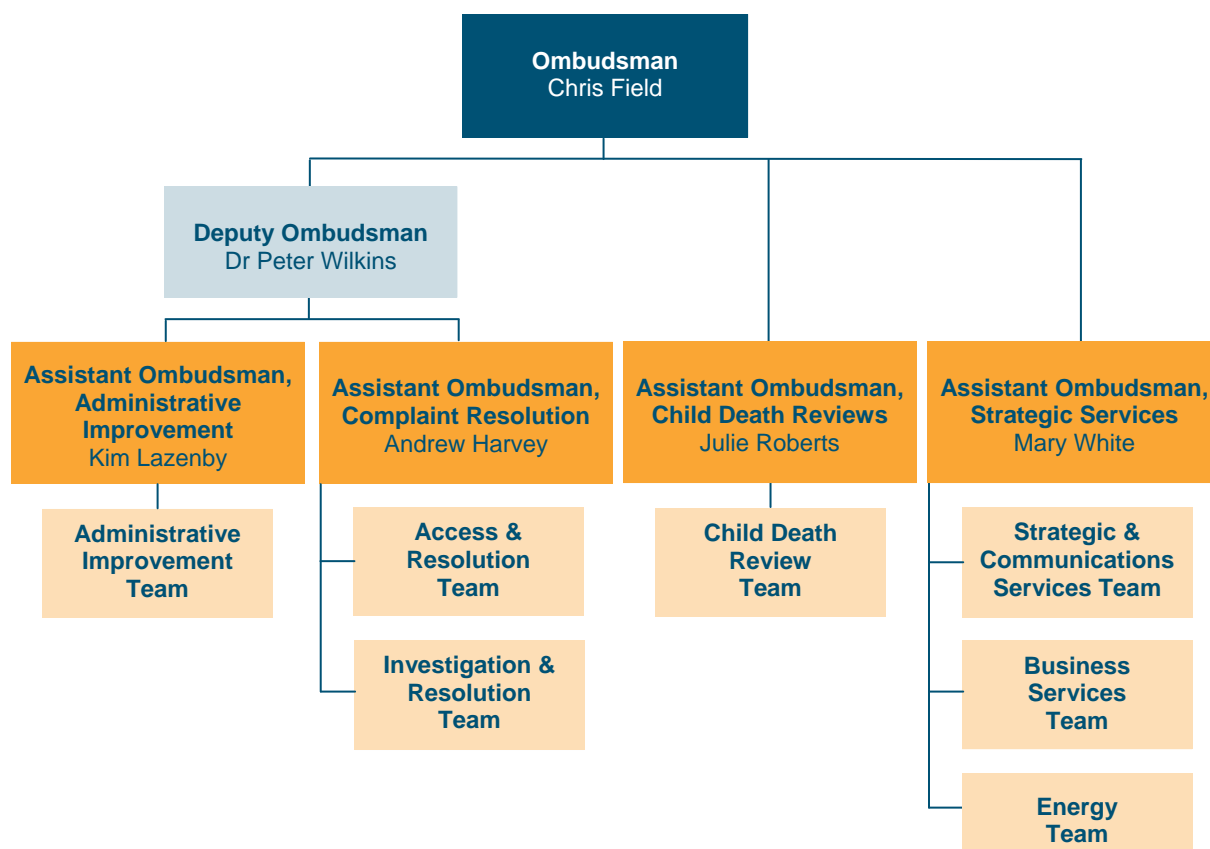
## Performance Management Framework

The Ombudsman's performance management framework is broadly consistent with the government goal of *Results-Based Service Delivery: Greater focus on achieving results in key service delivery areas for the benefit of all Western Australians*.



### Operational Structure

Organisational Structure as at 30 June 2011



- The **Administrative Improvement Team** has responsibility for programs and strategies aimed at improving administrative practices in public authorities.
- The **Complaint Resolution Team** has responsibility for handling enquiries and receiving, investigating and resolving complaints.
- The **Child Death Review Team** has responsibility for reviewing certain child deaths, identifying patterns and trends arising from these reviews and seeking to improve the administration of the responsibilities of the Department for Child Protection and other relevant government agencies to prevent or reduce child deaths.
- The **Strategic Services Team** has responsibility for supporting the office in strengthening its strategic focus, corporate communications and governance. The team encompasses Strategic and Communications Services and Business Services.
- The **Energy Team** has responsibility for handling enquiries and receiving, investigating and resolving complaints about energy providers.

### Executive Management Team

The Corporate Executive is made up of six members whose role 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.

The Corporate Executive provides leadership to the office and ensures strong corporate governance. See more in the [Disclosures and Legal Compliance](#) section.

Chris has held the position of Ombudsman since March 2007. He concurrently holds the roles of Energy Ombudsman and State Records Commissioner. Prior to his appointment as Ombudsman, Chris held a number of senior roles in Western Australia and Victoria in the public and private sectors.



Chris Field, Ombudsman



Peter commenced as Deputy Ombudsman in February 2009 and has more than 25 years experience in management roles in the Western Australian public sector. Peter has extensive public sector knowledge and expertise in the operation of independent accountability agencies.

Peter Wilkins, Deputy Ombudsman

## Our Office – Operational Structure

Mary became an Assistant Ombudsman in February 2008. Before this, she was the Executive Director Strategic and Corporate Services. Mary has 25 years experience in the public sector, including strategic and corporate leadership roles in line and accountability agencies.



**Mary White, Assistant Ombudsman Strategic Services**



Kim commenced in the position of Assistant Ombudsman in June 2008. She has 20 years experience in government roles, working at the Commonwealth and State levels, in both line and central agencies and has a strong background in evaluation.

**Kim Lazenby, Assistant Ombudsman Administrative Improvement**

Andrew joined the office in 2005 and was appointed to his current role in September 2008. Andrew has worked in management roles for a range of Commonwealth and State authorities in areas such as statistics, licensing and auditing.



**Andrew Harvey, Assistant Ombudsman Complaint Resolution**



Julie joined the office in 2005 and commenced in her current role in June 2009. Julie has more than 25 years experience in the Commonwealth and State public sectors and the non-government community services sector.

**Julie Roberts, Assistant Ombudsman Child Death Reviews**

## Strategic Focus

- Complaint resolution that is independent, fair and timely, raising community awareness of our role and increasing access to our services.
- Improved public administration through investigation of concerns that affect the broader community, recommending improvements and promoting good practice.
- Review and investigation of certain child deaths and recommendations to the Department for Child Protection and other public authorities.
- Inspection of the records of telecommunications interception activities and review of appeals by overseas students.
- Good governance and maintaining a skilled and valued workforce.