

# Glossary and acronyms

## Glossary

### **Administrative error**

Decisions and administrative actions of public agencies that are unlawful, unreasonable, unjust, oppressive, improperly discriminatory or wrong. May also be referred to as 'maladministration'.

### **Client**

A person who contacts the Ombudsman seeking service.

### **Complainant**

A person who brings a complaint to the Ombudsman.

### **Complaint**

An expression of dissatisfaction about an agency within jurisdiction. Complaints may comprise multiple issues in relation to an agency's administrative action or decision.

### **Complaint finalised**

A complaint that is closed by the Ombudsman after assessment, advice and/or investigation.

### **Complaints management system (CMS)**

A system for dealing with complaints.

### **Complaint received**

A complaint received during the financial year.

### **Contact**

Any contact with the Ombudsman through the Registration and Preliminary Assessment Team irrespective of whether the matter is within or outside jurisdiction.

### **Corporate governance**

The system by which an organisation is controlled and operates, and the mechanisms by which it is held to account. Ethics, risk management, compliance and administration are all elements of corporate governance.

### **Direct referral**

The referral of a premature complaint to the relevant agency for its consideration (with the complainant's permission).

### **Enquiry**

Contact where the person seeks information or assistance but does not make a specific complaint.

### **Human rights complaint**

Complaints about human rights breaches relating to acts and decisions made by Queensland public entities, as outlined in the *Human Rights Act 2019*.

### **Internal review**

Review of a decision undertaken by the agency that made the initial decision.

### **Internal review request**

If a complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of an assessment or investigation by the Ombudsman, they can ask that the decision be reviewed. Decisions are reviewed by another officer within the Office, who is more senior than the original decision-maker.

### **Investigation**

The Ombudsman may decide to examine the administrative actions or decisions of an agency based on a complaint or on the Ombudsman's own initiative. Investigations may be conducted informally or by exercising formal powers under the Ombudsman Act.

### **Maladministration**

Decisions and administrative actions of public agencies that are unlawful, unreasonable, unjust, oppressive, improperly discriminatory or wrong. May also be referred to as 'administrative error'.

### **Major investigation**

An investigation where significant time and resources are expended on investigating systemic administrative errors, the results of which are tabled in Parliament.

### **Out of jurisdiction (OOJ)**

A matter the Ombudsman does not have the power to investigate.

### **Own initiative investigation**

Where the Ombudsman decides to undertake an investigation into certain issues without receiving a complaint.

### **Preliminary assessment**

An analysis of a complaint by the Ombudsman to determine how it should be managed.

**Premature complaint**

A complaint that is determined to be too early for the Ombudsman's consideration because the complainant has not used the agency's full complaints management system.

**Prisoner PhoneLink**

A free telephone service, provided with the assistance of Queensland Corrective Services, that allows prisoners direct and confidential access to the Ombudsman at set times.

**Public administration**

The administrative practices of Queensland public sector agencies.

**Public agency**

A government department, statutory authority, council or public university that falls within the jurisdiction of the Ombudsman.

**Public interest disclosure (PID)**

A confidential disclosure of wrongdoing within the public sector that meets the criteria set out in the PID Act.

**Public report**

A report issued by the Ombudsman under part 6 division 2 of the Ombudsman Act. A report may be tabled in Parliament (s 52) or publicly released with the Speaker's authority (s 54).

**Public sector agencies**

A term covering state departments (including statutory authorities), local councils and public universities.

**Recommendation**

Advice provided by the Ombudsman to an agency to improve administrative practices. The Ombudsman cannot direct agencies to implement recommendations but they rarely refuse to do so. If agencies do refuse, the Ombudsman can require them to provide reasons and report to the relevant Minister, the Premier or Parliament if not satisfied with the reasons.

Recommendations may be made formally under s 50 of the Ombudsman Act or be an agreed action by the agency. Recommendations may be considered to be of direct benefit to a complainant (such as an apology or refund), or they may be about systemic improvements (such as improvement to policy).

**Rectification**

An outcome of an investigation where the Ombudsman finds an administrative error and/or negotiates a resolution with the agency as a result of the complaint (can be total or partial resolution).

**Regional**

This Office defines regional Queensland as the local council areas excluding the following: Noosa, Sunshine Coast, Moreton Bay, Brisbane, Redland, Logan, Gold Coast and Ipswich.

**Review**

The Ombudsman may conduct a review of the administrative practices and procedures of an agency and make recommendations for improvements.

**State agencies**

A term covering both state departments and statutory authorities.

**Systemic issue**

An error in an agency's administrative process that may impact on a number of people.

## Acronyms

<b>CMS</b>	Complaints management system
<b>FTE</b>	Full-time equivalent employees
<b>GOC</b>	Government owned corporation
<b>HR Act</b>	<i>Human Rights Act 2019</i>
<b>MP</b>	Member of Parliament
<b>NRS</b>	National Relay Service
<b>OOJ</b>	Out of jurisdiction
<b>PIDs</b>	Public interest disclosures
<b>PID Act</b>	<i>Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010</i>
<b>QHRC</b>	Queensland Human Rights Commission