

Media release

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Complaints on the rise for Queensland Ombudsman

The Queensland Ombudsman's annual report shows an 11% increase in complaints received by the Office. The 2014-15 annual report was recently tabled in Parliament.

Queensland Ombudsman Phil Clarke said his Office received 6,980 complaints and completed 1,119 investigations in 2014-15.

"This Office provides an essential service to help Queenslanders achieve fairness when dealing with state government, local councils and public universities," Mr Clarke said.

"It is also important we help public sector agencies to make better decisions, improve services and enhance complaint management processes so matters are resolved quickly and fairly."

Of the investigations completed, 247 (or 22%) resulted in the total or partial rectification of an issue, an increase of 58 per cent on 2013-14.

State government departments continue to be the main source of complaints.

Significant increases were seen in the State Penalties Enforcement Registry (Department of Treasury and Trade) as complaints doubled, a 26% increase in complaints about the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services, and Queensland Corrective Services (Department of Justice and Attorney-General) with a 25% increase.

Complaints about public universities increased by 12 per cent in 2014-15, and included issues about courses, exclusions, and enrolments.

Local council complaints decreased by 2 per cent.

The Office of the Queensland Ombudsman also celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2014-15 and has finalised over 150,000 complaints during this time.

[ends]

The [2014-15 annual report](#) is available to download. The following page includes case studies and statistics.

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Case studies

- **Employee compensated for incorrect advice** – Compensation was paid after a department incorrectly advised an employee her redundancy payment was tax-free (see page 34).
- **Deceased was required to sign form** – A complainant was able to have his deceased wife's name removed from his vehicle registration details after the department sent a form which required all parties to sign it, including his deceased wife. The complainant had already provided the department with the death certificate (see page 36).
- **Ratepayer receives \$480 credit** – A ratepayer was credited \$480 after a local council failed to contact her by all reasonable means (including telephone) to recover unpaid rates (see page 38).
- **Cancellation fee deemed unfair** – A university student was refunded her tuition fees after it was found the university was unreasonable in strictly applying its policy to retain 50% of the tuition fees, after she had to withdraw due to her son's illness (see page 42).

Statistics

Dealing with complaints

- Received 12,982 contacts
- Finalised 6,962 complaints
- Finalised 69% of complaints within 10 days; 93% in 30 days

Rectifying unfair decisions

- Conducted 1,119 investigations
- Made 301 recommendations to agencies
- Released a major report into the practices of strip searching female prisoners taking a certain class of medication

Improving decision-making

- Delivered 154 training sessions to 2,655 public sector officers on complaints management, good decision-making and ethical standards
- Conducted 17 reviews of state government and local council complaints management systems
- Received 89 requests for administrative improvement advice