



QUEENSLAND
OMBUDSMAN
Standing for fairness

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Media release - Ombudsman releases 2015-16 Annual Report

Better ways to help Queenslanders to get action on their complaints

5 October 2016

The Office of the Queensland Ombudsman's recently released [annual report](#) shows how the Office has improved the way it helps thousands of Queenslanders to get action on their complaints.

Phil Clarke, Queensland Ombudsman, reported that the Office had significantly improved two areas of service in 2015-16: a new automated phone referral service and a significant increase in the number of complaints referred directly to the right agency for action.

"Everyone has the right to speak-up about public sector decisions that they think are wrong or unfair but sometimes finding the right place to complain can be a challenge," Mr Clarke said.

The Queensland Ombudsman deals with complaints about the actions and decisions of state government departments and agencies, local councils and publicly-funded universities. In 2015-16, the Office finalised 6,919 complaints and conducted more than 1,000 investigations.

The Office's new telephone message and service provides callers with an option to transfer directly to one of six other major complaints agencies, without additional cost.

"For example, a caller to this Office looking for help on superannuation can use our new service to connect directly the Financial Ombudsman, the right place for this kind of complaint," Mr Clark said.

More than 5,000 callers used this service in eight months to 30 June 2016.

"We have also significantly increased the number of complaints we directly refer to public sector agencies' complaints management systems," Mr Clark said.

Of the 6,919 complaints received by the Ombudsman, 60% had not been fully considered by the agency involved.

Mr Clarke said it was an important first step in complaint-making to go directly to the organisation responsible for making the original decision.

"If the matter is not resolved, the second step is to ask the agency to do an internal review; and if you remain unhappy at that point you can contact this Office to ask for an external and independent review," he said.

"Last year, we provided advice in 2,902 cases about how to make a complaint to the agency involved; and in another 1,279 cases, with the consent of the complainants, we directly referred their complaints to

agencies for action – a 72% increase in the number of direct referrals compared with the previous year.”

“Navigating the full complaint system can be a complex process and our advice and referral service is another way we can add value and get better results for all Queenslanders.”

“In 2016-17, this Office will continue to provide advice and investigation services to help Queenslanders achieve fairness when dealing with state government, local councils and public universities,” Mr Clarke said.

[ENDS]

Media contact: [Communications Officer](#) on 1800 068 908.