



30th June 2017

To: All Media

Ombudsman for Bermuda Submits Her Annual Report for 2016

Hamilton, Bermuda: Victoria Pearman, Ombudsman for Bermuda, submitted her Annual Report for the calendar year 2016 to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Assembly in accordance with her statutory duty under the Ombudsman Act 2004. The Ombudsman's Annual Report for 2016 reports on the work of the Office from 1st January to 31st December 2016.

In keeping with the Ombudsman's responsibility to report to Parliament, the Report will be released to the public after it has been tabled following the reconvening of Parliament. This will afford members of both the House and the Senate the opportunity to receive her Report.

In 2016 the Office of the Ombudsman received 285 requests for assistance. This included 157 new complaints. It also received and dealt with a total of 128 enquiries in 2016. Enquiries are instances when people contacted the Office to seek information without making a complaint. Most enquiries were addressed immediately, but sometimes more time was needed to provide the person with guidance. In addition to the 285 cases received in 2016 the Office continued to address 70 complaints that remained open on 1st January 2016. The complexity of some complaints meant more time was required to resolve them. In total, the Office worked to address 355 complaints in 2016.

There were no systemic investigations launched in 2016. The Office concentrated on individual complaints. Among its other responsibilities, the Office's main priorities were to address outstanding complaints and improve complaint turn-around times.

The Annual Report 2016 focused on how the Ombudsman's Office can serve as a bridge in our community. The Ombudsman noted, "The work of this Office includes bridging differences and disconnections between members of the public and the authorities whose job it is to serve them. Ombudsmen focus on protecting people from unfair actions and bad administrative decisions. When complainants bring matters to our attention, where necessary our Office adds volume to their voices to ensure they are heard and appropriate attention is given to them. Ombudsmen connect the parties and seek to build understanding and promote fairness."

After the Report has been tabled in the House of Assembly a press release will be issued including highlights from the Report and informing the public it is available to them. The public will be able to download the Report from www.ombudsman.bm, along with all previous reports published by the Office. Limited copies of the Report will be available for the public at the

Suite 102 • 14 Dundonald Street West • Hamilton HM 09 • Bermuda
TEL 441-296-6541 • FAX 441-296-7734 • www.ombudsman.bm • complaint@ombudsman.bm

Office of the Ombudsman located at: Dundonald Place, Suite 102, 14 Dundonald Street West, Hamilton HM 09.

###

Editor's Notes:

- The Ombudsman is an independent, non-government official who investigates complaints from the public about maladministration in the delivery of public services.
- The Ombudsman Act 2004 is the governing legislation.
- Section 24 of the Ombudsman Act 2004 requires that, within six months of the end of the year, the Ombudsman shall submit an Annual Report to the Speaker of the House of Assembly, with a copy to the Governor and the President of the Senate.
- Sections 15-17 of the Ombudsman Act 2004 lay out the process by which the Ombudsman may make recommendations further to an investigation to which the authority is required to respond. Pursuant to section 24 and 17, the Ombudsman may submit a special report to Parliament outlining an authority's: (1) failure to notify the Ombudsman of action proposed to be taken; (2) failure to take any action; (3) action that in the Ombudsman's opinion has been inadequate or inappropriate.
- For more information, contact the Office of the Ombudsman for Bermuda at 296-6541.