

Victorian Ombudsman reports on progress of recommendations to government

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The recommendations made by Victorian Ombudsman Deborah Glass in her first two years in office blended strong calls for a fairer and more effective public service with practicality in achieving positive outcomes for Victorians.

Tabling the *Report on recommendations*, Ms Glass said that those made in the course of her investigations were aimed at improving public administration for all Victorians.

All 61 recommendations made in the eleven reports have been accepted, although some are yet to be implemented.

“I cannot enforce my recommendations, and rightly so; I am not responsible for government policy or how the state apportions its budget. But the very high take-up rate of recommendations is testament to the persuasive powers of the Ombudsman. It also clearly demonstrates that my reports are a means to an end, not an end in themselves.

“The recommendations are evidence-based and capable of being implemented – a matter on which I set great store.

“It is pleasing that all recommendations have been accepted, and that those which are more easily implemented have been, or are in process. I congratulate the government and heads of agencies on the positive response I have seen in the vast majority of cases,” said Ms Glass.

Ms Glass identified the \$4.33 million paid to former residents of aged care facility Mentone Gardens and a change in the law to allow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to retain the proceeds of artwork created in prison to assist their rehabilitation as examples of recommendations that have had a direct and positive impact on individuals.

“Most recommendations are remedial – their intention is either to remedy an injustice or to improve public administration. It is a truly gratifying aspect of my

role when their implementation makes a real and immediate difference to people's lives," said Ms Glass.

Some recommendations, while accepted in principle, require political will to achieve real long-term change, and Ms Glass said she would continue to monitor these.

"The public debate that followed the release of my report into rehabilitation in prisons highlighted what many in the criminal justice community have been saying for years: that prisons do not always make us safer, that we need to focus on the causes of crime rather than its consequences. The onus is now on the government to take a long-term view on reducing reoffending.

"Similarly, reform of political donations is not a subject generally embraced by governments, and a bi-partisan approach acknowledging the public interest in this area will be key to achieving change. I will continue to follow up and report on these issues," said Ms Glass.

"These reports are important as investigations of issues that matter to our community, and as an expression of the standards we expect of our public sector. The recommendations hold government to a high bar - no less than the people of Victoria deserve," said Ms Glass.

[Report on recommendations](#)

Ms Glass is available for interview.

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