



Managing enquiries about complaints (by people other than the complainant)

Introduction

From time to time, enquiries are received from Members of Parliament, staff from offices of Members of Parliament, the media or staff in Government agencies. These may be:

- Enquiries about complaints being managed or previously managed by the Ombudsman where it is clear that the person making the enquiry has not been authorised by the complainant to represent them in their complaint to the Ombudsman;
- Enquiries to establish if the Ombudsman has received a complaint from a particular individual;
- Enquiries about processes used by the Ombudsman;
- Enquiries seeking statistics or information about trends in complaints;
- Enquiries seeking additional information on matters contained on the Ombudsman's website or in its Annual Report.

Guidelines

The following information is provided to assist the person receiving the enquiry.

Enquiries relating to a specific complaint or complaints other than from the complainant

- Thank them for their call;
- Ask the individual for their name and details of their role, title and the agency or body they are calling from, and ask them for a timeframe for a response. If it seems appropriate, ask them why they want the information;
- Inform the individual that consideration will be given to their enquiry;
- Inform the individual that due to the strict secrecy provisions (confidentiality requirements) set out under the *Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1971 (PC Act)*, (section 23) they are not able to confirm or deny that a complaint has been received;
- Inform the individual that if they would like more information about the role of the Ombudsman WA, they might wish to look on the Ombudsman's website;
- End the call/hang up;
- The staff member should then document the information received and notify their supervisor immediately who will consult with the Assistant Ombudsman Complaint Resolution (**AOCR**) and the Deputy Ombudsman (**DO**); and

- The staff member may be asked to contact the individual again with additional information should it be decided that information may be disclosed because it is in the public interest to do so (section 23(1b) of the PC Act), noting that the disclosure must be approved in accordance with the Ombudsman's statutory delegations.

Enquiries relating to a request for information about Ombudsman processes, statistics, the website or the Annual Report:

- Thank them for their call;
- Ask the individual for their name, details of their role, title and the agency or body they are calling from, and ask them for a timeframe for a response. If it seems appropriate, ask them why they want the information; and
- Refer to the Communications Manager (Erin ext 567) or Principal Projects and Precedents officer (Lauren ext 508).

Media Enquiries

Any enquiries from the media will be managed in accordance with the Ombudsman's Guidelines for dealing with media enquiries.

- Explain that you are going to transfer the call to the Communications Manager; Transfer the call to the Communications Manager (Erin, extension 567) or if they are unavailable forward to the Executive officer (Nicola, extension 579).

(They will advise the caller to email the request to media@ombudsman.wa.gov.au)