

Communiqué of the APOR conference and 35th Members' meeting 1 November 2023

The Australasian Pacific Ombudsman Region (APOR) held a conference on 31 October and its 35th annual Members' meeting on 1 November 2023 in Melbourne, Australia.

The conference, themed *Through The Ombudsman Looking Glass: Now And Into The Future* was hosted by Victorian Ombudsman Deborah Glass OBE as Regional President.

Among other topics the conference explored the role of an Ombudsman in a crisis, noting the Ombudsman has a vital role to play in ensuring balance – understanding that governments may need to act decisively and swiftly, but must always be proportionate and responsible and have due consideration to maintaining human rights.

It coincided with celebrations to mark the 50th anniversary of the Ombudsman in Victoria. APOR members noted the significant contribution of the Victorian Ombudsman to the Victorian community over this period and commended their demonstrated integrity and independence.

APOR Members reflected on and reaffirmed their commitment to the Principles on the Protection and Promotion of the Ombudsman Institution adopted by the Venice Commission on 15 March 2019, and the Resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 16 December 2020, in particular noting:

- The importance of independent and autonomous Ombudsman institutions to improving public administration and ensuring fairness
- The role of the Ombudsman in the promotion and protection of human rights, good governance and the rule of law.

Noting the mandate for the promotion and protection of human rights, APOR Members also acknowledge the importance of supporting the rights of First Nations and Indigenous people. Ombudsman throughout the region have an important role to play in empowering those aggrieved by the actions of government agencies and supporting their human rights.