



A report about State Trustees

Victorian Ombudsman



Easy English



Hard words

This book has some hard words.

The first time we write a hard word

- the word is in **blue**
- we write what the hard word means.

You can get help with this book



You can get someone to help you

- read this book
- know what this book is about



- find more information.

About this book



This book is written by the Victorian Ombudsman.

When you see the word **we** it means the Victorian Ombudsman.



This book is about an **investigation** into **State Trustees**.

Investigation means we find out what happened.



State Trustees is a group that manages money for people with

- disability
- mental illness.



These people are called clients by State Trustees.



State Trustees can manage

- income



- bills



- property



- legal issues



- **investments**

- investments are ways to make more money.



State Trustees must talk to clients about what they want.

Why we investigated



We wanted to know why people made **complaints** to us about State Trustees.



Complaints means people say they are **not** happy about something.

What we found

We looked into 30 State Trustees complaints.



We found that State Trustees was

- sometimes good



- sometimes bad.

We found there were 4 types of complaints.

Complaint 1 - money management

The complaints showed that sometimes State Trustees



- does **not** make sure clients get the right money

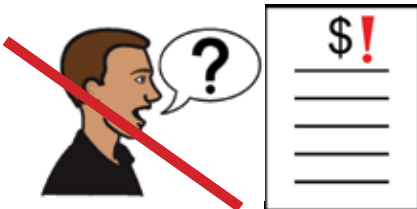


- does **not** pay bills the right way
- does **not** pay bills on time.

The complaints also showed that sometimes State Trustees



- does **not** pay **aged care bonds** on time



- does **not** ask questions about **debts** and **fin**es.

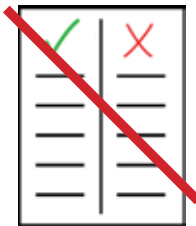
An aged care bond is money a client pays to live in an aged care home.

Debts and fines mean money a client owes.

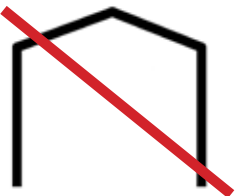
Complaint 2 - communication



State Trustees has rules about communication with clients.



We found that sometimes State Trustees does **not** follow the rules.



For example, State Trustees

- does **not** visit all clients each year



- might **not** ask clients how they want to manage their money



- does **not** give clients information that is easy to read and understand.

We also found that

- it is hard to contact State Trustees on the phone



- State Trustees does **not** always get back to people who contact them.

In some cases



- people had to wait over 1 hour to talk to State Trustees staff on the phone

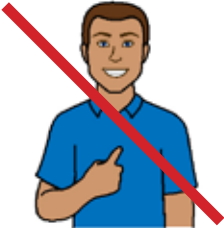


- people had to write to State Trustees lots of times before they were contacted by staff.

Complaint 3 - support for clients



State Trustees must help clients to manage their own money if they can.



We found that the State Trustees client support program does **not** work.



We also found that State Trustees

- does **not** give clients clear information about their money



- does **not** work with other groups to help clients learn more about money.

Complaint 4 - fees and commissions



State Trustees charges clients **fees** and **commissions** to manage their money.



Fees and commissions mean money you pay for a service.

We found that many State Trustees clients

- do **not** have much money
- find it hard to pay for State Trustees services.



What causes the problems?



State Trustees

- has new systems
- has too much work



- has lots of new staff



- has to cut costs.

Also State Trustees does **not** always

- follow up and support clients well



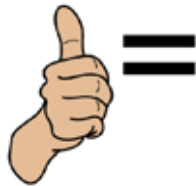
- fix things when they go wrong.

What is State Trustees doing to fix the problems?

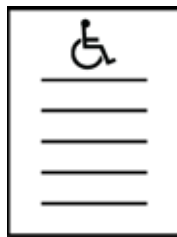


State Trustees has

- hired more staff



- trained staff about human rights



- made a disability action plan.

State Trustees will

- focus more on client needs



- make information easy to read and understand

- have better systems



- train staff about debts and fines.



Our recommendations

After the investigation we made some **recommendations**.

Recommendations are ideas to fix problems.



We think State Trustees should

- help clients to manage their own money



- work better with clients and people who support them

- explain its actions when things go wrong



- give clients clear information about their money.



We think the Victorian government should help

- State Trustees to meet the needs of its clients

- people to pay for State Trustees.



Result of our investigation

State Trustees and most government departments said **yes** to our recommendations.



More information

For more information contact
Victorian Ombudsman



For Melbourne call 9613 6222

For regional areas 1800 806 314



Website www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au



Visit us or send a letter

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Melbourne Victoria 3000



If you need help to speak or listen

Contact the Victorian Ombudsman through the
National Relay Service or NRS.

Call the NRS help desk
1800 555 660

Go to the NRS website

communications.gov.au/accesshub/nrs

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Scope's Communication and Inclusion Resource Centre wrote the Easy English version in June, 2019.

To contact Scope call 1300 472 673 or visit www.scopeaust.org.au

To see the original contact the Victorian Ombudsman.

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