

Fact sheet 1

About the Victorian Ombudsman

The Ombudsman is an independent officer of the Victorian Parliament. Her office investigates complaints about administrative actions taken by Victorian government agencies, including departments (such as the Department of Health and Human Services), most statutory authorities (such as VicRoads), and local government.

The Victorian Ombudsman is impartial, ethical and respectful of individual rights.

The Ombudsman has jurisdiction over more than 1000 Victorian public bodies, including government departments, statutory authorities, professional boards, councils, universities and government schools, prisons (including private prisons) and authorised officers on public transport. In addition, the Ombudsman can investigate private organisations contracted to perform functions for government agencies.

The Ombudsman's mission is to promote fairness, integrity, respect for human rights and administrative excellence in the Victorian public sector. The Ombudsman aims to achieve this mission by:

- independently investigating, reviewing and resolving complaints concerning administrative actions of state government departments, local councils and statutory authorities
- reporting the results to complainants and the agencies involved
- reporting to Parliament
- improving accountability
- promoting fair and reasonable public administration.

Any person can make a complaint to the Ombudsman about a matter which affects them. You can make a complaint about a Victorian agency even if you are not a Victorian resident. Brochures to assist non-English speaking people who want to access the Ombudsman are available in the 19 most common languages spoken in Victoria at www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au/www/html/72-translations.asp.

The Ombudsman will generally accept a complaint after the relevant public body has been given the opportunity to respond to the complaint.

History of the Victorian Ombudsman

The office of the Victorian Ombudsman was established on 30 October 1973 under the *Ombudsman Act 1973* (Vic). It was the third Ombudsman's office created in

Australia, following the appointment of the Western Australian Ombudsman (1971) and the South Australian Ombudsman (1972).

The Ombudsman's office has seen major changes in the Victorian public sector and the delivery of government services. While the office itself has also undergone some changes over this period, none of them have affected the core role and responsibilities of the Ombudsman.

Since 1973 the Ombudsman has drawn the government's attention to significant issues of concern and helped to improve broader public administration by resolving individual grievances.

The Victorian Ombudsman



Deborah Glass is the Victorian Ombudsman. She was appointed to a 10-year term in March 2014. Her office looks at the decisions and actions of Victorian government departments, local councils, statutory bodies and their contractors.

Deborah was raised in Melbourne and studied law at Monash University. She practiced law briefly before leaving Australia, working for an investment bank in Switzerland before moving into a career in financial services regulation in Hong Kong and London. She then moved into police oversight and became a Commissioner of the Independent Police Complaints Commission of England and Wales, heading up criminal and misconduct investigations into police.

In 2008, Deborah was appointed IPCC Deputy Chair and in 2012, was awarded an OBE for her service.

Deborah is on the board of the International Ombudsman Institute, which connects more than 190 Ombudsman offices world-wide, and is also a member of the Australian and New Zealand Ombudsman Association.

Deborah is committed to ensuring fair and reasonable decision making, and to improving public administration. She holds a firm belief in public sector integrity and advancing human rights.

Please note: This document is intended as a guide only. For this reason the information contained herein should not be relied on as legal advice or regarded as a substitute for legal advice in individual cases. To the maximum extent permitted by the law, the Victorian Ombudsman is not liable to you for any loss or damage suffered as a result of reliance on this document. For the most up-to-date versions of cited Acts, please refer to www.legislation.vic.gov.au.

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