

Head 114 — OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

Controlling officer: The Ombudsman will account for expenditure under this Head.

Estimate 2001–02	\$106.9m
Capital Account commitment balance	\$1.6m

Controlling Officer's Report

Programme

Complaints Administration This programme contributes to Policy Area 30: Complaints Against Maladministration (The Ombudsman).

Detail

	1999–2000 (Actual)	2000–01 (Approved)	2000–01 (Revised)	2001–02 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	54.6	63.9 (+17.0%)	59.4 (–7.0%)	106.9 (+80.0%)

Aim

2 The aim is to redress grievances and address issues arising from maladministration in the public sector and to bring about improvements in the quality and standard of and promote fairness in the public administration, through independent and impartial investigations.

Brief Description

3 The Ombudsman is directly responsible to the Chief Executive for resolving any complaints of maladministration lodged by the public with her through informal resolution, investigations and other forms of assistance. The Office generally met its objectives and targets in 2000.

4 The key performance measures in respect of complaints administration are:

Targets

The performance of the Office of The Ombudsman can be measured by the extent of public awareness and acceptance of the Office, the thoroughness of investigations, the efficiency with which complaints are resolved, and the degree of acceptance and recognition of the effectiveness of recommendations made for the redress of grievances.

Indicators

Key indicators of performance are the number of complaint cases and enquiries received; the number of complaint cases investigated or resolved through alternative resolution methods which include rendering clarification and assistance, referral under the Internal Complaint Handling Programme (INCH) and mediation; the number of direct investigations completed; and the number of recommendations accepted by the Administration either directly or after discussion in the legislature. The reporting year of the Office ends on 30 June. The performance figures for the last three reporting years are:

	<i>Reporting Year</i>		
	1997–98 (Actual)	1998–99 (Actual)	1999–2000 (Actual)
enquiries received.....	7 578	10 192	9 323
complaints received.....	3 073	4 125	3 101
complaints carried forward from the previous reporting year.....	531	594	891
total cases of complaints for disposal.....	3 604	4 719	3 992
complaints investigated			
substantiated.....	61	56	22
partially substantiated	87	73	100
unsubstantiated	203	172	61
incapable of determination.....	—	—	—
withdrawn/discontinued	4	8	11
complaints concluded after rendering clarification and assistance	509	793	969

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	<i>Reporting Year</i>		
	1997–98 (Actual)	1998–99 (Actual)	1999–2000 (Actual)
complaints concluded after referral under INCH programme	522	499	467
complaints concluded after mediation	16	19	10
complaints not investigated			
restriction on investigation	588	790	592
outside jurisdiction	719	998	825
withdrawn/discontinued	301	420	354
total cases concluded			
no. of cases	3 010	3 828	3 411
% over the total cases for processing	84	81	85
cases carried forward to the next reporting year	594	891	581
number of direct investigations completed	7	7	3
recommendations made and accepted	299	279	135

Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2001–02

5 During 2001–02, this Office will:

- achieve complete independence by establishing its own administration and financial control systems, and the phased replacement of seconded civil servants by contract staff employed under the Office's own terms and conditions of service;
- continue to promote public awareness and education of The Ombudsman system and services, including community involvement;
- reinforce human resource management to achieve professionalism in complaint management;
- strengthen the direct investigation functions;
- enhance the mediation service as an alternative dispute resolution method in resolving complaints;
- inculcate a professional complaint management culture in the public sector; and
- strengthen relationship with other ombudsman jurisdictions and kindred institutions through overseas liaison and exchange programmes.

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ANALYSIS OF FINANCIAL PROVISION

Programme	1999–2000 (Actual) (\$m)	2000–01 (Approved) (\$m)	2000–01 (Revised) (\$m)	2001–02 (Estimate) (\$m)
Complaints Administration.....	54.6	63.9 (+17.0%)	59.4 (–7.0%)	106.9 (+80.0%)

Analysis of Financial and Staffing Provision

Provision for 2001–02 is \$47.5 million (80.0%) higher than the revised estimate for 2000–01. This is mainly due to the related expenditure arising from the delinking of the Office from the service. Additional provision is required for the payment of gratuities, fringe benefits and cash allowances to non-civil service contract staff employed to replace seconded civil servants. In addition, extra provisions are required for office rental, procurement of support services, which also includes airtime for publicity purposes. Hitherto, these related expenditure items were either funded in other Heads of Expenditure or provided free of charge by government departments.

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Sub-head (Code)	Actual expenditure 1999–2000	Approved estimate 2000–01	Revised estimate 2000–01	Estimate 2001–02
	\$ 000	\$ 000	\$ 000	\$'000
Recurrent Account				
Operational expenses	54,090	63,546	58,800	—
Total.....	54,090	63,546	58,800	—
V — Subventions				
538 Salaries and allowances for staff and general expenses of the Office of The Ombudsman ..	—	—	—	106,100
Total, Subventions	—	—	—	106,100
Total, Recurrent Account	54,090	63,546	58,800	106,100
Capital Account				
II — Other Non-Recurrent				
700 General other non-recurrent	485	360	590	829
Total, Other Non-Recurrent.....	485	360	590	829
Total, Capital Account	485	360	590	829
Total Expenditure	54,575	63,906	59,390	106,929

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Details of Expenditure by Subhead

The estimate of the amount required in 2001–02 for the salaries and general expenses of the Office of The Ombudsman is \$106,929,000. This represents an increase of \$47,539,000 over the revised estimate for 2000–01 and of \$52,354,000 over actual expenditure in 1999–2000.

Recurrent Account

Subventions

2 Provision of \$106,100,000 under *Subhead 538 Salaries and allowances for staff and general expenses of the Office of The Ombudsman* is for the salaries and allowances of staff of the Office of The Ombudsman and its operating expenses.

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Capital Account

Commitments

Sub-head (Code)	Item (Code)	Ambit	Approved commitment	Accumulated expenditure to 31.3.2000	Revised estimated expenditure for 2000-01	Balance
			\$ 000	\$ 000	\$ 000	\$ 000
700		<i>General other non-recurrent</i>				
	002	Exchange development scheme with the Mainland.....	1,800	592	200	1,008
	006	Accounting and Human Resource Systems for the Office of The Ombudsman.....	1,019	—	390	629
		Total.....	<u>2,819</u>	<u>592</u>	<u>590</u>	<u>1,637</u>