

Head 114 — OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

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

Estimate 2023–24 **\$129.7m**

Controlling Officer's Report

Programme

Complaints Administration

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

Detail

	2021–22 (Actual)	2022–23 (Original)	2022–23 (Revised)	2023–24 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	128.0	126.8	129.5 (+2.1%)	129.7 (+0.2%)
				(or +2.3% on 2022–23 Original)

Aim

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

Brief Description

3 The Ombudsman is responsible for resolving complaints of maladministration lodged by the public with her through inquiries, investigations, mediation and other forms of assistance. The Ombudsman may, of her own volition, initiate direct investigation into areas of suspected maladministration. The Office generally met its objectives and targets in 2022.

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 concluded through inquiries and mediation; the number of direct investigations completed; and the number of recommendations accepted by government departments/public bodies either directly or after discussion in the legislature. The reporting year of the Office ends on 31 March. The performance figures for the last three reporting years are:

	<i>Reporting Year</i>		
	2019–20 (Actual)	2020–21 (Actual)	2021–22 (Actual)
enquiries received.....	8 581	7 505	8 851
complaints received.....	19 767#	29 814#	4 934#
complaints carried forward from the previous reporting year	970	899	692
total no. of complaints for processing	20 737	30 713	5 626
complaints concluded by full investigation.....	240	167	92
complaints concluded by inquiry.....	2 418	2 480	2 432
complaints concluded by mediation.....	149	179	215
complaints assessed and closed.....	17 031	27 195	2 293
total no. of complaints completed			
complaints	19 838	30 021	5 032
percentage over the total no. of complaints for processing (%)	96	98	89

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	<i>Reporting Year</i>		
	2019–20 (Actual)	2020–21 (Actual)	2021–22 (Actual)
complaints carried forward to the next reporting year	899	692	594
no. of direct investigations completed	10	9	8
no. of recommendations made	177	194	139
no. of recommendations accepted as at end of respective year	148	168	129

The majority of complaints received in the years 2019–20 and 2020–21 were secondary cases of topical complaints on particular social issues. Discounting the topical complaints, the numbers of complaints received in 2019–20, 2020–21 and 2021–22 were 4 733, 4 659 and 4 794 respectively.

Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2023–24

- 5 During 2023–24, the Office will continue to take forward the Strategic Plan for 2019–2024 as follows:
- enhance community awareness of the role and services of The Ombudsman;
 - foster improvement in the quality and fairness in public administration;
 - enhance transparency, efficiency and quality of the work of the Office; and
 - build professional capacity through enhanced staff development and knowledge management.

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ANALYSIS OF FINANCIAL PROVISION

	2021–22 (Actual) (\$m)	2022–23 (Original) (\$m)	2022–23 (Revised) (\$m)	2023–24 (Estimate) (\$m)
Programme				
Complaints Administration.....	128.0	126.8	129.5 (+2.1%)	129.7 (+0.2%)
				(or +2.3% on 2022–23 Original)

Analysis of Financial and Staffing Provision

Provision for 2023–24 is \$0.2 million (0.2%) higher than the revised estimate for 2022–23. This is due to the increased provision for operating expenses.

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Sub-head (Code)	Actual expenditure 2021–22	Approved estimate 2022–23	Revised estimate 2022–23	Estimate 2023–24	
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	
Operating Account					
Recurrent					
000	Operational expenses	128,035	126,755	129,476	129,655
	Total, Recurrent.....	<u>128,035</u>	<u>126,755</u>	<u>129,476</u>	<u>129,655</u>
	Total, Operating Account	<u>128,035</u>	<u>126,755</u>	<u>129,476</u>	<u>129,655</u>
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	Total Expenditure	<u>128,035</u>	<u>126,755</u>	<u>129,476</u>	<u>129,655</u>

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Details of Expenditure by Subhead

The estimate of the amount required in 2023–24 for the salaries and expenses of the Office of The Ombudsman is \$129,655,000. This represents an increase of \$179,000 over the revised estimate for 2022–23 and \$1,620,000 over the actual expenditure in 2021–22.

Operating Account

Recurrent

2 Provision of \$129,655,000 under *Subhead 000 Operational expenses* is for the payment of subvention to the Office of The Ombudsman to cover its salaries, allowances and other operating expenses.