

## Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman

### Strategic Plan 2010 to 2013

**Vision:**

*Administrative action by Australian Government agencies and related service providers is fair and accountable.*

#### Goal 1. Accountable, Fair and Transparent Public Administration

| Objectives   | Strategies  | Actions  | Measures  |
|--|---|--|---|
| <b>Agencies respect and value what we do and say</b> | Have constructive relationships with agencies   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have in place a protocol for contact with each agency, including for escalation</li> <li>• Have in place regular liaison meetings with agencies</li> <li>• Have in place up-to-date information on each agency's current activities</li> <li>• Actively undertake environmental scanning</li> <li>• Keep our commitments to agencies</li> <li>• Model best administrative practice</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of liaison/outreach meetings with agencies per quarter</li> <li>• Number and % of recommendations made that are implemented by agencies</li> <li>• Results of agency survey</li> <li>• Qualitative assessment of agency relationship</li> </ul> |
|  | Understand the business of agencies   |  |   |
| <b>Agencies have good complaint handling</b>         | Demonstrate good judgement and professionalism in all our dealings with agencies              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver training/information sessions on best practice complaint handling</li> <li>• Give constructive feedback on agency complaint handling</li> <li>• Formal protocols with other relevant oversight agencies</li> <li>• Produce material to help agencies improve (eg. fact sheets)</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of administrative deficiencies recorded</li> <li>• Qualitative assessment of agency complaint handling (including through analysis of complaints about complaint handling)</li> <li>• Results of agency survey</li> </ul>                       |
|  | Actively promote to agencies and encourage good complaint handling                            |  |   |
|  | Identify opportunities to share with, and contribute to the work of, other oversight agencies |  |   |

| Objectives  | Strategies   | Actions   | Measures  |
|---|--|---|---|
| <b>Improved decision-making, compliance and conduct in agencies</b>     | Actively monitor trends and issues in public administration  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental scanning</li> <li>• Monitoring complaint trends (including those not investigated) and systemic issues from complaints investigation and other activity</li> <li>• Follow up resolution of systemic issues with agencies</li> <li>• Produce own motion and s 15 reports and issues papers on systemic issues</li> <li>• Develop systems able to capture information and report on implementation of recommendations</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number and % of recommendations made that are implemented by agencies</li> <li>• Top issues per agency are regularly recorded and reported (at least each quarter) with comments on any identified reasons for trends/changes</li> <li>• Number and % of issues raised with agencies that are followed up/resolved by agencies</li> <li>• Number of administrative deficiencies recorded</li> <li>• Qualitative assessment of agency complaint issues</li> </ul> |
|   | Make helpful and practical suggestions and recommendations for improvement                           |   |   |
|   | Capture, monitor and pursue systemic issues arising from our complaints and other activities         |   |   |
|   | Follow up on the implementation of our recommendations and suggestions                               |   |   |
| <b>Public confidence in the accountability of public administration</b> | Keep the public informed about what we do and what we find   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Release public reports and media releases</li> <li>• Have an accessible and informative website</li> <li>• Make submissions to and appear before relevant Parliamentary and other government Committees</li> <li>• Actively seek opportunities to brief Ministers</li> <li>• Identify stakeholders for agency/complainant group and have a plan to engage with them, reviewed every year</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of relevant media spots/mentions</li> <li>• Number of submissions made</li> <li>• Number of hits on website and various parts of it</li> <li>• Number of invitations to appear before Parliamentary Committees</li> <li>• Number of contacts with stakeholders</li> <li>• Number of meetings with Ministers or senior Departmental officials (Band 3 and above)</li> <li>• Results of complainant survey</li> <li>• Results of agency survey</li> </ul>   |
|   | Actively contribute to parliamentary and government consideration of issues in public administration |   |   |
|   | Constructively engage with relevant stakeholders   |   |   |

| Objectives | Strategies  | Actions  | Measures   |
|------------|---|--|--|
|            | Statutory reviews of coercive powers are effective and timely                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know the business, procedures and internal controls of agencies inspected</li> <li>• Develop methodologies focused on material compliance and based on risk management principles</li> <li>• Conduct inspections as required by legislation in a timely and professional manner</li> <li>• Redevelop inspection reports to focus on significant issues that affect assurance</li> <li>• Develop a database to reconcile inspection findings and provide statistical and trend analysis</li> <li>• Participate in Parliamentary inquiries and contribute to legislative amendment processes</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statutory timeframes for conducting inspections and reporting to Ministers and Parliament are met</li> <li>• Ministers and Parliamentary Committees provide positive feedback on the level of assurance</li> <li>• Agencies achieve a high level of statutory compliance</li> <li>• Qualitative analysis of public and government attitude to the office</li> </ul> |
|            | Promote and support best practice complaint handling by overseas agencies within a regional network | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain twinning program with PNG</li> <li>• Maintain partnership program with Indonesia</li> <li>• Further develop and support the Pacific Ombudsman Alliance</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requirements of AusAID funding met</li> <li>• Qualitative analysis of the impact of our international program</li> </ul>  |

**Goal 2. An independent and effective avenue for the public to complain**

| Objectives  | Strategies   | Actions  | Measures  |
|---|--|--|---|
| <p><b>Best practical resolution of complaints</b></p> | <p>Measures are in place to ensure the quality, timeliness, effectiveness and practicality of complaint handling</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and meet Service Standards</li> <li>• Each staff member has an Performance Management Plan with clearly articulated performance indicators linked to strategic and business plans. These are consistent across teams that do similar work</li> <li>• 100% of outgoing correspondence is quality assured</li> <li>• Robust quality assurance process in place</li> <li>• Specialist teams provide effective and helpful assistance to investigation officers</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service standards are met</li> <li>• Allocation rate per FTE</li> <li>• Remedy achieved rate</li> <li>• Administrative deficiency rate (ADs in quarter/approaches closed in quarter x 100)</li> <li>• Percentage closure rate (closures /allocation per month x 100) by team and by individual</li> <li>• Closure rate for s 6 reasons (s 6 closure/cases allocated per month x 100)</li> <li>• Non affirmed review rate (further invest/approaches closed per quarter x 100)</li> <li>• Referral rate of approaches per quarter where a formal transfer process is in place</li> <li>• Median time approaches open per team per allocation rate</li> <li>• Number of QA'd approaches that meet the QA standard (minor issues to be disregarded)</li> <li>• Number of cases with no action for &gt; 60 days</li> </ul> |

| <b>Objectives</b>  | <b>Strategies</b>   | <b>Actions</b>  | <b>Measures</b>   |
|--|---|---|---|
| <b>Effective and efficient referral of complaints</b>                              | Make appropriate arrangements with other integrity agencies for the referral of complaints                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protocols/MOUs in place for appropriate referrals</li> <li>• Appropriate induction training</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Results of quality assurance audits</li> <li>• Call time for OOJ matters dealt with by PCT</li> </ul>  |
|  | Staff have good knowledge of our jurisdiction and other relevant agencies                                       |   |   |
| <b>Accessible to all members of the community</b>                                  | Pursue a social inclusion agenda  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify who we are reaching and who should be reached</li> <li>• Appropriate and effective outreach including, communication mechanisms to reach target audience, including through targeting community organisations working with such people</li> <li>• Get more information from our approaches about the complainants</li> <li>• Have information that can identify geographical location of target audience</li> <li>• Accessible website with useful and appropriate information</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer survey shows target audience is reached</li> <li>• Approaches by postcode</li> <li>• Analysis of approaches eg. by gender/education ( this may be new information)</li> <li>• Customer survey shows maintenance of community awareness</li> </ul> |
|  | Provide a range of appropriate communication methods/avenues for complainants                                   |   |   |
|  | Develop strong community awareness  |   |   |
| <b>Complainants view us as impartial and independent</b>                           | Embody impartiality and independence in everything we do  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote our values through training, our website and other promotion of our work (including media outreach, eg. press releases, articles and interviews)</li> <li>• Template letters and scripts reflect our values and the role of the office</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer and agency surveys show that both view us as impartial</li> </ul>   |
|  | Actively promote impartiality and independence aspect of our work with complainants, agencies and the community |   |   |
| <b>Agencies and related service providers are responsive to our investigations</b> | Clearly articulate to agencies our role and powers  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articulate and follow through on our expectations with agencies</li> <li>• Escalate appropriately</li> <li>• Have regular liaison meetings with agencies</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responses to s 8 notices received within requested timeframe</li> <li>• Qualitative analysis of responses to AD notices and reports</li> <li>• Response to requests within requested timeframe</li> </ul>  |
|  | Have constructive relationships with agencies and related service providers                                     |   |   |

**Goal 3.**

**Best Practice Integrity Agency**

| Objectives   | Strategies  | Actions   | Measures  |
|--|---|---|---|
| <p><b>We are influential and take advantage of strategic opportunities for improvement</b></p> | Investigations and publications are of the highest professional standard                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reinforce our values through our training and enhance our training (eg. though Certificate IV course)</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of invitations to appear before Parliamentary Committees</li> </ul>   |
|  | Effective targeting of the most important issues  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and update issue strings regularly</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of contacts with stakeholders</li> </ul>  |
|  | Apply our learnings to assist other agencies  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High level of engagement by Senior Executive</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of meetings with Ministers or senior Departmental officials (Band 3 and above)</li> </ul>   |
|  | High level of government awareness  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produce fact sheets, better practice guides, submissions and other reports</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of requests for speakers</li> </ul>   |
|  | Maintain a high level awareness of, and contribution to, current and emerging issues in public administration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environmental scanning by each team</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trends in approaches by issues</li> </ul>  |
|  | Be flexible and responsive to change  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Active awareness of complaint trends, top issues, number of approaches</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Qualitative assessment of our influence</li> </ul>   |
|  | Model and share best practice   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective deployment of staff and other resources to meet demand</li> <li>Engage with influential decision makers</li> </ul>   |   |
| <p><b>Effective use of professional and other resources</b></p>                                | Recruit, develop and maintain professional and productive staff   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set internal timeliness standards (eg. for recruitment)</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet internal timeliness standards</li> </ul>  |
|  | Our systems are focussed on supporting our business   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performance Management Plans each year identify training and development needs for each staff member</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By end year each year Performance Management Plans show every staff member has attended core training</li> </ul>                                 |
|  | Keep our business under review and adjust where necessary   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mandatory/core training is delivered at least twice a year</li> <li>Certificate IV is developed</li> <li>IT development and acquisitions rigorously assessed for business needs</li> <li>Establish a process for assessing and implementing systems changes</li> <li>Effective deployment of staff and other resources to meet demand</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All IT Projects are supported by IT project plan</li> <li>Office stays within budget</li> <li>Analysis of capacity to improve systems</li> </ul> |