

# accountability and management

## CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

The Governor-General appointed Prof. John McMillan as Commonwealth Ombudsman in March 2003 and Mr Ron Brent as Deputy Ombudsman in June 2003, both for a five-year period. The remuneration for the Ombudsman and Deputy Ombudsman is determined in accordance with a ruling by the Remuneration Tribunal. The office's Executive comprises the Ombudsman, Deputy Ombudsman and five Senior Assistant Ombudsmen.

Each year, the Ombudsman's office develops a Strategic Plan and a Business Plan, which identify priorities for the year. Progress against these plans is monitored and assessed on a quarterly basis, with any adjustments made accordingly.

### Strategic plan

The major objectives outlined in the office's 2004–05 Strategic Plan were to:

- investigate complaints against Australian Government agencies and make recommendations for resolving complaints
- foster good complaint handling in Australian Government agencies
- highlight problems in public administration through complaint handling, own motion investigations and reporting
- focus attention on the adverse impact government administration can have on individuals
- promote open government
- inspect the accuracy and comprehensiveness of law enforcement records, including telephone interceptions and controlled operations
- provide assistance to ombudsman offices in the Asia–Pacific region.

The Strategic Plan for the office is being reviewed for the period 2005–06 to 2007–08, and a priority action plan for 2005–06 is being developed.

## Business plans

Each specialist team and office throughout Australia has developed a detailed business plan outlining strategies and activities to support the strategic plan. The plans are customised to reflect current challenges and relevant issues facing individual teams. These business plans are, in turn, used to develop individual work plans for staff members.

## Audit Committee

The Audit Committee's role is to review, monitor and where necessary recommend improvements to internal control, financial reporting, internal audit functions, external audit processes, and the office process for monitoring compliance with legislation, and government policy directives.

The Audit Committee comprises five members: Mr Ron Brent, Deputy Ombudsman (Chair); Ms Helen Fleming, Senior Assistant Ombudsman (alternate Chair); Mr Joe D'Angelo, Chief Finance Officer from the Department of the Senate; Ms Mary Durkin, Senior Assistant Ombudsman; and Ms Natalie Humphry, Contract Manager. The committee also has a standing position for the Australian National Audit Office.

## Risk management

Risk management activities have been incorporated into the Ombudsman's planning and operations and the management of contractors. The office has developed a risk management policy and procedures to:

- create, maintain and continuously improve risk management standards
- establish, maintain and continuously improve a risk register
- help to prioritise and schedule risk control improvements in each of the Ombudsman's cost centres

- report to the Audit Committee and Executive on risk improvement and compliance
- raise awareness among staff about risk management.

An external consultant was engaged to review the existing risk management framework and assess the strategic business risks. The Audit Committee endorsed the consultant's reports.

### **Business continuity planning**

An important issue for the office is continuity management to identify and assess risks that could disrupt services and functions, to predict likely problems and to plan to avoid or minimise the impact of hazardous incidents.

Finalisation of a business continuity plan was delayed in 2004–05 due to the office's implementation of the new information technology framework. The business continuity plan will:

- assess the impact on the Ombudsman's operations of a disaster which may render the Canberra office and central information technology facilities unusable for an extended period
- identify key components and provide recovery solutions for the Canberra computer systems and interstate voice and computer network
- create a complaint handling solution for emergency operations
- establish a strategic plan for Canberra operations and the public's ability to contact the Ombudsman in the immediate and medium-term period
- document a practical strategy for recovery to include the office's strategic plan, key applications, essential procedural changes (if any) and team construction and responsibilities.

The plan will be finalised in 2005–06 and tested as part of its implementation.

### **Fraud prevention and control**

The Ombudsman has adopted a Fraud Control Plan in line with the government's Fraud Control Guidelines to reflect best practice in identifying and controlling fraud risks. This policy aims to:

- actively prevent, detect and investigate fraud
- refer offenders to appropriate agencies where necessary
- seek civil, administrative or disciplinary penalties where appropriate
- recover proceeds of fraudulent activity
- be accountable to Parliament and report to government
- maintain and improve appropriate fraud control standards
- train employees in ethical management, privacy and fraud awareness issues
- ensure that fraud control contractors have the required specialised training.

The office reviewed its fraud risks and controls in 2004–05, and the risk of fraud remains low. The Audit Committee has endorsed the office's new Fraud Control Plan.

### **Occupational health and safety**

The office's Occupational Health and Safety Committee is made up of elected representatives from staff, including the State offices, and chaired by the Human Resource Manager, who represents management. The committee met twice during the year.

All new employees are made aware of the importance and responsibilities of both staff and management for health and safety in the workplace. New employees are encouraged to have workplace assessments conducted shortly after commencement. There were no reportable incidents during the year.

During 2004–05, the office ensured that:

- obligations for Comcare premiums were met
- compensation cases were managed in accordance with approved guidelines
- health assessments were made available to employees, where necessary
- workplace assessments were conducted for employees
- necessary eye examinations were undertaken
- first aid facilities and supplies were made available
- individual health awareness was raised through a health management program.

The office provides an Employee Assistance Program to ensure that employees and their families have access to a confidential counselling service to assist with workplace problems and the management of any work-related or personal stress.

### **Providing access to people with disabilities**

The Ombudsman recognises the importance of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* in ensuring equality of access to the services of the Commonwealth Ombudsman for people with disabilities and eliminating discriminatory practices by staff. The office endeavours to meet its obligations under the Act through implementation of the Commonwealth Disability Strategy and its Disability Action Plan and Workplace Diversity Plan.

#### **Disability action plan**

The Ombudsman's Disability Action Plan was reviewed during 2004–05. A revised plan is now in place for the three-year period from July 2005 to June 2008. The plan commits the office to ensuring that people with disabilities are not disadvantaged when accessing the services provided by our organisation. It outlines the various approaches we are taking, such as:

- being accessible, with the minimum of formality, to all people who believe they have been adversely affected by defective government administration, regardless of ethnic or cultural background, sex, language differences or disability
- identifying, and overcoming where possible, barriers which might prevent ready access to the Ombudsman's information and services
- ensuring that the office identifies and understands the priorities and needs of the community (particularly those facing disadvantage).

The implementation of the plan is being monitored through the office's Occupational Health and Safety Committee.

### **Commonwealth Disability Strategy**

The office's operations encompass the activities of regulator, service provider and employer.

### **Our role as regulator**

The Ombudsman does not enforce regulations directly, but provides a complaints resolution service under statute for the Australian Government, which can include recommendations to agencies on enforcement of regulations. The Ombudsman seeks to promote awareness of services in all areas of the Australian community, and provides an online complaints lodgement facility on the office's website (which complies with Australian Government accessibility requirements). Ombudsman staff regularly liaise with community organisations to promote awareness of the Ombudsman's services.

### **Our role as provider**

The office's complaints management system has a specific quality assurance function. Complaint handling is reviewed to ensure that outcomes are appropriate and to identify areas that may have affected service delivery.

The Ombudsman has an established internal complaints and review process, which allows complaints about the office's decisions and service quality to be resolved quickly, fairly and informally. We seek to promote awareness of the office's role and service in all areas of the Australian community. An important element in a redevelopment of the Ombudsman's website (to be completed in 2005–06) is to better meet web accessibility guidelines.

### **Our role as employer**

The Ombudsman's Workplace Diversity Plan aims to ensure that, in working to achieve the goals of the office, the diverse background, skills, talents and views of staff are recognised, encouraged and valued, and that all staff are aware of the value of creating a culture of workplace diversity. The plan provides for the following measures to assist staff who have particular needs.

- All employment policies and procedures are communicated in a manner that is responsive to the needs of employees.
- Employment policies and procedures are made available in a manner that is responsive to the needs of prospective employees. Appropriate material is provided in hard copy to prospective employees when they seek details of employment opportunities, as well as via the office's website in accessible formats.

- Managers and recruiters apply 'reasonable adjustment' principles.
- The workplace diversity program allows for a flexible approach to management of employees with special needs.
- Training and development programs consider and respond to the needs of people with disabilities and include information on disability issues where they relate to the content of the program.
- Complaints/grievance mechanisms, including access to external mechanisms, are in place to address issues and concerns raised by staff and the public.

### Environmental matters

The Ombudsman is required to report on certain environmental matters by s 516A(5)(a) of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, detailing the office's environmental performance and its contribution to ecologically sustainable development.

The Ombudsman continued to encourage staff to manage all resources, including energy, prudently and in an ecologically responsible manner. Policy guidance is provided on conservation of energy in use of lighting and computer equipment. The office actively recycles paper and cardboard products.

### Advertising and market research

Reporting requirements contained in s 311A of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* oblige the Ombudsman to report details of all amounts over \$1,500 (including GST) paid during 2004–05 for advertising or market research, including payments to advertising agencies, market research bodies, polling organisation, direct mail services and media advertising organisations. To support the office's outreach program to regional and rural Australia, advertisements were placed in 13 regional and ethnic newspapers. The total payment by the Ombudsman for newspaper advertising was \$5,295.

### Service charter

We are committed to providing the best service possible to the community. The Commonwealth Ombudsman Service Charter is available on our website at [www.ombudsman.gov.au](http://www.ombudsman.gov.au). The charter outlines the service that can be expected from

the office, ways to provide feedback and steps that can be taken if standards are not met.

Where a complainant disagrees with our conclusions and decision on a complaint, they may ask for a review of how the investigation was conducted. A more senior officer not previously involved in the matter will conduct a review, and seek to determine whether the conclusion reached was reasonable, justified and adequately explained to the complainant. Only in exceptional circumstances will more than one review be undertaken.

In last year's annual report, we stated that we would review the office's service charter and the mechanisms for monitoring, responding to and recording complaints about our service. This review has been held over until early 2006 following the implementation and bedding down of the office's new complaints management system and revised work practices.

Feedback from complainants to this office is an effective way to identify where changes may need to be made. During the year, 14 written comments were received from complainants about our services. Most of the feedback concerned service delivery and decisions reached, with 12 of the comments positive and two negative. The negative comments related to dissatisfaction about decisions we made.

## EXTERNAL SCRUTINY

### Privacy legislation

Consistent with the Privacy Commissioner's stated approach, we continued to assess and manage our privacy issues. In doing so, we applied the *Privacy Act 1988* and the secrecy provisions in the Ombudsman Act.

The Ombudsman provided information to the Privacy Commissioner for inclusion in the Personal Information Digest. The Commissioner did not issue any reports about the actions or practices of the office under s 30 of the Privacy Act during 2004–05.

In late 2004, the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) made a decision in relation to compensation for a person whose personal information had been found by the Privacy Commissioner to have been wrongfully disclosed to the Ombudsman's office by an ACT Government

agency: *Rummery and Federal Privacy Commissioner* [2004] AATA 1221. The Ombudsman was critical of the Privacy Commissioner's determination in the ACT Ombudsman Annual Report 2003–04, pointing to a possible chilling effect on Ombudsman investigations if agencies were excessively constrained by privacy breaches in conveying information to the Ombudsman's office (which is itself subject to strict secrecy and privacy obligations). The Ombudsman was further of the view that no breach of privacy had occurred, and that the disclosure to this office (in its ACT Ombudsman role) was both proper and authorised by the *Ombudsman Act 1989* (ACT).

The decision of the AAT to award compensation for the breach of privacy adds to our concern that there will be a growing reluctance by agencies to disclose information to the Ombudsman in the absence of a formal statutory notice. There are clear signs of that trend emerging in our dealings with Australian Government agencies. The office has raised with government the option of amending the Ombudsman Act to clarify that an agency can provide information to the Ombudsman that the agency reasonably thinks is relevant to an investigation without breaching privacy laws.

### Litigation and legal issues

During 2004–05, our office was the respondent in five matters brought to the AAT by two applicants (both former complainants) who had made requests under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*. In three matters by one FOI applicant, the AAT is expected to hear the cases early in 2005–06 after significant delay requested by the applicant. The AAT dismissed an application by the other applicant in late 2004 (on the ground that internal review by the agency should first occur for the AAT to have jurisdiction). Following internal review, the applicant applied again to the AAT. The application was decided early in 2005–06, with the AAT setting aside the decision, but replacing it with a slightly revised decision that the office had proposed.

The Ombudsman is also a respondent in a matter in the Federal Magistrates Court brought by a complainant. At 30 June 2005, the court had not yet decided whether to allow the applicant the extension of time he would need to bring the action.

Section 35 of the Ombudsman Act provides that the office is not compellable to provide, to a court or tribunal, information or documents obtained by the office in discharging its functions. We customarily rely on that statutory non-compellability when required by subpoena or discovery to produce information for the purposes of a legal proceeding to which we are not a party.

## PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

During 2004–05, the Ombudsman's office managed its employees in accordance with the conditions of our Certified Agreement and a number of Australian Workplace Agreements (AWAs), as well as within our obligations under the *Public Service Act 1999*.

### Workplace relations

The Australian Industrial Relations Commission certified a two-year agreement on 22 October 2003. The Certified Agreement remains in force until 30 September 2005.

The agreement focuses on people, remuneration and employment arrangements, working environment and lifestyle, further streamlining of personnel practices and processes, and performance management and improvement to underpin salary increases. These are also characteristic of the AWAs in place for a small number of employees. Full details are in Table 9.1. (Note: as statutory officers, the Ombudsman and Deputy Ombudsman are not included.)

**TABLE 9.1: APS EMPLOYEES COVERED BY CERTIFIED AGREEMENT AND AUSTRALIAN WORKPLACE AGREEMENTS, BY SES AND NON-SES, 30 JUNE 2004**

	SES	Non-SES
Certified Agreement	0	109
Australian Workplace Agreements	3	2

SES = Senior Executive Service

Non-salary benefits provided to staff under the agreement include employee-sponsored superannuation.

The Certified Agreement and the non-Senior Executive Service (non-SES) AWAs do not make provision for performance pay. Salary advancement

through pay points within each classification is linked to performance, in accordance with the policy parameters for agreement making in the Australian Public Service. SES AWAs provide for annual salary advancement within the range based on performance.

The Workplace Relations Committee continues to provide an internal forum for discussion of issues surrounding implementation and operation of the agreement. It also provides the consultative, advisory and information-sharing mechanism between management and employees on matters affecting employment conditions in the office.

### Career development and training

Career development and training focused on continuous improvement of performance through analysis of the organisation's needs. During the year, we employed a consultant to review the office's training and development program. Following the review, we implemented a number of the recommendations, including changing our approach to induction training to better meet the needs of new staff members, developing a training program in presentation and representational skills, and looking at a range of measures for the ongoing development of leadership and supervision skills for staff with supervisory responsibilities.

Key areas of training and staff development conducted during the year were:

- investigations course and on-the-job training
- mediation and alternative dispute resolution
- dealing with difficult people
- presentation skills
- performance management
- preventing bullying and harassment
- general information sessions.

All staff attended workshops to participate in a review and evaluation of the office's Performance Management Program and to explore key elements of effective performance appraisal, and to discuss ways of preparing effectively and staying on track. Staff also worked through a process for negotiating useful work plans and personal development plans. The workshops were held to consolidate the first full year's operation of the office's new performance management program.

An induction program was held during the year for all new staff members to provide a consolidated overview of the organisation and its functions. Subsequent new staff members were provided with individual sessions on their commencement.

The office also contributed to the development of its staff by providing study assistance to enable a number of staff to undertake courses at educational institutions.

In July 2004, a two-day workshop was held for the office's senior managers to look at some of the strategic challenges facing the office, as well as



Ombudsman staff working through some of the challenges facing the office.

issues such as juggling priorities, managing workload, encouraging more junior staff and contributing to office-wide priorities. The office's national managers group also met several times during the year to discuss specific issues arising out of the workshop.

### Staffing profile

As at 30 June 2005, the actual number of employees was 116, which included the Ombudsman and Deputy Ombudsman, who are statutory appointments. The full-time equivalent number of employees was 102.

During the year, 34 employees (20 of whom were women) were engaged on an ongoing basis. Nineteen

ongoing employees left the office, equating to a turnover rate of 16%. While this turnover is relatively high, given the nature of the office's work and the fact that we run eight offices throughout Australia it is not unreasonable. There is a cost to staff turnover, however, it also provides opportunities for a small office to renew and broaden its skill base.

The numbers of ongoing and non-ongoing employees, by gender and Australian Public Service classification, are shown in Table 9.2. Six employees on long-term leave without pay under the Prime Minister's Directions 1999 are not included in the table. Table 9.3 provides the office's staffing profile by location and gender.

**TABLE 9.2 STAFFING PROFILE, BY LEVEL AND GENDER, 2004–05**

Salary	Men	Women	Total
APS1 \$30,774—\$33,981	-	-	-
APS2 \$34,794—\$38,584	-	-	-
APS3 \$39,632—\$42,775	2	5 (incl 3 non-ongoing)	7 (incl 3 non-ongoing)
APS4 \$44,170—\$47,958	8 (incl 2 non-ongoing)	14 (incl 2 non-ongoing)	22 (incl 4 non-ongoing)
APS5 \$49,266—\$52,241	5 (incl 2 non-ongoing)	11	16 (incl 2 non-ongoing)
APS6 \$53,211—\$61,124	8 (incl 2 non-ongoing)	15 (incl 1 non-ongoing)	23 (incl 3 non-ongoing)
EL1 \$68,214—\$73,660	10 (incl 2 non-ongoing)	8	18 (incl 2 non-ongoing)
EL2 \$78,676—\$89,197	10 (incl 1 non-ongoing)	10	20 (incl 1 non-ongoing)
SES, non SES and statutory officers—above \$94,943	4*	6	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>47* (incl 9 non-ongoing)</b>	<b>69 (incl 6 non-ongoing)</b>	<b>116* (incl 15 non-ongoing)</b>

\* Includes two statutory officers.

**TABLE 9.3 STAFFING PROFILE, BY LOCATION AND GENDER, 2004–05**

Location	Men	Women	Total
ACT	32*	41	73
NSW	2	9	11
NT	0	1	1
QLD	3	7	10
SA	0	4	4
TAS	1	0	1
VIC	6	6	12
WA	3	1	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>47*</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>116*</b>

\* Includes two statutory officers.

## FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

### Financial performance

Revenue received from ordinary activities was \$12.762 million in 2004–05.

The office received \$11.480 million in appropriation revenue, amounting to \$2 million more than received in 2003–04. The additional revenue was provided to strengthen the Ombudsman's capacity to:

- promote public sector accountability in relation to law enforcement legislation and in regional and rural Australia, and to improve the office's delivery of online services
- inspect surveillance records held by other agencies and to ensure their compliance with relevant legislation such as the *Surveillance Devices Act 2004*
- oversight compliance powers of the Building Industry Taskforce under the *Workplace Relations Amendment (Codifying Contempt Offences) Act 2004*
- support Australian and overseas companies and individuals accessing the Ombudsman as a free avenue for complaint or review regarding trade, tender or contract objections.

Total expenses for the office were \$12.342 million leading to a surplus in 2004–05 of \$0.420 million, primarily due to the delays involved in the development of additional activities above.

### Financial position

The office's total equity—that is, sum of the office's assets less its liabilities—has increased by \$0.519 million, due mainly to a surplus in the 2004–05 year and an increase in the asset revaluation reserve.

Assets may be broken down into four main categories:

- cash
- infrastructure, plant and equipment
- intangibles (non-physical assets such as software)
- receivables (amounts due to be paid to the office).

'Other non-financial assets' relate to prepayments.

The office's total assets increased to \$3.965 million in 2004–05 from \$3.731 million in 2003–04. The increases arose primarily from the implementation of a new complaints management system and related electronic data management, and the replacement of aged desktop information technology equipment (Infrastructure, Plant and Equipment). The proportion of each type of asset held during 2004–05 is set out in Figure 9.1.

### Financial assets

The Statement of Financial Position shows cash holdings of \$2.157 million. This compares with the \$2.477 million held in 2003–04. The decrease in cash holding is primarily due to purchases of Infrastructure, Plant and Equipment. The office also drew on its Appropriation Receivable to fund these purchases.

### Non-financial assets

The office's non-financial assets increased to \$1.668 million in 2004–05 from \$0.870 million in 2003–04, primarily due to purchases of Infrastructure, Plant and Equipment. The purchases were for implementing a new complaints management system and related electronic data management, and replacing aged desktop information technology equipment.

### Liabilities

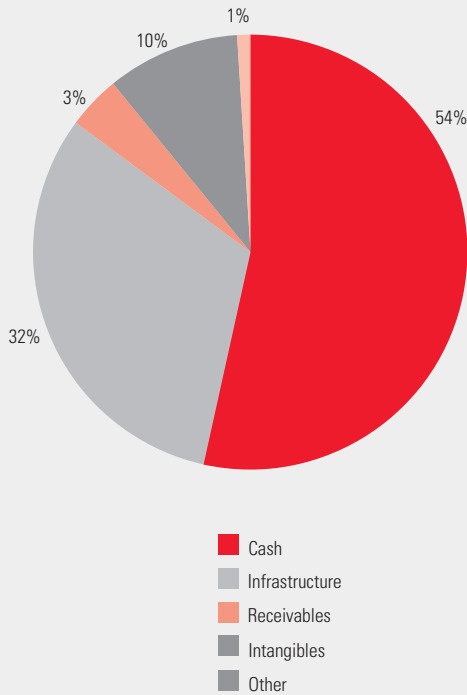
Total liabilities decreased by \$0.285 million, to \$3.193 million in 2004–05 compared to \$3.477 million in 2003–04. The decrease in liabilities was primarily due to a reduction in employee accruals and creditors.

### Factors affecting future performance

In the 2005–06 Budget, we received additional funding of \$0.770 million over four years to:

- support Australian and overseas companies and individuals accessing the Ombudsman as a free avenue for complaint or review regarding trade, tender or contract objections (in the 2005–06 to 2008–09 years)
- establish a connection to Fedlink (a secure communication channel between the Ombudsman's office and other Australian Government agencies).

**FIGURE 9.1** OFFICE ASSETS BY CATEGORY, 2004–05



### Consulting services

The Ombudsman’s office is committed to achieving the best value for money in its procurement practices. Purchasing practices and procedures are consistent with the Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines and are set out in the Ombudsman’s Chief Executive Instructions. The main categories of contracts relate to information technology, financial services, human resources services, and policy, governance and legal advice.

During 2004–05, five new consultancy contracts with a value of \$10,000 or more were entered into to the value of \$145,936. Of this amount, \$122,009 was actually expended in the reporting year. In addition, one ongoing consultancy contract was active in 2004–05, involving total actual expenditure of \$990. (The total expenditure of this consultancy was \$26,464.) See Appendix 4 for details of new consultancy contracts. (Details are also available at [www.ombudsman.gov.au](http://www.ombudsman.gov.au).)

Total actual expenditure for new and existing consultancies in 2003–04 was \$278,565 (nine new consultancies) and in 2002–03 was \$98,562 (two new consultancies).

### Competitive tendering and contracting

In 2004–05, we continued to outsource activities relating to the provision of financial services and payroll and recruitment services as follows:

#### ■ DuesburysNexia

Financial services to the value of \$606,547 for the period 18 October 2000 to 30 June 2005 with net savings over a five-year period of approximately \$200,000. Following market testing in 2004, we entered into a contract commencing 1 July 2005 for services to be provided for a five-year period, including a two-year option, for \$756,900.

#### ■ Rel Corp Management Services Pty Ltd

Payroll and recruitment services through the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet to the value of \$311,687 for the period 25 August 2002 to 25 August 2005. The contract has been extended for an additional period of six months, pending the outcome of marketing testing by the department.

Contracts with DuesburysNexia and Rel Corp Management provide for the Auditor-General to have access to a contractor’s premises.

### INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Significant planning of information technology infrastructure and business systems was conducted during 2004–05, resulting in changes initiated in a number of key information technology functions:

- complaints management system
- network information management architecture
- facilities management and desktop replacement.

These changes are the foundation for achieving greater consistency and integrated electronic management of information and workflow.

As reported in our 2003–04 annual report, the need to make significant changes to our technological environment has arisen as the demands to improve productivity and associated pressures on staff have grown. The inherent restrictions of our complaints management

system and our current network architecture would inhibit our ability to make these changes.

During the year, part of the process of enhancing capacity and processing capability within the new environment included upgrading the office's ageing desktop workstations (including printers), implementing a new corporate email environment, instituting a web content management system, and reviewing complaints management work practices and functional specifications. With the upgrade of desktop equipment and the corporate email system, relevant training was conducted for staff.

### **Complaints management system**

The electronic complaints management system is the office's core business application for complaint handling. A review of the current system's functionality found a number of performance weaknesses, including poor network performance (particularly in our State offices), limited reporting flexibility, operational issues and the need for enhancements in workflow.

The complaints management system review highlighted a need to move to a distributed database system across the Ombudsman's eight offices, with replication back to the national office in Canberra. Upgrades to all server operating systems were completed during the year to facilitate this process.

A tender process resulted in a suitable supplier being selected to implement a new system. Significant progress was made during the year in adapting the system to meet the office's functional requirements. Acceptance testing of the new system is expected to occur during September, with implementation to be completed by the end of 2005. Other factors in this process are data migration from the old system, staff training and change management.

These changes aim to improve the handling of complaint information within the office and to integrate better with other office applications, such as email and web services. The 'Challenges in complaint handling' chapter provides further information on how the complaints management system is used and on some of the challenges faced.

### **Network information management architecture**

Our aim is for all information relating to a complaint to reside in the new complaints management system. The system will support registration of material to enable tracking of manual files from within the system, as well as the ability to move email content or associated documents into the system. While the system is a combination of records and workflow, the office's non-complaints management information is a 'record' or document management process. Typical content in this area is corporate email, network file shares (storage) and web content.

During the year, we upgraded the office's email system. In 2005–06, we plan to add additional features and move to a more structured email environment and network-shared storage, including electronic records management functionality and archiving.

The office's internet and intranet websites are being redeveloped to improve the effectiveness of the sites and the content management processes. As part of this project, a workplace web content management system was instituted during the year. Implementation of the redeveloped sites will be completed in the first half of 2005–06.

Other planning in this area includes greater mobility for use of email and flexibility in remote access (with appropriate security). We are also looking at ways to improve the office's contact mechanisms and integration between voice records and data records.

### **Facilities management**

The management of information technology facilities (equipment and help desk) was resourced in-house for most of the year. To manage an increased level of demand for help desk user support, we implemented a new database system to track requests and outsourced the support function towards the end of the year. We will review the help desk function in 2005–06.

With suppliers moving to online facilities, we have progressed to online bill reporting and bill verification for our Telstra 1300 number system, frame relay services and voice services.