



# Statement of Commitments

This statement sets out the Ombudsman's commitments to organisations we oversee ('organisations') about how we will engage with organisations in carrying out our statutory oversight functions. It replaces any pre-existing relationship protocols (but not Memoranda of Understanding) the Office agreed with organisations about exercising its statutory oversight functions.

## The Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman seeks to:



Provide assurance that organisations we oversee act with integrity and treat people fairly, and influence systemic improvement in administration.

## We do this by:

- Independently and impartially handling complaints and disclosures.
- Influencing organisations to be accountable, lawful, fair, transparent, and responsive.
- Providing a level of assurance that relevant agencies comply with legal requirements when using covert, intrusive and coercive powers.
- Inspecting places of detention.

## The Office will:

1

**Provide organisations with clear and timely information** when we commence and during an investigation, inspection or other oversight activity.

This includes providing relevant background, explaining what information, documents, access and/or other assistance the organisation is expected to provide, and specifying any related timeframe/s.

2

**Consider carefully** whether and when to act informally or formally, including whether and when to use coercive powers.

3

**Set appropriate timeframes for requests or requirements** of organisations, having regard to the urgency and complexity of the matter and the scope and complexity of the request/requirement.

We will consider requests from organisations for additional time to respond to our requests/requirements, having regard to urgency, scope and complexity. We will also consider the reason/s additional time is needed, and the organisation's timeliness in past matters.

If we do not agree to allow additional time, we will explain our reasons.



4

**Safely collect, store, archive and destroy** any information and data shared with us.

5

**Notify organisations** when we finalise an investigation,<sup>1</sup> inspection or other oversight activity.

6

**Act fairly** by:

- explaining the grounds for our findings, comments, suggestions and recommendations and inviting the affected organisation/s to provide a response (including identifying any apparent errors of facts or law).
- considering the affected organisation's response in finalising our position (noting we may not agree)
- including organisations' formal response/s to findings and recommendations in our published reports.

7

**Publish reports, issues papers, fact sheets and other guidance materials** to inform best practice in our areas of oversight.

8

**Provide organisations with insights** about their administration and recommendations, suggestions and comments to improve their administration.

9

**Provide organisations with current, correct details for key points of contact** within our Office.

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<sup>1</sup> As a general rule, we will not notify organisations when we finalise complaints – see s 12(2) of the *Ombudsman Act 1976* (CTH) and s 15(2) of the *Ombudsman Act 1989* (ACT).