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MEDIA RELEASE

May 2023: Publication of Ombudsman’s Annual Report into AFP Professional Standards Complaints

Today, the Commonwealth Ombudsman, Iain Anderson, published a report about his Office’s review of the Australian Federal Police’s (AFP) administration of Part V of the *Australian Federal Police Act 1979* (the Act), on professional standards and conduct and practices issues. This report relates to complaints finalised between 1 March 2021 to 28 February 2022.

Part V of the Act sets out the process for how the AFP must record and deal with conduct and practices issues. An AFP conduct issue arises where an AFP appointee may have engaged in conduct that contravenes the AFP professional standards or engaged in corrupt conduct. An AFP practices issue relates to concerns about the practices and procedures of the AFP.

In this report, the Ombudsman makes 3 recommendations, 8 suggestions and 3 better practice suggestions for improvement. The AFP was receptive to the Ombudsman’s findings and undertook to take action to address them.

“I recommended the AFP ensure that it identifies and responds to complaints it receives consistently with the intent of the legislation,” Mr Anderson said. “Additionally, I have recommended the AFP review the handling of a past complaint involving sexual harassment that was administered under its previous practices, with a view to identifying any ways to improve their current administration of complaints involving sexual abuse or sexual harassment. I have also recommended the implementation of regular reporting to the AFP Commissioner on all complaints involving sexual abuse or sexual harassment.”

“I am encouraged by reforms the AFP is making to address ongoing issues my Office identified in previous years,” Mr Anderson said. “This includes findings on the AFP’s performance against timeliness benchmarks, its communication with complainants and the identification and management of conflicts of interest in the administration of its complaints.”

“We will monitor the outcome of these reforms and continue to support the AFP’s work to administer a fair and reasonable complaints process.”

The report can be found on the [Commonwealth Ombudsman website](#).