



Ombudsman
Western Australia

Overview

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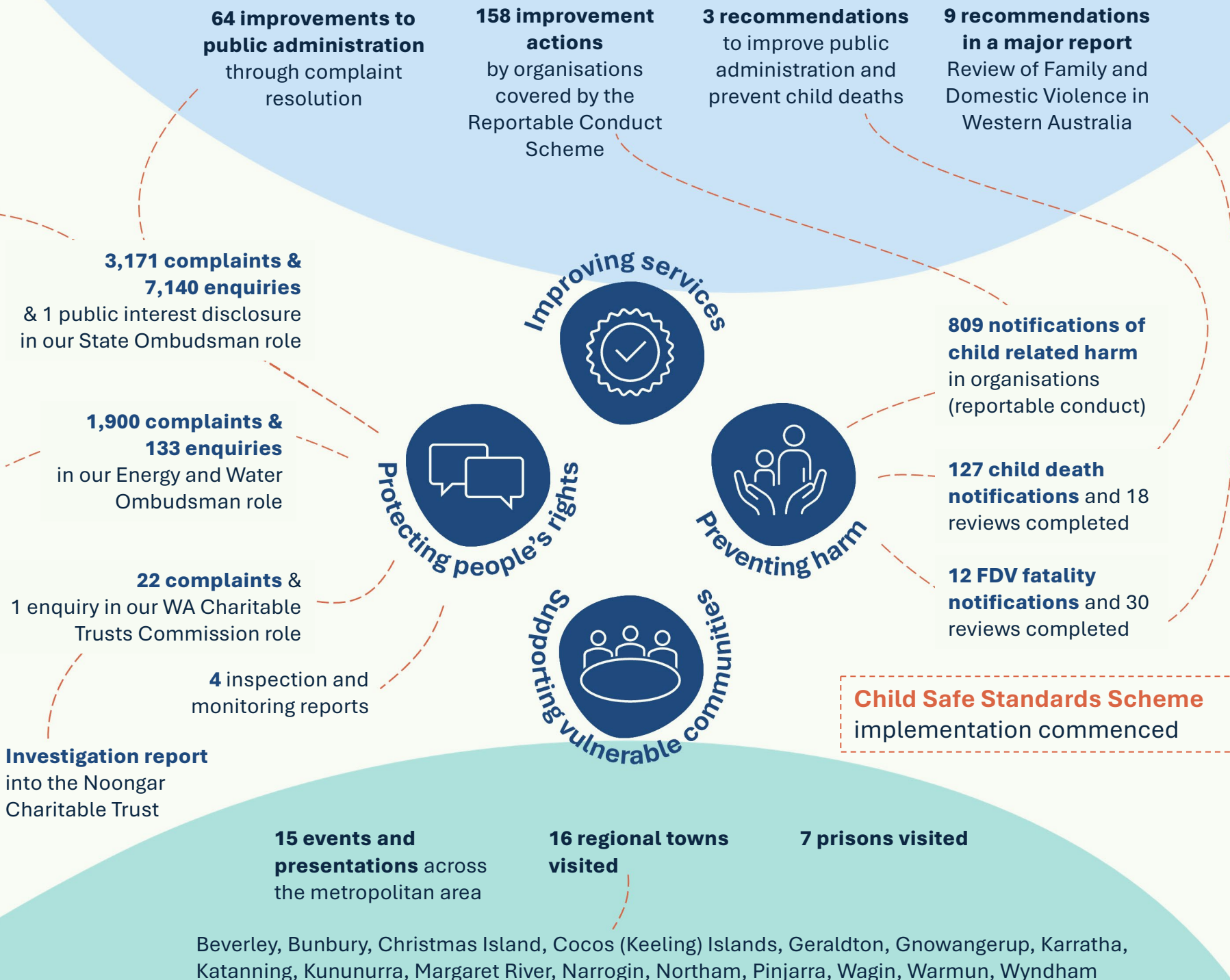
Highlights for 2025-26

30% increase in complaints about public authorities.

Digital transformation and process improvements to maintain services.

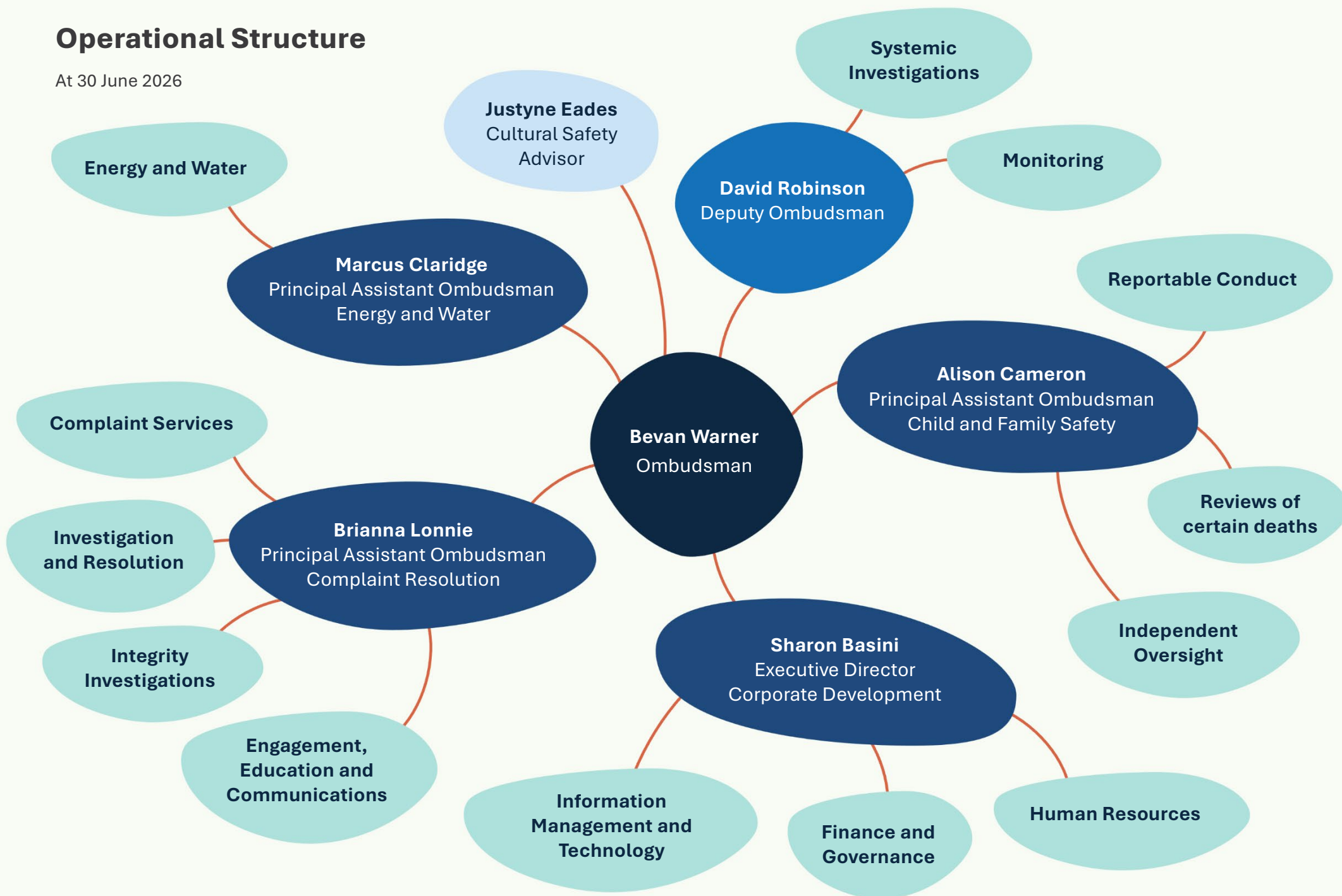
19% increase in complaints about energy and water providers.

Preparing for the **Alternative Electricity Services** scheme



Operational Structure

At 30 June 2026



Leadership team

Bevan Warner, Ombudsman

Appointed in June 2025. Bevan has over 30 years' experience in the public sector, including 10 as Managing Director of Victoria Legal Aid, 11 as General Manager of Legal Aid WA and 5 in senior roles with the WA Aboriginal Affairs Department. Immediately prior to being appointed Ombudsman, Bevan was the CEO of Launch Housing, a Melbourne based community housing organisation dedicated to ending homelessness.

David Robinson, Deputy Ombudsman

Appointed in February 2024. David was previously the Acting Deputy Director General, People, Culture and Standards in the Department of Justice. Prior to that, David spent 20 years at the Corruption and Crime Commission, including eight as Director Operations and 18 months acting as Chief Executive.

Own Motion Investigations and Monitoring branch

Our Own Motion Investigations Team carries out large investigations that generally examine a significant or systemic issue identified from complaints, reviews or oversight roles.

Our Monitoring Team does inspection, monitoring and reporting functions like:

- inspecting telecommunication interceptions records to ensure compliance with legislation;
- monitoring the exercise of police powers on unlawful consorting notices and prohibited insignia; and
- scrutinising the powers relating to protected entertainment precincts.

Brianna Lonnie, Principal Assistant Ombudsman Complaint Resolution

Brianna joined the Ombudsman's office in November 2024. Previously, Brianna worked for Legal Aid WA for 25 years and has extensive experience leading impactful legal and public sector initiatives in justice, advocacy, and public administration.

Complaint Resolution branch

We receive, investigate and resolve complaints about State Government agencies and local government authorities.

Our Complaint Services Team handles enquiries and assesses complaints, with a focus on advice, referral, early resolution and investigation of less complex complaints.

Our Investigations and Resolution Team does informal investigations for lengthy or more complex complaints with a focus on early resolution where possible.

Our Integrity Investigations Team investigates Public Interest Disclosures

(PIDs) complaints, Charitable Trusts Commission complaints and undertakes our Reviews function.

Our Engagement, Education and Communications Team are responsible for media relations, community outreach programs, presentations, websites, social media and publications.

Alison Cameron, Principal Assistant Ombudsman Child and Family Safety

Alison joined the Ombudsman's office in 2017 and was appointed Principal Assistant Ombudsman in November 2023. Admitted to legal practice in 2009, Alison has extensive leadership and front-line experience in child protection practice and systems reform, domestic violence advocacy and administrative law and practice across Australia and Canada.

Reportable Conduct

We receive notifications about allegations of, and convictions for, child related harm (reportable conduct) from organisations about their employees. We monitor, oversee and review the investigations by organisations and look for opportunities for improvement.

We also provide education and advice to organisations about identifying and preventing reportable conduct.

Reviews of certain deaths

We review child deaths and family and domestic violence fatalities and make recommendations to relevant public authorities to prevent or reduce these deaths.

We collate and analyse data on child deaths and family and domestic violence fatalities to identify patterns, trends and systemic issues, informing thematic and cohort reviews that drive evidence-based, system-wide reform

Independent Oversight

The Independent Oversight Team are a project team designing the Child Safe Standards Scheme in Western Australia.

Marcus Claridge, Principal Assistant Energy and Water Ombudsman

Marcus joined the Ombudsman's office in 2011 and commenced in his current role in April 2018. Marcus has over 35 years of regulatory and investigations experience, both within Australia and Asia.

Energy and Water Ombudsman branch

We investigate and resolve complaints about electricity, gas and water providers.

The Intake Team within the Complaint Resolution branch handles the enquiries and referrals to electricity, gas and water providers. The Energy and Water Ombudsman team facilitates resolutions and investigates the complaints.

The costs of the Energy and Water Ombudsman are met by industry. The Energy and Water Ombudsman is governed by an independent Board.

More about the Energy and Water Ombudsman can be found at energyandwater.ombudsman.wa.gov.au

Sharon Basini, Executive Director Corporate Development

Sharon joined the Ombudsman's office in January 2025. Sharon previously worked at the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and has more than 20 years' experience in various corporate services roles including senior roles since 2017.

Corporate Development branch

Corporate Development provides the financial, governance, information technology, records management, and workforce capability functions that enable the office to deliver its statutory responsibilities. As our workload, complexity and functions continue to expand, demand for corporate services has also increased significantly. Corporate capability is essential to maintaining service delivery, implementing reforms, supporting staff wellbeing and delivering new functions effectively.

Justyne Eades, Cultural Safety Advisor

The Cultural Safety Advisor role was vacant at 30 June 2026, as Justyne was being supported to complete supervised legal practice requirements via a secondment to another agency.

In June 2026, our three Aboriginal staff in the Complaint Resolution branch formed a group called 'Moorditj Wirrin' ('strong spirit' in Noongar language). Moorditj Wirrin provides cultural advice on engagement with Aboriginal communities and help advance cultural safety for Aboriginal people who engage with us.

Administered legislation

Principal legislation

The enabling legislation for the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations (Ombudsman) is the [Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1971](#)

Legislation and other instruments governing our functions

Investigating and resolving complaints	Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1971
Reviewing certain deaths	Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1971 Part III, Division 3A and section 16(1).
Reportable Conduct Scheme	Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1971 Part III, Division 3B
Own motion investigations	Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1971 section 16(1).
Western Australian Charitable Trusts Commission	Charitable Trusts Act 2022
Complaints and appeals by overseas students	National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018
Public Interest Disclosures	Public Interest Disclosure Act 2003
Complaints from residents of the Indian Ocean Territories	Indian Ocean Territories (Administration of Laws) Act 1992 Christmas Island Act 1958 (Commonwealth) Cocos (Keeling) Islands Act 1955 (Commonwealth)
Complaints from persons detained under terrorism legislation	Terrorism (Preventative Detention) Act 2006

Inspection of Telecommunications Interception records

[Telecommunications \(Interception and Access\) Act 1979 \(Commonwealth\)](#)
[Telecommunications \(Interception and Access\) Western Australia Act 1996](#)
[Telecommunications \(Interception and Access\) Western Australia Regulations 1996](#)

Scrutiny of police powers in relation to unlawful consorting and prohibited insignia

[Criminal Law \(Unlawful Consorting and Prohibited Insignia\) Act 2021](#)

Scrutiny of powers in relation to Protected Entertainment Precincts

[Liquor Control Act 1988](#)

Other key legislation impacting on our activities

Auditor General Act 2006	Minimum Conditions of Employment Act 1993
Corruption, Crime and Misconduct Act 2003	Procurement Act 2020
Disability Services Act 1993	Public Sector Management Act 1994
Economic Regulation Authority Act 2003	Royal Commissions Act 1968
Equal Opportunity Act 1984	Salaries and Allowances Act 1975
Financial Management Act 2006	State Records Act 2000
Industrial Relations Act 1979	Work Health and Safety Act 2020
Long Service Leave Act 1958	

Performance management framework

Our outcome-based management framework is consistent with the Government goal of Safe, Strong and Fair Communities: Supporting our local and regional communities to thrive.

The framework has been in place for many years and will be reviewed later next year.

Desired outcomes

The public sector of Western Australia is accountable for, and is, improving the standard of administrative decision making and practices, and relevant entities are accountable for, and are, preventing, notifying and dealing with reportable conduct.



Key Effectiveness Indicators

- Where the Ombudsman made recommendations to improve practices or procedures, the percentage of recommendations accepted by agencies.
- Number of improvements to practices or procedures as a result of Ombudsman action.
- Where the Ombudsman made recommendations regarding reportable conduct, the percentage of recommendations accepted by relevant entities.
- Number of actions taken by relevant entities to prevent reportable conduct.

Services provided

Resolving complaints about the decision making of public authorities, improving the standard of public administration, and to oversee and monitor that relevant entities are accountable for, and are, preventing, notifying and dealing with reportable conduct.



Key Efficiency Indicators

- Percentage of allegations finalised within three months.
- Percentage of allegations finalised within 12 months.
- Percentage of allegations on hand at 30 June less than three months old.
- Percentage of allegations on hand at 30 June less than 12 months old.
- Average cost per finalised allegation.
- Average cost per finalised notification of death.
- Average cost per notification of reportable conduct.
- Cost of monitoring and inspection functions.

Summary of performance

Financial performance

Financial targets

	2025-26 Target (a) (‘000)	2025-26 Actual (‘000)	Variance (‘000)
Total cost of services (expense limit) (sourced from Statement of Comprehensive income)	17,194	18,133,	939
Net cost of services (sourced from Statement of Comprehensive income)	14,428	15,128	700
Total equity (b) (sourced from Statement of financial position)	2,780	3,444	644
Agreed salary expense level (c)	11,068	12,569	1,501

Explanations on variances are contained in Note 9 'Explanatory Statement' to the financial statements.

- a) As specified in the 2025-26 Budget Statements and Resource Agreement.
- b) Total equity was higher than budget due to higher-than-expected cash balances and capitalised software development costs at year end.
- c) The salary expense exceeded the target due to a return to normalised staffing levels following a period of high turnover, some one-off severance payments and budget supplementation to plan for the Independent Oversight of Child Safe Organisations.

Full details of financial performance are presented in the [Financial Statements](#).

Key effectiveness performance

	2024-25	2025-26 Target	2025-26 Actual	Variance	Result
Where the Ombudsman made recommendations to improve practices or procedures, the percentage of recommendations accepted by agencies	100%	100%	50%	-50%	 (1)
Number of improvements to practices or procedures as a result of Ombudsman action	57	100	73	-27	 (2)
Where the Ombudsman made recommendations regarding reportable conduct, the percentage of recommendations accepted by relevant entities	Not applicable	100%	Not applicable (3)	Not applicable	
Number of actions taken by relevant entities to prevent reportable conduct	238	150	158	+8	

1. For half of the 18 recommendations made during the 2025-26 financial year, we elected not to confirm with the relevant agencies that they accepted the recommendations during the same year. We will assess the agencies' response to our recommendations in 2026-27.
2. There are fluctuations in improvements each year. This is because the number, nature and outcomes of investigations can vary and are difficult to predict.
3. Our Reportable Conduct Scheme role continues to be educational, focusing on working with organisations to make sure they understand their reporting and investigation responsibilities. Accordingly, although engagement was strong with 158 improvement actions undertaken, we did not make formal recommendations.



For further details, see the [Key Performance Indicators section](#)

Key efficiency performance

	2024-25	2025-26 Target	2025-26 Actual	Variance	Result
Percentage of allegations finalised within three months	93%	95%	84%	-11%	 (4)
Percentage of allegations finalised within 12 months	100%	100%	100%	-	
Percentage of allegations on hand at 30 June less than three months old	85%	90%	60%	-30%	 (4)
Percentage of allegations on hand at 30 June less than 12 months old	100%	100%	100%	-	
Average cost per finalised allegation	\$1,375	\$1,890	\$1,226	-\$664	
Average cost per finalised notification of death	\$14,429	\$14,655	\$12,474	-\$2,181	
Average cost per notification of reportable conduct	\$3,226	\$4,000	\$3,969	-\$31	
Cost of monitoring and inspection functions	\$1,116,054	\$1,176,000	\$1,219,971	+\$43,971	

4. We resolved 19% more complaints (3,278) than last year (2,755) with the same resources. Although we became more efficient, a 30% increase in complaints received, meant there was a deterioration in some timeliness indicators. The combined impact of more cases and quicker resolution of simple cases meant a greater proportion of cases at 30 June were over 3 months old.



For further details, see the [Key Performance Indicators section](#)

Significant issues impacting the agency

Increase in complaints

Since January 2025, we have received a significant and sustained increase in the volume and complexity of complaints. In 2025-26, we received 30% more in-jurisdiction complaints than in the previous year. This has placed ongoing significant pressure on our Complaint Resolution branch and affected the timeliness of complaints. The Complaint Resolution branch has significantly improved various processes to handle the increased volume and finalised more complaints than were received in 2025-26. More information is provided in the [Complaint Resolution section](#).

While process improvements enabled the branch to finalise more complaints than it received, continued growth of this scale cannot be managed indefinitely through efficiencies alone. Additional operational and corporate resources will be required to maintain service standards

AI generated complaints and correspondence

We have observed an increase in complaints that have been generated by artificial intelligence (AI). While the use of AI may improve our accessibility by enabling complaints from vulnerable people who may have struggled otherwise, we have experienced challenges that include complaints becoming unclear and including inaccuracies, incorrect facts and references to legislation that are incorrect or do not exist. These challenges extend to ongoing and persistent AI-generated correspondence that continues after the case has been finalised and requires careful consideration and management.

Changes to the child safety landscape

We are committed to facilitating the implementation of the Child Safe Standards (CSS) in Western Australia and recognise the importance of the CSS in increasing the significance and effectiveness of the Reportable Conduct Scheme. Our outreach work in metropolitan and regional Western Australia focused on increasing awareness of all aspects of child safety in WA, and this will continue in 2026-27.

The Child Safe Standards Scheme represents a significant expansion of our child safeguarding responsibilities. Delivery of the scheme will require specialist operational capability, communications, education, governance, ICT and administrative support.

Investing in our future

Significant work was undertaken to develop [Our Strategy 2026-2029](#) during the year. All staff were involved in identifying our goals and focus areas for the coming three years.

This work represents a range of enhancements to the way we work and new streams of work to improve our services.

A particular focus is continuing our early-stage digital transformation. In 2025-26, this focussed on enhancing our information and communications technology systems, upgrading to the latest versions, rolling out access to Copilot AI for non-decision-making processes, and implementing new business systems.

Delivering these reforms has placed additional demands on corporate teams responsible for finance, governance, human resources, records management, information technology and communications. These functions are essential to supporting frontline service delivery and implementation of new statutory responsibilities.



Student programs

Supporting the next generation

Our student programs continue to play an important role in our work, supporting the practical learning and development of future professionals in Western Australia. In turn, the students bring their skills and new ways of looking at problems to help with meaningful research projects. We endeavour to match students to projects related to their fields of interest. Their work is supervised and integrated into how we improve our services to better serve the community.

Students can apply for our vacation clerkships and through three internship programs. Over the last year, we expanded the opportunities available to students to work with us.

Internships are available through:

- UWA's McCusker Centre for Citizenship Internships
- UWA's Juris Doctor Internship
- Murdoch University's LLB (law) Internship.

Vacation Clerkships are available to law students at any WA University, which is a paid role that runs for four weeks during the university summer vacation. This is advertised on the WA government Jobs Board.

Student placements in 2025-26

Thank you to the 12 students who joined us over the past year:

- Alex Hedman - seasonal clerk
- Alice Law – McCusker intern
- Ana Trost – McCusker intern
- Dara Hart - UWA Juris Doctor
- Declan McCarthy - UWA Juris Doctor
- Edward Sin – McCusker intern
- Erica Cauchi - McCusker intern
- Griffin Davenport - seasonal clerk
- Nishi Jayawickrema - McCusker intern
- Shawn Peppin - Murdoch law
- Sumaya Shimu – McCusker intern
- Zak Spillman – McCusker intern



Image:
Edward Sin, Marketing Intern,
with Lucy Ledger from the
Child & Family Safety Team

Comments from students:



My experience at Ombudsman WA has been incredibly rewarding and has deepened my understanding of public service. I have been able to translate both my lived experiences and analytical skills into meaningful contributions for Western Australia's community.

It has reinforced my motivation to continue challenging myself and pursue a career centred on positive change.

**Ana Trost, Research Intern
Community Engagement**



My internship with Ombudsman WA allowed me to contribute meaningful research work to the Child and Family Safety Team while learning from a genuinely welcoming and cooperative group.

The experience strengthened my analytical skills and deepened my understanding of child protection practice.

**Sumaya Shimu, Research Intern
Child and Family Safety Team**



I enjoyed the whole internship experience as it allowed me to engage in a variety of tasks from various teams and expand my professional skills, as well as gaining a deeper insight on the functions of each department within the Ombudsman.

I really appreciated how close-knit and supportive everyone in the team was. Each person genuinely cared for one another, and this created an environment of warmth and trust. I would highly recommend this internship to fellow students, as it provides valuable experience, practical skills, and meaningful opportunities for growth.

**Edward Sin, Marketing Intern
Reportable Conduct, Communications &
Community Engagement**



I contributed to the research in how the Charitable Trusts Commission can improve its accessibility, in particular for the Aboriginal community. I really enjoyed my time in the office and working in an area which is relatively new.

The team was super helpful and ensured I had every resource to make my time at the Ombudsman a successful one.

**Zak Spillman, Research Intern
Charitable Trusts Team.**



Image: interns Zak Spillman,
Ana Trost and Sumaya Shimu