

**Information Note for
Legislative Council Members' Meeting with The Ombudsman
on 5 December 2001**

**Briefing by The Ombudsman
on the Work of The Ombudsman's Office**

Workload

In the 2000/2001 reporting year, the Office of The Ombudsman received 11,821 enquiries and 3,709 complaints. A total of 3,476 complaints were concluded in the year, of which 50.6% were concluded within three months of receipt while 44% were concluded between three and six months. Within the year, the Office failed to meet its pledge of completing 60% and 40% of its cases within either three months or three to six months. This is due to the fact that complaints are increasingly complex and longer investigation time is required. In addition, there has also been an increase in the number of revived cases whereby complainants either seek a revival of the case because of new developments, or seek review of The Ombudsman's conclusions or challenge her findings.

2. In the first half of the current reporting year (i.e. from mid-May to mid-November 2001), this Office has already received 6,613 enquiries and 2,041 complaints. This Office has also reviewed 103 revived cases in the same period.

Investigations

3. A total of 161 complaints were investigated in 2000/2001, of which 69 (42.9%) were substantiated or partially substantiated. Five direct investigations were completed.

4. The Office has made 190 recommendations during these investigations, including 59 made in connection with direct investigations. The Administration tabled a Government Minute on 28 November 2001 to inform Members of its response to The Ombudsman's recommendations. Over 95% of the recommendations made have either been implemented or accepted for implementation by the Administration.

5. Since May 2001, one direct investigation has been completed and six are still in progress. They are:

	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Date of Announcement</i>	<i>Date of completion</i>
(1)	Direct Investigation into the Procedure for Handling Travellers Suspected of Using False or Otherwise Suspect Travel Documents	29.2.2000	29.6.2001
(2)	Direct Investigation into the Management of Construction Projects by the Housing Authority and the Housing Department	31.5.2000	<i>Investigation underway</i>
(3)	Direct Investigation into the Administrative Arrangements for HKCEE and A-level Examinations	18.5.2001	"
(4)	Direct Investigation into the Anti-smoking Enforcement Mechanism	29.6.2001	"
(5)	Direct Investigation into the SSPA & Relief Mechanism	2.8.2001	"
(6)	Direct Investigation into the HA practices for dealing with missing patients	28.9.2001	"
(7)	Direct Investigation into the funding of sports programmes and activities by the HKSDB	28.9.2001	"

Public Education & Publicity

6. The Office continues its out-reach activities to promote the concept of ombudsmanship through regular publicity and promotion programmes such as press briefings, outreach talks, visits and seminars. In addition, the Office embarked upon a number of new and special projects in the current year, as follows:

- (a) organising seminars to introduce and explain the work of the Office to special target groups such as Yin Ngai Society, assistants to District and Legislative Council members, and frontline social workers;

(b) broadcasting of API and exhibiting publicity posters in local TV / radio stations, on public buses and MTR; and

(c) staging roving exhibitions in MTR stations, shopping centres and Government offices throughout the territory.

7. The Office now accepts complaints lodged by electronic mail following the commencement of the Electronic Transactions Ordinance in January 2000. In the 2000/2001 reporting year, the Office received 201 complaints lodged by electronic mail. Within the first half of the current reporting year, 196 complaints were lodged by electronic mail.

8. The Office began accepting telephone complaints in March 2001. A total of 326 telephone complaints were received in the last reporting year. Action was taken on 218 complaint cases following confirmation of the complaints by the complainants. For the first half of the current reporting year, 551 complaints were lodged by telephone and follow-up action were taken on 333 cases.

Office of The Ombudsman

November 2001