

## **An Information Paper on the Work and Developments of the Office of The Ombudsman**

### **Introduction**

This paper summarizes the work of the Office of The Ombudsman and its recent developments for Members' information.

### **Workload**

2. During the 1998-99 reporting year, this Office received 10 192 enquiries and 4 125 complaints, which represent increases of 35% and 34% respectively over those received in the previous reporting year. Compared to the five-year average prior to the introduction of the direct access system in June 1994, the number of enquiries and complaints had increased by some 14 and 23 folds respectively.

3. This Office continues to receive large numbers of enquiries and complaints in the current reporting year. From July to October 1999, this Office received 3 226 enquiries and 1 108 complaints.

4. A total of 3 828 complaints were concluded in 1998-99, of which 72% were concluded in less than three months upon receipt while 26% were concluded between three to six months.

### **Investigations**

5. A total of 309 complaints were investigated in the year, of which 129 (42%) were concluded to be substantiated or partially substantiated. Seven direct investigations were completed.

6. A total of 287 recommendations culminated from these investigations, including 106 made in connection with direct investigations. The Administration tabled the Government Minute on 3 November 1999 to inform Members of their response to these recommendations. The Ombudsman is happy to note that over 95% of the recommendations made in connection with complaints and all recommendations made in connection with direct investigations have either been implemented or accepted for implementation by the Administration.

7. In the current reporting year up to end November 1999, the Ombudsman has declared six direct investigations, one of which had been completed. They are listed below –

	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Date of Announcement</i>	<i>Date of Completion</i>
(1)	<i>Direct Investigation into the Registration and Inspection of Kindergartens</i>	<i>05.05.99</i>	<i>11.11.99</i>
(2)	<i>Direct Investigation into the Regulatory Mechanism of the Import/Export, Storage and Transportation of Used Motor Vehicles/Cycles and Related Spare Parts</i>	<i>07.07.99</i>	<i>investigation underway</i>
(3)	<i>Direct Investigation into the Regulatory Mechanism for Local Travel Agents for Inbound Tours</i>	<i>16.08.99</i>	<i>-ditto-</i>
(4)	<i>Direct Investigation into the Provision and Management of Private Medical and Dental Clinic Services in Public Housing Estates</i>	<i>16.08.99</i>	<i>-ditto-</i>
(5)	<i>Direct Investigation into the Clearance of Provisional Urban Council Tenants and Licence Holders affected by Land Development Corporation's Development Projects</i>	<i>11.11.99</i>	<i>-ditto-</i>
(6)	<i>Direct Investigation into Selected Issues Concerning the Provision of Retraining Courses by the Employees Retraining Board</i>	<i>11.11.99</i>	<i>-ditto-</i>

## **Finance**

8. Starting April 1999, this Office commenced operation under a one-line-vote system that gives greater flexibility in the deployment of resources for this Office. However, as this is a pilot scheme, quarterly reports are having to be submitted to report on the deployment of resources within the vote.

## **Major Development**

9. The Office has an establishment of 90 posts, of which 79 are filled by civil servants posted from central Government and 11 by contract investigators recruited by this Office. To enhance the independence of this Office, priority is given to planning for eventual delinking from the civil service. This will give greater flexibility in resource management and employment matters for the Office. Preliminary discussions with the Administration indicated no objections in principle to the delinking proposal although details would still have to be formulated and agreed.

### Office of The Ombudsman

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