

Deputy Premier
Attorney-General
Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation
Minister for Small Business, Trade and Consumer Affairs

Level 10, 15 Murray Street, HOBART TAS 7000

GPO Box 123 HOBART TAS 7001

Phone 03 6165 7678

Email Barnett.correspondence@dpac.tas.gov.au



24 November 2025

The Hon Rosemary Armitage MLC
Chair
Legislative Council Select Committee
Estimates B
Email: julie.thompson@parliament.tas.gov.au

Dear Chair

I refer to your correspondence of 17 November requesting a response to the following questions as a result of the Legislative Council Estimates Committee 'B' examination of the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation portfolios and provide the responses below.

Output Group 1.1 – The Office of the Ombudsman

1.1 Decisions on Complaints referred to the Ombudsman and Health Complaints Commissioner and Right to Information

1. Provide details of staff roles across each activity area in the Ombudsman's Office.

Response:

Please see Organisation Chart at Attachment 1.

2. Noting that there were no complaints raised by children to the Official Visitors Scheme in 2024-25, how many complaints were raised by children in each in the three years previous to that?

Response:

Examination of Ministerial Reports for the three (3) reporting years prior to the 2024-25 Annual Report provides the following:

2023-24:

One (1) report of a complaint from a child in the Mental Health Inpatient Unit of the Royal Hobart Hospital (Complaint communicated to the Nurse Unit Manager and managed through them).

One (1) report of an Official Visitor concern regarding the care of a child in the High Care Unit of Spencer Unit at Northwest Regional Hospital (patient was a NDIS admission with complex needs and the restricted environment of the HCU was considered the safest treatment space within the hospital).

2022-23: No complaints or concerns reported

2021-22: No complaints or concerns reported*

*Please note that the 2021-22 reporting period was prior to the application of Tranche 2 changes to the *Mental Health Act 2013* which provided the right for a child patient undergoing treatment under the Act to make a complaint to Official Visitors “regardless of whether the patient has the consent of a parent, or guardian, to make the complaint” (Section 161 (1A)- *Mental Health Act 2013*). This may have contributed to the lack of complaints prior to 2022-23.

Please note that Mental Health Official Visitors are only authorised under the Act to visit “approved facilities”. Most child mental health patients are cared for in paediatric units, and as such do not appear on patients within “approved facilities”. Without changes to designate paediatric mental health spaces within the existing hospital environments, Official Visitors are limited to only child complaints received by complaint form or phone.

3. *In the 2024-25 year, were there fewer instances of children being visited in mental health facilities by the Official Visitors Scheme than in recent years?*

Response:

In 2024-25, Mental Health Official Visitors made the visits required under the *Mental Health Act 2013* to the following approved facilities:

- The Royal Hobart Hospital, including the Mental Health Inpatient Unit, the Mental Health Short Stay Unit and the Emergency Department
- Roy Fagan Centre
- Millbrook Rise Centre
- Launceston General Hospital, including the Northside Clinic and the Emergency Department
- North-West Regional Hospital, including the Spencer Clinic and the Emergency Department
- Wilfred Lopes Centre

In addition, Official Visitors made 5 ad hoc visits to facilities where a complaint had been received outside of the monthly meeting schedule but required a physical visit to progress.

In each case, any child patients in the facilities, were included in the conduct of the visit and any complaints received, referred and reported to the Principal Official visitor. Complaints received by Official Visitors are formally reported, collated and actioned.

Any potential contravention of the Act is examined and escalated into the appropriate level of Tasmanian Mental Health Service management. These “preliminary enquiries” are documented separately and reported through the Principal Official Visitor, to the Minister and the Chief Psychiatrist.

There were not fewer instances of children being visited in 2024-25 when compared to recent year, as the incidence of child patient visits and child patient complaints is predicated on a child patient being detained under the Act in an “approved facility” which is uncommon.

Thank you for writing to me about these important matters, I hope this information assists.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Guy Barnett', with a horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Hon Guy Barnett MP
Deputy Premier
Attorney-General
Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation
Minister for Small Business, Trade and Consumer Affairs

Attachments

1. Ombudsman and Health Complaints Commissioner Organisation Chart

*not permanently funded

Ombudsman and Health Complaints Commissioner 350316 – SCH04 - 1 FTE

Deputy Ombudsman - 357555 – SE501 - 1 FTE									
Charterisation	Right to Information	Energy	Corporate	Health Complaints	Custodial Inspector	National Preventative Mechanism	Official Visitors		
Principal Officer Ombudsman 356325 Band 5 - 1 FTE	Principal Officer RTI 357151 Band 5 - 1 FTE	Principal Officer Energy 356538 Band 6 - 1 FTE	Business Manager 355002 Band 7 - 1 FTE	Principal Officer Health 350317 Band 6 - 1 FTE	Principal Inspection Officer 356852 Band 8 - 1 FTE	Director Office of the NPM 357823 Band 8 - 1 FTE	Manager Official Visitors 356152 Band 6 - 0.6 FTE		
Senior Investigation Officer 354954 Band 6 - 1 FTE	Senior Investigation and Review Officer 356218 Band 6 - 1 FTE	Investigation Officer 357223 Band 5 - 0.6 FTE	Business Services Coordinator 356892 Band 4 - 1 FTE	Senior Conciliation Officer 357573 Band 7 - 0.6 FTE	Assistant Principal Inspection Officer 357605 Band 7 - 1 FTE		Program Admin Officer 356156 Band 3 - 0.6 FTE		
Senior Investigation Officer (PID) 357654 Band 6 - 1 FTE	Investigation & Review Officer 357698 Band 5 - 1 FTE	Investigation Officer 354854 Band 5 - 1 FTE	Executive Officer 356476 Band 4 - 0.8 FTE	Senior Investigation Officer 355989 Band 6 - 1 FTE	Senior Inspection Officer 356880 Band 6 - 1 FTE				
Intake and Investigation Officer 357629 Band 5 - 0.8 FTE	Investigation & Review Officer 357725 Band 5 - 1 FTE	Administrative Officer 355516 Band 3 - 0.8 FTE	Administrative Officer 356700 Band 3 - 0.6 FTE	Senior Investigation Officer 355612 Band 6 - 1 FTE	Admin & Research Officer 357456 Band 5 - 1 FTE				
Intake and Investigation Officer 356533 Band 5 - 1 FTE	Intake and Assessment Officer 356218 Band 4 - 1 FTE	Administrative Officer 350454 Band 3 - 0.6 FTE	Administrative Officer 356408 Band 5 - 1 FTE	Intake and Assessment Officer 357694 Band 4 - 1 FTE					