
Commonwealth Ombudsman

The Ombudsman Through the Looking Glass

Arrangements are currently being made for the holding of a seminar at the Australian National University Law School on 7 September 1985 entitled 'The Ombudsman Through the Looking Glass'. The seminar will attempt to bring Ombudsman experience and the theory of the Ombudsman's role together in a public forum. The evolution of the office, future directions, contribution to administrative fairness, and its successes and failures will be examined from a variety of perspectives.

International Ombudsman Consultative Committee Meeting

As noted in the last issue of Admin Review, Australia is scheduled to host the Fourth International Ombudsman Conference in 1988, the Australian bicentennial year. As Chairman of the International Ombudsman Consultative Committee ('the IOCC'), the Commonwealth Ombudsman presided over a meeting of the Committee held in Canberra on 15-17 April 1985 which was attended by Ombudsmen from Canada, Fiji, Ghana, Jamaica, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland and West Germany. Taking advantage of the overlap of membership with the IOCC, the Board of Directors of the International Ombudsman Institute met in Sydney on 18-19 April 1985.

Recent Address

The Ombudsman gave the second Sir Samuel Griffith Memorial Lecture at the National Press Club, Canberra, on 1 May 1985 concerning the need for greater awareness and utilisation by the legal profession of the Commonwealth administrative law reforms introduced in the last decade.

STATISTICAL TRENDS

The table below shows a substantial increase in the number of complaints received in the first six months of 1985 compared with the first six months of 1984. As noted in the last issue of Admin Review, written complaints generally tend to involve more complex issues and require greater investigative resources to be spent on them than on oral complaints.

No. of Complaints Received/On Hand

1985	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
Complaints received:						
Oral	1486 (82%)	1518 (84%)	1588 (82%)	1506 (81%)	1560 (80%)	1608 (78%)
Written	327 (18%)	288 (16%)	354 (18%)	350 (19%)	392 (20%)	442 (22%)
TOTAL	<u>1813</u>	<u>1806</u>	<u>1942</u>	<u>1856</u>	<u>1952</u>	<u>2050</u>
Written Complaints on hand	1964	1932	1903	1908	1918	1929

1984	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
Complaints received:						
Oral	1325 (86%)	1525 (86%)	1557 (86%)	1360 (90%)	1455 (79%)	1359 (84%)
Written	217 (14%)	243 (14%)	256 (14%)	155 (10%)	385 (21%)	253 (16%)
TOTAL	<u>1542</u>	<u>1768</u>	<u>1813</u>	<u>1515</u>	<u>1840</u>	<u>1612</u>
Written Complaints on hand	1682	1783	1791	1730	1789	1806

The Courts

Scope of Review Under the AD(JR) Act

In Australian Film Commission v Mabey (12 April 1985) an appeal was allowed by the Full Federal Court from a decision of a single judge. The primary judge quashed a decision terminating the respondent's employment on the grounds of denial of natural