

 **Ombudsman**
Kaitiaki Mana Tangata

Pūrongo-ā-tau Annual Report

2024/2025

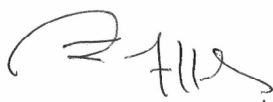
Kaitiaki Mana Tangata Aotearoa | Ombudsman New Zealand
for the year ended 30 June 2025

Presented to the House of Representatives
pursuant to section 44 of the Public Finance Act 1989

Tuia kia ōrite • Fairness for all

Mr Speaker

I submit to you my report for the year 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025.



John Allen, Chief Ombudsman

2024/2025

Pūrongorongo o te Kaitiaki Mana Tangata

Report of the Ombudsman for the year ended 30 June 2025

Presented to the House of Representatives pursuant to section 29 of the Ombudsmen Act 1975

I āta whakairotia ngā āhuatanga ahurea o te PĪTAU-A-MANAIA me te Tohu o te PAPA mā te whakairo matihiko i Ariki Creative i Ōtautahi e Taane Flanagan, kia whakamahia motuhakehia e te Tari a Te Kaitiaki Mana Tangata. Ko te manatārua me ngā tika o te moko kei roto i te PĪTAU-A-MANAIA me te Tohu o te PAPA nā te Kaitiaki Mana Tangata, ā, i whakamanatia hei whakamahi mā te Tari a Te Kaitiaki Mana Tangata.

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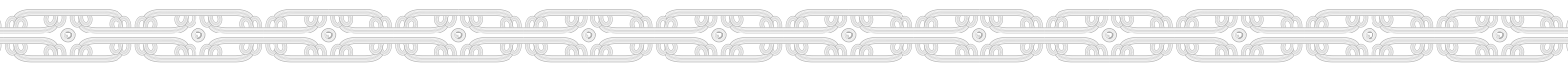
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Introduction

I began my term in March this year with a clear focus on the future. We are living in a time of uncertainty and change, and this is impacting trust and confidence in government. While the public expect greater transparency, fairness and inclusion from government, the overall perception of openness, integrity, and trust in government is declining. Not surprisingly in this environment the demand for our services is increasing and managing this is requiring us to explore new ways of operating and new technologies to drive efficiency.

As an Officer of Parliament, the Ombudsman contributes to society through a range of activities aimed at:

- helping to improve administrative practice when the government is taking action and making decisions that affect people;
- promoting government accountability, integrity and transparency; and
- safeguarding the rights of people.

Our oversight can help to identify and resolve problems, as well as provide examples of good practice when we identify them. Ultimately, we can help to ensure public trust in government and that New Zealand is a safe and stable place to live and do business. But we can't make an impact unless we are well equipped to identify and respond to issues in a timely way.

We managed increasing demand this year through sustained effort and trialling new approaches and systems. However, while we completed a record number of complaints, 30 percent more than last year, our timeliness has suffered. Our focus is very much on resolving cases more quickly, acting proportionately, and identifying and addressing systemic issues. Our initiatives in this space are delivering positive results.

We also carried out a number of proactive interventions, including investigations of central and local government agencies' official information practices, with good engagement from agencies meaning we are helping to lift good practice in this space.

We continued to engage actively with our stakeholders, both public and government. Our outreach and engagement throughout the country has seen some increase in awareness amongst Māori, Asian people and young people this year, although this remains lower than our overall public awareness which remains steady at 66 percent. Our social media presence is also growing, but there is still much more we can do to

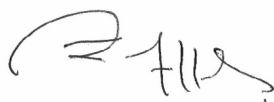
make our work visible. We are also building relationships across government, and this year we continued to influence good administrative practice, with improvements made as a result of our submissions on Cabinet papers, Bills and policies, and our advice and guidance to agencies.

In an environment of growing public awareness of protected disclosures, we managed a significant increase in the volume and complexity of protected disclosures and enquiries, completing 26 percent more matters than last year. We also carried out some significant interventions to address serious wrongdoing.

We also continued our work to monitor implementation of the Disability Convention and work with government and detention facilities to identify and address long-term challenges that are common across many of the places of detention we examine.

I thank all our people for their dedication, passion, achievement and engagement this year.

Finally, this year we farewelled Chief Ombudsman Peter Boshier at the end of March. Peter completed his term by publishing [The Way I See It](#), his report on leaving office, and his [Reflections on the OIA](#). This annual report is a testament to Peter's hard work and the significant legacy he leaves behind. It shows the rich tapestry of interventions and the enduring impacts to improve good government that he has achieved. Thank you, Peter, for your service.



John Allen
Chief Ombudsman



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2024/25 at a glance

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The purpose of this part is to provide, at a glance, information about each of our impact and output areas.

Perceptions of participation, openness and integrity

While public awareness of rights appears to be rising, there is an overall trend of declining perceptions of government openness and integrity.

- 59 percent of people had high trust in the public sector, consistent with last year.¹
- 46 percent of people were aware of the official information legislation, up from 43 percent last year.²
- 56 percent of people who requested information received the information they asked for, down from 70 percent last year.³
- New Zealand scored 'fair' for the ability for the public to participate in government. Whilst last year New Zealand scored fair for this metric as well, the score underpinning the categorisation of 'fair' decreased from 7.7 in 2023/24 to 6.4 this year.⁴
- New Zealand scored 'fair' for freedom from torture and ill treatment, down slightly from 6.6 last year to 6.4 this year.^{5 6}
- 84 percent of people would report serious wrongdoing to their employer, an increase from 82 percent last year.⁷
- New Zealand was ranked the fourth least corrupt country, a decrease from third last year.⁸

Inform the public to enable them to take constructive action to realise their rights

Our online and in-person outreach and engagement has seen an increase in awareness amongst Māori, Asian people and young people this year, although this remains low relative to our general public awareness which remains steady at 66 percent. Our social media presence is growing, which may help raise awareness amongst harder to reach populations.

1 Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission administers the [Kiwis Count survey](#) to measure the trust and confidence of New Zealanders in the Public Services.

2 Based on a commissioned domestic market research survey.

3 Above, note 2

4 Using [the Human Rights Measurement Initiative](#) – Rights Tracker, which quantifies if New Zealand has achieved the rights specified in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights.

5 Above, note 4

6 Interpretation of scores: Good (8-10), Fair (6-8), Bad (3.5-6), Very bad (0.3.5).

7 Based on a commissioned domestic market research survey.

8 Using the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index to track perceptions of public trust in government in New Zealand.

- Made 424 external resources and presentations available to the public.
- Launched teaching resources to support civics learning for students from years 1 to 10.
- Social media platforms had 140,852 views.
- Carried out 92 engagements with a wide range of people and organisations, including 17 hapū, iwi and Māori organisations, 18 ethnic community organisations, 13 Disability and Deaf organisations, and 23 general providers.
- 89 percent of people had confidence in accessing our services following our engagements.

Improve public sector capability to do its work and make decisions

We continued to influence good administrative practice in government, with improvements made as a result of our submissions on Cabinet papers, Bills and policies, and our advice and guidance to agencies.

- Commented on 45 legislative, policy, or administrative proposals.
- Provided advice to public sector agencies on 359 occasions.
- Provided 30 speeches, presentations and learning sessions for public sector agencies.
- 96 percent of learning participants said the information provided would help them in their work.
- Published 36 new or updated guides, case notes and opinions.
- Reached 940 officials across 137 agencies through Te Puna Mātauranga, our eLearning platform for public sector agencies.
- 278 full course completions and 2,290 module completions in Te Puna Mātauranga.

Formal consultation to assist public sector agencies to make specific decisions

We supported good decision-making through formal consultations.

- Responded to 18 consultations on applications for authorised access to personal information on the motor vehicle register.
- Advised the Cabinet Office on the regular release of information from the ministerial conflicts of interest register.

Enable serious wrongdoing to be disclosed and investigated and whistleblowers protected

In an environment of growing public awareness of protected disclosures, we managed an ongoing increase in the volume and complexity of protected disclosures and enquiries. We also completed some significant interventions to address serious wrongdoing.

We developed new guidance for organisations on managing protected disclosures, including effective processes to encourage employees to speak out, protect them from retaliation, and keep their identities confidential.

- Completed 278 protected disclosures and enquiries.
- Published two new protected disclosures guides.
- 67 percent of people would look to the Ombudsman for advice about serious wrongdoing.
- 48 percent of people thought they would be safe if they reported serious wrongdoing.

Break down the barriers that prevent disabled people from participating equally in society

We continued our work to monitor implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Disability Convention) and address issues through feedback and submissions, and to ensure accessibility of our information and services.

- Published 36 new or updated resources.
- Translated eight Ombudsman pamphlets into New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) and alternative formats.
- Alongside our Independent Monitoring Mechanism (IMM) partners⁹ developed a draft Workplan to monitor the implementation of the Disability Convention.

⁹ The Ombudsman is part of the *Independent Monitoring Mechanism* protecting and monitoring implementation in New Zealand of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. The Ombudsman, Te Kāhui Tika Tangata Human Rights Commission and the Disabled People's Organisations Coalition form the Independent Monitoring Mechanism (IMM) under Article 33 of the Disability Convention.

Improve the conditions and treatment of people in detention

We continued to work with government and detention facilities to identify and address long term challenges that are common across many of the places of detention we examine, including capacity pressures, staffing shortages, substandard material conditions, insufficient training and resources, overly restrictive practices, and poor record keeping.

- Visited 121 places of detention where people are not free to leave at will.
- 100 visits to places of detention were unannounced.
- Made 214 recommendations, of which 95 percent were accepted.
- Reported on an examination of the Prisoners of Extreme Risk Unit.
- Published a thematic Report on Aged Care Monitoring.

Ensure official information is increasingly available and not unlawfully refused

We resolved and investigated (Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) and Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA)) complaints, and investigated the practices of central and local government agencies, to help ensure the appropriate operation of the official information legislation, enhance public trust and confidence in government, and increase the availability of official information.

We effectively managed increasing demand, through sustained effort and trialling new approaches and systems. Our focus is on resolving cases more quickly, acting proportionately, and addressing systemic issues.

- Received 2,554¹⁰ complaints concerning official information matters, 15 percent more than last year.
- Completed 2,858 official information complaints, 34 percent more than last year.
- Achieved a complaint clearance rate of 112 percent.
- Obtained 1,031 remedies for the benefit of an individual or public administration, through resolution or investigation.
- Formed 857 opinions and made recommendations in 162 complaints, all of which were accepted.
- Quality standards remained high, although timeliness was an ongoing challenge.
- Completed seven proactive investigations into how seven central government agencies were meeting their timeliness obligations under the OIA. Also initiated and completed proactive investigations into the official information practices of five local government agencies. The combined 12 agencies accepted 16 recommendations and 320 action points for improvement to their practices.

¹⁰ Includes complaints under the Official Information Act and the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act.

Identify flawed public sector decision-making and processes and how to resolve them

We resolved and investigated complaints under the Ombudsmen Act (OA) about the administrative conduct of public sector agencies, and undertook proactive interventions to identify and correct administrative deficiencies and help improve government administration and decision-making.

We effectively managed increasing demand through sustained effort and trialling new approaches and systems. Our focus is on resolving cases more quickly, acting proportionately, and addressing systemic issues.

- Received 5,269 OA complaints and 4,935 enquiries concerning OA matters, a record number.
- Completed 5,305 OA complaints, a record amount and 28 percent more than last year.
- Achieved a complaint clearance rate of 101 percent.
- Obtained 557 remedies for the benefit of an individual or public administration, through resolution or investigation.
- Formed 636 opinions and made recommendations in 98 complaints, of which 99.5 percent were accepted.
- Quality standards remained high, although timeliness was an ongoing challenge.

Learn from, and assist to develop, international best practice

We gained insight from our international colleagues to help inform our work practices, and worked with them to lift regional and international best practice.

- Responded to 65 requests for collaboration with overseas Ombudsmen and integrity institutions.
- Facilitated and hosted 16 international initiatives and delegations.
- Ten resources and publications for overseas stakeholders were produced or updated.
- Engaged with Ombudsmen and integrity agencies across 19 Pacific and South-East Asian countries.
- Alongside the Cook Island's Ombudsman, delivered the *Regional Workshop: Being an Effective Investigator* in Fiji, with participants from eight organisations in the Pacific.



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Background

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Nature and scope of the Ombudsman's functions

The Ombudsman is an Officer of Parliament, and is responsible to Parliament and independent of the Government.

Purpose

The Ombudsman's overall purpose is to investigate, review, and inspect conduct and decision-making and provide advice and guidance to ensure people are treated fairly.

Functions

The Ombudsman's functions are to:

- inform the public to enable them to take constructive action when they have concerns;
- improve public sector capability to do its work and make decisions;
- respond to formal consultations that assist public sector agencies to make specific decisions;
- deal with requests for advice and guidance about alleged serious wrongdoing, and investigate if necessary;¹¹
- protect and monitor disability rights;¹²
- monitor and examine places of detention to prevent torture or other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment;¹³
- review, investigate, and resolve complaints about decisions on requests for access to official information;¹⁴
- monitor general compliance and good practice by public sector agencies in managing and responding to official information requests;¹⁵
- resolve and investigate complaints about decision-making and conduct in the public sector;¹⁶

11 Under the Protected Disclosures (Protection of Whistleblowers) Act 2022.

12 The Ombudsman is part of the *Independent Monitoring Mechanism* protecting and monitoring implementation in New Zealand of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*.

13 The Ombudsman is a *National Preventive Mechanism* under the Crimes of Torture Act 1989. This Act fulfils New Zealand's responsibilities under the *United Nations Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture*

14 Under the Official Information Act 1982 and the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987.

15 Through investigation under the Ombudsmen Act 1975.

16 Under the Ombudsmen Act. Including some organisations providing services on behalf of government, such as Oranga Tamariki care or custody providers.

- contribute to systemic improvement by identifying, resolving, and investigating concerns with public sector administration and decision-making;¹⁷ and
- learn from, and assist to develop, international best practice.

Contribution

The Ombudsman's role is to provide Parliament and the public with an independent and impartial check on:

- the quality, fairness and integrity of administrative conduct and decision-making;
- the conditions and treatment of people in detention, and the prevention of torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; and
- the implementation of the Disability Convention.

Ombudsman interventions help to reduce unfairness and inefficiencies caused by deficient processes. They also support transparency, accountability and anti-corruption in our democratic society, helping to make New Zealand a safe and stable place to live and do business.

What is the extent of our oversight?

We have oversight of approximately 4,000 agencies in the public sector, including:

- government departments and ministries;
- local authorities;
- crown entities;
- state-owned enterprises;
- tertiary education institutions
- school boards; and
- Ministers of the Crown and the Police (in relation to decisions on requests for official information).

We also have:

- oversight of 87 Oranga Tamariki contracted care or custody providers.
- the designation to monitor and inspect private sector facilities funded by and/or accountable to the public sector in the detention of aged care recipients and those in isolation or quarantine; and
- the role to provide information and guidance to any person (including private sector organisations) on protected disclosures.

¹⁷ Under the Ombudsmen Act.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi | The Treaty of Waitangi

We acknowledge the fundamental constitutional status of Te Tiriti o Waitangi | The Treaty of Waitangi¹⁸ (Te Tiriti) and tikanga as a source of law in New Zealand. We aim to incorporate Te Tiriti and tikanga into our work in the following ways:

- by ensuring the Crown is acting consistently with Te Tiriti and tikanga when undertaking our oversight functions;
- by ensuring our processes, practices, and decisions are consistent with Te Tiriti (as appropriate for an entity outside of the Crown)¹⁹ and tikanga;
- by engaging Māori to understand their views when considering matters that affect Māori; and
- by ensuring te ao Māori is authentically and appropriately applied in overseeing any Māori entities and non-governmental organisations.

Strengthening Inclusion

Fairness for all means that our services and information must be available to all New Zealanders, and that we have measures in place to ensure and promote inclusion. We also need to ensure we align with the guiding principles of Te Tiriti and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

We are committed to breaking down any barriers that may prevent disabled people from engaging equitably with us. Our vision is to be fully accessible, inclusive in employment processes, and to support disabled people to understand and engage with the services we provide.

We are also fully committed to embedding an understanding of te ao Māori within all our work. Last year, we launched [Te Rautaki Māori a Kaitiaki Mana Tangata](#), the Ombudsman's te ao Māori Strategy. This year, the focus was on implementing Te Rautaki Māori a Kaitiaki Mana Tangata through a three-year plan, so as to continue incorporating te ao Māori, Te Tiriti and tikanga Māori into the Ombudsman's work. Specific initiatives include:

- a te ao Māori cultural capability programme for staff;
- an operational practice improvement programme; and
- outreach to Māori as part of a wider community engagement programme.

We have also maintained our focus on engaging with a range of diverse communities, including Pacific and Asian communities.

¹⁸ We acknowledge there are two texts with different meanings.

¹⁹ The Ombudsman's status as an Officer of Parliament means we are not a 'Crown' Treaty partner, but the Courts are increasingly expecting any entities that perform public functions to act in line with Te Tiriti, reflecting its constitutional importance. Our role and institutional independence from the Crown means that there may be particular contexts where the Crown's Treaty obligations do not apply in the same terms to our work.

The Way I See It

In March 2025, Chief Ombudsman Peter Boshier completed his term as New Zealand's eighth Chief Ombudsman. Before leaving office he published [The Way I See It](#), a report sharing his thoughts on the jurisdiction and constitutional position of the Chief Ombudsman in New Zealand.

The report covered wide ranging issues such as the importance of the Chief Ombudsman's independence from the government, the importance of integrating a te ao Māori and disability rights lens into the Chief Ombudsman's work, and the growth in protected disclosures, to name a few.

The report highlighted the role of the Chief Ombudsman in a time of crisis, including lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic and recent weather events. Mr Boshier recounted the importance of continuing to monitor places of detention during times of crisis, to ensure people's fundamental human rights are not unjustifiably limited. He also reflected on the importance of the official information legislation, and the mechanisms available within the Acts to respond to pressures on public sector agencies, whilst enabling the public to have access to information that impacts their lives.

Mr Boshier reflected that, overall, he found agencies responsive to his investigations and willing to accept and implement his recommendations. He did also note some of the challenges he had observed for some agencies to make real and effective change, both generally in terms of good administrative practice and in relation to their official information responsibilities. At the same time, he referred to some requesters who may not be acting in the spirit of the official information legislation and were overwhelming the system. Mr Boshier questioned whether a few more tools should be made available to address poor behaviour on both sides.

Mr Boshier concluded with a discussion on the future of the Office, noting the need to innovate and adopt new approaches and technology.

Outcomes sought by the Ombudsman

Our high-level outcomes, aimed at achieving our goal of fairness for all, are:

- there is a high level of public trust in government;
- Parliament is assured robust and independent oversight is taking place;
- people’s rights are respected, protected, and fulfilled; and
- New Zealand contributes to regional stability and supports integrity institutions.

The framework below demonstrates the linkages between the services we deliver through our outputs, the impacts of these services, and the outcomes the Ombudsman aims to achieve.

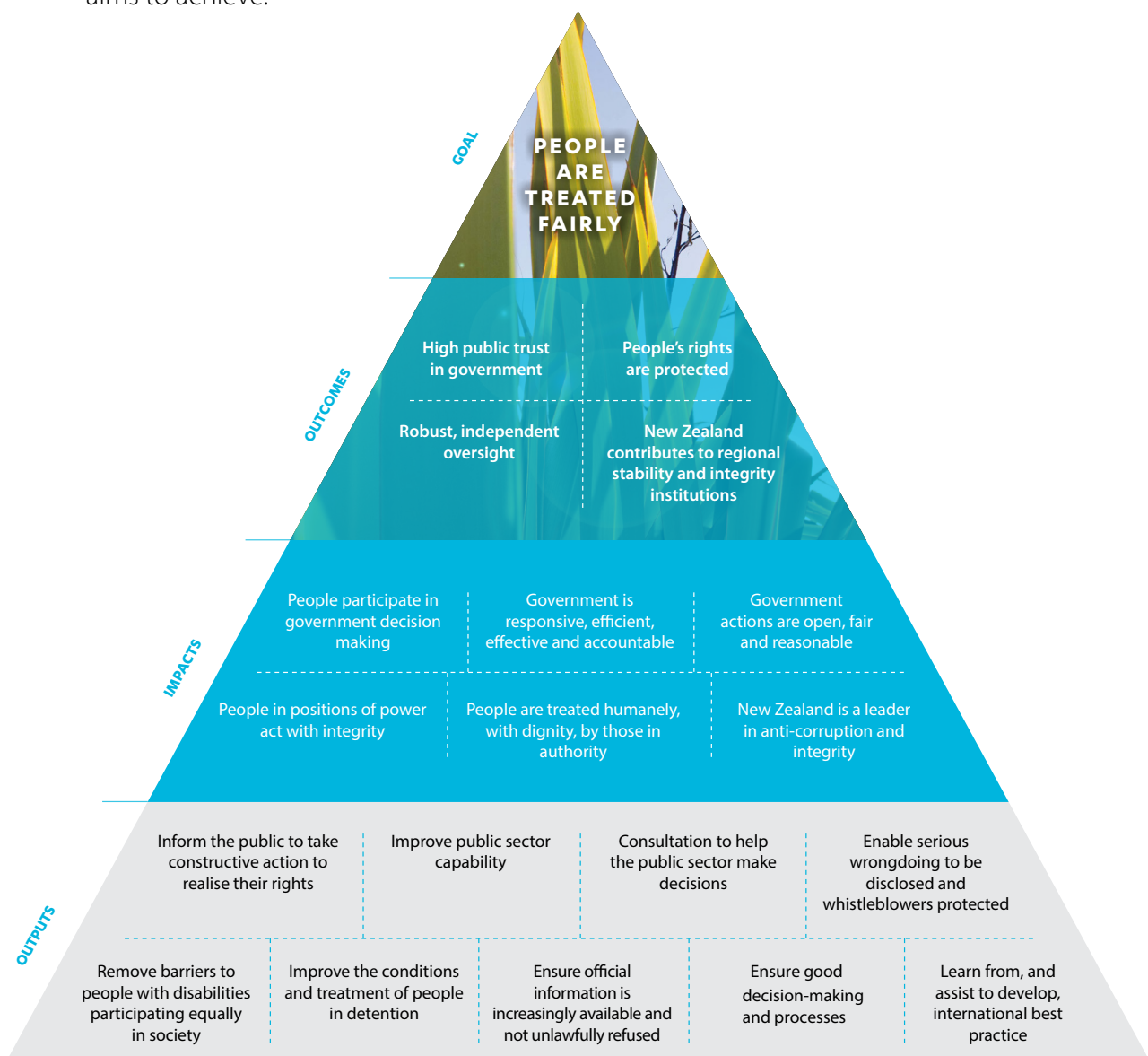


Figure 1: Ombudsman Outcomes Framework.

[See Appendix 1 for text alternative version of this diagram.](#)

Impacts

To achieve the high-level outcomes set out in the above framework, we seek to make an impact in a number of areas.

Impact 1: People are able to participate in government decision-making

In a modern democracy, the public must be able to participate in government decision-making. This is achieved in various ways, including through greater openness, fairness, and transparency of government information and decision-making. Parliament has tasked the Ombudsman with investigating the administrative conduct of public sector agencies and their decisions. Proactive interventions and investigation of complaints can help ensure information is made available to the public, and that decision-making is fair and transparent.

Impact 2: Government is responsive, efficient, effective, and accountable

The Ombudsman provides independent oversight through powers to investigate, review, and inspect. Independent oversight assists agencies to identify and correct deficiencies and promotes greater accountability for the decisions made. Improving administration and decision-making will result in better outcomes for the public.

Impact 3: Government actions, systems, processes, and legislation are open, fair, and reasonable

A fair, reasonable, and open government is fundamental to our society. Well-designed systems, processes, and legislation provide a solid foundation. Parliament has charged the Ombudsman with providing proactive advice, guidance, and learning to help lift public sector performance. Targeted interventions can assist to improve government actions from the outset.

Impact 4: People in positions of power act with integrity

People in positions of power have a responsibility to act with integrity. Dishonesty and corruption have no place in New Zealand. They undermine public trust and are contrary to the ethos of treating people fairly. The Ombudsman has the legislated function to promote and protect whistleblowing, provide information and guidance, and investigate serious wrongdoing. Having mechanisms like these to expose and investigate serious wrongdoing is essential.

Impact 5: People are treated humanely and with dignity and respect by those in authority

Everyone should be treated humanely, and with dignity and respect. New Zealand has recognised this by signing and ratifying various international human rights conventions. As such we, as a country, have a responsibility to ensure our words match our deeds by monitoring how people are treated. The Ombudsman has been designated a key role under United Nations conventions to monitor the rights of disabled people and the treatment of those in certain places of detention.

Impact 6: New Zealand is a leader in promoting good governance, anti-corruption, and integrity

Ombudsmen around the world have a key role in acting as integrity institutions. We work with international Ombudsmen colleagues to develop, share, and learn from best practice, which can then inform our work in New Zealand.

Impact measures

We use a number of market research surveys and third-party research initiatives to monitor how New Zealand is viewed or rated against the concepts and ideals behind these impacts.

As discussed below, the results for some of these measures have dropped in 2024/25. While the public appear to be expecting greater transparency, fairness and inclusion from government, there is an overall trend of declining perceptions of government openness and integrity. This suggests we need to continue our efforts to support good governance, transparency, and accountability, in a considered and meaningful way. The key actions we have taken in this respect in 2024/25 are discussed under our nine output areas in [Part 4](#) (with detailed statistics in [Parts 6](#) and [7](#)).

Impacts 1, 3 and 4

For impacts 1, 3 and 4, we track public perceptions of participation, openness, and integrity through domestic market research surveys. These commissioned surveys reflect a nationally representative sample of New Zealanders.

The first survey considers access to official information. In 2024/25, 46 percent of those surveyed were aware of the official information legislation.²⁰ In addition, 56 percent of those who requested information received the information they asked for—down from 70 percent in 2023/24.

The second survey considers whistleblowing. In 2024/25, 84 percent of those surveyed would report serious wrongdoing to their employer.²¹

²⁰ An increase from 43 percent in 2023/24.

²¹ An increase from 82% in 2023/24.

Impacts 1 and 5

For impacts 1 and 5 we use the [Human Rights Measurement Initiative – Rights Tracker](#) to quantify how New Zealand uses its available resources to progressively achieve ‘the full realisation of the rights’ specified in the [International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights](#). We track where New Zealand sits within the fair to good range (6 to 10) for the ability of the public to participate in government, and freedom from torture and ill treatment. In 2024/25, New Zealand scored 6.4 (fair) for the ability of the public to participate in government—down from 7.7 in 2023/24. New Zealand also scored 6.4 (fair) for freedom from torture and ill treatment.²²

Impacts 2 and 3

For impacts 2 and 3 we use the [Kiwis Count](#) survey to track the experience of trust in the public sector.²³ On average, 59 percent of New Zealanders had high trust in the public sector brand based on their personal experience in 2024/25.²⁴

Impacts 4 and 6

For impacts 4 and 6 we use the [Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index](#) which measures public service probity,²⁵ to track public perceptions of the integrity of the New Zealand government. The Index ranks 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of corruption in the public and political sectors. In 2024/25, New Zealand was the fourth least corrupt country (behind Denmark, Finland and Singapore). This was a drop from third in the previous year.

[Performance objectives and performance measures](#), including the impact measures, are available in Part 6.

Chief Ombudsman reflections on the OIA

Prior to his departure in March 2025, Chief Ombudsman Peter Boshier released a report on his reflections on the Official Information Act 1982. He did this with the benefit of nine years’ experience as Chief Ombudsman, including consideration of over 14,000 OIA complaints and 37 proactive investigations of the official information practices of government agencies.

The Chief Ombudsman noted that since the publication by former Chief Ombudsman Dame Beverley Wakem of [Not a Game of Hide and Seek](#) almost 10 years ago, there have been many areas of improvement in OIA practice. These include steadily improving statistics reported by the Public Service Commission and a much greater prevalence of agencies proactively disclosing a range of information on their websites. However, a variety of concerns persist.

²² A decrease from 6.6 in 2023/24.

²³ Administered by Te Kawa Mataaho Public Services Commission.

²⁴ No change from 2023/24.

²⁵ The quality of having strong moral principles; honesty and decency.

The common issues identified included:

1. **Leadership and culture:** Leadership and cultural issues, which can impact all areas of an agency's OIA operation.
2. **Delay in decision-making processes:** processes causing unnecessary delay in the OIA decision-making process and in the associated release of information.
3. **Public interest weighting:** failure to properly identify, consider and weigh the public interest in release against section 9 withholding grounds.
4. **Record keeping:** failure to ensure records are made and retained in an accessible form.
5. **Proactive disclosure:** inconsistent practice in respect of proactive disclosure.
6. **Resourcing:** inadequate agency resourcing of the OIA system.

The Chief Ombudsman also highlighted a significant issue for OIA practice was the increasing breadth, complexity and volume of requests, alongside the rapidly increasing quantities of information to search across a range of agency repositories and systems.

To manage this issue the Chief Ombudsman pointed to the obligation on requesters to frame their requests with specificity and due particularity, and encouraged agencies²⁶ and requesters to communicate openly and constructively to clarify the scope of a request where this is broad or unclear.

He also acknowledged the disproportionate burden that a small minority of requesters can place on respondents. To that point, the Chief Ombudsman encouraged agencies to utilise the options available within the OIA, in cases where the impact on core agency functions becomes significant.

The Chief Ombudsman concluded with a call to action to the Government, agencies, the media and this Office. Of the Government, he implored transparency and warned against legislative carve-outs to avoid the OIA. Of agencies he encouraged prioritisation and adequate resourcing for their OIA operations, and of the media, he cautioned care when framing requests. Finally, he challenged this Office to continue finding ways to improve timeliness without sacrificing quality when considering complaints, and ultimately to continue acting to make things fair for all.

[Read the full report on our website.](#)

²⁶ Section 13 of the OIA requires agencies to provide reasonable assistance to requesters.



4

Outputs and operations

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Ensure official information is increasingly available and not unlawfully refused	46
Ensure good decision-making and processes	61
Learn from, and assist to develop, international best practice	79

Inform the public to enable them to take constructive action to realise their rights

People must be informed in order to participate in government decision-making or take action when they believe they have been treated unfairly or without dignity and respect.

We work to ensure that the public understand their rights and options, have reasonable expectations about what the public sector should provide, and have a reasonable understanding and expectation of what the Ombudsman can do.

External resources for the public

We undertake a range of public awareness related activities, so everyone can understand the role of the Ombudsman, know how to contact us, and can easily access the information and resources we provide.

We do this by maintaining a digital and social media presence, publishing information and resources, and attending public engagements—such as hui, presentations, and media interviews. We also release newsletters, public statements and messaging across a range of platforms, promoting the many resources, case notes, and reports we publish. This year we made 424 external resources and presentations available to, and for, the public. The Ombudsman website had a total of 179,648 unique users, and our social media platforms had a total of 140,852 views.

In September 2024, we launched [Keeping Things Fair | Tuia kia ōrite](#), teaching resources to support civics learning for ākonga (students) ranging from years 1 to 10. This was a meaningful step towards ensuring people of all ages understand the role of the Ombudsman.

Keeping things fair | Tuia kia ōrite

Our new learning resources for students in years 1 to 10 are aimed at teaching children and young people about the Ombudsman, citizenship, and how they can contribute to a fair and just society.

The resources introduce students to the Ombudsman so they can know about, understand, and see how the Ombudsman can help them. Topics include: children's rights, the rights of disabled people, fair treatment for all, understanding a fair process, the Official Information Act, and protected disclosures. Age-appropriate activities and case studies are included throughout.

Since the launch of the resources in September 2024, feedback from teachers and education stakeholders has been positive, with many acknowledging that the practical and relevant resources help address a gap in the New Zealand curriculum regarding civics education.

Specific feedback received includes:

The resources provided by the Ombudsman are interactive and engaging. The videos are not too heavy and the students enjoyed the touches of comedy. Thinking tasks and activities that require discussion and contemplation are throughout the resources...

The ākongā (students) loved the video because they all knew someone who had been suspended. It was enlightening for them to see how the disciplinary process really works, including the role of parents in this situation...

It is vital that students have the opportunity to know what their avenues of complaint are in New Zealand. In a world where fact and fiction [are] blurred too often, we need students to be aware that the Ombudsman can help them when they feel they have been treated unfairly...

I am referring people to your resource as an exemplar in my Initial Teacher Training.

[Find the resources on our website.](#)

To ensure the way we communicate is accessible to everyone, we publish information in a variety of formats and languages. We regularly update and publish pamphlets covering different aspects of our work, making them available to all Citizens Advice Bureaux and Community Law offices across New Zealand. Two of our pamphlets are available in New Zealand's three official languages,²⁷ together with Audio, Easy Read and Braille, as well as in 16 different languages (Arabic, Cook Islands Māori, Fijian, Hindi, Kiribati, Korean, Mandarin, Niuean, Punjabi, Samoan, Spanish, Tagalog, Tamil, Tokelauan, Tongan, and Tuvaluan).

27 English, Te Reo Māori, New Zealand Sign Language.

Outreach and engagement

We also meet regularly with a range of stakeholders to raise awareness of the Ombudsman's role. In line with our vision '*Tuia kia ōrite /Fairness for All*,' we reach out to a wide range of people, including those who have not had much engagement with the Ombudsman before. We have adopted a regional approach to connect with a diverse range of people, including Citizens Advice Bureaux, Community Law offices, advocacy and interest groups, students, and Māori, Pasifika, and Asian communities.

This year we completed 92 engagements with a wide variety of people and organisations, including 17 hapū, iwi and Māori organisations, 18 ethnic community organisations, 13 Disability and Deaf organisations, and 23 general providers. Our engagements covered Auckland down to Christchurch, with a focus on Tasman, Marlborough, Wellington, Wairarapa, Taranaki and Auckland regions.

In our surveys of those participating in our engagements, only 36 percent knew about the Ombudsman before attending. Encouragingly, following our engagements, 89 percent were confident accessing our services, and 96 percent reported that our engagements helped raise awareness about the Ombudsman. We also gained invaluable feedback on how we can improve our reach and visibility within these communities, including hosting more face to face outreach sessions, and utilising social media and community radio.

The full list of the public groups and organisations we engaged with in 2024/25 are listed in [Part 7](#).

The Ombudsman also has two external panels which provide expertise and insights on engagement:

- Pūhara Mana Tangata is comprised of senior Māori leaders and rangatahi, and provides advice on engagement and communication on matters that impact Māori.
- Te Rōpū Kaiārahi Hauātanga is comprised of people from the Disability and Deaf communities, and provides advice and input on disability rights.

General community providers

We engaged with community organisations, such as Citizens Advice Bureaux, Community Law branches and advocacy groups. The meetings provide an opportunity to hear from people about the issues that are having an impact on their communities, and to share information about our role and how we may be able to help.

Further, as part of our enhanced role under the Oversight of Oranga Tamariki System Act 2022, we have been engaging with those involved in providing services and care for tamariki and rangatahi.

Hapū, Iwi and Māori organisations

We engaged with 17 hapū, iwi and Māori organisations across the motu this year. The focus was on hearing about the issues they faced, sharing information about our role, and building connections to support us in our oversight role for children in care.²⁸

KIINGITANGA

We have an ongoing relationship with Kiingitanga. This includes the annual Kiingitanga summer internship at our Office and Kiingitanga membership of Pūhara Mana Tangata. The relationship also includes the annual invitation to attend Koroneihana events and other events hosted by Kiingitanga.

It was with sadness that in September 2024, we witnessed the tangihanga of the late Kiingi Tuheitia Pootatau Te Wherowhero VII. Former Chief Ombudsman Peter Boshier, along with staff and members of Pūhara Mana Tangata, paid tribute to Kiingi Tuheitia. Mr Boshier spoke on the marae ātea, and in his speech in te reo Māori and English, acknowledged the passing of a great leader, the friendship they enjoyed, and the common ground shared in relation to improving outcomes for Māori.

We acknowledge the crowning of Te Arikinui Kuini Ngāwai Hono i te Po. Earlier this year, we met with Te Arikinui Kuini Ngāwai Hono i te Po at her office in Hopuhopu. At this meeting we reaffirmed our relationship and the opportunities to continue developing the relationship further.

Te Pūrongo nā Te Pūhara Mana Tangata ki te Kaitiaki Mana Tangata

Pūhara Mana Tangata, the Chief Ombudsman’s Māori Panel, was established in 2019 to support our desire for fairness for all. This year we published the second report from Pūhara Mana Tangata, covering their key highlights and reflections for 2022 to 2024.

The report includes a brief outline of the role of Pūhara Mana Tangata, including to champion the work of the Chief Ombudsman, to provide advice on Crown and Māori relations, and to support and promote meaningful relationships and engagement with Māori.

Some of the key highlights for Pūhara Mana Tangata from 2022 to 2024 included:

- continuing to support the relationship established with the Kiingitanga and others such as the Iwi Chairs Forum;
- supporting the development of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and te ao Māori capability in the Office; and
- providing engagement advice on several published reports.

²⁸ Section 43 of the Oversight of Oranga Tamariki System Act 2022 requires us to make reasonable efforts to develop arrangements with hapū, iwi and Māori organisations for the purposes of supporting us in carrying out our role in an accessible and culturally appropriate way, and sharing information.

Pūhara Mana Tangata concluded with a mihi to outgoing Chief Ombudsman Peter Boshier for his instrumental role in transforming the Māori capability of the Office. Pūhara Mana Tangata also raised future considerations for the incoming Chief Ombudsman John Allen, including their advice to continue engagement with iwi and Māori communities, and to continue implementing the Chief Ombudsman's [te ao Māori strategy](#).

[Read the full report on the Ombudsman's website.](#)

Pasifika and Asian engagement

This year we continued to build on our pilot outreach and engagement programme targeted at Pasifika and Asian communities. Our engagement included meetings with business hubs, community hubs, multicultural groups, religious groups, and various support groups and associations.

We have continued to see that many Pasifika and Asian communities do not know how the Ombudsman can help or the types of complaints that the Ombudsman can investigate. Whilst our engagement has helped raise awareness and visibility of the role of the Ombudsman, and we have developed a greater understanding of how to improve our outreach and engagement with these communities, there is more to be done.

Disabled and Deaf People and their organisations

We continued engagement within the Deaf and Disability communities through meetings with a number of community leaders, organisations and groups. This included meeting with Blind and Low Vision New Zealand, Auckland Deaf Society, and attending the CCS Disability Action Annual General Meeting.

A highlight was attending the 2025 New Zealand Sign Language Week launch that was hosted by Hon Louise Upston, Minister for Disability Issues, in partnership with Deaf Aotearoa. We also attended the 2025 iLead's National Conference, who are a disabled movement led by youth, for youth.

Public awareness

We track the general public's awareness of the Ombudsman, and how we can assist them, through a market research survey.

Overall, in 2024/25 two thirds of people surveyed (66 percent), were aware of the Ombudsman. This is the same as last year. Awareness has remained steady over the past five years after a peak in 2020.

Awareness amongst Māori, Pasifika, Asian populations and youth is lower than general public awareness. We are committed to lifting awareness amongst these harder to reach populations and this year we saw awareness increase for certain groups. This may be attributable to our initiatives underway to lift awareness within some communities.

Awareness increased amongst:

- Māori respondents (55 percent, up from 50 percent);
- Asian respondents (53 percent, up from 50 percent); and
- respondents under 30 (30 percent, up from 26 percent last year) and those between 45 and 59 (80 percent, up from 75 percent last year).

Consistent with previous surveys, those aged over 60 years old were more likely to be aware of the Ombudsman (91 percent). Levels of awareness decreased slightly among Pasifika respondents (47 percent, from 50 percent last year).

In this year's survey, 73 percent of respondents said that they used the internet to find out what the Ombudsman does.

As discussed above, our outreach and engagement efforts continue to work on lifting awareness among communities with lower awareness scores. Outcomes and learnings from the survey results and outreach engagements are incorporated more widely into all the work we undertake.

Improve public sector capability to do its work and make decisions

Improved capability in the public sector enables the government to be responsive and effective in the services it provides to the public, helps reduce unfairness and inefficiencies from poor practices, and supports transparency, integrity and anti-corruption. An important part of our work is the learning, advice, and guidance we offer to agencies and other stakeholders.

We monitor and review developments in the public sector, and identify relevant skills and knowledge gaps to best target our efforts. We also participate in initiatives to build capability and improve practice. This support is provided with an aim to:

- lift public sector capability to improve administration, decision-making, and complaint handling capability; and
- improve compliance with official information legislation, whistleblowing legislation, and international conventions, including those concerning the rights of disabled people and people in detention.

Good practice for meetings and workshops

Following the publication of Chief Ombudsman Peter Boshier's report [Open for Business](#), which summarised key themes from our investigation into the meeting and workshop practices of eight local authorities, we released a guide on [Good practice for Meetings and Workshops](#).

The guide explains relevant requirements for meetings and workshops, and outlines our expectations of local government agencies in this area.

Understanding the difference between meetings and workshops is important because Part 7 of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA) outlines requirements for meetings, which do not apply to workshops or other informal gatherings. For the purposes of Part 7, a 'meeting' is defined as a meeting where a resolution or decision is made.

Part 7 requires that meetings must be publicly notified, and agendas, reports and minutes must be publicly available. Meetings must also be open to the public, unless there is good reason under the LGOIMA for excluding them. The guide outlines the grounds for excluding the public from meetings.

The guide also reflects the Chief Ombudsman's position that workshops and other gatherings, whilst not within scope of Part 7 of the LGOIMA, should be open by default. The guide outlines the benefits of opening workshops to the public, including helping to build public trust in council processes. This approach reflects one of the principles in the Local Government Act 2002 that local authorities should conduct its business in an open, transparent and democratically accountable manner. We recognise there are reasons for closing workshops or other gatherings, and the guide includes where it may be reasonable to do so.

Advice and guidance

In 2024/25, we commented on 45 legislative, policy, or administrative proposals.²⁹ These included submissions and comments on Cabinet papers, Bills, and administrative policies and procedures. We also participated in three submissions and engagements with United Nations Committees.³⁰

Our comments are largely focused on areas relevant to our jurisdiction and functions, including the official information legislation, good decision-making, effective complaint handling, protected disclosures, and human rights issues in relation to people in detention and people with disabilities.

²⁹ Some of these are the results of advice requests captured in the figure of 359 below.

³⁰ Including our shadow report for the *New Zealand Government's follow up report to the Committee against Torture*, and our submission to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child on *Children's rights to access justice and effective remedies*. We also engaged with the Second Cycle Review of the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

A continuing theme is proposals to exclude the application of the official information legislation from specific information held by government in certain sectors. This year, we provided submissions and comments in 11 cases on the application of the official information legislation and the Ombudsmen Act (OA). The OIA and LGOIMA are constitutional in nature and reflect a widely accepted public policy position that the public should be given worthwhile information about how public affairs are conducted. The Acts comprehensively protect information from release where that is warranted in the public interest. Given these factors, it would be rare for exclusions from the official information regime to be justifiable. Public sector agencies and bodies that perform a public function should be made subject to appropriate public sector accountability mechanisms—including the OA, OIA and LGOIMA—unless there are compelling reasons for them not to be.

We continue to see regular invitations from agencies to provide formal submissions as well as engaging in *kōrero* early in the policy development process. It is reassuring that government agencies see the Ombudsman as a valuable resource when drafting their policies. [A list of the key submissions](#) we made this year is in Part 7.

Overall, we provided advice to public sector agencies on 359 occasions; primarily in relation to processing official information requests. While we do not tell agencies what to do with *'live'* requests, we provide guidance around an agency's obligations and options that are open for the agency to consider, to help support good decision-making.

Responding to the Abuse in Care Legislation Amendment Bill

In December 2024, Chief Ombudsman Peter Boshier made a submission to the Social Services and Community Committee on the Responding to the Abuse in Care Legislation Amendment Bill. The Bill was the initial legislative response to the findings of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Historical Abuse in State Care and the Care of Faith-based Institutions. The intent was to improve the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and adults in care, by amending a number of other Acts.

The Bill proposed to strengthen and clarify record-keeping oversight in the Public Records Act 2005. The Chief Ombudsman commended this; however, he asked the Committee whether enhanced audit powers and functions should be extended to directly encompass care or custody providers under Oranga Tamariki contracts. This would enable the Chief Archivist to more directly inquire, audit and support the record-keeping practices of contracted providers relating to children and young people in care. This would also align with the changes made as part of improving oversight of the Oranga Tamariki system, which made care and custody providers subject to the Ombudsmen Act and Official Information Act.

The Bill also proposed to amend the Children's Act 2014 to ensure safety checking of children's workers. The Chief Ombudsman supported the extension of checks to workers not covered by the current Act. However, he encouraged the Committee to

consider the mechanisms for completion and monitoring of safety checks under the current Act. He observed that safety checks may not always be consistently carried out,³¹ and encouraged the Committee to consider additional legislative measures to support reporting, monitoring and compliance.

Proposed amendments to the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 included repealing the ability to undertake strip searches and introducing new provisions to allow pat down and body scanner searches. The Chief Ombudsman commended the proposed amendment to remove the power to strip search, and the additional protections proposed for other searches, such as the requirement for an individual to have a search plan. However, he considered there were inconsistencies in relation to other provisions within the proposed Bill, specifically secure care and use of force. He encouraged the Committee to consider adopting a more modern, child-centric and trauma-informed approach in these areas.

[Read the full submission on our website.](#)

Learning

In 2024/25, we provided 30 speeches, presentations and in-person learning sessions for public sector agencies. A list of agencies that have engaged in in-person [Ombudsman learning](#) is available in Part 7.

Learning topics included official information, complaints-handling and managing unreasonable complainant conduct. We continue to offer wide reaching information-sharing sessions at the Official Information Forum³² based on the needs of agency leaders and practitioners. This forum is open to staff from all public sector agencies subject to the OIA, and provides an opportunity to come together, discuss official information practices and issues, and share learning experiences. We received positive feedback from 96 percent of participants that the information provided would help them in their work.

We also continued to promote our new online learning platform, Te Puna Mātauranga. Te Puna Mātauranga offers free, self-paced e-learning at a foundational level, which is supplemented by in-person sessions on request. While it is targeted at staff working in public sector agencies, anyone can access it. This year, we saw registered users increase to 940 people across 137 different central and local government agencies.

31 [See our opinion on Health New Zealand's compliance with children's safety checks requirements.](#)

32 Facilitated by Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission. See <https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/guidance/official-information/official-information-forum/> for more information.

Currently Te Puna Mātauranga contains three courses focusing on key areas where agencies often seek our advice:

- OIA for ministers and central government agencies (8 modules);
- LGOIMA for local government agencies (8 modules); and
- managing unreasonable complainant conduct (4 modules and a facilitated workshop).

The three courses are designed so participants can pick and choose certain modules to complete which correlate to their particular interest area. This is the first full year of the platform being in use, and we saw 278 full course completions and 2,290 module completions for the year.

Guidance materials

We continue to develop and update our suite of guidance and resources available for public sector agencies. Each year we undertake a needs-based assessment to prioritise which new topics are most relevant or would be the most useful to give effect to public sector capability improvement. We also regularly revise and update existing guidance to ensure it remains relevant and reflects new developments. A [list of guides and resources](#) we published this year, with links to our website, is available in Part 7.

These guides are supplemented by the publication of case notes and opinions formed on complaints. [A list of case notes and opinions](#) we published this year, with links to our website, is available in Part 7.

Eighty-two percent of public sector agencies surveyed reported that our information resources assist them in their work. While many of our guidance materials are formulated with the aim of improving public sector capability, they are also available to members of the public.

Formal consultation to assist public sector agencies to make specific decisions

Providing sound and timely input to public sector agencies as part of a formal consultation process provides the public and stakeholders with confidence that agencies are receiving a relevant, independent perspective when they are making decisions, improving practices, and reporting. We do this by:

- meeting both legislated and agreed requirements for the Ombudsman’s formal input in decision-making; and
- participating effectively in advisory and working groups, while maintaining our independence.

This year we provided comment to the Cabinet Office on the proactive release of information from the ministerial conflicts of interest register. We also commented to Waka Kotahi (New Zealand Transport Agency) on 18 applications for authorised access to personal information on the motor vehicle register.³³

We participated in eight advisory and working groups this year. The details are provided in the table below.

Ombudsman Role	Agencies
Member of the Operations Working Group	Oversight Agencies for the Oranga Tamariki System
Member of the Communications Working Group	Oversight Agencies for the Oranga Tamariki System
Member of the Executive Group	Oversight Agencies for the Oranga Tamariki System
Member of Operations Group	National Preventative Mechanism Agencies (OPCAT)
Member of Chairs Group	National Preventative Mechanism Agencies (OPCAT)
Member of Inter-Agency Group	National Preventative Mechanism Agencies (OPCAT)
Member of Governance Group	Independent Monitoring Mechanism Agencies (Disability Convention)
Member of Working Group	Independent Monitoring Mechanism Agencies (Disability Convention)

³³ Under section 241 of the Land Transport Act 1998.



Enable serious wrongdoing to be disclosed and investigated and whistleblowers protected

Ensuring that serious wrongdoing³⁴ is brought to light and investigated will lead to greater transparency and accountability, and ultimately to higher trust in government. Mechanisms to expose and investigate serious wrongdoing will be effective only when whistleblowers are protected, and people have the confidence to come forward. Insiders will often be the only ones with knowledge of serious wrongdoing in their workplace. If they are unaware of the protections available to them, or do not feel confident raising their concerns through the appropriate channels, instances of serious wrongdoing are likely to go undetected.

The Ombudsman's role and functions under the Protected Disclosures (Protection of Whistleblowers) Act 2022 (PDA) are to:

- provide advice and guidance to potential whistleblowers;
- provide advice and guidance to employers, appropriate authorities, Ministers and third parties;
- review and guide public sector agencies in their responses to serious wrongdoing; and
- receive and investigate disclosures of serious wrongdoing, or refer them to others as appropriate.

Following the updated PDA coming into force on 1 July 2022 and dedicated funding approved by Parliament from 1 July 2023,³⁵ we established specialist protected disclosures staff to respond to the increasing volume and complexity of protected disclosures and enquires.

There has been an ongoing increase in the volume and complexity of protected disclosures and enquiries. In 2022/23 we received 128 protected disclosures and enquiries, and in 2023/24 we received 206 protected disclosures and enquiries. This year, there was again a significant increase, and we received 287 protected disclosures and enquires—a 39 percent increase on last year. We completed 278 protected disclosures and enquiries—a 26 percent increase on last year.

We also received 25 Ombudsmen Act complaints in 2024/25 relating to how public sector agencies responded to protected disclosures.³⁶

³⁴ As defined in [section 10 of the Protected Disclosures \(Protection of Whistleblowers\) Act 2022](#)

³⁵ Additional funding has been approved by Parliament from 1 July 2025.

³⁶ We have completed 13 of these complaints in addition to one that was received in 2023/24, and the remainder are under consideration. In addition, we also monitored three agencies' responses to the disclosures they received.

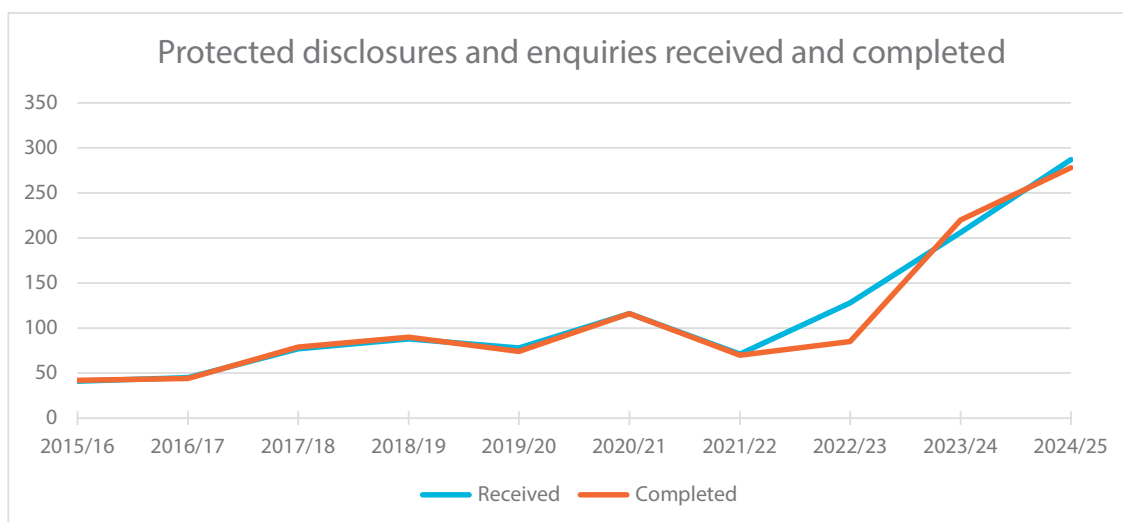


Figure 2: Protected disclosures and enquiries received and completed over the past 10 years.³⁷

[Link to text alternative version of Figure 2.](#)

A breakdown of the [types of agencies in respect of which protected disclosures and enquiries were received](#) is available in Part 7.

The new legislation in 2022 gave people the ability to raise concerns about serious wrongdoing in their workplace directly with the Ombudsman and other appropriate authorities, without first having to raise concerns with their employer. This could be one reason for the notable increase in protected disclosures in the last three years. There may also be a growing awareness of whistleblowing, and/or growing intolerance in society of unacceptable behaviour and practices.

We were able to respond to the continued growth in this area by recruiting additional staff on a temporary basis in the second half of 2024/25. We maintained a high clearance rate of the matters we received,³⁸ and lifted our timeliness to 83 percent of matters completed within 3 months—as compared to 71 percent in 2023/24.

Parliament has approved additional permanent funding from 1 July 2025, which means we are able to stabilise our workforce in this area. However, the demand continues to impact on our ability to provide proactive interventions in this area, in order to lift good practice by organisations in responding to protected disclosures.

We undertake formal quality assurance checks across a random sample of protected disclosures and enquiries. Ninety two percent of protected disclosures met internal quality standards this year, up from 82 percent in 2023/24.

³⁷ The figures for 2015/16 to 2018/19 have been adjusted from previous reporting, following a recalibration of data by type of work.

³⁸ At 97 percent.

Health New Zealand's compliance with children's safety check requirements

We received a protected disclosure alleging children's safety checks were not being conducted on contractors at a hospital, as required by the Children's Act 2014 (the Act) and Children's (Requirements for Safety Checks of Children's Workers) Regulations 2015 (the Regulations).

The Act and Regulations introduced measures from 2015 to reduce the risk of harm to children, by requiring all government-funded organisations to conduct safety checks on people employed or engaged in work that involves regular or overnight contact with children.

As provided under the Protected Disclosures (Protection of Whistleblowers) Act 2022, we referred the protected disclosure to Health NZ to consider and address the concerns, and sought a detailed report back. To protect the identity of the discloser, no identifying information was shared with Health NZ as part of the referral process.

Health NZ undertook an audit of children's safety checks at the hospital, identifying eight key issues and making 13 recommendations. Health NZ advised the recommendations were being implemented, audits had also been undertaken at other locations across the country, and there was work underway to look at how safety checks were processed nationally for all Health NZ staff.

We then initiated an own motion investigation into Health NZ's compliance with the Act and Regulations, pursuant to section 13 of the Ombudsmen Act 1975. The investigation focused on:

- how the situation was able to arise over the past nine years;
- responsibilities for monitoring compliance;
- the scale of the issue at the national level, including the outcomes of audits at other locations; and
- actions taken to address the issues identified.

As a result, Chief Ombudsman John Allen formed the opinion that Health NZ and a range of District Health Boards (including Bay of Plenty, Canterbury, Lakes, Nelson-Marlborough and Tairāwhiti) acted contrary to law by failing to undertake children's safety checks as required by the Act and Regulations.

The Chief Ombudsman noted District Health Boards, and since 1 July 2022 Health NZ, have been required by the Act to conduct safety checks on all new core children's workers since 2015 and all existing workers since 2018. Given the issues identified by the recent audits, it was evident that a range of District Health Boards and Health NZ locations had not been complying with the Act or Regulations. While Health NZ advised that appropriate processes should have been in place in each district, no specific information was provided to support this—such as what these processes entailed, who was responsible for conducting the checks, and how these

checks were monitored, across the country over the past nine years. The Ombudsman considered it wrong and concerning that this issue had not been picked up for nine years, despite these checks being a legal requirement.

The Chief Ombudsman acknowledged Health NZ's commitment to meeting its obligations under the legislation, the changes implemented to date, and the actions Health NZ would continue to take. This included new policy and systems, audit checks, weekly reporting to executive leadership, and the introduction of a relevant performance measure for senior managers.

However, the Chief Ombudsman also recommended that Health NZ implement a national audit programme of safety checks in all locations to ensure ongoing compliance with the legislation, and to allow for the timely identification of issues going forward. Health NZ accepted the recommendation, advised it was underway with implementation of an audit programme, and agreed to continue to update the Chief Ombudsman on progress.

[Read the full opinion on our website.](#)

Knowledge and awareness

We continued working this year to raise public awareness of protected disclosures and the Ombudsman's role. To understand the impact of the new PDA and our outreach efforts, we conduct an annual survey of public knowledge and awareness about whistleblowing. Awareness of the PDA continues to grow—awareness has increased to 36 percent in 2024/25, compared to 25 percent in 2023/24 and 20 percent in 2022/23.

A growing majority of respondents (67 percent) also said they would look to the Ombudsman for advice if they were considering reporting serious wrongdoing—compared to 63 percent in 2023/24 and 61 percent in 2022/23. Eighty-four percent of respondents said that if they witnessed serious wrongdoing in the workplace, they would report it to their employer.

It is of concern that almost a third of respondents (31 percent) said they had witnessed serious wrongdoing at work (up from 25 percent in 2023/24). Of those who witnessed wrongdoing, only half (50 percent) said they made a protected disclosure (up nine percent).

Only 48 percent of respondents thought they would be safe if they reported serious wrongdoing, although that was an increase from 44 percent in 2023/24. The key reasons given for not feeling safe were: 61 percent feared losing their job, 44 percent feared retaliation, and 32 percent feared their identity would not be kept confidential. The survey also reported that people felt safer if there was a guarantee of anonymity and confidentiality. This demonstrates how important it is for workplaces to have effective processes to encourage employees to speak out, protect them from retaliation, and keep their identities confidential.

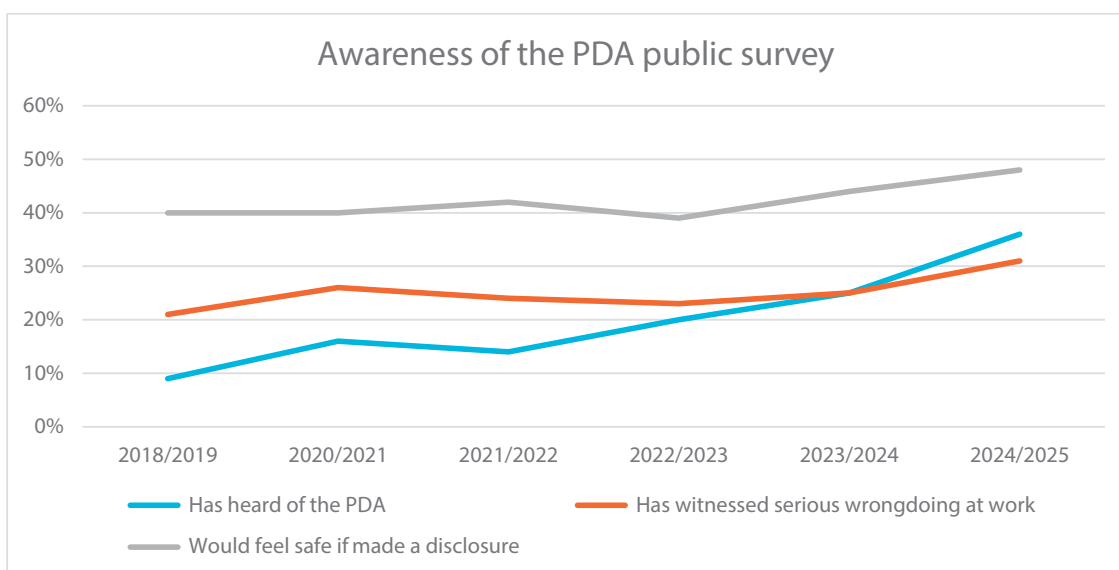


Figure 3: Awareness of protected disclosure survey results since 2018/19. Note, in 2019/20 survey was not completed.

[Link to text alternative version of Figure 3.](#)

Educating organisations

This year, we published two new pieces of specific guidance to complement our existing [guidance on internal policies and procedures](#). The new guidance was:

- A [guide for receivers of protected disclosures](#) to help organisations (including employers and appropriate authorities) respond to protected disclosures in line with the Act. This guide also outlines key differences between standard complaints and protected disclosures.
- A [detailed guide on the PDA](#) including the terms and definitions used in the PDA, the protections available for people who make protected disclosures, and what disclosers can expect after making a protected disclosure.

We continue to scope what further guidance may be useful for individuals, employers and appropriate authorities to assist in their understanding of the PDA, and what best practice looks like when it comes to receiving and responding to protected disclosures. At a minimum, employers should:

- Create a policy and process for receiving and responding to protected disclosures, and communicate these widely and regularly to staff.³⁹ This should be part of an organisation's broader work to ensure a culture where staff feel safe to speak up.

³⁹ For further information, see our guide [Protected disclosures – guidance on internal policies and procedures](#).

- Consider whether concerns which do not amount to serious wrongdoing require investigation or other action in any event. If the organisation does not consider that investigation or other action is needed, explain this to the discloser, and also provide reassurance that they will continue to be protected under the PDA.
- Be open to receiving and investigating anonymous disclosures (for instance via an online portal or via an anonymous email account). In these circumstances, it is important to explain to the anonymous discloser that there may be limitations on how the concerns may be investigated, and how the organisation may protect them if they are not aware of who they are.
- Clearly set out to the discloser what kind of information and updates they can expect from any investigation process. Speaking up about concerns is often very stressful for disclosers. A key way to alleviate stress is to ensure disclosers are well informed. While there may be privacy and employment considerations which may limit the ability to update disclosers more fulsomely, this context can be provided to the discloser.

Department of Conservation’s response to protected disclosure about data security

We received a protected disclosure raising various concerns about information security at the Department of Conservation (the Department).

Following consultation with the Department, we referred the protected disclosure to the Department to investigate the allegations, with the agreement the Department would provide a report back. To protect the discloser’s identity, we did not provide any identifying information about the discloser to the Department as part of this referral process.

The Department’s investigation into the allegations found that there had been data breaches. The Department acknowledged that there were some issues in relation to information security and information management, including some misunderstandings by staff regarding what was required, and lack of management oversight. This meant there was a risk that similar practices could occur more broadly.

We encouraged the Department to engage with the Government Chief Digital Officer and the Chief Archivist to seek expert advice on data management and associated security risks.

The Department then provided Chief Ombudsman John Allen with a comprehensive update setting out the actions taken to ensure the specific data breaches identified were addressed, and outlining the steps being taken to strengthen information security and governance arrangements generally, including:

- revising relevant policies;

- implementing recommendations from the Department's 2024 Cyber Security Review, with further reviews underway to enhance security controls and risk management;
- conducting a gap analysis against Government Chief Digital Officer guidelines to identify priority areas for uplift and alignment with public sector best practice;
- re-establishing the Data and Information Governance Board and establishing further assurance mechanisms;
- collaborating more closely with the Government Chief Digital Officer and the Chief Archivist through the Information Management Future State Programme; and
- embedding privacy risk assessments and mandating privacy training for all staff, and implementing a comprehensive Data and Information Asset Register.

This comprehensive update provided the Chief Ombudsman with confidence that the matter had been appropriately addressed.

Break down the barriers that prevent disabled and deaf people from participating equally in society

Deaf, tāngata whaikaha Māori, and disabled people face persistent barriers which prevent them from being able to participate fully in community and public life. Examples of societal barriers include access to public spaces, public transport, receiving accessible information, employment opportunities, attitudinal barriers, and access to education.

The *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (the Disability Convention) sets out what needs to happen in order to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by disabled and Deaf people.

The Ombudsman, Te Kāhui Tika Tangata Human Rights Commission and Disabled People's Organisations Coalition form the Independent Monitoring Mechanism (IMM) under Article 33 of the Disability Convention. The IMM promotes, protects and monitors implementation of the Disability Convention, to ensure disability rights are being upheld. As we do not have an advocacy role, the Ombudsman's role within the IMM is to protect and monitor, only. The IMM make-up ensures disabled and Deaf people play an active role in monitoring and promoting the Disability Convention.

This year IMM partners developed a Workplan to monitor the implementation of the Disability Convention. The Workplan covers the period 2025-2028, with a second Workplan to be developed, resulting in a Workplan up to 2030, when the United

Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is expected to examine New Zealand. IMM partners were also invited to – and did – provide comment on the Cabinet paper on *Progressing the Government response to the UNCRPD Concluding Observations*.

This year we translated eight Ombudsman pamphlets into New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) and alternative formats. All eight pamphlets are now accessible to the disability and Deaf community in Easy Read, Audio, Large print, Accessible Word and Braille.

Te Rōpū Kaiārahi Hauātanga

[Te Rōpū Kaiārahi Hauātanga](#), the Ombudsman's Disability Advisory Panel, was established in 2021 to help inform work in the area of disability rights. The Panel provides the Chief Ombudsman with advice and insight from people with the lived experience of disability.

This year Te Rōpū Kaiārahi Hauātanga provided advice and guidance on community engagement, developing accessible information, and the refresh of the Accessibility Strategy.

Ongoing disability rights focus in investigations, inspections and advice

Our Ombudsmen Act powers can be used to resolve complaints and investigate concerns about administrative conduct by public sector agencies when disability rights issues are raised. Disability rights issues can also be considered when we provide advice and guidance, and we are able to explicitly ask an agency how it has taken a particular article of the Disability Convention into account.

We also note issues as they arise in inspections of places of detention. Disability rights continue to be an area of focus for our inspections as we are aware that a significant proportion of detainees have a disability, or have experience of mental health distress.

Submission on Mental Health Bill

In December 2024, Chief Ombudsman Peter Boshier made a submission to the Health Committee on the Mental Health Bill. The Bill would repeal and replace the Mental Health (Compulsory Assessment and Treatment) Act 1992, and aimed to create a modern legislative framework for compulsory mental health care.

The Chief Ombudsman considered that foundational, holistic shifts were needed to align New Zealand's mental health legislation with contemporary best-practice and mental health philosophy, and international human rights law. However, he was concerned the Bill was unlikely to address significant concerns with the current mental health legislation, and would not lead to the necessary transformational change. Some of the Chief Ombudsman's concerns were:

- change appeared to be piecemeal in areas where transformational change is needed;
- there did not appear to be any changes to the existing model of community and inpatient treatment orders, which is a missed opportunity to focus on community-based rather than inpatient-focussed mental health care; and
- the approach to decision-making capacity appeared narrow, reductionist, and binary in nature, and lacked detail about how and by whom assessments of decision-making capacity would be made.

The Chief Ombudsman did note some encouraging aspects in the Bill, including the intention to:

- strengthen and promote supported decision-making;
- give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi | the Treaty of Waitangi;
- be tāngata whai ora | patient and whānau | family centred;
- take a social model approach to disability; and
- be embedded in a human rights framework.

[Read the full submission here.](#)

Improve the conditions and treatment of people in detention

The Ombudsman is a National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) under the Crimes of Torture Act 1989, which gives effect to the *United Nations Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment* (OPCAT). The Ombudsman is designated⁴⁰ to examine and monitor the conditions and treatment of persons detained in:

- prisons and otherwise in the custody of the Department of Corrections;⁴¹
- health and disability places of detention, including within mental health, intellectual disability and privately run aged care facilities;⁴²
- premises approved or agreed under the Immigration Act 2009;
- residences established under the Public Safety (Public Protection Order) Act 2014;⁴³ and
- court facilities.⁴⁴

The purpose of our OPCAT role is preventive, aimed at ensuring safeguards against ill-treatment are in place, and risks, poor practices or systemic problems are identified and addressed promptly. Preventive monitoring also helps ensure New Zealand adheres to international human rights standards and is seen as a good global citizen.

In this role we undertake various activities, including to:

- carry out regular and unfettered monitoring, through examination of places of detention across the 465 facilities under our designation;
- use information and evidence from various sources to assess conditions and treatment in places of detention;
- comment on law, policy and procedure that relates to conditions and treatment in places of detention; and
- report on our examinations, and make and track recommendations to prevent torture or ill-treatment, and to improve the conditions of detention and treatment of detainees.⁴⁵

40 See <https://gazette.govt.nz/notice/id/2023-go2676>.

41 Such as during transport, transit or otherwise outside of a prison facility while in the custody of the Department of Corrections.

42 Other health and disability places of detention include substance addiction compulsory treatment centres, and isolation and quarantine facilities.

43 Refer to section 114.

44 The designation in respect of court facilities overlaps with the Independent Police Conduct Authority's designation to examine and monitor conditions and treatment of people detained in Police custody in court facilities.

45 Including identifying and promoting good practice according to international standards.

This year we continued to observe and make recommendations related to long term challenges that are common across many of the places of detention we examine, including capacity pressures, staffing shortages, substandard material conditions, insufficient training and resources, as well as overly restrictive practices and poor record keeping.

Our high-level [Expectations](#), for the conditions and treatment of those in places of detention we are designated to examine, are that people deprived of their liberty:

- have their rights upheld by people, principles and practice at all levels;
- are safe and their independence is promoted;
- are treated with dignity and respect;
- enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health;
- are in an environment that promotes their safety, independence, culture, dignity, and wellbeing; and
- are supported by skilled, motivated, and engaged people.

Examination through visits and inspections

We visit and examine places of detention on a regular basis. In 2024/25, we carried out a total of 121 visits to places of detention. [A list of the places we visited](#) is available in Part 7 of this document.

Our OPCAT visiting programme included in-depth inspections, shorter targeted inspections focusing on specific areas of interest, and a number of drop-in visits, particularly in the aged residential care sector. One hundred of our 121 visits were unannounced. More information about these examinations, including a breakdown of unannounced and announced visits, and details of reports published this year, are available in [Part 7](#).

This year, we made 214 recommendations, of which 203 (95 percent) were accepted. A further breakdown of these recommendations can be found in [Part 7](#).

Prisons and people otherwise in the custody of the Department of Corrections

We conducted five examinations of prisons in 2024/25. These visits, alongside other activities, have informed our monitoring of the progress of the Department of Corrections in relation to improving conditions and treatment of people in custody.

We continue to be concerned about how the Department of Corrections is managing people in custody, especially given a number of prisons are at, or close to, capacity; and the resulting resource pressure this is likely to generate. We will continue to examine the impacts on people in custody of measures deployed by the Department of Corrections to manage capacity constraints, such as placement in shared cells, transfers

of prisoners away from their communities, and the use of older and/or previously decommissioned facilities.

We also published our [Report on the examination of the Prisoners of Extreme Risk Unit \(PERU\) under the Crimes of Torture Act 1989](#), highlighting our significant concerns regarding the treatment of people detained in the Prisoners of Extreme Risk Unit in Auckland Prison.

Report on an examination of the Prisoners of Extreme Risk Unit

Chief Ombudsman Peter Boshier published an [OPCAT report on the Prisoners of Extreme Risk Unit \(PERU\) at Auckland Prison](#) in December 2024.

The PERU is currently the only unit of its type in New Zealand. It was established in 2019, and is managed as a separate 'prison site' within, but distinct from, Auckland Prison. People were placed in the PERU based on a new model developed by the Department of Corrections for those it considers to present 'extreme risk'.

The Chief Ombudsman first visited the PERU in June 2023, returned in August 2023, and undertook follow-up visits in May and November 2024. There were 13 people in custody on the Unit in August 2023. As at 1 October 2024, the average length of time people had spent in the PERU was approximately 36 months.

Our report raised significant concerns about the conditions and treatment of people in the PERU. Serious concerns were also raised about how people are placed in the PERU, including this process lacking transparency, independent oversight or robust protective measures, such as the ability to effectively challenge decisions.

The Chief Ombudsman considered there was compelling evidence of prolonged solitary confinement of all those in custody in the PERU, and potentially, indefinite solitary confinement.

The Chief Ombudsman considered the cumulative human impact of the conditions and treatment of the people in custody in the PERU to be cruel, inhuman, and degrading.

The Chief Ombudsman's recommendations included that the Department of Corrections stop the use of the PERU operating model without delay. The Department did not accept this recommendation.

The Chief Ombudsman also recommended the Department of Corrections end the prolonged solitary confinement of people in custody in the PERU including by providing significantly increased time out of cell and adjoining yard, and significantly increased access to meaningful human contact. The Department accepted this recommendation, and is providing ongoing updates.

Health and disability facilities

There are a range of health and disability facilities where people may be deprived of their liberty and which, therefore, fall under the purview of our OPCAT role. These include acute mental health inpatient, forensic mental health inpatient, forensic intellectual disability, older persons' mental health units, substance addiction compulsory treatment centres, and Aged Care.⁴⁶ Over the course of the reporting year we visited 20 of these facilities. Several of the issues we identified through our examinations this year have been ongoing, including:

- inequities experienced by Māori and Pasifika;
- over-occupancy of inpatient mental health services;
- substandard and rundown material conditions that do not align with current models of care, wellbeing and recovery;
- a lack of intellectual disability-specific training for staff working in health and disability facilities;
- limited evidence of individuals being supported, well-informed and having opportunities for meaningful engagement on their care and treatment, including through the promotion of supported decision-making;
- a high number of staff without up-to-date training on restraint minimisation and safe practice; and
- a lack of safeguards in place to ensure that voluntary service users are not arbitrarily detained in health and disability places of detention.

We remain concerned that people across the country are being deprived of their liberty in facilities that are neither fit for purpose nor conducive to their wellbeing. A number of health and disability places of detention are rundown and over-occupied, and adversely impact wellbeing and recovery. We have made a number of repeated recommendations in this area. We continue to engage with Health NZ and the Ministry of Health on their capital improvement programmes and system stewardship work to address these issues.

Aged residential care facilities

Both public and private aged residential care facilities where people are not free to leave at will, come within our designation to examine and monitor health and disability places of detention. There are currently 272 aged residential care facilities providing secure care⁴⁷ in New Zealand. This year we visited 89 of those, both announced and unannounced. 'Drop-in' visits enable us to continue to educate and familiarise aged residential care providers on our role, as well as to gather information to identify where intensive examination may be required and to better understand the key issues impacting on the conditions and treatment of residents living in aged residential care facilities.

In March 2025 we published a thematic report summarising our observations from examining secure aged residential care facilities between 1 July 2021 and 30 June 2024.

⁴⁶ Aged Care is discussed separately below.

⁴⁷ Dementia level care, and specialised hospital (psychogeriatric) level care.

Aged Care Monitoring—Chief Ombudsman’s Observations 2021-2024

Chief Ombudsman Peter Boshier published a thematic report summarising observations from examining secure aged residential care facilities between 1 July 2021 and 30 June 2024. The report identified themes from 125 ‘drop-in’ visits and 23 full inspections of 148 facilities. Our [Expectations for conditions and treatment of residents in health and disability places of detention \(aged residential care\)](#) informed the methodology and structure of the thematic report.

The report discussed both facility-specific and systemic issues identified during OPCAT examination, including recommendations made by the Chief Ombudsman. It emphasised our expectation that management and staff always reflect a human-rights based approach when caring for residents in aged residential care.

The report also highlighted examples of good practice and areas where there was room for improvement, as well as sharing what some facilities have changed in response to visits.

The systemic features discussed in the report are wide-ranging, including:

- **Lack of appropriate legal authority:** there is a lack of centralised oversight of whether there is appropriate legal authority for residents to be placed in secure care, and an over-reliance on providers to ensure this is the case. Without such processes in place, there is a risk of arbitrary deprivation of liberty;
- **Lack of advocacy services:** there is an over-reliance on whānau to provide advocacy and support for residents in secure aged care, and a lack of access for residents to independent advocacy services; and
- **Resourcing pressures:** whilst staff are highly dedicated to the wellbeing of residents they care for, there is a real risk of burnout due to workloads and schedules.

In respect of the systemic issue identified on the lack of appropriate legal authority, Health NZ is developing national guidance for facilities on how to verify and record that each resident has a valid legal basis for their placement in secure care.

[Read the full report on our website.](#)

Court facilities

We are also designated to examine the conditions and treatment of people detained in court facilities. Our court facilities designation overlaps with the Independent Police Conduct Authority's (IPCA) designation to examine and monitor the conditions and treatment of people detained in Police custody in court facilities. In 2024/25 we conducted four concurrent visits with IPCA, and two visits independently. We shared our observations and recommendations with the relevant agencies, in co-operation with IPCA where appropriate.

Immigration

We regularly engage with Immigration New Zealand on the numbers and locations⁴⁸ of people detained under warrants of commitment, as well as on systemic issues related to such detention.

This year we progressed the development of our *Expectations for conditions and treatment of people in premises approved or agreed under the Immigration Act 2009*. We also provided feedback and submitted on proposed legislative amendments that would impact on the treatment and conditions of immigrants in detention.

OPCAT engagement

The OPCAT role is broad and flexible, extending beyond visits and examinations. We also report to Parliament, engage in constructive dialogue with detaining agencies, and co-operate with other NPMs and civil society. In 2024/25, these activities included:

- making formal submissions to national and international bodies on issues related to the rights of people in detention (a [list of the key submissions](#) is available in Part 7);
- presenting and participating in a range of conferences, symposiums and webinars, including the New Zealand Medico-Legal Congress, the College of Gerontology Nursing, New Zealand Nurses Organisation Conference, Law and Psychiatry presentation for Otago University, and the National Dementia Conference; and
- presenting and knowledge exchange initiatives with colleagues at the Thailand Ombudsman, Samoan Ombudsman, Tasmanian NPM, and the collective body for Australian NPMs.

48 Predominantly in Department of Corrections facilities.

Submission on the Inquiry into aged care

In August 2024, Chief Ombudsman Peter Boshier made a submission to the Health Committee on the Inquiry into the aged care sector's current and future capacity to provide support services for people experiencing neurological cognitive disorders.

The Chief Ombudsman outlined some of his expectations for the conditions and treatment of residents in aged residential care, and referred to his [Expectations](#) document as a useful document for the Health Committee to consider.

The Chief Ombudsman also noted his concerns about the verification and documentation required for the detention of residents in aged residential care. He referred to previous examinations where he found a lack of consistent or reliable processes to verify and record the legal basis for consent for a resident's placement in a secure unit, which presents a risk of arbitrary deprivation of liberty. He encouraged the Health Committee to consider the safeguards necessary to ensure the facilities have the appropriate legal authority for placing people in secure aged residential care.

[Read the full submission on our website.](#)

Ensure official information is increasingly available and not unlawfully refused

The Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) and Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA) enable the public to request official information held by Ministers of the Crown and public sector agencies. Making official information increasingly available, and assuring the public that access is not denied unnecessarily, leads to greater transparency and accountability within the public sector, and facilitates public participation in the making and administration of laws and policies.

Under both Acts, we independently investigate and review complaints about acts and decisions of public sector agencies on official information requests. We also monitor agencies' official information practices, resources, and systems.⁴⁹ This serves to both enhance public trust and confidence in government, and increase the availability of official information. In this context, we:

- provide resolution-oriented and impartial complaint handling;
- undertake interventions and investigations to identify where official information practices, resources, and systems are vulnerable;
- obtain early resolutions, form opinions, and make recommendations;
- provide advice to agencies and support them to resolve complaints; and
- report on, and monitor, the implementation of our suggestions and recommendations.

⁴⁹ Using general investigation powers under the Ombudsmen Act.

We also report on the outcome of key complaints and investigations to assist in improving official information practice across the public sector, and publish official information complaints data concerning both central and local government. The biannual data publication aligns with the data on OIA requests made to agencies as compiled and published by Te Kawa Mataaho | Public Service Commission.

Request for school dental data from across Health NZ districts

Chief Ombudsman Peter Boshier received a complaint about Health New Zealand's (HNZ) decision to refuse a request for information about school dental data.

A member of the public made a request to HNZ for statistical data for five-year-olds and year eight students, including their ethnicity, DMFT (decay, missing or filled teeth) score, and fluoridation status. The requester sought the information from some former district health board (DHB) areas, for varying years between 2017-2022.

HNZ first refused the request under section 18(d) of the OIA on the basis that statistical information was available on the Ministry of Health website. The requester expressed concern that the information on the website was high-level data, whereas their request sought more detailed information. HNZ subsequently refused the request under section 18(f) of the OIA on the basis the information *'cannot be made available without substantial collation or research'*, noting that *'the data for 20 different districts is not held centrally and so the completion of your request is unfortunately not possible'*.

The Chief Ombudsman considered it was unreasonable for HNZ to refuse the request under section 18(f) of the OIA when the same information was previously routinely made available to the requester under the DHB system. HNZ advised the Chief Ombudsman that prior to the amalgamation of 20 DHBs, each DHB was responsible for responding to OIA requests, and each DHB had different systems and processes for managing and storing data and information requests. HNZ advised the Chief Ombudsman of the steps it would need to take now, including estimated time, to process the request.

The Chief Ombudsman observed that some of the steps HNZ outlined were not collation or research, but rather actions to check or curate the information from different districts. The Chief Ombudsman noted such steps were not necessary to make the information available, and a statement could be included with the information as to its accuracy or overall cohesiveness across different districts. The Chief Ombudsman also noted the requester was able to access the information before DHBs were amalgamated to form HNZ, and for the information to not be available now would conflict with one of the purposes of the OIA—*'to increase progressively the availability of official information'*.

The Chief Ombudsman formed the opinion that HNZ was not entitled to refuse the request under section 18(f) of the OIA and recommended HNZ reconsider its decision, review its process for multi-district requests, and report back on the

outcome of that review. The Chief Ombudsman also notified the Chief Archivist of his final opinion. HNZ accepted the Chief Ombudsman's recommendations.

[Read the full case note on our website.](#)

Request for late sibling's medical records

Chief Ombudsman Peter Boshier received a complaint about Health New Zealand (HNZ) refusing to release information under section 9(2)(a) of the OIA— *'to protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons'*.

The complainant had sought their late sibling's health records from HNZ. They had requested this information to submit to the coroner because they felt that the coroner had incomplete information. HNZ refused the request on privacy grounds.

There is usually a high privacy interest in a person's health records, and this is retained following death. However, in this case the Chief Ombudsman considered there was a lower privacy interest because the person had discussed their health with their family, and their family had attended medical appointments with them. Therefore, it was likely that the family knew many of the details in the information requested.

The Chief Ombudsman consulted with the Privacy Commissioner, who agreed that the circumstances of the case lowered the privacy interest. The Privacy Commissioner also observed that because of the family's collective support for the person and involvement in their health appointments, a lower privacy interest would be consistent with tikanga and whanaungatanga concepts which are relevant in New Zealand.

Section 9(2)(a) of the OIA is subject to a public interest test, meaning the need to withhold the information to protect privacy needs to be weighed against any public interest in release. If the public interest in release outweighs the need to withhold, then the information must be released. In this case, the Chief Ombudsman considered there was a strong public interest in the family having access to the person's health records, especially in the context of wanting to ensure the coroner had complete health information. However, this public interest was confined to family members and the coroner (not the general public). The Chief Ombudsman considered the information could be released to the requester, on the condition that they did not disclose or disseminate the information to anyone other than close family and the coroner.

The Chief Ombudsman therefore formed the opinion that section 9(2)(a) of the OIA did not provide good reason to withhold the information from the requester. HNZ accepted the opinion, apologised to the requester, and released the information on the grounds that it would not be circulated wider than close family and the coroner.

[Read the full case note on our website.](#)

Enquiries

We receive a significant number of enquiries from members of the public prior to a complaint being made. Most of these are received over the telephone. We typically treat matters as formal *complaints* once they have been put in writing.⁵⁰ We define these initial enquires and phone calls as *'other contacts'* and we respond to them with advice and assistance.

If we are contacted prior to a formal complaint being made, this is our first opportunity to consider the issues and the best course of action we may be able to take for the individual. When someone comes to us, they are typically looking for remedial action or accountability from the agency they are complaining about. One of the services we offer is the provision of advice and guidance about the best and most efficient way the complainant can progress their concerns.

Enquiries about official information generally relate to a member of the public seeking clarification about an agency's obligations under the OIA or LGOIMA.

In 2024/25, we received 364 enquiries about official information requests. We responded to the majority of these enquiries (63 percent) by providing a plain language explanation of the legislation. In 106 of these enquires (29 percent) we invited the person to make a complaint to us in writing to consider and possibly investigate.

Minister did not hold information on who wrote or compiled tobacco policy notes

Chief Ombudsman Peter Boshier received a complaint about the Associate Minister of Health's refusal of a request for information on who wrote or compiled notes on tobacco policy. The Associate Minister refused the request and said that information on the Parliamentary website, in the form of a response to written and oral questions, addressed the request.

After the Chief Ombudsman commenced his investigation, the Associate Minister clarified the refusal was under section 18(g) of the OIA as she did not know 'who' wrote or collated the notes. The Associate Minister also acknowledged the information on the Parliamentary website did not address the request.

Section 18(g) of the OIA provides reason to refuse a request where the information requested is not held and the person dealing with request has no grounds for believing the information is either held by another agency or connected more closely with the functions of another agency. Before refusing a request under section 18(g), the agency should be able to explain the steps taken to try to locate the information and the reasons why the information is not held.

The Associate Minister advised the Chief Ombudsman she had confirmed the notes on tobacco policy were not written, collated or placed on her desk by ministerial staff. The notes were placed on her desk as a hard copy only. She confirmed that none of her staff knew who wrote or collated the notes.

⁵⁰ See sections 28(3A) of the OIA and 27(3A) of the LGOIMA.

On balance, the Chief Ombudsman was satisfied that the Associate Minister had made reasonable efforts to determine ‘who’ wrote or compiled the notes. However, the Chief Ombudsman expressed concern about the lack of records in the Associate Minister’s office to confirm the provenance of the notes on tobacco policy.

The Chief Ombudsman formed the opinion that the Associate Minister was entitled to refuse the request for ‘who’ wrote or compiled the notes under section 18(g), on the basis that the information was not held by the Associate Minister. He also formed the opinion that the failure to reference a refusal ground in the response to the requester was contrary to law (as required by section 19 of the OIA).

The Chief Ombudsman notified the Chief Archivist of this matter, in light of the lack of records about the origin of the notes. He also recommended the Associate Minister review the handling of the request and take steps to address the identified deficiencies in the way the request was dealt with.

[Read the full case note on our website.](#)

Request for all messages sent and received by Ministers over a month

Chief Ombudsman Peter Boshier received a complaint about the response to requests for all text, WhatsApp and Snapchat messages sent and received by Ministers Jones, Bishop and Brown, in their ministerial capacities, relating to a one-month period in 2024. The Ministers refused the requests under section 18(f) of the OIA—on the basis that ‘the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research’. None of the Ministers used Snapchat. Minister Jones used text, and Ministers Bishop and Brown used text and WhatsApp.

The complainant considered that as their request covered a single month and a very small number of devices there would be little effort involved in locating the information.

The Chief Ombudsman asked each Minister to undertake a sampling exercise, to demonstrate what would be required to process the requests. The exercise confirmed that the work involved in identifying, extracting and compiling the requested information would have a significant and unreasonable impact on the Ministers’ ability to carry out their functions. Staff resource was small for each Minister’s office, and the sampling exercise indicated each request would require one person to be removed from other duties to focus on the request for over a week. Also, given the quantity of non-official information held on the phones, a large part of processing each request would fall on the Ministers themselves. The Chief Ombudsman was satisfied that making the information available would require substantial collation and research.

Before refusing a request under section 18(f) of the OIA, agencies must consider:

- whether charging or extending the timeframe would enable the request to be met; and

- whether consulting the requester would enable them to make a request that would not require substantial collation or research.

The Chief Ombudsman was satisfied that all three Ministers considered these other options to manage the requests, and so section 18(f) could be applied. Charging or extending the timeframe would not have assisted given the workload pressures on the Ministers' offices. Two of the Ministers consulted the complainant, and one did not, on the basis this was unlikely to assist in reducing the workload to a manageable level. However, the Chief Ombudsman was disappointed efforts to consult were not more fulsome, specifically the Ministers could have explained the volume and nature of the information that had to be searched through, which may have enabled the requester to refine their request.

Even where section 18(f) of the OIA is made out, reliance on it is discretionary rather than mandatory, so an agency may still choose to release information even if doing so would require substantial collation or research. In some cases, it may be unreasonable for an agency to rely on section 18(f). This will usually be in cases where the information should have been readily accessible, or where there is a clear and compelling public interest in release.

In this case, each Minister confirmed they followed the 2017 Guidance of the Department of Internal Affairs (Guidance) for record keeping in respect of their messages. The Guidance notes that many text messages Ministers create in their official capacity will be *'facilitative, transitory and/or short-term value'* and do not need retaining. However, the Guidance suggests retaining *'text messages [that] require or initiate further action or are potentially of longer-term value.'*

The Chief Ombudsman noted as the Ministers can use keywords to search for information in text messages, and as they are following the Guidance for retention of particular messages by saving them in other formats, this satisfies the public interest in information of long-term value being readily accessible. The Chief Ombudsman consulted the Chief Archivist, and she concurred with his views from a record keeping perspective.

In these circumstances, the Chief Ombudsman formed the final opinion that it was open to the three Ministers to refuse the requests for all their messages over a one-month period under section 18(f) of the OIA.

[Read the full opinion on our website.](#)

Complaints

In 2024/25, we received 2,554 official information complaints.⁵¹ This was 15 percent more than last year.⁵² Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, we received an average of 1,607 official information complaints annually.⁵³ The sustained increase in the number of official information complaints we have received over the past five years indicates that a higher volume of complaints is the new normal.

Seventy-four percent of official information complaints were from the general public and 11 percent were from the media.

Most official information complaints were about a refusal of a request (50 percent), a delay (22 percent), or an incomplete or inadequate response (11 percent). A breakdown of the nature of official information complaints is available in [Part 7](#), in tables 6 and 12.

Over the past 10 years, the proportion of delay complaints received has remained relatively steady (between 22 and 26 percent).⁵⁴ However, the proportion of refusal complaints has decreased (from 56 percent in 2015/16 to 50 percent in 2024/25), while the proportion of complaints about an inadequate or incomplete response has increased (from 6 percent in 2015/16 to 11 percent in 2024/25).⁵⁵ This suggests increasing dissatisfaction with the actual information being released in response to a request.

It should also be noted that in terms of volume, delay complaints have almost doubled over the past 10 years (from 305 in 2015/16 to 567 in 2024/25), in line with the general increase in official information complaints overall.⁵⁶

This year, 32 percent of official information complaints were made against government departments, 38 percent against other public sector agencies, 18 percent against local government agencies, and 11 percent against Ministers.

In terms of numbers, complaints against:

- Ministers *increased* to 279, from 196 last year (42 percent increase);
- government departments *increased* to 824, from 634 last year (30 percent increase).
- other public sector agencies *increased* to 967, from 880 last year (10 percent increase); and
- local government agencies *decreased* to 472, from 494 last year (4 percent decrease).

51 This consisted of 2,083 complaints about requests made under the Official Information Act and 471 complaints about requests made under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act.

52 There were 2,222 official information complaints in 2023/24.

53 From 2014/15 to 2018/19 (inclusive) on average 1,607 official information complaints were received annually.

54 This figure includes three types of delay complaints: delay in making decision, delay in releasing information and decision not made as soon as reasonably practicable.

55 All proportions have been calculated after excluding bulk complaints received about schools in 2018/19 and 2021/22.

56 From 1,339 in 2015/16 to 2,554 in 2024/25.

Request for information about Chief Executive's exit payments

Chief Ombudsman Peter Boshier received a complaint about Christchurch City Council's refusal to provide information about the former Chief Executive's exit payments.

Three requesters asked for information about the exit payments made to the former Chief Executive when she resigned in November 2023. The Council refused the requests in full, under sections 7(2)(a) and 7(2)(c)(ii) of the LGOIMA.

Subject to any stronger public interest in release, section 7(2)(a) provides grounds to withhold information to *'protect the privacy of natural persons'*, and section 7(2)(c)(ii) provides grounds to withhold where it is necessary *'to protect information which is subject to an obligation of confidence... where the making available of the information would be likely otherwise to damage the public interest'*.

The Chief Ombudsman accepted the former Chief Executive had a strong privacy interest in the requested information (which contained employment and personal financial information), except for the information required to be released under the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA). Under section 32 of Schedule 10 of the LGA, councils are required to include chief executive remuneration in the annual report. This meant that the privacy interest over the amount of the severance payment was less, as that would be included in the Council's annual report in due course.

The information was also subject to an obligation of confidence due to a settlement between the parties. The Chief Ombudsman accepted there was a public interest in a local government agency being able to maintain promises of confidentiality, where that had been a necessary part of reaching a settlement. However, the obligations under the LGOIMA and LGA affect the extent to which the information can be considered confidential.

Both sections 7(2)(a) and 7(2)(c)(ii) of the LGOIMA are subject to the public interest test, meaning the need to withhold needs to be weighed against the public interest in release. Where the public interest in release outweighs the need to withhold, the information must be released.

The Council considered that the public interest in release would be met by reporting the total amount of the remuneration payment and the total amount of the severance payment in the annual report for 2023/24, as required under the LGA. However, the Chief Ombudsman noted there was a public interest in the Council being accountable and transparent about such payments in a timely manner, and it was not sufficient to have this published in the annual report some months later. The Chief Ombudsman also noted a significant public interest in the employment and remuneration of senior public officials, and the circumstances of the Chief Executive's departure added to a public interest in releasing information to give the public assurance around accountability and bolster the relationship between the Council and its community.

The Chief Ombudsman formed the opinion that the Council had good reason to withhold most of the requested information under sections 7(2)(a) and 7(2)(c)(ii) of the LGOIMA, but the public interest required the release of some information.

The Chief Ombudsman recommended that the Council release a statement advising there had been an agreed settlement, both parties received separate legal advice, the total amount of the severance payment, and the high-level reasons for the payment. The Council accepted the Chief Ombudsman's recommendation.

[Read the full opinion on our website.](#)

Resolution and forming opinions

In 2024/25, we completed 2,858 official information complaints—a clearance rate of 112 percent. This is the highest number of official information complaints the Office has completed in a year, and is 34 percent more than last year.⁵⁷ As well as sustained efforts by staff, and continually reviewing our processes and priorities to identify efficiency gains, this year we reaped the benefits from a number of staff, who had been recruited and trained with additional funding granted in previous years, becoming fully operational. Our focus is resolving cases more quickly, acting proportionately, and addressing systemic issues where we can.

We made recommendations in 162 complaints,⁵⁸ and obtained 1,031 remedies. The majority of these remedies were for the benefit of the individual, including access to information they had been refused by way of a changed decision or an omission rectified. There was a 25 percent increase in the number of decisions changed, compared to last year.⁵⁹

Detailed breakdowns of the remedies under each piece of legislation are provided in [Part 7](#).

In complaints handling, we use a resolution-focused approach where possible to encourage remedial action both for the benefit of the complainant and the benefit of public administration. We obtained resolution for 43 percent of official information complaints (645 complaints) that could otherwise have been subject to a full investigation.⁶⁰

A focus on resolution does not limit our ability to scrutinise administrative conduct and identify deficiencies where required. After full investigation and review, we formed a final opinion on 857 complaints in 2024/25, an increase of 11 percent from last year. Of those opinions, we did not uphold the agency's decision, identifying administrative deficiency, in 369 complaints (43 percent). This can be compared to 62 percent of complaints where we identified administrative deficiency in 2023/24.⁶¹

57 There were 2,126 official information complaints completed in 2023/24.

58 All recommendations have been accepted.

59 320 decisions were changed in 2023/24, and 399 decisions were changed in 2024/25.

60 1,502 complaints that could have or did go to full investigation.

61 In 2023/24 where we formed a final opinion, we identified administrative deficiency in 480 complaints.

In the majority of the 370 complaints where we identified a deficiency, the agency did not act in accordance with timeliness requirements resulting in a delay in decision-making or in providing information (49 percent), or was unjustified in its decision to refuse a request for information (35 percent).

Request for unredacted copies of preliminary Treaty Impact Analysis for the proposed Regulatory Standards Bill

As part of public consultation on the Regulatory Standards Bill, the Ministry for Regulation proactively released several documents on its website. This included the Preliminary Treaty Impact Analysis which was released with partial redactions under section 9(2)(h) of the OIA, *'to maintain legal professional privilege'*.

The Ministry received numerous requests for the unredacted version of the document, however maintained its decision to withhold the information. We then received a number of complaints about the Ministry's decision, and initiated an investigation into the group of complaints.

Legal privilege is intended to protect confidential communications between legal advisors and their clients, and extends to any document or material that evidences the substance of a communication between a legal advisor and client. Chief Ombudsman John Allen reviewed the withheld information, and noted that it set out the substance of legal advice received. He considered solicitor-client privilege applied to the information, and withholding the information was necessary to maintain legal privilege.

Section 9(2)(h) of the OIA is subject to the public interest test, meaning the need to withhold the information to maintain legal privilege needs to be weighed against any public interest in release. If the public interest outweighs the reason to withhold, the information must be released.

The complainants submitted there was a high public interest in release of the information. Some of the key themes from their submissions were:

- the redactions impaired their ability to make informed submissions on the proposed Bill;
- the Ministry's decision to withhold the information was in breach of the Crown's Tiriti o Waitangi | Treaty of Waitangi obligations;
- the decision to withhold was inconsistent with the principles of natural justice, including accountability and transparency; and
- the public interest in releasing the information outweighed the need to withhold it to maintain legal privilege due to the significance of the subject matter, the number of people affected, and the level of public discourse around the Bill.

The Chief Ombudsman acknowledged the high public interest in release of the information in terms of public participation in the legislative process, which was particularly acute given the potential breadth and depth of the impacts of the proposed Bill. However, he considered the public interest could be met in part via other avenues available to individuals to pursue their underlying concerns about the proposed Bill and the adequacy of consultation. These included the options to raise their concerns with the Waitangi Tribunal, through judicial review, in their submissions during the public consultation process, to their local Members of Parliament or the Minister for Regulation, through interest groups and associated campaigns, and in submissions to the Select Committee once the Regulatory Standards Bill was introduced to Parliament.

On the other hand, the Chief Ombudsman considered it was especially important that Ministers and officials are able to seek and obtain free and frank legal advice on matters that are as significant as the proposed Regulatory Standards Bill. The fundamental interests in favour of maintaining the privilege of this legal advice were therefore particularly high, considering the potential constitutional significance of the proposed Regulatory Standards Bill and the breadth and depth of its potential impacts.

The Chief Ombudsman accepted that release of the information could help inform public participation, by disclosing advice about whether and how the Crown is meeting its obligations under te Tiriti | the Treaty. However, the Chief Ombudsman considered the Crown's own internal legal advice is not determinative of that question—it is a question for the Waitangi Tribunal and, ultimately, the Courts. The fact that the public is concerned about the legality of the Crown's actions did not, in his view, necessitate the release of legal advice the Crown obtained to inform its position.

While acknowledging the matter was finely balanced, the Chief Ombudsman formed the opinion that the public interest in release did not outweigh the need to withhold the information to maintain legal professional privilege, and the Ministry was entitled to withhold the information under section 9(2)(h) of the OIA.

[See the full case note on our website.](#)

Request for advice on Fast-track Approvals Bill

On 8 March 2024, The Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society of New Zealand Inc (Forest and Bird) requested from the Department of Conservation (DoC) a copy of all advice from DoC to Ministers on the Fast-track Approvals Bill. On 8 April 2024, DoC refused the request under section 18(d) of the OIA on the basis that *'the information... will soon be publicly available'*. Forest and Bird complained to Chief Ombudsman Peter Boshier about this decision.

In response to preliminary inquiries, DoC noted it refused the request as there was an all-of-Government proactive release planned for information related to the Fast-track Approvals Bill, and it expected, at that time, for this to be released a week prior to Select Committee submissions closing.

Emails from DoC provided to the Chief Ombudsman during his investigation, stepped through the coordination of the proactive release between agencies and Ministers' Offices. The emails in late March and early April indicated concern from officials about the proactive release coming out in a reasonable time before Select Committee submissions were to close on 19 April 2024. Officials also considered releasing the information (separately) to the requesters. However, a decision was made to go ahead with the proactive release and not to release the information to the requesters separately.

Section 18(d) of the OIA is discretionary—agencies *may* refuse a request if the information is or will soon be publicly available. To exercise this discretion:

- there must be reasonable certainty that the specific information requested will be made publicly available;
- there must be reasonable certainty that the information will be made available soon (and that is sufficiently soon); and
- the agency must be able to articulate when and where the requester would access the information.

Even if the grounds to exercise the discretion in section 18(d) are made out, the use of section 18(d) should not undermine the purposes of the OIA, which include enabling *'more effective participation in the making and administration of laws and policies'*. The discretion to refuse a request on this basis should be exercised reasonably, and with regard to the particular circumstances of the case.

The Chief Ombudsman formed the opinion that DoC's reliance on section 18(d) was unlawful, because:

- The planned proactive release had no clear release date and so there was no reliable basis to conclude the release would take place soon. The correspondence showed that as time went on there was no certainty about the release date; and

- DoC had determined that not all the requested information would be released proactively. Therefore, DoC could not be reasonably certain that the specific information requested was going to be released, and therefore the grounds in section 18(d) were not met.

In any case, the Chief Ombudsman formed the opinion that the use of the discretion under section 18(d) was unreasonable, because:

- DoC knew the information would be useful to those seeking to provide a submission on the Bill, and that a deferred release by way of the proactive release would undermine the purpose of the OIA to enable *'more effective participation in the making and administration of laws and policies'*; and
- The information appears to have been ready for release, with redactions, and the only basis for relying on section 18(d) appears to have been a desire from a Minister to release it later. The Ombudsman noted his concern that DoC improperly abdicated its legal responsibility to make a proper and reasonable decision on the OIA request.

The Chief Ombudsman stated, *'while I welcome the use of proactive release where it will enhance the objectives of the OIA, it appears that the plan to proactively release material in this case had the opposite effect.'*

In his provisional opinion, the Chief Ombudsman indicated he would likely recommend that DoC immediately release the information it proposed for the proactive release and advise the reasons for any redacted information. As this action had been taken by the time of the Chief Ombudsman's final opinion, a recommendation was no longer necessary.

[Read the full opinion on our website.](#)

Official information practice investigations

Under the Ombudsmen Act, we proactively investigate public sector agencies' official information practices. In these investigations, we look at five key areas that have a significant impact on OIA and LGOIMA compliance and practice:

- leadership and culture;
- organisation structure, staffing, and capability;
- internal policies, procedures, and resources;
- current practices; and
- performance monitoring and learning.

Our objective is to provide independent assurance to the public and to Parliament

about the official information compliance capabilities within public sector agencies. We aim to highlight good practice where we find it, identify any vulnerabilities, and overall, advance government accountability and transparency. Our reports make suggestions and recommendations about the areas agencies should focus on improving, including steps that can be taken to maintain resilience and compliance in emergency situations like natural disasters or pandemics.

In 2024/25, we completed investigations into how seven government agencies met their timeliness obligations under the OIA.⁶² The agencies selected represented a range of organisation types and functions. They were the Department of Internal Affairs, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Kainga Ora, Pharmaceutical Management Agency (Pharmac), Health New Zealand, the Treasury, and Transpower New Zealand Limited.

OIA timeliness investigations

In March 2025, Chief Ombudsman Peter Boshier released reports on self-initiated investigations examining the practices and processes used by seven agencies to meet their timeliness obligations under the Official Information Act 1982.

The decision to initiate the investigation was, in part, a response to public concerns that various agencies were slow to respond to official information requests, and comments from some individuals that the OIA was being used as a bureaucratic tool to stifle or delay the flow of information.

The investigations ultimately found no evidence of deliberate obstruction of information flow. However, gaps were identified in most OIA systems that caused or contributed to delays in providing information to requesters.

In terms of the gaps identified, some of the key issues were:

- **Resourcing:** a small number of agencies had under-resourced OIA functions, which increased the time taken to respond to requesters. Some agencies were also undergoing restructures which created challenges for OIA processing;
- **FYI notifications to Ministers:** some practices around sending agency OIA responses to Ministers for FYI notification, or 'no surprises' purposes, caused delays;
- **Extensions:** in some cases, extensions were not for reasons provided in the Act, and were for blanket time periods, as opposed to being made on a case-by-case basis; and
- **Decision-making:** a small number of agencies told requesters that they had made a decision on their OIA request within statutory timeframes and the information would be released at a later date, but had not always completed the steps necessary to make a decision.

⁶² These investigations were initiated in 2023/24 and completed in 2024/25.

The investigation also identified good practices, including:

- **Culture:** most agencies had a positive OIA culture or were working towards developing one over the course of the investigation; and
- **Proactive release:** some agencies had particularly good practice around the proactive release of information.

Overall, there were 11 recommendations and 152 action points made in total across the seven agencies. It is positive that all seven agencies advised they were making changes in response. We continue to monitor implementation of these recommendations and action points.

[Read the seven reports on our website.](#)

This year, we also completed five self-initiated investigations into local government official information practices. This was the first time we have investigated the practices of council-controlled organisations, specifically Auckland Transport and Wellington Water. Also included in the investigations were Wellington City Council, Queenstown Lakes District Council and Marlborough District Council.

Local government official information practice investigations

In June 2025, Chief Ombudsman John Allen finalised investigations into five local authorities' official information practices, comprising both Councils and Council Controlled Organisations (CCOs).

There were areas of excellence within all of the Councils and CCOs. Overall, we were impressed with the volume and variety of information local authorities proactively released to the public. Some published responses to official information requests on their website, and one Council in particular also publicly reported on its LGOIMA performance. The good practice in this area reflects positively on the leadership within the local authorities investigated.

As with all practice investigations, we identified opportunities for improvement.

We identified that local authorities did not always comply with the LGOIMA when they withheld information from release. Each time a request for official information is not responded to in full, local authorities should give a valid reason why and let the requester know they can complain to the Chief Ombudsman.⁶³ Councils and CCOs sometimes did not provide one or both of the above in situations where, for instance, requesters were advised that information would be available at a later date, or it did not exist.

A small number of local authorities considered reputational risk as part of assessing their LGOIMA requests. While this is not necessarily negative, information cannot be withheld solely on the basis that release would affect public perceptions of the council or CCO.

63 See ss 18(a)(i) and 18(b) of the LGOIMA.

A few local authorities' LGOIMA handling processes relied on one or two key people. Building greater resilience around those processes can help ensure that, if core staff are unavailable, LGOIMA requests can still be answered in a timely and consistent manner.

We were disappointed to hear that some local authorities experienced challenging and unreasonable behaviour from requesters. Requesters should engage in good faith and in a manner that enhances the integrity and operation of the LGOIMA. We advised one local authority that it would be beneficial to develop a strategy to ensure staff safety without compromising requesters' fundamental right to request information.

In total, we made five recommendations and 168 action points. It is positive that all five local authorities advised they were making changes in response. We continue to monitor implementation of these recommendations and action points.

Read the five reports on our website: [Auckland Transport](#), [Marlborough District Council](#), [Queenstown Lakes District Council](#), [Wellington City Council](#), and [Wellington Water](#).

Ensure good decision-making and processes

Under the Ombudsmen Act 1975 (OA), we can investigate the administrative conduct of public sector agencies and other agencies subject to our jurisdiction, by way of a complaint or an own-motion investigation. Our independent oversight assists agencies to identify and correct administrative deficiencies, including where significant or systemic issues are identified. In doing so, we provide a means of improving administration and decision-making over time. In this context, we:

- provide resolution-oriented and impartial complaint handling;
- undertake interventions and investigations to identify where administrative practices, resources, and systems are vulnerable;
- obtain early resolutions, form opinions, and make recommendations;
- provide advice to agencies and support them to resolve complaints; and
- report on and monitor the implementation of Ombudsman suggestions and recommendations.

We continue to report on the outcome of key complaints and investigations to assist in improving administrative practice across the public sector.

Enquiries

As discussed above, members of the public frequently make enquiries with us prior to a complaint being made.⁶⁴

In 2024/25, we received 4,932 enquiries related to OA matters and completed 4,935. In 650 cases (13 percent), we advised the person to make a complaint in writing for our consideration as they had already exhausted any other options.

Overall, the majority of enquiries relating to OA matters can be appropriately addressed through the provision of an explanation or advice, or by being raised directly with the relevant agency in the first instance. Under the OA, recourse to the Ombudsman should be a last resort. It has been a long-standing general practice of Ombudsmen not to intervene in a matter if the agency concerned has not had an adequate opportunity to respond to the complaint first. With some exceptions (such as in the case of a complaint from a child or young person), we generally expect a complaint to have been sent first to the chief executive of the agency or to the agency's nominated complaints service. This was the case for over a quarter (1,324 or 27 percent) of the OA enquiries we completed during the year.

MSD's process for considering claims of abuse in care

Cooper Legal complained to Chief Ombudsman Peter Boshier that a historic claims process administered by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) was unreasonable and unjust.

At the time, MSD administered a scheme for people who had experienced abuse or neglect while in the care of Child, Youth and Family before April 2017. The process was established in 2007 and revised in 2018. Cooper Legal's complaint concerned the revised 2018 process, and raised a number of issues.

The Chief Ombudsman's opinion on the complaint was formed after the final report by the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Historic Abuse in Care was released in 2024. The Chief Ombudsman identified there was some overlap between the complaint from Cooper Legal and the Royal Commission findings and recommendations. The Royal Commission recommended a new and independent redress scheme for survivors of abuse in care, however the Government had not, at the time the Chief Ombudsman considered the matter, decided on a new redress scheme. The Chief Ombudsman proceeded to form an opinion on the current MSD historic claims process, with an understanding his opinion would help inform the design of a new redress scheme. However, the Chief Ombudsman chose not to consider in detail elements of the Cooper Legal complaint where the Royal Commission had made findings and recommendations, and the Chief Ombudsman did not think he could add further value.

⁶⁴ We typically treat matters as formal *complaints* once they have been put in writing. See section [16\(1A\) of OA](#).

In addition to the overlap with the Royal Commission, the complaint also included some aspects of the process that had been reviewed or approved by Ministers, and the Chief Ombudsman does not have jurisdiction to directly review decisions taken by Ministers. However, the Chief Ombudsman's jurisdiction does extend to advice tendered by officials to Ministers.

In considering the complaint, the Chief Ombudsman outlined his expectation that the historic claims process should be consistent with the following principles of good administrative decision-making:

- there must be proactive publication of eligibility criteria, processes and policies;
- there must be engagement with the individual to ensure they understand the process and have the opportunity to provide relevant information, and decisions must be clearly communicated;
- there must be a simple complaint process;
- benchmarking must be rational and consistent; and
- conflicts of interest must be identified and managed.

It was with this lens that the Chief Ombudsman formed the opinion there were some elements of the process that were unreasonable, in particular:

- Cooper Legal was not notified until April 2019 of changes to the eligibility criteria and process that occurred in November 2018;
- MSD had not made parts of the process clear to claimants;
- MSD had not given claimants good enough reasons for the decisions being made;
- it was unreasonable for MSD to refuse a claim solely on the basis of not having substantiating information in its own files;
- the rates of payment were arbitrary and unreasonable; and
- some elements of the payment framework were unreasonable.

The Chief Ombudsman chose not to make recommendations on matters that were already addressed by the Royal Commission. He recommended that:

- MSD review its current guidance and practices for communicating decisions on historic claims;
- MSD review and amend its current practice to ensure a historic claim is not declined solely on the basis of an absence of substantiating information in MSD files, instead taking a holistic approach and engaging with the claimant before making a decision; and
- officials designing the new redress system review his opinion to inform that design.

MSD accepted the recommendations.

[Read the full opinion on our website.](#)

Complaints

We received 5,269 OA complaints in 2024/25. This is the highest number of OA complaints we have ever received in a year, and is 19 percent more than last year.⁶⁵ When the COVID-19 pandemic hit we expected to see an increase in OA complaints, and we did. However, this increase has been sustained over time, and we now expect this quantum to be the new normal.

Eighty-seven percent of OA complaints were received from the general public and nine percent were from prisoners and prisoner advocates. This is consistent with the central purpose of the OA complaint function, which is to provide recourse for people who are personally affected by the administrative conduct of public sector agencies. Forty-four percent of OA complaints were made against government departments, 28 percent against other public sector agencies, and 16 percent were made against local government agencies.

In terms of numbers, complaints against:

- other public sector agencies *increased* to 1,457, from 1,155 last year (26 percent increase);
- government departments increased to 2,334, as compared to 2,056 last year (13 percent increase); and
- local government agencies *increased* to 853, from 758 last year (13 percent increase).

The agencies that generate the highest numbers of complaints tend to be those with a significant operational component that interact directly with large numbers of people. These agencies have consistently been the highest complained about over previous years, with further details available in [Part 7](#).

We have processes and systems in place to triage and manage incoming complaints to ensure we remain flexible and agile in a rapidly evolving environment where new issues regularly appear. This allows us to identify urgent and time sensitive issues, to ensure these complaints are assessed and allocated as quickly as possible.

We look for opportunities to identify early resolution opportunities, where appropriate. Further, where we receive a high volume of related complaints, we look at opportunities to manage these together. This approach enables consistent consideration of the matters raised, and also allows us to identify and address any relevant systemic issues.

We also publish case notes where our findings are likely to have wider implications for government decision-making. [A list of case notes and opinions](#) we published this year, with links, is available in Part 7.

⁶⁵ There were 4,443 OA complaints received in 2023/24.

Dam safety and waterway debris

Chief Ombudsman Peter Boshier received a complaint that Hastings District Council (HDC) had failed to maintain the Mangarau and Herehere dams, and Mangarau stream, and that this contributed to flooding in the Havelock North area in 2023 during Cyclone Gabrielle.

The Chief Ombudsman could not reliably conclude that HDC had caused or contributed to the flooding. However, he was able to investigate HDC's actions in relation to dam safety and waterway debris in the lead up to the cyclone.

Dam safety reviews in 2016 and 2021 had highlighted flood capacity issues and made various recommendations. HDC noted the dams were not categorised as flood-prone or dangerous, and therefore there was no legal obligation to undertake a recommended urgent review. However, the Ombudsman considered that compliance with legal obligations in this context was a minimum requirement, and in his view HDC took insufficient steps to properly consider the flood capacity matters that had been raised by the reviews.

The Chief Ombudsman was also concerned that three other recommendations in the reviews were not actioned until after the cyclone these were that pipework be inspected, rain gauges checked and calibrated, and an emergency action plan developed. HDC also received a number of non-compliance letters from the regional council, which indicated a pattern of behaviour of HDC failing to action recommendations regarding the maintenance of dams. A concern was also raised that HDC did not obtain a safety report for 2021, and that this was a breach of a resource consent. HDC agreed that the report was a requirement of the relevant resource consent.

The Chief Ombudsman formed the opinion that HDC acted unreasonably by repeatedly failing to action recommendations from the dam safety reports at the relevant times, and failing to obtain a safety report in 2021.

A concern was also raised that HDC failed to clear debris from the Mangarau stream prior to Cyclone Gabrielle. The Chief Ombudsman noted that under a 2003 agreement, HDC had the responsibility for managing the five main Havelock North streams. However, he did not consider HDC to have complete responsibility to keep waterways clear. He recognised the general responsibilities of waterways can be complicated as they often traverse private property, for which respective landowners have responsibility.

In this case, and in the context of HDC's previous actions undertaking to clear the stream, the Chief Ombudsman considered that HDC had the responsibility of clearing the Mangarau stream. He considered five examples of debris needing to be cleared from the stream, some of which on their own would not have been unreasonable, but, as whole, he found HDC fell short of its responsibilities and its omission to clear the stream closer to the time the debris was reported was unreasonable.

As HDC had committed to work to improve the management of dams and waterways, the Chief Ombudsman did not make any recommendations in that respect.

[Read the full opinion on our website.](#)

Resolution and forming opinions

In 2024/25, we completed a total of 5,305 OA complaints. This is the highest amount of OA complaints we have completed in a year, and is 28 percent more than last year, indicating the sustained effort from our people to manage our increasing workloads. As noted above, our focus is resolving cases more quickly, acting proportionately, and addressing systemic issues where we can.

During the year, we made recommendations on 98 complaints, and obtained 557 remedies.

In all but two complaints,⁶⁶ our recommendations were accepted. Generally, public sector agencies respond to the process we follow and the robust, evidence-based nature of our opinions.

Just over three-quarters of remedies were for the benefit of the individual, including apologies, financial remedies, provision of an explanation, rectification of actions and omissions, and reconsidered or changed decisions. The remainder were remedies with a wider benefit to public administration. These included review of law, policy or procedures, the provision of guidance or training to staff, and changes in agencies' practices and procedures. Detailed breakdowns of the remedies obtained under the OA are provided in [Part 7](#).

As previously noted, we use a resolution-focused approach where possible, to encourage remedial action both for the benefit of the complainant and the benefit of public administration. We obtained resolution for 28 percent of OA complaints (244 complaints) that could otherwise have been subject to a full investigation.⁶⁷ This is 89 percent more than last year.⁶⁸

This data reflects our experience that public sector agencies are generally receptive to Ombudsman investigations and enquiries, and often take the opportunity to examine their conduct and remedy any administrative deficiencies that have occurred. Helping people obtain individual remedies to resolve their complaints is central to our purpose, but obtaining remedies for wider administrative improvement is also critical to ensuring that people are treated fairly. These remedies help to effect change on a larger scale and are necessary to promote continuous and lasting improvement.

66 Two complaints had recommendations not accepted. The two complaint case notes are found here: [School Board decision to exclude student unreasonable, School Board acted unreasonably by failing to adequately communicate reasons.](#)

67 880 complaints that could have, or did go, to full investigation.

68 129 OA complaints were resolved last year, which would otherwise have been subject to a full investigation.

A focus on resolution does not limit our ability to complete full investigations where required. We formed a final opinion on 636 OA complaints in 2024/25. The majority (76 percent) of final opinions identified no administrative deficiency in the acts or decisions of the agency. This proportion is consistent with the previous year.

Of the 146 OA complaints where we identified a deficiency, the main reasons were:

- an unreasonable, unjust, oppressive, or discriminatory act, omission, or decision by the agency in 44 percent of complaints;
- a procedural deficiency in 18 percent of complaints; and
- a flawed agency process or system in 13 percent of complaints.

Complaints clearance, timeliness and quality assurance

We report clearance rates, timeliness and quality assurance across all complaint types—OIA, LGOIMA and OA.

In 2024/25, we received 7,823 OIA, LGOIMA and OA complaints. This is the highest number of complaints we have ever received in a year, surpassing the previous record number of complaints we received in 2021/2022 at the height of the Government’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic.⁶⁹ It is also a 17 percent increase on last year.⁷⁰

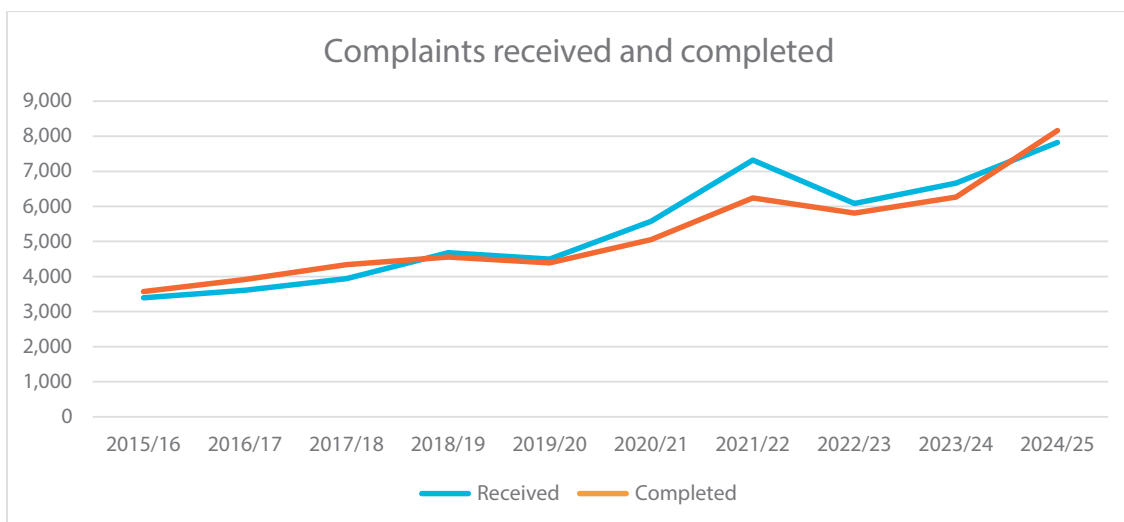


Figure 4: Complaints received and completed over a ten year period.

[Link to text alternative version of Figure 4.](#)

From 2021/22, Parliament approved additional funding to enable us to respond to the increasing demand for our complaint handling services. This has enabled us to recruit and train more investigative staff, and has improved our ability to respond to the pressure of complaints. We are also taking additional steps to manage the ongoing sustained increase in complaints by:

⁶⁹ We received 7,321 complaints in 2021/22.

⁷⁰ We received 6,665 complaints in 2023/24.

- using real-time data reporting and data modelling to track progress and accurately predict and plan for peaks and flows of complaints;
- continually reviewing our processes, priorities and planning to identify efficiency gains, including through a resolution-focused, proportionate approach;
- trialling new approaches and systems in pilot groups, and applying the learnings more broadly across the Office;
- actively managing organisational priorities to enable the reprioritisation of resources when necessary;
- considering the better use of technology, including to enable people to quickly access the information they need to resolve issues without needing our intervention;
- identifying early any potential systemic issues and working closely with agencies to resolve these before they result in further complaints; and
- assisting agencies to have the appropriate policies, processes and procedures in place to enable and ensure good decision-making, thus reducing complaints.

Overall, our complaint throughput has increased, with a total of 8,163 complaints completed in 2024/25. This is the highest number of complaints ever completed in a year, and is 30 percent higher than the number of complaints completed last year.⁷¹ In addition, our clearance rate exceeded 100 percent (at 104 percent), meaning we completed more complaints than we received.

This reflects our sustained efforts to effectively and efficiently respond to the increasing number of complaints. As noted above, we have reprioritised and redeployed our resources, and the clearance rate appears to reflect this concerted effort. However, we are conscious that short-term reprioritisation decisions may have longer-term, unintended impacts. We are also looking at new technology, tools, processes and ideas to ensure we can continue to deliver on all of our priorities. We will continue to strive towards completing more complaints than we receive in order to manage our workload down over time.

The increase in throughput this year has been achieved without sacrificing quality. We perform regular, formal quality assurance checks across random samples of all completed complaints and other contacts. Eighty-one percent of the complaints and other contacts reviewed met internal quality standards. We identify and action relevant learnings from our quality assurance checks as part of our continuous improvement cycle. In addition to our quality assurance process, we ensure quality through a proportionate review process where necessary and a robust in-house learning programme.

While we are managing the high volume of complaints we are receiving, our timeliness continues to be impacted. This year, of all complaints and other contacts closed, we completed 85 percent within six months or less from the date of receipt, down from 88 percent last year.

⁷¹ In 2023/24 we completed 6,269 complaints.

In relation to complaints, our timeliness figures were:

- 56 percent completed in three months (down from 59 percent last year);
- 71 percent completed in six months (down from 75 percent last year); and
- 82 percent completed in twelve months (down from 84 percent last year).

In relation to other contacts, our timeliness figures were:

- 96 percent completed in one month (up from 95 percent last year).

We are focused on improving the timeliness of our complaint handling as a top priority. We will continue to look for ways to drive efficiencies in the delivery of our services, to ensure we resolve complaints as close as possible to the point of impact.

Children in care

The Ombudsman has enhanced oversight over Oranga Tamariki and its care and custody providers under the Oversight of Oranga Tamariki System Act 2022, which came into force on 1 May 2023.

Our enhanced functions and powers include:

- the extension of OA and OIA jurisdiction over care or custody providers contracted to Oranga Tamariki;
- specific requirements on Oranga Tamariki and care or custody providers to provide information to us in relation to preliminary inquiries, critical or serious incidents, complaints, complaint trends and data, and any other information we request; and
- an express mandate for the Ombudsman to provide guidance to Oranga Tamariki and care or custody providers on the design of their complaints processes, and to support learning and continuous improvement in regard to those processes.

The legislation requires we operate in a way that:

- recognises the importance of tamaiti and rangatahi whānau, hapū, iwi and culture;
- ensures our processes are visible and accessible to tamariki, rangatahi, and their family, whānau, hapū and iwi, or an individual or organisation supporting them; and
- involves them in the complaint or investigation process as appropriate.

These obligations promote a child-centric, trauma-informed and tikanga-informed approach that elevates the mana and dignity of participants.

The Act also requires we make reasonable efforts to develop arrangements with hapū, iwi and Māori organisations, to support us with complaint handling and to share information.

The Act also sets out how the Ombudsman will work with other oversight bodies such as Mana Mokopuna (the Children and Young People's Commission)⁷² and Aroturuki Tamariki (the Independent Children's Monitor). This includes working to ensure that there is no wrong door for people to come to, and regardless of which oversight body someone approaches in the first instance, they will help them get to the right place.

⁷² From 1 August 2025, the Children's Commissioner.

Reports of Concern made to Oranga Tamariki

Chief Ombudsman Peter Boshier received a complaint that Oranga Tamariki had failed to adequately respond to reports of concern about tamariki.

From January 2022 to July 2023, Oranga Tamariki received nine reports of concern from seven different parties, regarding alleged violence and abuse in relation to pre-school and primary school aged tamariki. Two complaints about the responses to the reports of concern were also made to Oranga Tamariki, and the complainants applied to the Family Court for intervention.

Following an investigation, the Chief Ombudsman formed the opinion that Oranga Tamariki acted unreasonably and contrary to law in failing to conduct investigations into the safety of the tamariki, or where it did investigate it failed to investigate adequately. This was despite mounting serious concerns about their safety raised over time through multiple reports of concern from multiple parties.

The Chief Ombudsman identified significant concerns about the actions and decisions of Oranga Tamariki, including failures to adhere to legislation and policy, failures to properly investigate multiple reports of concern, the provision of incorrect information to the Family Court, failures to make or monitor safety plans, the making of an inappropriate safety plan, and a failure to adequately engage with the tamariki. Short term assessments of safety were made without proper planning for future expected events, and there was a fundamental misunderstanding of the role of Oranga Tamariki to protect tamariki from harm.

The Chief Ombudsman also formed the opinion that Oranga Tamariki acted unreasonably in responding to the two complaints about its responses to the reports of concern, as it did not acknowledge any of the above shortcomings and maintained the tamariki were not at risk.

Oranga Tamariki accepted the Chief Ombudsman's recommendations to:

1. undertake an immediate and thorough fresh assessment of the safety of the tamariki;
2. take all actions necessary to ensure the tamariki are safe;
3. provide an apology to the complainant;
4. provide a financial remedy to the complainant for costs incurred at the Family Court when seeking to ensure the safety of the tamariki;
5. undertake an audit of a random sample of reports of concern at the relevant site;
6. undertake a training session with the relevant site;
7. consider creating a review process when ongoing, multiple reports of concern are received about a child;

8. review its Initial Assessment Policy; and
9. consider how to notify the Family Court of the inaccuracies in its reports in this case.

[Read the full case note on our website.](#)

In 2024/25, we received 793 OA and OIA complaints and enquiries about Oranga Tamariki. This is a six percent increase from last year.

We completed 823 complaints and enquiries and obtained 200 remedies—69 percent for the benefit of the individual and 32 percent for the benefit of public administration.

The main issues raised in complaints related to care and protection, social worker issues, complaints, staff conduct, communication, caregivers, practice standards, care standards, access, and decision-making.

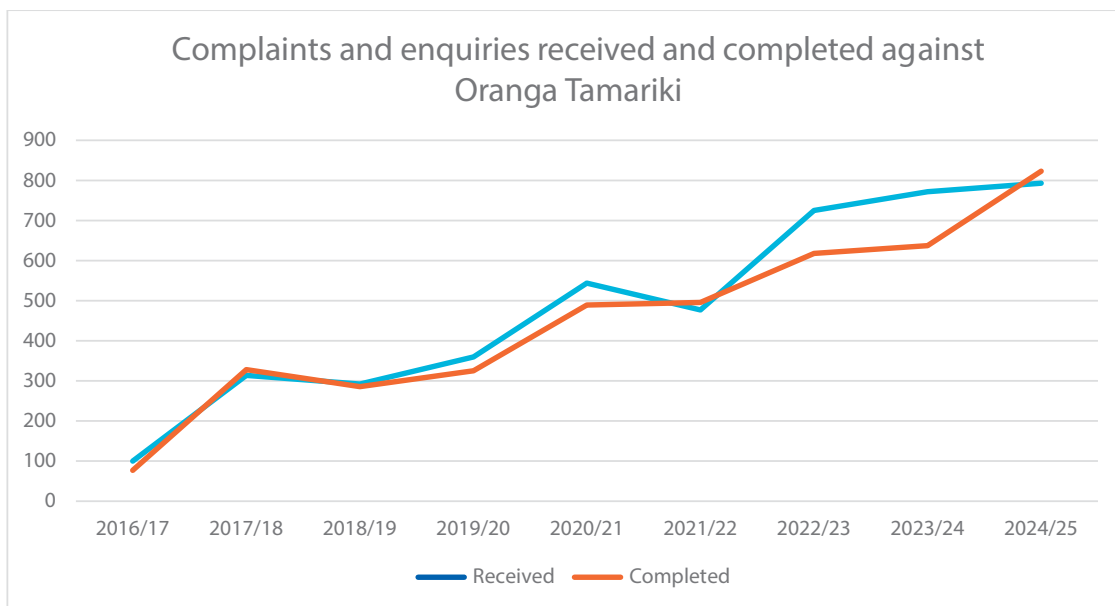


Figure 5: Complaints and enquires received against Oranga Tamariki over a ten year period.

[Link to text alternative version of Figure 5.](#)

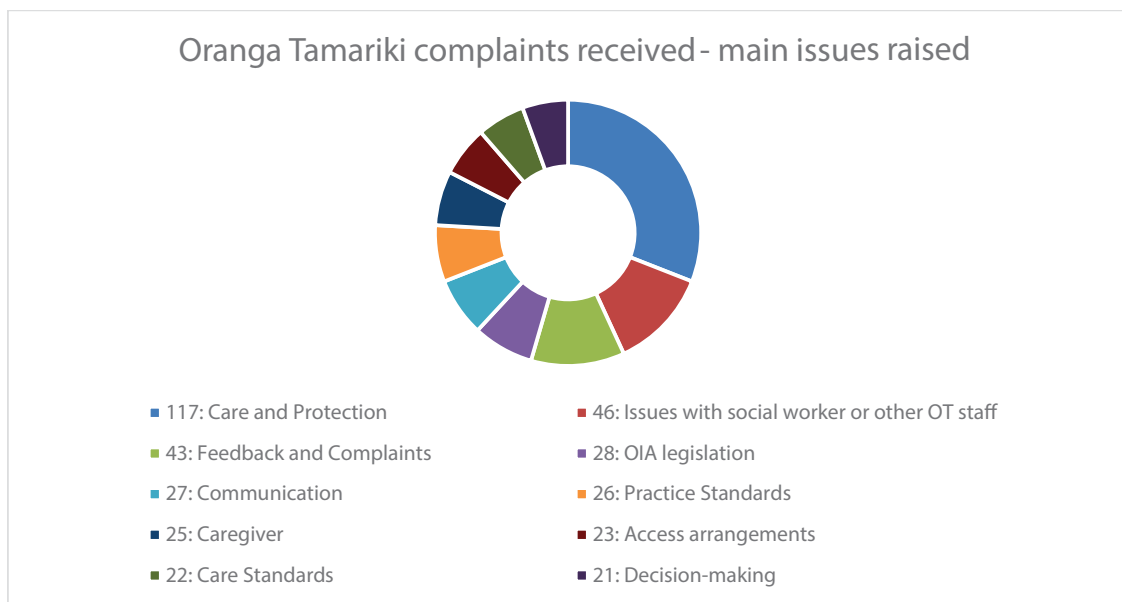


Figure 6: Complaints received against Oranga Tamariki – main issues.⁷³

[Link to text alternative version of Figure 6.](#)

We continue to see an increase in children and young people⁷⁴ contacting us directly about Oranga Tamariki—this year we were contacted by children and young people 45 times.

Many concerns are often the result of inadequate kōrero and planning from the Ministry, which have resulted in remedies that include the Ministry providing meaningful kanohi ki te kanohi apologies and hui that provide complainants with a full understanding of Oranga Tamariki acts and decisions (tika and pono). Further details of the remedies obtained are set out in the table below.

Remedies obtained in Oranga Tamariki complaints	Ombudsmen Act complaints	Official Information Act complaints
Apology	52	9
Omission rectified	24	5
Reasons/explanation given	11	-
Decision to be reconsidered	6	7
Decision changed	3	4
Financial remedy	15	1
Provision of guidance or training to staff	24	-

⁷³ Any issue with over 20 complaints.

⁷⁴ Either on their own or with the support of a trusted adult.

Remedies obtained in Oranga Tamariki complaints	Ombudsmen Act complaints	Official Information Act complaints
Law/policy/practice/procedure to be reviewed	17	-
Change in practice/procedure	12	-
Change in law/policy	7	-
Provision of additional resources	3	-

Care of tamariki and rangatahi in community placements and Oranga Tamariki residences

Chief Ombudsman Peter Boshier considered the care of tamariki and rangatahi in community placements and Oranga Tamariki residences, and made a number of recommendations.

Oranga Tamariki accepted the Chief Ombudsman’s recommendations, which included that the agency:

- undertake a review to ensure there is adequate forward planning and national level support and oversight for social workers dealing with children and young people with extremely complex needs;
- report on any work that has been done to increase the availability and suitability of community placements and respite care for children and young people with extremely complex needs;
- ensure recommended therapeutic treatments and structured programmes are consistently made available to children and young people in residences, in accordance with professional advice;
- undertake a review of medicine administration and record keeping practices, and health and safety oversight practices, at residences, and take remedial action as necessary;
- consult with Health NZ and produce a report that assesses all practice and policy gaps related to medicine administration, and monitoring and sharing information about rangatahi health needs;
- implement a national standard for medical administration and distribution across all residences;
- ensure it addresses the impact of cumulative instances of use of force and secure care in residences, and establish a policy on the actions that should be taken in such circumstances;
- ensure significant complaints raised about the care of children and young people in residences are effectively considered at the national level; and



- provide training and oversight to staff in all residences on:
 - expectations on residences in fulfilling the role of custodian/guardian and 'stand-in parent';
 - expectations for communications with whānau when issues arise;
 - the legal requirements to facilitate a child and young person's right to communicate freely with their caregivers at all reasonable times;
 - how to respond to disclosures of abuse by children and young people;
 - how to appropriately monitor, report and address health issues and ongoing self-harm and suicidal behaviours;
 - the appropriate use of physical force and secure care in accordance with legal and policy requirements;
 - how to provide comprehensive trauma-informed and non-physical de-escalation techniques;
 - the legal requirements to notify family, counsel for child and others about the use of secure care; and
 - appropriate record-keeping.

Oranga Tamariki is reporting to us on the implementation of these recommendations.

Update: Children in care—complaints to the Ombudsman 2019-2023

We reported last year on the publication of our report [Children in care—complaints to the Ombudsman 2019-2023](#).

In that report, we provided our view of the process and practice improvements that would make a material difference to the numbers of complaints we received from people about Oranga Tamariki. They included an organisation-wide quality improvement plan, ensuring staff understand and apply legislation and policy, better attention to detail and accurate information in decision-making, more training and supervision, regular tracking and reporting, and keeping better records overall.

Oranga Tamariki continues to report to us on work underway, and for the 2024/25 year worked on:

- implementing a strengthened practice quality assurance system;
- developing extensive training for social workers on the law, and updating policy and training on Family Group Conferences and engaging with the Family Court;

- updating assessment reporting tools to support social workers in taking an organised and intentional approach, and to encourage critical thinking and analysis;
- updating processes and guidance for reports of concern, including allocating reports of concern to experienced staff, improving supervision and quality checks, and improving tracking and data analysis;
- developing a delivery plan for initiatives to enhance supervision practices generally;
- commencing a substantial upgrade to frontline information and record keeping technology; and
- developing enhanced reporting to help identify resource needs and provide effective warning when teams or sites are struggling.

Last year we launched nau-mai.nz – a website that provides support to tamariki, rangatahi and their trusted adults who may have concerns about the services or support received from Oranga Tamariki and its care or custody providers. The website features child friendly images and age-appropriate language. This year the website had a total 1,371 unique users.

We also ran a promotion campaign across social media targeted at children in care, with our video on ‘How to make a complaint’ reaching 4,000 people.

We have a dedicated 0800 phone line and a SMS text call-back service, that tamariki, rangatahi and their trusted adults can call or text for free to talk to us.



O for Ombudsman

We take complaints about Oranga Tamariki. This includes groups, organisations and people who do work for Oranga Tamariki.

[Read about the Ombudsman](#)

Figure 7: Image from the Ombudsman’s nau-mai.nz website

We continue to work hard to inform tamariki, rangatahi and their trusted adults about how the Ombudsman can help them, whether they have digital access or not. The resources we have developed have been informed by specialist research with care-experienced children and young people and their trusted adults. Alongside nau-mai.nz and our free-phone and text services, we have created other information resources,⁷⁵

75 See [information for children and young people](#), [information for adults](#), and general information on our [website](#).

and we are getting the message out by:

- engaging with iwi, hapū and Māori organisations, caregivers and their associations, community groups, and care or custody providers;
- engaging directly with tamariki and rangatahi;
- providing Ombudsman resources to all Oranga Tamariki branches and asking social workers to share that information as part of their visits; and
- providing posters to be displayed in youth residences, and ensuring our other resources are also available in youth residences.

We also launched another animated video on Nau-mai which introduces the Ombudsman to visitors of the site, and explains how to get in touch with us.

We are continuing to build capability, including through a dedicated staff learning package and internal practice guides. These are tikanga-informed, trauma-informed and adopt a child-centred approach. We have also developed complaint handling and OIA guidance for Oranga Tamariki care or custody providers, which will be published in 2025/26.

Decision to reduce access to phone and video calls for young person in residence

Chief Ombudsman Peter Boshier received a complaint from a young person who was placed in a specialist residential programme operated by Barnardos Aotearoa, in its capacity as a care and custody provider for young people in the custody of Oranga Tamariki.

In the first six months at the residence, the young person was allowed to make three 20-minute phone calls and one 45 minute video call a day. After a visit to the residence by Oranga Tamariki auditors, the young person's calls were reduced to two 15-minute phone calls and one 15 minute video call a day.

The young person first complained to the residence about the sudden decrease in call times. The residence upheld the complaint in part. The young person remained unhappy and asked for their concerns to be referred to the residence's Grievance Panel. The Grievance Panel found the complaint to be justified in part because of a lack of information around the rules for calls, and made a number of recommendations to the residence to resolve the situation.

The young person then complained to the Chief Ombudsman. The Chief Ombudsman formed the opinion that Barnardos had acted unreasonably in:

- failing to appropriately plan for the young person's calls on admission;
- failing to appropriately explain to the young person when their call times were reduced, and not supporting them through the transition; and
- not responding in a timely manner to the Grievance Panel's recommendations.

The Chief Ombudsman made the following recommendations to Barnardos:

- apologise to the young person;
- review policy and practices around phone and video calls, and undertake training with staff on these processes;
- take steps to ensure communication to rangatahi is in a supportive and appropriate manner;
- establish a process to ensure new residents are informed of the phone and video call regime; and
- establish a process to ensure Grievance Panel recommendations are recorded and implemented in a timely manner.

Barnardos accepted and actioned all of the Chief Ombudsman's recommendations, including undertaking to prioritise, track and monitor the implementation of Grievance Panel recommendations.

[Read the full opinion on our website.](#)

Proactive interventions

In 2024/25 we continued to actively monitor serious and systemic issues in the public sector, taking an early resolution approach to matters of concern, where appropriate. We also monitored:

- deaths and serious incidents relating to people in the custody of the Department of Corrections; and
- serious and sentinel events relating to children and young people in the care or custody of Oranga Tamariki.⁷⁶

We monitor the implementation of recommendations made in our investigations, both in relation to complaints and proactive interventions.⁷⁷ The purpose of this monitoring is to work with agencies to facilitate meaningful and effective improvement and outcomes.

Our 2023 own motion investigation into the Department of Corrections (the Department), [Kia Whaitake | Making a Difference](#), included a number of recommendations which we have been monitoring. One recommendation was for the Department and the Public Service Commission to provide the Minister of Corrections with options for oversight and assurance over the operation and management of the Department. We are pleased that the Oversight Bodies Advisory Board was established in 2024/25, to consider the Department's implementation of recommendations made by oversight agencies. This meant we were able to close our formal monitoring of the *Kia Whaitake | Making a Difference* recommendations this year, however we continued to

⁷⁶ Section 42 of the Oversight of the Oranga Tamariki System Act 2022.

⁷⁷ Further details about recommendations and remedies obtained can be found in Part 7 and in the Ombudsmen Act and official information complaint sections above.

receive updates from the Department and monitored reporting by the Board to the Public Service Commission.

When issues arise that can be resolved early, we work with agencies to facilitate meaningful and effective resolution to improve outcomes for New Zealanders. An example of this includes our engagement with the Ministry of Education on a matter regarding the use of physical restraint. Our engagement with the Ministry led to reminders being shared about the new rules and guidance in place at schools.

A thematic analysis of Corrections death in custody cases

When a death in custody occurs, the Department of Corrections Office of the Inspectorate⁷⁸ investigates and sends us the final report, which we then review.

This year, we prepared a thematic analysis on all the death in custody reports we reviewed from 1 January 2022 to 30 June 2024.

The analysis was of the 39 final reports (cases) we reviewed over the period, and showed:

- most deaths in custody were male;
- at least 20 of the prisoners identified as Māori;
- 16 were over 65 years old; and
- in at least 20 cases, the deaths were by natural causes.

Some of the key themes included:

- access and adequacy of healthcare;
- end of life issues; and
- incident management.

We previously identified issues with access to adequacy of healthcare in *Kia Whitake I Making a Difference*, in 2023, and end of life issues were also raised by the Inspectorate in their thematic report published on older prisoners.⁷⁹ We will continue monitoring the actions Corrections are taking to address these issues.

The thematic analysis has been provided to Corrections, and we expect a report back to include actions underway to address the identified issues.

We intend to continue this proactive monitoring and will undertake a thematic analysis annually.

78 The Office of the Inspectorate reports to the Chief Executive of Corrections, but is operationally independent from the Department of Corrections.

79 See report here https://inspectorate.corrections.govt.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/41103/Older_prisoners_thematic_report.pdf

Learn from, and assist to develop, international best practice

In 1962, New Zealand became the first country outside Scandinavia to establish an Ombudsman. The Ombudsman model developed by New Zealand has been widely copied throughout the world, and other countries seek to learn from the New Zealand experience. The systems and processes we employ are widely viewed as international best practice.

We learn from and assist integrity institutions particularly in the Asia-Pacific and Indo-Pacific region, and work with them to lift regional and international best practice. We work with others to build and improve tools, frameworks, methodologies and resources, as well as to improve our own practices by benchmarking internationally and learning from our international counterparts. We do this by:

- building quality relationships with other integrity institutions and integrity-focused organisations;
- supporting regional and international Ombudsman networks;
- participating in tailored learning and resource development;
- actively seeking to learn about and understand cultural diversity;
- identifying and sharing best practice issues; and
- ensuring that our international work is co-ordinated with other New Zealand agencies.

Networks and delegations

Three Chief Ombudsmen from New Zealand have held the presidency of the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI).⁸⁰ This year, Chief Ombudsman Peter Boshier served as Second Vice President of the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI) and Director of the Australasia and Pacific Ombudsman Region (APOR) until 19 March 2025.

We continued to engage productively with the APOR and IOI Networks. This year, together with the Cook Islands Ombudsman, we co-hosted a Regional Training Workshop for APOR Pacific members.

Chief Ombudsman Peter Boshier attended the inaugural Southeast Asian Ombudsman Forum 'Plus' (SEAOFF+) meeting in November 2024. The Forum provided an opportunity to learn from other Ombudsmen offices, including meetings with counterparts from the Ombudsman of Thailand and Timor-Leste Ombudsman for Human Rights and Justice.

We also signed a Bilateral Cooperation and Support Arrangement with the Ombudsman of the Republic of Indonesia in February 2025.

⁸⁰ Sir John Robertson was a Director of the IOI from 1988 and President of the IOI for two years from 1992 to 1994; Sir Brian Elwood was President of IOI from 1999 to 2003; and Dame Beverley Wakem was President of IOI from 2010 to 2014.

We remain active members of the international information access community, including the Australasian Association of Information Access Commissioners (AIAC) and the International Conference of Information Commissioners (ICIC). We also signalled our intention to work more closely with other Australasian networks, re-joining the Australia New Zealand Ombudsman Association in May 2025.

Regional Workshop: Being an Effective Investigator

This year, alongside the Chief Ombudsman for the Cook Islands, we delivered the *Regional Workshop: Being an Effective Investigator*, with funding support from the IOI. The workshop, hosted in Fiji, brought together 19 participants from eight organisations in the Pacific.⁸¹ Participants ranged from mid–senior level Ombudsman (or equivalent) staff.

The topics covered included investigations skills, principles of administrative law, disability awareness and accessibility, and maintaining wellbeing and resilience.

The workshop was a unique opportunity for Ombudsman staff in the Pacific to learn from international colleagues who face similar geographical, historical, and population contexts. Feedback from participants included:

Overall, the engagement has given me practical tools to improve compliance oversight, identify systemic issues earlier, and advocate for better procedures grounded in law, fairness, and accessibility.

The engagement will help me... to write good investigation plans, be able to apply the appropriate principles of natural justice and procedural fairness... And most importantly not to forget [disabled] people when it comes to providing information and how this information can be [accessible].

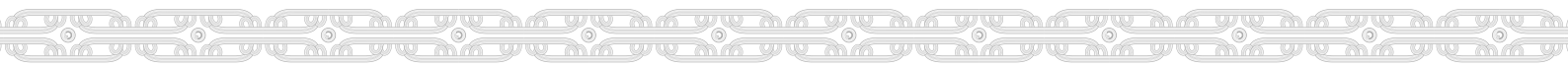
Presentations and learning opportunities

We also contributed to the Ombudsmen Pacific Community Outreach Network, which explores good practice initiatives in outreach and engagement across the Pacific to access hard to reach communities. The learning shared in this forum continues to inform our own outreach and engagement programme.

A list of international organisations engaged with over the year is available in [Part 7](#) Some of these opportunities included:

- sharing how we approach unreasonable complainant conduct with staff from the Timor-Leste Ombudsman for Human Rights and Justice;
- hosting several delegations of public sector officials, Ombudsmen and parliamentarians from other countries to discuss our work, share insights and build relationships;

81 Cook Islands, Kiribati, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu.

- 
- delivering online and in-person investigation training for investigators at the Cook Islands and Tongan Ombudsmen;
 - supporting the Samoa Ombudsman Office with organisational and operational capacity building;
 - providing a video presentation to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development World Justice Forum on Justice and Extreme Weather Events; and
 - hosting a meeting with the National Human Rights Commission of Korea, and Disabled Peoples International Korea about our activities in monitoring the Disability Convention.

We also responded to a range of ad-hoc requests for advice and guidance from international colleagues, and continued to publish the [Waka Tangata](#) newsletter for Ombudsmen in the Pacific and Australasia.



5

Well-run office

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Leadership and management

The Chief Ombudsman is supported by the Senior Leadership Team, and a number of internal governance groups, to achieve effective governance.

We invest in our leaders, including managers and senior staff, to ensure we continue to grow our leadership capability. We do this via our leadership framework, which includes:

- a leadership essentials programme for staff in leadership positions;
- management essentials learning options for managers; and
- tailored coaching and learning opportunities.

Risk management

The [2023-28 Strategic Intentions](#) sets out key strategic risks, and strategies used to manage these risks. In summary, our key risks are:

- failing to meet timeframes for the progression of work, resulting in a backlog of cases and/or a significant delay for complainants;
- mistakes or errors may be made in the course of undertaking Ombudsman functions; and
- not maximising the resources available to support work, resulting in underspends in Vote Ombudsman.

There is a clear interrelationship between the first two risks. Ensuring both timeliness and quality are maintained is at the heart of much of the Ombudsman's work.

We have refined and enhanced how these and other key strategic risks are managed. Our key risks are reported on, considered, and managed. We are also establishing an independent Audit and Risk Committee, and developing an organisation wide policy on risk management.

Supporting our people

Our people

As at 30 June 2025, the Ombudsman employed 231 employees.⁸²

The regional breakdown was:

- Auckland (15 percent—35 people); and
- Wellington (86 percent—196 people).

⁸² These figures do not include vacancies or casuals. Temporary resources were engaged to assist in the delivery of key priority projects as necessary.

In terms of gender representation:

- 69 percent identified as female;
- 30 percent identified as male; and
- one percent identified as gender diverse.

Further details are set out below.

Breakdown of Ombudsman employees by role

Role	Number	% of total staff	% Female	% Male	% Gender Diverse
Senior Managers (excluding Chief Ombudsman)	8	3%	75%	25%	0%
Managers	30	13%	57%	43%	0%
Operations staff	106	46%	74%	25%	1%
Specialist staff	48	21%	69%	27%	4%
Administration and support staff	39	17%	62%	38%	0%

In terms of working arrangements, 55 percent of our people were covered by an individual employment agreement as at 30 June 2025, and 45 percent of our people were covered by one Collective Agreement. Of the permanent employees, five percent worked part-time.

While our work is very interesting and engaging, employee turnover is inevitable for a variety of reasons. Our people are highly trained and are in-demand within the public and private sector. Twenty-five employees left voluntarily in the 2024/25 year, resulting in a voluntary turnover for the year of 11 percent. There is a continuing trend of employees leaving for overseas opportunities.

Lifting performance

We have a strong focus on lifting performance through quality, integrity, and values. All employees are assessed according to their performance and achievement, and also their adherence to, and promotion, of agreed values.

We routinely review and update our human resources policies and practices. We also continuously identify opportunities for professional development.

To enhance capability and support our people in their roles, this year we have:

- enhanced our online learning platform, Te Puna Mātauranga,⁸³ to provide a more learner enabled and cohesive learning experience, as well as providing people leaders with more oversight;
- continued to update our suite of operational practice learning, including a blended learning approach and more self-directed learning;
- continued work to enhance our people systems, including better visibility for managers of relevant employee information;
- enhanced our suite of te ao Māori, te reo Māori and Te Tiriti learning with the launch of e-learning for our people through Te Pakiaka;
- increased the number of learning offerings targeted at specific audiences such as people leaders, emergency wardens, and new employees, to address identified needs; and
- continued to make external learning options available, where these are not available in-house.

Health, safety and wellbeing

We are committed to providing a working environment that prioritises the health, safety and wellbeing of our staff⁸⁴ and visitors.

We seek continuous improvement in the way that we manage our health and safety risks. This year, we focused on ensuring we have appropriate controls and mitigations in place to manage our critical risks. We did this by engaging with staff to best understand causes, consequences and what controls are necessary to mitigate risks. The information we gathered has informed our critical risk management planning.

Our revised professional support services programme continues to support our people in managing challenging work, with many teams having group sessions on a regular basis as well as individuals having access to support.

We continue to support our staff to have the necessary training available to support their health and safety needs. This includes refreshed health and safety modules in our e-learning platform, Te Puna Mātauranga. We have also improved our people leaders' visibility of leave to enable the active management of leave balances.

83 Our learning management system, Te Puna Mātauranga, is for both internal staff and external stakeholders.

84 Including employees and contractors

Diversity, equity and inclusion

We are committed to attracting and retaining a diverse, skilled and engaged workforce. We offer a variety of flexible working arrangements, and we recognise that enabling work-life balance while maintaining operational requirements is a core component of a healthy and productive work environment.

We have progressed a programme to instil cultural competence and confidence in all our people. Our current focus is on upskilling our people in Māori engagement and developing Māori cultural capability. We have offered both in-person and online learnings, aimed at building and enhancing staff knowledge of tikanga, Te Tiriti, te ao Māori, and te reo Māori.

This year we expanded our summer internship programme with Kiingitanga and tertiary institutions to welcome six interns, two of whom were from the disability community. This helped us attract talented tertiary students, and promoted our vision of being an inclusive and diverse workplace.

We also continued to support both the Rainbow Community and Allies employee-led network, and the Rōpū Whānau employee-led network, which aim to create opportunities for staff to connect, share, learn and grow in a supportive environment where diversity is welcomed.

This year we also surveyed staff on diversity, equity, and inclusion matters, and these survey results will inform the areas we choose to focus our efforts on next year.

Accessibility

This year we reviewed the first three year's implementation of our [Accessibility Strategy and Action Plan](#), and commenced refresh work on two of the Strategy's plans (the Physical Accessibility Plan and the Community Engagement Plan). The vision of the Strategy is for disabled people to engage with, and be employed by, the Ombudsman on an equitable basis with others.

We also implemented a number of changes in our offices to support our Physical Accessibility Plan. These included commencing installation of visual fire alarms and relocating emergency devices and electrical switches to improve accessibility.⁸⁵ We also started upgrading our glazing with contrast bands to ensure people with low vision can safely navigate these spaces.

85 This work will continue in 2025/26

Information and knowledge management, and information and communications technology

This year we continued to modernise our information technology infrastructure in line with our Information Systems Strategic Plan. A key focus has been the implementation of our Hosting Strategy through our Digital Workplace Modernisation Programme. This work strengthens the security and capability of underlying infrastructure, builds greater resilience, and leverages modern tools and technologies that will provide secure and accessible applications for our people to use now and in the future.

We have continued to enhance the functionality of our core business information and process management system, including successfully migrating the legacy Case Management System to a Case Archive to ensure the long-term accessibility and integrity of our case records.

Work continued on implementing recommendations from the Public Records Act Audit, including an Information Asset Register and actioning digital retention and disposal in our Enterprise Content Management System.

We have continued to develop our data capability through increased and more sophisticated business intelligence to support our understanding of case management workflow and trends, including forecasting for future growth.

Financial and capital management

Vote Ombudsmen had an appropriation of \$54.701 million (excluding GST) for the year ended 30 June 2025. Personnel and accommodation costs accounted for 78 percent of the actual amount spent. The remaining operating expenditure spending was primarily on depreciation, professional services, travel, and information and communications technology.

Most operating expenditure is of a non-discretionary kind. What discretionary financial resources do exist are allocated in a planned, prioritised, and contestable manner. Discretionary funding is spent on critical projects to support our work and on internal learning, and is overseen by our Senior Leadership Team.

During 2024/25 \$0.727 million of capital expenditure was spent on the Tuia Mai project (enhancements to the Complaint Management System), \$0.345 million on the Wellington data centre replacement, and \$0.164 million on replacing ICT equipment.

In December 2024, we procured a new Finance Management Information System to replace our accounting and reporting software. In May 2025, Microsoft Dynamics Business Central was implemented as the new primary accounting tool, allowing tighter controls and streamlined processes within the finance environment. The financial reports generated by the system deliver financial information on a business unit basis and are reported monthly to senior leadership. In combination with existing capability, we use

information generated from the previous Greentree financial system and the current Business Central system to provide budget projections which enables the effective use of our assets and the early identification of any financial risks.

When procuring goods and services, we do so in accordance with our procurement policy. We also negotiate term supply arrangements where there is an identified potential for savings.

We continue to work closely with the Treasury and Audit New Zealand. The liaison allows us to benefit from their advice and guidance in matters relating to improving transparency of performance and reporting systems, and ensures there is a sound understanding of the working environment and issues we face.

Security

The security of our people, information and the workplace environment remains a high priority. In a dynamic and increasingly complex risk environment, we are committed to ensuring that our security practices are robust, proportionate and aligned with government expectations, while respecting our independent constitutional role.

We continue to align our security settings with the Protective Security Requirements where possible, and we take a 'security by design' approach to technology products. This year our Security Governance Committee oversaw the development and implementation of a threat-informed, risk-based Security Strategy and annual work programme.

We place strong emphasis on maintaining a culture of security awareness across the organisation. Security responsibilities are embedded into induction and ongoing training to ensure our people understand how to identify and respond to potential risks.



6

Financial and performance

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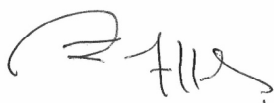
Statement of responsibility

I am responsible, as Chief Ombudsman, for:

- the preparation of financial statements and the statements of expenses and capital expenditure and for the judgements expressed in them;
- having in place a system of internal control designed to provide a reasonable assurance as to the integrity and reliability of financial reporting;
- ensuring that end-of-year performance information on the appropriation is provided in accordance with sections 19A to 19C of the Public Finance Act 1989, whether or not that information is included in this Annual Report; and
- the accuracy of any end-of-year performance information, whether or not that information is included in the annual report.

In my opinion:

- the annual report fairly reflects operations, progress, and organisational health;
- these financial statements fairly reflect the financial position of the Ombudsman for the year ended 30 June 2025 and operations for the year ended on that date; and
- the forecast financial statements fairly reflect the forecast financial position of the Ombudsman as at 30 June 2025 and operations for the year ending on that date.



John Allen

Chief Ombudsman

30 September 2025



Meaw-Fong Phang

Chief Financial Officer

30 September 2025

Independent Auditor's Report

To the readers of the Office of the Ombudsman's annual report for the year ended 30 June 2025

The Auditor-General is the auditor of the Office of the Ombudsman (the Office). The Auditor-General has appointed me, Clint Ramoo, using the staff and resources of Audit New Zealand, to carry out, on his behalf, the audit of:

- the annual financial statements of the Office that comprise the statement of financial position, statement of commitments, statement of contingent liabilities and contingent assets as at 30 June 2025, the statement of comprehensive revenue and expenses, statement of changes in equity, and statement of cash flows for the year ended on that date and the notes to the financial statements that include accounting policies and other explanatory information on pages 109 to 136;
- the end-of-year performance information for appropriations of the Office for the year ended 30 June 2025 on pages 96 to 107; and
- the statements of expenses and capital expenditure of the Office for the year ended 30 June 2025 on page 108.

Opinion

In our opinion:

- The annual financial statements of the Office
 - fairly present, in all material respects:
 - its financial position as at 30 June 2025; and
 - its financial performance and cash flows for the year ended on that date; and
 - comply with generally accepted accounting practice in New Zealand in accordance with Public Benefit Entity Standards.

- The end-of-year performance information for appropriations:
 - provides an appropriate and meaningful basis to enable readers to assess what has been achieved with each appropriation; determined in accordance with generally accepted accounting practice in New Zealand; and
 - fairly presents, in all material respects:
 - what has been achieved with the appropriation; and
 - the actual expenses or capital expenditure incurred in relation to each appropriation as compared with the expenses or capital expenditure that were appropriated or forecast to be incurred; and
 - complies with generally accepted accounting practice in New Zealand in accordance with Public Benefit Entity Standards.
- The statements of expenses and capital expenditure have been prepared, in all material respects, in accordance with the requirements of section 45A of the Public Finance Act 1989.

Our audit was completed on 30 September 2025. This is the date at which our opinion is expressed.

Basis for our opinion

We carried out our audit in accordance with the Auditor-General's Auditing Standards, which incorporate the Professional and Ethical Standards, the International Standards on Auditing (New Zealand), and New Zealand Auditing Standard 1 (Revised): The Audit of Service Performance Information issued by the New Zealand Auditing and Assurance Standards Board. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Responsibilities of the auditor section of our report.

We have fulfilled our responsibilities in accordance with the Auditor-General's Auditing Standards.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Responsibilities of the Chief Ombudsman for the information to be audited

The Chief Ombudsman is responsible on behalf of the Office for preparing:

- Annual financial statements that fairly present the Office's financial position, financial performance, and its cash flows, and that comply with generally accepted accounting practice in New Zealand.
- End-of-year performance information for appropriations that:
 - provides an appropriate and meaningful basis to enable readers to assess what has been achieved with each appropriation; determined in accordance with generally accepted accounting practice in New Zealand;
 - fairly presents what has been achieved with each appropriation;
 - fairly presents the actual expenses or capital expenditure incurred in relation to each appropriation as compared with the expenses or capital expenditure that were appropriated or forecast to be incurred; and
 - complies with generally accepted accounting practice in New Zealand.
- Statements of expenses and capital expenditure of the Office, that are prepared in accordance with section 45A of the Public Finance Act 1989.

The Chief Ombudsman is responsible for such internal control as is determined is necessary to enable the preparation of the information to be audited that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the information to be audited, the Chief Ombudsman is responsible on behalf of the Office for assessing the Office's ability to continue as a going concern.

The Chief Ombudsman's responsibilities arise from the Public Finance Act 1989.

Responsibilities of the auditor for the information to be audited

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the information we audited, as a whole, is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion.

Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit carried out in accordance with the Auditor-General's Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements are differences or omissions of amounts or disclosures, and can arise from fraud or error. Misstatements are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the decisions of readers, taken on the basis of the information we audited.

For the budget information reported in the information we audited, our procedures were limited to checking that the information agreed to the Estimates of Appropriations for the

Government of New Zealand for the Year Ending 30 June 2025. For the forecast financial information for the year ending 30 June 2026, our procedures were limited to checking to the best estimate financial forecast information based on the Budget Economic Fiscal Update for the year ending 30 June 2026.

We did not evaluate the security and controls over the electronic publication of the information we audited.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Auditor-General's Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. Also:

- We identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the information we audited, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- We obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Office's internal control.
- We evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Chief Ombudsman.
- We evaluate whether the end-of-year performance information for appropriations:
 - provides an appropriate and meaningful basis to enable readers to assess what has been achieved with each appropriation. We make our evaluation by reference to generally accepted accounting practice in New Zealand; and
 - fairly presents what has been achieved with each appropriation.
- We evaluate whether the statements of expenses and capital expenditure have been prepared in accordance with legislative requirements.
- We conclude on the appropriateness of the use of the going concern basis of accounting by the Chief Ombudsman.

- We evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the information we audited, including the disclosures, and whether the information we audited represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with the Chief Ombudsman regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Our responsibilities arise from the Public Audit Act 2001.

Other information

The Chief Ombudsman is responsible for the other information. The other information comprises all of the information included in the annual report other than the information we audited and our auditor's report thereon.

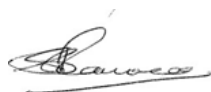
Our opinion on the information we audited does not cover the other information and we do not express any form of audit opinion or assurance conclusion thereon.

Our responsibility is to read the other information. In doing so, we consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the information we audited or our knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If, based on our work, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Independence

We are independent of the Office in accordance with the independence requirements of the Auditor-General's Auditing Standards, which incorporate the independence requirements of Professional and Ethical Standard 1: International Code of Ethics for Assurance Practitioners (including International Independence Standards) (New Zealand) issued by the New Zealand Auditing and Assurance Standards Board.

Other than in our capacity as auditor, we have no relationship with, or interests, in the Office.



Clint Ramoo
Audit New Zealand
On behalf of the Auditor-General
Wellington, New Zealand

Statement of objectives and service performance for the year ended 30 June 2025

Reporting Entity

The Ombudsman holds the role of an Officer of Parliament under the Public Finance Act 1989 and is domiciled in New Zealand. Each Ombudsman is appointed by the Governor-General on the recommendation of Parliament. The Ombudsman is responsible to Parliament and independent of the Government.

The primary purpose, functions, and outcomes of the Ombudsman are to investigate, review, and inspect, conduct and decision-making within government, and some private facilities, and provide advice and guidance in order to ensure people are treated fairly.

The overall outcome sought is that people are treated fairly. The high-level outcomes of achieving this goal are that there is high public trust in government, people's rights are respected and protected, Parliament is assured of robust and independent oversight, and New Zealand contributes to regional stability and supports integrity institutions.

The Ombudsman provides services to the public rather than making a financial return. Accordingly, the Ombudsman is designated a public benefit entity (PBE) for financial reporting purposes.

The service performance information covers all activities of the Ombudsman as set out in the 2024/25 Main and Supplementary Estimates of Appropriations for Vote Ombudsman.

The service performance is for the year ended 30 June 2025 and was authorised for issue by the Chief Ombudsman on 30 September 2025.

The Ombudsman's performance measures are reported from pages 98 to 105. Additional information including pages 4 to 87 and 135 to 179 are not audited but provide additional context to the Ombudsman's performance for the year ended 30 June 2025.

Statement of Compliance

The service performance information included in this section has been prepared in accordance with Tier 1 PBE financial reporting standards which have been applied consistently throughout the period and meets the Ombudsman's requirements under the Public Finance Act 1989.

PBE FRS 48 Service Performance Reporting

This Standard establishes requirements for the selection and presentation of service performance information. PBE FRS 48 requires additional information to be disclosed on

the judgements that have the most significant effect on the selection, measurement, aggregation, and presentation of service performance information.

Critical Reporting Judgements, Estimates and Assumptions

Performance measures have been selected for the six impacts and each of the nine output areas that encapsulate the Ombudsman's role and functions as set out in the [Strategic Intentions for 2023-2028](#). In selecting performance measures for these activities, judgements must be made in determining which aspects of performance are relevant and material to users of the Performance Report.

Generally, the impact measures are centred around public perceptions of how the government, and New Zealand generally, is participatory, responsive, open, shows integrity, and treats people humanely. These are assessed through market research surveys and third-party research initiatives.

The output measures are centred around quantity, quality and timeliness, and are assessed through external surveys and tracking of external demand, as well as internal tracking of volume and timeliness, and quality assurance. A number of output measures also connect to the impacts the Ombudsman is trying to achieve. For example, levels of complainant, agency and other stakeholder satisfaction, and the proportion of Ombudsman recommendations that are accepted.

There is also judgement, estimates and assumptions involved in determining how to measure performance against the measures selected. The judgements, estimates and assumptions which have the most significant impact on selection and measurement of performance measures are disclosed below.

To disclose material judgements, estimates, and assumptions, performance measures are aggregated into six impact areas and nine output areas, as discussed above in Part 3, and explained further below.

Impact measures

IMPACT 1: PEOPLE ARE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN GOVERNMENT DECISION-MAKING

Public participation in government decision-making contributes to higher trust in government and protection of people's rights. We measure this impact by assessing public awareness of the official information legislation and public satisfaction in obtaining information, as well as tracking the perception that the New Zealand public is able to participate in government.

IMPACT 2: GOVERNMENT IS RESPONSIVE, EFFICIENT, EFFECTIVE, AND ACCOUNTABLE

When the government is responsive, efficient, effective, and accountable, it ensures

people's rights are protected, and contributes to high public trust overall. We measure this impact by tracking public perception of government services in New Zealand.

IMPACT 3: GOVERNMENT ACTIONS, SYSTEMS, PROCESSES, AND LEGISLATION ARE OPEN, FAIR, AND REASONABLE

Public trust in government, the protection of people's rights, independent oversight, and contribution to regional stability are all impacted by whether government actions are open, fair and reasonable. We measure this impact by assessing public awareness of the official information legislation and public satisfaction in obtaining information, and tracking public perception of government services in New Zealand.

IMPACT 4: PEOPLE IN POSITIONS OF POWER ACT WITH INTEGRITY

All of our identified outcomes are affected by people in positions of power acting with integrity. We measure this impact by tracking the level of comfort by members of the public in reporting serious wrongdoing to their employer, and perceptions of the integrity of the New Zealand government.

IMPACT 5: PEOPLE ARE TREATED HUMANELY AND WITH DIGNITY AND RESPECT BY THOSE IN AUTHORITY

Those in authority must treat people with dignity and respect in order to ensure people's rights are protected, and for there to be high public trust in government. We measure this impact by assessing the perception that New Zealand is free from torture and ill-treatment.

IMPACT 6: NEW ZEALAND IS A LEADER IN PROMOTING ANTI-CORRUPTION AND INTEGRITY

New Zealand being a leader in promoting integrity and anti-corruption has a direct impact on our country's contribution to regional stability and integrity institutions, and high trust in government. We measure this impact by tracking perceptions of the integrity of the New Zealand government.

Output measures

OUTPUT 1: INFORM THE PUBLIC TO ENABLE THEM TO TAKE CONSTRUCTIVE ACTION TO REALISE THEIR RIGHTS

We measure progress under this output by assessing public awareness and perception of the Ombudsman, as well as the number of outreach activities and resources we produce. These provide quantitative measures of the extent of our reach and direct feedback from the public on the effectiveness of our efforts.

OUTPUT 2: IMPROVE PUBLIC SECTOR CAPABILITY TO DO ITS WORK AND MAKE DECISIONS

We measure progress under this output by assessing public sector uptake of our advice, services, and public sector perceptions of the value of our advice and guidance. We also track the number of outreach and learning activities and guidance resources we produce. These provide both direct qualitative indications from the public sector, and quantitative measures, of the effectiveness of our efforts.

OUTPUT 3: FORMAL CONSULTATION TO ASSIST PUBLIC SECTOR AGENCIES TO MAKE SPECIFIC DECISIONS

We measure progress under this output by assessing the quantity and timeliness of our formal consultation responses.

OUTPUT 4: ENABLE SERIOUS WRONGDOING TO BE DISCLOSED AND INVESTIGATED AND WHISTLEBLOWERS PROTECTED

We measure progress under this output by assessing the quantity and timeliness of responses to protected disclosures matters. We assess quality through a formal internal assurance process. We also track the number of resources we produce, and providing guidance to whistleblowers and employers is one of our legislative functions.

OUTPUT 5: BREAK DOWN THE BARRIERS THAT PREVENT DISABLED PEOPLE FROM PARTICIPATING EQUALLY IN SOCIETY

We measure progress under this output by tracking the number of external resources we produce and assessing key external stakeholder feedback on our effectiveness. These provide both quantitative and qualitative measures of our efforts.

OUTPUT 6: IMPROVE THE CONDITIONS AND TREATMENT OF PEOPLE IN DETENTION

We measure progress under this output by tracking the number of inspections and visits to places of detention and by assessing timeliness and quality through internal assurance processes. We assess the percentage of unannounced inspections and visits to measure performance against internationally accepted standards for the proportion of unannounced inspections. We also track the percentage of formal recommendations accepted as an indicator of agency commitment to implementing corrective actions which will help achieve improvements.

OUTPUT 7: ENSURE OFFICIAL INFORMATION IS INCREASINGLY AVAILABLE AND NOT UNLAWFULLY REFUSED

We measure progress under this output by tracking the number of complaints and enquires completed, and by assessing timeliness and quality through internal assurance processes. We also measure the number of self-initiated interventions completed

and assess the effectiveness of outcomes achieved by tracking resolution rates, the percentage of recommendations accepted, and by assessing qualitative feedback from both complainants and agencies.

OUTPUT 8: ENSURE GOOD DECISION-MAKING AND PROCESSES

We measure progress under this output by tracking the number of complaints and enquires completed, and by assessing timeliness and quality through internal assurance processes. We also measure the number of self-initiated interventions completed and assess the effectiveness of outcomes achieved by tracking resolution rates, the percentage of recommendations accepted, and by assessing qualitative feedback from both complainants and agencies.

OUTPUT 9: LEARN FROM, AND ASSIST TO DEVELOP, INTERNATIONAL BEST PRACTICE

We measure progress under this output by tracking the volume of collaboration and engagement with overseas Ombudsmen and integrity institutions. We also track the number of resources for overseas stakeholders and gather qualitative feedback from overseas stakeholders in order to assess the reach and effectiveness of our efforts.

Survey Measures

Satisfaction surveys are important instruments for understanding stakeholder experiences and expectations of the services the Ombudsman provides. Surveys help support accountability and improvement. A number of surveys are carried out across all impacts and across outputs 1, 2, 5, 7, 8 and 9, including with the public, public sector agencies, complainants, disability stakeholders, and international stakeholders.

Survey performance measures have been selected because they have a material impact on ensuring that the services being provided by the Ombudsman meet quality standards. The measures allow us to indirectly measure the impact of the services provided which contribute to the Ombudsman's strategic outcomes.

Surveys are administered either in-house, by an independent research company, or by third-party research initiatives. Complainant surveys are conducted more frequently (quarterly, rather than annually) to ensure a better and more considered response rate, as well as to provide continuous feedback and make improvements.

Key targets are included in [Vote Ombudsmen Estimates of Appropriations for the year ended 30 June 2025](#). Full details can be found on the Treasury's website.

Investigation and resolution of complaints about government administration

Performance measures	Budget Standard 2024/25	Actual 2024/25	Actual 2023/24
Impact measures			
% of members of the public who are aware of official information legislation ⁸⁶	49%	46%	43%
% of members of the public who received the information they asked for ⁸⁷	63%	56%	70%
% of members of the public who would report serious wrongdoing to their employer ⁸⁸	80%	84%	82%
New Zealand public is able to participate in government ⁸⁹	Scores within fair or good range ⁹⁰	6.4 (fair)	7.7 (fair)
New Zealand is free from torture and ill treatment ⁹¹	Scores within fair or good range ⁹²	6.4 (fair)	6.6 (fair)
High trust in public sector brand based on personal service experience ⁹³	60% or higher	59%	59%
New Zealand ranked as one of the leading countries in public service probity ⁹⁴	NZ in top 3 on average over next 5 years	NZ ranked fourth	In 2023, New Zealand ranked third

86 Based on a commissioned domestic market research survey.

87 Above, note 86

88 Based on a commissioned domestic market research survey.

89 Using the [Human Rights Measurement Initiative – Rights Tracker](#), which quantifies if New Zealand has achieved the rights specified in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights.

90 Interpretation of scores: Good (8-10), Fair (6-8), Bad (3.5-6), Very bad (0-3.5). For more information see: [Right's tracker methodology](#).

91 Above, note 89.

92 Above, note 90.

93 Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission administers the Kiwis Count survey to measure the trust and confidence of New Zealanders in the Public Service, see <https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/research-and-data/kiwis-count/>.

94 Using the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index to track perceptions of public trust in government in New Zealand, see <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi>.

Performance measures	Budget Standard 2024/25	Actual 2024/25	Actual 2023/24
Output 1 – Inform the public to enable them to take constructive action to realise their rights			
Demand-driven measures			
# of new or updated external resources and presentations for the public ⁹⁵	150	424 ⁹⁶	307
# of media mentions of the Ombudsman	1,000	936	1,056
# of unique visitors to Ombudsman website	225,000	179,648 ⁹⁷	179,551
Proactive measures			
% of members of the public who have heard of the Ombudsman ⁹⁸	70%	66%	66%
% of complainants who found the Ombudsman website useful ⁹⁹	80%	84%	91%
Output 2 – Improve public sector capability to do its work and make decisions			
Demand-driven measures			
# of requests for advice or comment ¹⁰⁰ from public sector agencies ¹⁰¹ responded to	300	359	356
# of external speeches, presentations, and learning provided to public sector agencies	30	30	64 ¹⁰²

95 Including speeches, presentations, interviews, media statements and requests for comment, resources, and training sessions provided via the website, or to public forums, media, opposition research units, and community organisations.

96 There was an increased demand in 2024/25 due to the number of significant reports and engagements related to the departure of Chief Ombudsman Peter Boshier.

97 This figure is lower than the target as the target was set before we recognised that bots were targeting our website, and therefore from 2023/24 onwards we count only visits from natural persons.

98 Based on a commissioned domestic market research survey.

99 Based on a survey of randomly selected complainants. Selection does not include complainants where the discretion not to investigate a complaint was exercised.

100 Including on legislation, policies, procedures, administrative processes, and decision-making.

101 All references to public sector agencies include Ministers' offices and non-government organisations subject to jurisdiction

102 This spike appears to have been driven by an increase in requests for training associated with the election period. The change of government also resulted in temporary increased demand for OIA inductions and trainings for new Ministers and staff.

Performance measures	Budget Standard 2024/25	Actual 2024/25	Actual 2023/24
Proactive measures			
% of public sector agency participants in Ombudsman external learning who report the information provided will assist them in their work ¹⁰³	95%	96%	94%
# of guidance materials for public sector agencies produced or updated	30	36	43
% of public sector agencies which report Ombudsman information resources assist them in their work ¹⁰⁴	80%	82%	88%
% of public sector agencies satisfied with our communication overall ¹⁰⁵	75%	87%	65%
Output 3 – Formal consultation to assist public sector agencies to make specific decisions			
Proactive measures			
# of formal consultations completed	10-100 ¹⁰⁶	19	19
% of formal consultations completed within 3 months ¹⁰⁷ from date of receipt	100%	100%	100%
Output 4 – Enable serious wrongdoing to be disclosed and investigated and whistleblowers protected			
Demand-driven measure			
# of requests and enquiries ¹⁰⁸ completed	110 ¹⁰⁹	278 ¹¹⁰	220

103 Based on a survey of participants in external learning.

104 Based on a survey of public sector agencies that were the subject of investigation in the reporting year.

105 Above, note 104.

106 The majority of these are consultations under section 241 of the Land Transport Act. The number of consults has ranged between 7 and 149 since 2010.

107 Counted as 90 calendar days.

108 Includes requests for advice and disclosures.

109 This standard was set in 20233 and will be revised upward in the Strategic Intentions 2025-2030.

110 Increasing demand may be due to the ability since 2022 to raise a protected disclosure directly with us, and there may also be growing awareness of calling out serious wrongdoing.

Performance measures	Budget Standard 2024/25	Actual 2024/25	Actual 2023/24
Proactive measures			
% of requests and enquiries completed within 3 months ¹¹¹ from date of receipt	85%	83%	71%
% of completed requests and enquiries meeting internal quality standards, following random quality assurance check	85%	92%	82%
# of guidance materials and resources produced or updated that assist serious wrongdoing to be disclosed and investigated	2	2	2
Output 5 – Break down the barriers that prevent disabled people from participating equally in society			
Proactive measures			
# of resources produced or updated that assist to break down the barriers that prevent disabled people from participating equally in society	10	36 ¹¹²	30
% of external stakeholders satisfied that the Ombudsman provides an effective contribution to Independent Monitoring Mechanism (IMM) activities	80%	100%	100%
Output 6 – Improve the conditions and treatment of people in detention			
Proactive measures			
# of inspections and visits to places of detention	105	121 ¹¹³	108
% of unannounced inspections and visits	40% ¹¹⁴	83% ¹¹⁵	75%

111 Counted as 90 calendar days.

112 Result was higher due to publications being in a variety of accessible formats.

113 Since the target was set, places of detention within our designation have increased to 465. Visits have increased accordingly, as we are expected to visit each place of detention at least once every four years.

114 The internationally accepted standard is for at least one third of inspections to be unannounced.

115 There has been an increased focus on unannounced visits.

Performance measures	Budget Standard 2024/25	Actual 2024/25	Actual 2023/24
Proactive measures			
% of feedback or reports sent to places of detention within 4 months ¹¹⁶ of visit or inspection	80%	100%	90%
% of reports reviewed against internal quality standards	40% ¹¹⁷	95%	100%
% of recommendations accepted ¹¹⁸	85%	95%	90%
Outputs 7 & 8 – Complaint handling and investigations¹¹⁹			
Demand-driven measures			
# of official information complaints completed	1,900 ¹²⁰	2,858	2,126
# of official information other contacts ¹²¹ completed	350	364	329
# of Ombudsmen Act 1975 (OA) complaints completed	3,200 ¹²²	5,305	4,143
# of OA other contacts completed	5,000	4,935	5,034
Proactive measures			
% complaints and other contacts considered	100%	100%	100%
% net clearance rate ¹²³ of complaints	100%	104%	94%
% net clearance rate of other contacts	100%	100%	100%
% of complaints completed within 3 months ¹²⁴ of receipt	70%	56% ¹²⁵	59%
% of complaints completed within 6 months ¹²⁶ of receipt	80%	71% ¹²⁷	75%

116 Counted as 120 calendar days. Includes written feedback and draft reports.

117 This target was set on the basis of an expected move to random quality assurance, which has been deferred to 2025/26.

118 Recommendations accepted at provisional and final report stages.

119 Measures for Outputs 7 and 8 are combined. Refer to [Strategic intentions 2023/28](#).

120 This target was set in 2023/24, based on expected complaints intake.

121 Other contacts are primarily phone enquiries, seeking assistance ahead of making a complaint.

122 Above, note 120.

123 'Net clearance rate' means the total number of complaints closed in the reporting year as a proportion of the total number of complaints received during the year.

124 Counted as 90 calendar days.

125 Expected timeliness has been affected by the ongoing high intake.

126 Counted as 180 calendar days.

127 Above, note 125.



Performance measures	Budget Standard 2024/25	Actual 2024/25	Actual 2023/24
Proactive measures			
% of complaints completed within 12 months ¹²⁸ of receipt	95%	82% ¹²⁹	84%
% of other contacts completed within 1 month ¹³⁰ from date of receipt	99%	96%	95%
% of complaints resolved prior to formal opinion ¹³¹	40%	34% ¹³²	30%
% of complainants satisfied with our service ¹³³	50%	36% ¹³⁴	47%
% of completed complaints and other contacts meeting internal quality standards, following random quality assurance checks ¹³⁵	85%	81%	85%
# of official information practice investigations completed	5–8	12 ¹³⁶	0 ¹³⁷
# of self-initiated interventions for systemic improvement completed	2–5	4	4
% of OA and official information recommendations accepted	90%	100% ¹³⁸	99%
% of public sector agencies satisfied the Ombudsman's opinions are fair ¹³⁹	75%	73%	62%

128 Counted as 365 calendar days.

129 Above, note 134.

130 Counted as 30 calendar days.

131 Measure does not include complaints which were outside an Ombudsman's jurisdiction, or referred to another complaint handling agency, or where we exercised discretion not to investigate a complaint.

132 Resolution is attempted in the early stages of complaint handling. With a high number of complaints on hand as a result of increased intake (in respect of which early resolution has already been attempted), there is less opportunity to resolve complaints before they are completed.

133 Based on a survey of randomly selected complainants. Selection does not include complainants where the discretion not to investigate a complaint was exercised.

134 Timeliness is the main factor that influences complainant satisfaction.

135 We also have other measures in place to ensure quality, including proportionate review of work where needed.

136 Including seven investigations conducted during 2023/24 and completed in 2024/25.

137 Above, note 136.

138 99.5% were accepted, which is rounded up.

139 Based on a survey of public sector agencies who were the subject of investigation in the reporting year.

Performance measures	Budget Standard 2024/25	Actual 2024/25	Actual 2023/24
Output 9 – Learn from, and assist to develop, international best practice			
Demand-driven measures			
# of requests for collaboration with overseas Ombudsmen and integrity institutions responded to ¹⁴⁰	20	65 ¹⁴¹	48
# of international initiatives facilitated or delegations and placements hosted	2–10	16 ¹⁴²	16
Proactive measures			
# of resources and publications for overseas stakeholders produced or updated	4	10	8
% of overseas stakeholders who report value in collaboration	95%	100%	100%
% of Ombudsmen and integrity institutions who report that their relationship with our office assists them in their work	80%	86% ¹⁴³	100%

The cost of delivery of these results is detailed in the next section.

140 This includes advice, guidance, speeches, presentations, and training sessions.

141 The New Zealand perspective continues to be highly valued.

142 Above, note 141.

143 This was assessed through a survey based on a small number of institutions that interacted with us.

Our appropriations

The following statements report information about the expenses and capital expenditure incurred against each appropriation administered by the Office for the year ended 30 June 2025.

Actual 2023/24 \$(000)		Actual 2024/25 \$(000)	Main Estimates 2024/25 \$(000)	Supp. Estimates 2024/25 \$(000)	Main Estimates 2025/26 \$(000)
	Vote Ombudsmen Appropriation for output expenses				
44,162	Investigations, Resolution, Monitory, Advisory and Support Functions This appropriation is limited to the investigation, resolution of complaints and the provision of advice relating to central and local government administrative actions, monitoring compliance with international conventions, and the provision of advice and support for international ombudsman communities and forums.	46,607	54,134	54,134	52,659
529*	Remuneration of Ombudsmen (Permanent Legislative Authority) This appropriation is limited to remuneration expenses for the Ombudsmen as authorised by sections 8 and 9 of the Ombudsmen Act 1975	632*	537	567	577
44,691	Sub total	47,239	54,671	54,701	53,236

Actual 2023/24 \$(000)		Actual 2024/25 \$(000)	Main Estimates 2024/25 \$(000)	Supp. Estimates 2024/25 \$(000)	Main Estimates 2025/26 \$(000)
3,257*	Office of the Ombudsman - Capital Expenditure (Permanent Legislative Authority) This appropriation is limited to the purchase or development of assets by and for the use of the Office of the Ombudsman, as authorised by section 24(1) of the Public Finance Act 1989.	1,236*	1,775	1,775	2,844
47,948	Total	48,475	56,446	56,476	56,080

*These are Permanent Legislative Authorities and not subject to appropriation limits.

Statement of comprehensive revenue and expense for the year ended 30 June 2025

Actual 2023/24 \$(000)		Notes	Actual 2024/25 \$(000)	Main Estimates 2024/25 \$(000)	Supp. Estimates 2024/25 \$(000)	Main Estimates 2025/26 \$(000)
	Revenue					
54,294	Revenue Crown		54,701	54,671	54,701	53,236
-	Other revenue		-	-	-	-
54,294	Total revenue		54,701	54,671	54,701	53,236
	Expenses					
31,574	Personnel costs	2	33,854	31,164	31,055	33,446
11,208	Other operating costs	3	11,208	21,506	21,489	17,266
1,207	Depreciation and amortisation	4	1,426	1,250	1,406	1,773
702	Capital charge	5	751	751	751	751
44,691	Total expenses		47,239	54,671	54,701	53,236
9,603	Surplus/(deficit)		7,462	-	-	-

Actual 2023/24		Notes	Actual 2024/25	Main Estimates 2024/25	Supp. Estimates 2024/25	Main Estimates 2025/26
\$(000)			\$(000)	\$(000)	\$(000)	\$(000)
-	Other comprehensive revenue and expense		-	-	-	-
9,603	Total comprehensive revenue and expense		<u>7,462</u>	-	-	-

Explanations of major variances against the original 2024/25 budget are provided in Note 17.

Statement of financial position as at 30 June 2025

Actual 2023/24		Notes	Actual 2024/25	Main Estimates 2024/25	Supp. Estimates 2024/25	Main Estimates 2025/26
\$(000)			\$(000)	\$(000)	\$(000)	\$(000)
	Assets					
	<i>Current assets</i>					
22,108	Cash and cash equivalents		20,060	10,840	10,409	9,948
476	Other current assets	6	510	414	491	491
<u>22,584</u>	Total current assets		<u>20,570</u>	<u>11,254</u>	<u>10,900</u>	<u>10,439</u>
3,794	Property, plant and equipment	7	3,427	3,673	3,957	5,350
3,389	Intangible assets – Software & Trademarks	8	3,565	3,427	3,599	2,619
<u>7,183</u>	Total non-current assets		<u>6,992</u>	<u>7,100</u>	<u>7,556</u>	<u>7,969</u>
<u>29,767</u>	Total assets		<u>27,562</u>	<u>18,354</u>	<u>18,456</u>	<u>18,408</u>

Actual 2023/24		Notes	Actual 2024/25	Main Estimates 2024/25	Supp. Estimates 2024/25	Main Estimates 2025/26
\$(000)			\$(000)	\$(000)	\$(000)	\$(000)
2,613	Creditors and other payables	9	2,187	1,527	1,404	1,404
60	Leasehold incentive – current portion [^]		53	-	-	-
9,603	Return of operating surplus	10	7,462	-	-	-
2,385	Employee entitlements	11	2,798	1,718	1,934	1,934
14,661	Total current liabilities		12,500	3,245	3,338	3,338
-	Employee entitlements	11	-	5	-	-
83	Leasehold Incentives		39	81	95	47
83	<i>Total non-current liabilities</i>		39	86	95	47
14,744	Total liabilities		12,539	3,331	3,433	3,385
15,023	Net assets		15,023	15,023	15,023	15,023
15,023	General funds	12	15,023	15,023	15,023	15,023
15,023	Total Equity		15,023	15,023	15,023	15,023

[^] This current liability has no liquidity impact.

Explanations of major variances against the original 2024/25 budget are provided in Note 17.

Statement of changes in equity for the year ended 30 June 2025

Actual 2023/24		Notes	Actual 2024/25	Main Estimates 2024/25	Supp. Estimates 2024/25	Main Estimates 2025/26
\$(000)			\$(000)	\$(000)	\$(000)	\$(000)
15,023	Balance at 1 July		15,023	15,023	15,023	15,023
9,603	Total comprehensive revenue and expense for the year		7,462			

Actual 2023/24		Notes	Actual 2024/25	Main Estimates 2024/25	Supp. Estimates 2024/25	Main Estimates 2025/26
\$(000)			\$(000)	\$(000)	\$(000)	\$(000)
	Owner transactions					
-	Capital injections		-	-	-	-
(9,603)	Return of operating surplus to the Crown		(7,462)			
15,023	Balance at 30 June	12	15,023	15,023	15,023	15,023

Explanations of major variances against the original 2024/25 budget are provided in Note 17.

Statement of cash flows for the year ended 30 June 2025

Actual 2023/24		Notes	Actual 2024/25	Main Estimates 2024/25	Supp. Estimates 2024/25	Main Estimates 2025/26
\$(000)			\$(000)	\$(000)	\$(000)	\$(000)
	Cash flows from operating activities					
54,294	Receipts from Crown		54,701	54,671	54,701	53,236
-	Receipts from other revenue		-	-	-	-
(32,352)	Payments to employees		(33,222)	(31,164)	(31,055)	(33,446)
(10,782)	Payments to suppliers		(12,398)	(21,578)	(21,849)	(17,226)
503	Goods and services tax (net)		460	-	-	-
11,663	<i>Net cash from operating activities</i>		9,541	1,929	1,797	2,564

Actual 2023/24		Notes	Actual 2024/25	Main Estimates 2024/25	Supp. Estimates 2024/25	Main Estimates 2025/26
\$(000)			\$(000)	\$(000)	\$(000)	\$(000)
	Cash flows from investing activities					
(853)	Purchase of property, plant and equipment	7	(510)	(1,331)	(1,049)	(2,634)
(2,400)	Purchase of intangible assets – software	8	(726)	(444)	(726)	(210)
54	Sale/disposal of Property, plant and equipment and Leasehold		1	-	-	-
(3,199)	<i>Net cash from investing activities</i>		(1,235)	(1,775)	(1,775)	(2,844)
	Cash flows from financing activities					
-	Capital injection		-	-	-	-
(6,084)	Return of operating surplus		(9,603)	-	(9,603)	-
(702)	Payment for capital charge		(751)	(751)	(751)	(751)
(6,786)	<i>Net cash from financing activities</i>		(10,354)	(751)	(10,354)	(751)
1,679	Net increase / (decrease) in cash		(2,048)	(594)	(11,695)	(1,119)
20,429	Cash at beginning of the year		22,108	11,434	22,104	11,067
22,108	Cash at end of the year		20,060	10,840	10,409	9,948

Explanations of major variances against the original 2024/25 budget are provided in Note 17.

Reconciliation of net surplus to net cash flow from operating activities for the year ended 30 June 2025

Actual 2023/24 \$(000)		Actual 2024/25 \$(000)
9,603	Net surplus	7,462
	Add/(less) non-cash items	
1,207	Depreciation and amortisation expense	1,426
10,810	Total non-cash items	8,888
	Add/(less) items classified as investing or financing activities	
44	Net (gains)/losses on disposal of property, plants and equipment	1
702	Increase/(decrease) in payment of capital charge	751
746	Total items classified as investing or financing activities	752
	Add/(less) movements in statement of financial positions items	
(3)	(Increase)/decrease in Debtors and Receivables	15
(176)	(Increase)/decrease in Prepayments	(49)
609	Increase/(decrease) in Creditors and Payables	(518)
(41)	Increase/(decrease) in Short Term Liabilities (Leasehold Incentive)	(7)
(12)	Increase/(decrease) in Long Term Liabilities (leasehold Incentive)	(44)
503	Increase/(decrease) in GST	91
(773)	Increase/(decrease) in Employee Entitlements	413
107	Total net movement in statement of financial position items	(99)
11,663	Net cash flows from operating activities	9,541

Statement of commitments as at 30 June 2025

Non-cancellable operating lease commitments

The Office leases accommodation space and photocopiers as a normal part of its business in Auckland and Wellington. There are no operating or unusual restrictions placed on the Office by any of its leasing arrangements.

The agreements for the photocopiers have a non-cancellable period, generally of five years. The accommodation leases are long-term and non-cancellable until expiry except if the premises become untenable under the terms of the lease agreement. The annual lease payments are subject to three-yearly reviews which are due after 2027. The amounts disclosed below as future commitments are based on the current rental rate for each of the leased premises.

Actual 2023/24 \$(000)		Actual 2024/25 \$(000)
	Non-cancellable operating lease commitments	
2,142	Less than one year	2,557
2,169	One to two years	2,389
2,313	Three to five years	6,034
756	More than five years	831
7,380	Total non-cancellable operating lease commitments	11,811

Capital commitments

During 2024/25 the Office has taken over leases for part of Level 8 and the whole of Level 11 (Wellington office). This is subject to the final design capital costs, including leasehold improvement and furniture and fittings, which are expected during 2025/26.

Statement of contingent liabilities and contingent assets as at 30 June 2025

Unquantifiable contingent liabilities

In November 2024, the Office was served with a notice of a judicial review proceeding.

This is not expected to result in damages or compensation, and there is a remote chance of the Office being liable for costs.

(As at 30 June 2024 the Office had no unquantifiable contingent liabilities).

Quantifiable contingent liabilities

As at 30 June 2025, the Office does not have any quantifiable contingent liabilities.

(As at 30 June 2024, the Office had one quantifiable contingent liability).

Unquantified contingent assets

As at 30 June 2025, the Office does not have any unquantifiable contingent assets.

(2024 Nil).

Quantified contingent assets

As at 30 June 2025, the Office does not have any quantifiable contingent assets.

(2024 Nil).

Notes to the financial statements

1. Statement of accounting policies for the year ended 30 June 2025

Reporting entity

The financial statements of the Office are for the year ended 30 June 2025. The financial statements were authorised for distribution by the Chief Ombudsman on 30 September 2025.

Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis and the accounting policies have been applied consistently throughout the year.

Changes in accounting policy

There have been no changes in accounting policies since the date of the last audited financial statements.

Statement of compliance

The financial statements of the Ombudsman have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Public Finance Act 1989, which include the requirement to comply with New Zealand generally accepted accounting practices (NZ GAAP), and Treasury instructions.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Tier 1 PBE Standards. These financial statements comply with PBE Financial Reporting Standards (FRS).

Measurement base

The financial statements have been prepared on a historical cost basis.

Functional and presentation currency

The financial statements are presented in New Zealand dollars and all values are rounded to the nearest thousand dollars (\$000). The functional currency of the Ombudsman is New Zealand dollars.

New or amended standards adopted

The Office adopted *Disclosure of Fees for Audit Firms' Services* – Amendments to FRS44 on 1 July 2024. The amendments require enhanced disclosure of fees paid to audit or review firms, including a description of each service under specified categories. Adoption of the amendments did not have a significant impact on the financial statements.

Standards issued and not yet effective and not adopted

Standards and amendments that have been issued but are not yet effective and that have not been adopted and that are relevant to the Office are:

2024 OMNIBUS AMENDMENT TO PBE STANDARDS

The External Reporting Board (XRB) has issued the 2024 Omnibus Amendments to PBE Standards. The amending standard updates:

- PBE IPSAS 1 Presentation of Financial Reports: the amendments clarify the principles for classifying liabilities as current or non-current.
- PBE IAS 12 Income Tax: to provide temporary relief from accounting for deferred taxes arising from the OECD's international tax reform. (This is not applicable to the Office).
- The amendment to PBE IPSAS 1 is effective for accounting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2026.

PBE IFRS 17 INSURANCE CONTRACTS

This new standard sets out accounting requirements for insurers and other entities that issue insurance contracts and applies to financial reports covering periods beginning on or after 1 January 2026.

The Office has not yet assessed in detail the impact of these amendments and the new standard.

Summary of significant accounting policies

Revenue

The specific accounting policies for significant revenue items are explained below:

REVENUE CROWN

Revenue from the Crown is measured based on the Office's funding entitlement for the reporting year. The funding entitlement is established by Parliament when it passes the Appropriation Acts for the financial year. The amount of revenue recognised takes into account any amendments to appropriations approved in the Appropriation (Supplementary Estimates) Act for the year and certain other unconditional funding adjustments formally approved prior to balance date.

The Office considers there are no conditions attached to the funding, and it is recognised as revenue at the point of entitlement.

The fair value of revenue from the Crown has been determined to be equivalent to the amounts due in the funding arrangements.

Other expenses

Other expenses are recognised as goods and services received.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents includes cash on hand and funds on deposit with banks, and is measured at face value.

The Office is only permitted to expend its cash and cash equivalents within the scope and limits of its appropriations.

Other current assets

Other current assets are short-term debtors and prepayments that are recorded at their face value less any provision for impairment.

Receivables

Receivables are recorded at the amount due, less an allowance for expected credit losses (ECL). The Office applies the simplified ECL model of recognising lifetime ECLs for receivables.

In measuring ECLs, short-term receivables have been assessed on a collective basis because they possess shared credit-risk characteristics. They have been grouped based on the days past due.

Short-term receivables are written off when there are no reasonable expectations of recovery. Indicators are that there are no reasonable expectations of recovery including the debtor being in liquidation or the receivable being more than one year overdue.

Property, plant, and equipment

Property, plant, and equipment consists of leasehold improvements, furniture, and office equipment. The Office does not own any vehicles, buildings, or land.

Property, plant, and equipment are shown at cost, less accumulated depreciation and impairment.

In general, fixed assets with a unit cost of more than \$1,000, or if the unit cost is \$1,000 or less but the aggregate cost of the purchase exceeds \$3,000, are capitalised. However, for specific assets such as mobile phone handsets, the Office may decide to capitalise the purchase due to its economic useful life exceeding one year.

ADDITIONS

The cost of an item of property, plant, and equipment is recognised as an asset only when it is probable that future economic benefits or service potential associated with the item will flow to the Office and the cost of the item can be measured reliably.

In most instances an item of property, plant, and equipment is initially recognised at its cost. Where an asset is acquired through a non-exchange transaction, it is recognised at fair value as at the date of acquisition.

DISPOSALS

Gains and losses on disposals are determined by comparing the proceeds with the carrying amount of the asset. Gains and losses on disposals are reported net in the surplus or deficit. When revalued assets are sold, the amounts included in revaluation reserves in respect of those assets are transferred to general funds.

SUBSEQUENT COSTS

Costs incurred subsequent to initial acquisition are capitalised only when it is probable that future economic benefits or service potential associated with the item will flow to the Ombudsman and the cost of the item can be measured reliably.

The costs of day-to-day servicing of property, plant, and equipment are recognised in the surplus or deficit as they are incurred.

DEPRECIATION

Depreciation is provided on a straight-line basis on all property, plant, and equipment, at rates that will write-off the cost (or valuation) of the assets to their estimated residual values over their useful lives. The useful lives and associated depreciation rates of classes of assets held by the Office are set out below.

Equipment	Useful Life	Percent
Computer equipment	4 years	25%
Plant and other equipment	3-5 years	20%
Furniture and fittings	5-10 years	10%
Leasehold improvement	Lease term	Lease term

Leasehold improvements are depreciated over the unexpired period of the lease or the estimated remaining useful lives of the improvements, whichever is the shorter.

The residual value and useful life of an asset is reviewed, and adjusted if applicable, at each financial year-end.

Intangible assets

SOFTWARE ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT

Acquired computer software licences are capitalised on the basis of the costs incurred to acquire and bring to use the specific software.

Costs that are directly attributable in the creation, production, and preparation of internally generated software are recognised as intangible assets.

AMORTISATION

The carrying value of an intangible asset with a finite life is amortised on a straight-line basis over its useful life. Amortisation begins when the asset is available for use and ceases at the date that the asset is derecognised. The amortisation charge for each period is recognised in the surplus or deficit.

Work in progress amortisation occurs only when assets are completed and in use.

USEFUL LIVES OF SOFTWARE

The useful life of software is determined at the time the software is acquired and brought into use, and is reviewed at each reporting date for appropriateness. For computer



software licences, the useful life represents management’s view of the expected period over which the Office will receive benefits from the software, but not exceeding the licence term.

For internally generated software developed by the Office, the useful life is based on historical experience with similar systems as well as anticipation of future events that may impact on the useful life, such as changes in technology.

Estimating useful lives and residual values

At each balance date, the useful lives and residual values of property, plant, and equipment are reviewed. Assessing the appropriateness of useful life and residual value estimates of property, plant and equipment requires a number of factors to be considered, such as the physical condition of the asset, expected period of the use of the asset by the Office, and expected disposal proceeds from the future sale of the asset.

An incorrect estimate of the useful life or residual value will affect the depreciation expense recognised in the surplus or deficit, and carrying amount of the asset in the statement of financial position. The Office minimises the risk of this estimation uncertainty by:

- physical inspection of assets;
- asset replacement programmes;
- review of second-hand market prices for similar assets; and
- analysis of prior asset sales.

The Office has not made significant changes to past assumptions concerning useful lives and residual values. The useful lives and associated amortisation rates of major classes of intangible assets have been estimated as set out below.

Computer software	Useful Life	Percent
Acquired computer software	4 years	25%
Internally generated software	10 years	10%

Impairment of property, plant and equipment, and intangible assets

The Office does not hold any cash-generating assets. Assets are considered cash-generating where their primary objective is to generate a commercial return.

Property, plant, and equipment and intangible assets held at cost that have a finite useful life are reviewed for impairment whenever events or changes in circumstances indicate that the carrying amount may not be recoverable. An impairment loss is recognised for the amount by which the asset’s carrying amount exceeds its recoverable service amount. The recoverable service amount is the higher of an asset’s fair value less costs to sell and value in use.

Value in use is the present value of the asset's remaining service potential. Value in use is determined using an approach based on either a depreciated replacement cost approach, restoration cost approach, or a service units approach. The most appropriate approach used to measure value in use depends on the nature of the impairment and availability of information.

If an asset's carrying amount exceeds its recoverable service amount, the asset is regarded as impaired and the carrying amount is written down to the recoverable amount. The total impairment loss is recognised in the surplus or deficit.

The reversal of an impairment loss is recognised in the surplus or deficit.

Payables

Short-term payables are recorded at the amount payable.

Provisions

ONEROUS CONTRACTS

A provision for onerous contracts is recognised when the expected benefits or service potential to be derived from a contract are lower than the unavoidable cost of meeting the obligations under the contract.

The provision is measured at the present value of the lower of the expected cost of terminating the contract and the expected net cost of continuing with the contract.

Employee entitlements

SHORT-TERM EMPLOYEE ENTITLEMENTS

Employee entitlements that are due to be settled within 12 months after the end of the period in which the employee renders the related service are measured based on accrued entitlements at current rates of pay. These include salaries and wages accrued up to balance date, annual leave earned but not yet taken at balance date, and long service leave gratuities expected to be settled within 12 months.

The Office recognises a liability and an expense for performance pay where there is a contractual obligation, or where there is a past practice that has created a constructive obligation, and a reliable estimate of the obligation can be made.

The Office's employment agreement for its staff provides for an 'open ended' sick leave entitlement, accordingly there is no sick leave liability for accounting purposes.

LONG-TERM EMPLOYEE ENTITLEMENTS

Employee benefits that are due to be settled beyond 12 months after the end of period

in which the employee renders that related service, such as long service leave, have been calculated on an actuarial basis. The calculations are based on:

- likely future entitlements based on years of service, years to entitlement, the likelihood that staff will reach the point of entitlement, and contractual entitlements information; and
- the present value of the estimated future cash flows.

The Office's terms and conditions of employment do not include a provision for retirement leave. Long service leave is available to one long-serving staff under 'grandparent' employment terms. Long service leave is not otherwise available to Office staff.

LONG-SERVICE LEAVE

Note (11) provides an analysis of the exposure in relation to estimates and uncertainties surrounding the long service leave liability.

PRESENTATION OF EMPLOYEE ENTITLEMENTS

Annual leave, vested long-service leave, and non-vested long service leave expected to be settled within 12 months of balance date are classified as a current liability. All other employee entitlements are classified as a non-current liability.

Superannuation schemes

DEFINED CONTRIBUTION SCHEMES

Obligations for contributions to KiwiSaver and other cash accumulation schemes are recognised as an expense in the surplus or deficit as incurred.

Equity

Equity is the Crown's investment in the Office and is measured as the difference between total assets and total liabilities. Equity is disaggregated and classified as taxpayers' funds.

Commitments

Commitments are future expenses and liabilities to be incurred on contracts that have been entered into at balance date. Information on non-cancellable capital and lease commitments are reported in the statements of commitments.

Cancellable commitments that have penalty or exit costs explicit in the agreement on exercising that option to cancel are reported in the statement of commitments at the value of that penalty or exit cost.

Capital commitments

Capital commitments are the aggregate amount of capital expenditure contracted for the acquisition of property, plant, and equipment and intangible assets that have not been paid for or not recognised as a liability at a balance date.

Cancellable capital commitments that have penalty or exit costs explicit in the agreement on exercising that option to cancel are reported at the lower of the remaining contractual commitment and the value of those penalty or exit costs (that is, the minimum future payments).

Goods and services tax (GST)

All items in the financial statements and appropriation statements are stated exclusive of GST, except for receivables and payables, which are stated on a GST inclusive basis. Where GST is not recoverable as input tax, then it is recognised as part of the related asset or expense.

The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the Inland Revenue Department (IRD) is included as part of receivables or payables in the statement of financial position.

The net GST paid to, or received from the IRD, including the GST relating to investing and financing activities, is classified as an operating cash flow in the statement of cash flows.

Commitments and contingencies are disclosed exclusive of GST.

Remuneration paid to Ombudsmen is exempt from GST pursuant to Part 1 section 6(3)(c) of the Goods and Services Tax Act 1985.

Income tax

The Ombudsman is a public authority and consequently is exempt from the payment of income tax. Accordingly, no provision has been made for income tax.

Statement of cost accounting policies

The Office has one output expense appropriation. All the Office's costs with the exception of the remuneration of the Ombudsmen are charged to this output.

There have been no changes in cost accounting policies since the date of the last audited financial statements.

Critical accounting estimates and assumptions

In preparing these financial statements, the Office has made estimates and assumptions concerning the future.

These estimates and assumptions may differ from the subsequent actual results. Estimates and assumptions are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. The estimates and assumptions that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year are discussed below.

Critical judgements in applying accounting policies

Management has exercised the following critical judgements in applying accounting policies for the year ended 30 June 2025.

Budget and forecast figures

The forecast financial statements (Main Estimates 2025/26) have been prepared as required by the Public Finance Act 1989, to communicate forecast financial information for accountability purposes. The budget and forecast figures (all Estimates information) are unaudited and have been prepared using the accounting policies adopted in preparing these financial statements.

2024/25 MAIN ESTIMATES AND SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES

The 2024/25 Main Estimates forecast financial statements are consistent with the forecasts published in Budget 2024 and in the Office's 2023/24 annual report.

The 2024/25 Supplementary Estimates forecast financial statements are based on the updated forecasts published in Budget 2025.

2025/26 MAIN ESTIMATES

The 2025/26 Main Estimates forecast financial statements are consistent with the forecasts published in Budget 2025. They have been prepared in keeping with PBE FRS 42: Prospective Financial Statements and comply with that standard.

Although we regularly update our forecasts, updated forecast financial statements for the year ending 30 June 2025 will not be published.

The 2025/2026 forecast financial statements are consistent with the best estimate financial forecast information submitted to the Treasury for the BEFU for the year ending 30 June 2026.

The financial forecasts are based on Budget Economic Forecast Update (BEFU) and have been prepared on the basis of assumptions as to future events that the Office reasonably expects to occur, associated with the actions it reasonably expects to take.

The forecast financial statement have been prepared to communicate forecast financial information for accountability purposes, as required by the Public Finance Act.

These forecast financial statements were compiled on the basis of existing parliamentary outcomes at the time the statements were finalised.

The main assumptions are as follows:

- There are no significant events or changes that would have a material impact on the BEFU forecast.
- Factors that could lead to material differences between the forecast financial statements and the 2024/25 actual financial statements include changes to the baseline budget through new initiatives, or technical adjustments.

Authorisation statement

The 2025/26 forecast financial statements were approved for issue by the Chief Ombudsman on 14 April 2025. The Chief Ombudsman is responsible for the forecast financial statements, including the appropriateness of the assumptions underlying them and all other required disclosures.

The preparation of these forecast financial statements requires judgements, estimations, and assumptions that affect the application of policies and reported amounts of assets and liabilities, and income and expenses. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and various other factors that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. Actual financial results achieved for the period covered are likely to vary from the information presented, and the variations may be material.

2. Personnel costs

Actual 2023/24		Actual 2024/25	Main Estimates 2024/25	Supp. Estimates 2024/25	Main Estimates 2025/26
\$(000)		\$(000)	\$(000)	\$(000)	\$(000)
28,359	Salaries and wages	30,864	29,057	29,057	31,185
1,238	Employer contributions to staff superannuation	1,294	1,453	1,358	1,559
1,145	Other personnel costs	1,696	654	640	702
30,742	Total personnel costs	33,854	31,164	31,055	33,446

Employer contributions to superannuation plans include contributions to KiwiSaver and other complying cash accumulation plans. Tax on employer contributions are included under Other Personnel costs as funded by the employer.

3. Other operating costs

Actual 2023/24		Actual 2024/25	Main Estimates 2024/25	Supp. Estimates 2024/25	Main Estimates 2025/26
\$(000)		\$(000)	\$(000)	\$(000)	\$(000)
2,110	Operating accommodation lease expenses	2,400	2,225	2,429	2,387
552	Accommodation costs – other	522	558	550	550
97	Audit fees – for audit of financial statements	167	154	116	116
2,461	Maintenance – ICT & Equipment	2,772	4,126	2,329	2,867
3,367	Professional Services	3,126	5,805	6,260	4,546
270	Information Resources	160	220	226	220
1,039	Travel	820	1,786	1,267	1,786
389	Telecommunications	231	468	361	468
923	Other costs	1,010	6,164	7,951	4,326
<u>11,208</u>	Total other operating costs	<u>11,208</u>	<u>21,506</u>	<u>21,489</u>	<u>17,266</u>

Other operating costs exclude depreciation and capital charges.

4. Depreciation and amortisation

Actual 2023/24		2024/25 Actual	Main Estimates 2024/25	Supp. Estimates 2024/25	Main Estimates 2025/26
\$(000)		\$(000)	\$(000)	\$(000)	\$(000)
168	Furniture and fittings	89	168	169	169
275*	Plant and equipment and other	335	273	269	589
423	Computer equipment	452	463	451	483
341	Intangible assets – software	550	346	517	532
<u>1,207</u>	Total depreciation and amortisation	<u>1,426</u>	<u>1,250</u>	<u>1,406</u>	<u>1,773</u>

* Excludes depreciation adjustment on write offs of \$4k. (See Note 7)

5. Capital charge

The Office pays a capital charge to the Crown on its taxpayers' funds as at 30 June and 31 December each year. The capital charge is recognised as an expense in the financial year to which the charge relates.

The capital charge rate was 5% for the year ended 30 June 2025 (Year ended 2024, 5%).

6. Other current assets

Actual 2023/24		Actual 2024/25	Main Estimates 2024/25	Supp. Estimates 2024/25	Main Estimates 2025/26
\$(000)		\$(000)	\$(000)	\$(000)	\$(000)
16	Receivables	-	-	-	-
460	Prepayments	510	414	491	491
<u>476</u>	Total receivables	<u>510</u>	<u>414</u>	<u>491</u>	<u>491</u>

7. Property, plant, and equipment

Movements for each class of property, plant, and equipment are set out below.

2025	Plant & equipment \$(000)	Leasehold improvements \$(000)	IT equipment \$(000)	Furniture & fittings \$(000)	Total \$(000)
Cost					
Balance at 30 June 2024	688	2,080	3,368	1,749	7,885
Additions	12	-	479	19	510
Reclassification of Asset	267			(267)	0
Disposals and write-offs	(197)	-	(464)	(60)	(721)
Balance at 30 June 2025	770	2,080	3,383	1,441	7674
Accumulated depreciation and impairment losses					
Balance at 30 June 2024	441	638	2,319	693	4,091
Depreciation	159	176	452	89	876
Accumulated depreciation/recovery on disposals	(197)	-	(462)	(60)	(719)
Balance at 30 June 2025	403	814	2,309	722	4,248
Carrying amounts:					
At 30 June 2024	248	1,441	1,049	1,056	3,794
At 30 June 2025	367	1,266	1,074	719	3,427

2024	Plant & equipment \$(000)	Leasehold improvements \$(000)	IT equipment \$(000)	Furniture & fittings \$(000)	Total \$(000)
Cost					
Balance at 30 June 2023	577	2,131	2,709	1,662	7,079
Additions	111	-	659	87	857
Disposals and write-offs	-	(51)	-	-	(51)
Balance at 30 June 2024	688	2,080	3,368	1,749	7,885
Accumulated depreciation and impairment losses					
Balance at 30 June 2023	347	461	1,896	525	3,229
Depreciation	94	181	423	168	866
Accumulated depreciation on disposals	-	(4)	-	-	(4)
Balance at 30 June 2024	441	638	2,319	693	4,091
Carrying amounts:					
At 30 June 2023	230	1,666	814	1,139	3,849
At 30 June 2024	248	1,441	1,049	1,056	3,794

8. Intangible assets

2025	Acquired software \$(000)	Internally generated software \$(000)	Trademark (\$000)	Total \$(000)
Cost				
Balance at 30 June 2024	1,175	3,528	6	4,709
Additions	-	726	-	726
Disposals	(5)	-	-	(5)
Balance at 30 June 2025	1,170	4,254	6	5,430

2025	Acquired software \$(000)	Internally generated software \$(000)	Trademark (\$000)	Total \$(000)
Accumulated depreciation and impairment losses				
Balance at 30 June 2024	775	545	-	1,320
Amortisation	212	338	-	550
Reverse Depreciation on Disposals	(5)	-	-	(5)
Balance at 30 June 2025	982	883	-	1,865
Carrying Amounts				
At 30 June 2024	400	2,983	6	3,389
At 30 June 2025	188	3,371	6	3,565

2024	Acquired software \$(000)	Internally generated software \$(000)	Trademark (\$000)	Total \$(000)
Cost				
Balance at 30 June 2023	1,175	1,128	6	2,309
Additions	-	2,400	-	2,400
Balance at 30 June 2024	1,175	3,528	6	4,709
Accumulated depreciation and impairment losses				
Balance at 30 June 2023	574	405	-	979
Amortisation	201	140	-	341
Balance at 30 June 2024	775	545	-	1,320
Carrying Amounts				
At 30 June 2023	601	786	6	1,393
At 30 June 2024	400	2,983	6	3,389

There are no restrictions over the title of the Office's intangible assets, nor are any intangible assets pledged as security for liabilities.

9. Creditors and other payables

Creditors and other payables are non-interest bearing and are normally settled on 30-day terms. Therefore, the carrying value of creditors and other payables approximates their fair value.

Actual 2023/24 \$(000)		Actual 2024/25 \$(000)	Main Estimates 2025/26 \$(000)
2,245	Trade creditors and accruals	1,728	870
368	GST Payable	459	534
<u>2,613</u>	Total creditors and other payables	<u>2,187</u>	<u>1,404</u>

10. Return of operating surplus

There is a surplus of \$7,462,000 to be repaid for the 2025 financial year (2024, \$9,603,000).

11. Employee entitlements

Actual 2023/24 \$(000)		Actual 2024/25 \$(000)	Main Estimates 2024/25 \$(000)	Supp. Estimates 2024/25 \$(000)	Main Estimates 2025/26 \$(000)
	<i>Current liabilities</i>				
1,532	Annual leave	1,605	1,440	1,476	1,476
-	Long service leave	-	-	-	-
853	Superannuation, Superannuation Contribution Withholding Tax and salaries	1,193	278	458	458
2,385	Total current liabilities	2,798	1,718	1,934	1,934
	<i>Non-current liabilities</i>				
-	Long service leave	-	5	-	-
<u>2,385</u>	Total for employee entitlements	<u>2,798</u>	<u>1,723</u>	<u>1,934</u>	<u>1,934</u>

12. Equity (taxpayers' funds)

Actual 2023/24 \$(000)		Actual 2024/25 \$(000)	Main Estimates 2025/26 \$(000)
	General Funds		
15,023	Balance at 1 July	15,023	15,023
9,603	Net operating surplus	7,462	-
-	Capital injections	-	-
(9,603)	Provision for repayment of surplus to the Crown	(7,462)	-
<u>15,023</u>	Total Equity at 30 June	<u>15,023</u>	<u>15,023</u>

13. Capital management

The Office's capital is its equity, which comprises of taxpayer funds. Equity is represented by net assets.

The Office manages its revenues, expenses, assets, liabilities, and general financial dealings prudently. The Office's equity is largely managed as a by-product of managing revenue, expenses, assets, liabilities and compliance with Parliament budget processes, Treasury instructions, and the Public Finance Act 1989.

14. Related party information

The Office is a wholly owned entity of the Crown. The Ombudsman acts independently, and its main source of revenue is Parliament.

Related party disclosures have not been made for transactions with related parties that are within a normal supplier/recipient relationship on terms and conditions no more or less favourable than those that it is reasonable to expect the Office would have adopted in dealing with the party at arm's length in the same circumstances. Further, transactions with government agencies (for example, government departments and Crown Entities) are not disclosed as related party transactions when they are consistent with the normal operating arrangements between government agencies and undertaken on the normal terms and conditions for such transactions.

All related party transactions have been entered into on an arm's length basis.

Key management personnel compensation

Remuneration and benefits of the senior management staff of the Office amounted to the following:

Actual 2023/24 \$(000)		Actual 2024/25 \$(000)
	Leadership Team, including the Chief Ombudsman	
1,336	Remuneration and other benefits	1,460
4	Full-time equivalent staff	4

This is higher than last year due to annual salary increases and the previous Chief Ombudsman’s termination pay.

15. Financial instruments

The Office’s financial instruments are limited to cash and cash equivalents, debtors and other receivables, creditors and other payables, and employee entitlements. These activities expose the Office to low levels of financial instrument risks, including market risk, credit risk, and liquidity risk.

Market Risk

CURRENCY RISK

Currency risk is the risk that the fair value of future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in foreign exchange rates.

The Office incurs a small portion of operating expenditure in foreign currency, and risk is minimised through prompt settlement. Recognised liabilities that are payable in foreign currency were nil at balance date. (2024: Nil).²

INTEREST RATE RISK

Interest rate risk is the risk that the fair value of a financial instrument will fluctuate, or the cash flows from a financial instrument will fluctuate, due to changes in market interest rates.

The Office has no interest-bearing financial instruments and, accordingly, has no exposure to interest rate risk.

CREDIT RISK

Credit risk is the risk that a third party will default on its obligation to the Office, causing the Office to incur a loss.

In the normal course of the Office’s business, credit risk arises from receivables and deposits with banks.

The Office is permitted to deposit funds only with Westpac, a registered bank with high credit ratings. For its other financial instruments, the Office does not have significant concentrations of credit risk.

The Office's maximum credit exposure for each class of financial instrument is represented by the total carrying amount of cash and cash equivalents, and net receivables.

There is no collateral held as security against these financial instruments.

Liquidity risk

Liquidity risk is the risk that the Office will encounter difficulty raising liquid funds to meet commitments as they fall due.

In meeting its liquidity requirements, the Office closely monitors its forecast cash requirements with cash draw-downs from the New Zealand Debt Management Office. The Office maintains a target level of available cash to meet liquidity requirements.

The Office's financial liabilities are outlined in Note 9: Creditors and other payables. These are all due to be settled on 30-day terms.

Categories of financial instruments

Actual 2023/24 \$(000)		Actual 2024/25 \$(000)
	Loans and receivables	
22,108	Cash and cash equivalents	20,060
476	Debtors and other receivables (note 6)	510
22,584	Total	20,570
	Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost	
2,613	Creditors and other payables (note 9)	2,187
2,385	Employee entitlements (note 11)	2,798
4,998	Total	4,985

The carrying value of cash and cash equivalents approximates their fair value.

16. Events after the balance sheet date

There were no post-balance sheet date events in regard to the Office's financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2025.

17. Significant variances from budgeted financial performance

Explanations for major variances from the Office's original 2024/25 budget are as follows:

Statement of comprehensive revenue and expenses

OTHER OPERATING COSTS

The underspend (\$10.281 million) was primarily due to:

- A number of projects with original delivery date of 30 June 2025 will now commence in, or have been extended to, 2025/2026; and
- A reprioritisation of work and approach has resulted in reduction in travel.

The cash variance results from the operating surplus to be returned in 2025/26, partly caused by the reasons outlined above.



Analysis, statistics, and directory

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Community outreach and engagement

Public groups and organisations engaged with included:

Hapū, Iwi and Māori Organisation Stakeholders:

- Huakina Development Trust
- Kōkiri Marae
- Mokopuna Ora (Tainui)
- Ngāti Koata Trust
- Ngāti Ruanui Iwi
- Ngāti Ruanui Trust
- Ngāti Toa Rangatira
- Papakura Marae
- Piritahi Marae
- Te Atiawa (Te Whanganui-a-Tara)
- Te Korowai Trust
- Tu Tama Wahine o Taranaki
- Waikato-Tainui (Koroneihana and Tangihanga)
- Waipareira Trust
- Taiporohēnui Marae
- Taonga Education Centre (Tāmaki Makaurau)
- Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Rārua

Pasifika and Asian Community Stakeholders:

- Asian Family Services Community Group
- Chinese New Settlers Services Trust
- English Language Partners (Porirua)
- Marlborough Multicultural Centre & Community
- Marlborough Pacific Trust & Pacific Community
- Multicultural Nelson Tasman
- Multicultural Porirua

- New Zealand China Friendship Society Community
- New Zealand Ethnic Social Services
- Pacific Services Network (Wellington)
- Pacific Trust & Pacific Community
- Pasifika o Wairarapa Trust
- Samoan Church Ministers Network
- Taeaomanino Trust
- Vaka Tautua (Wellington)
- Victoria University Pacific Student Network
- Waitakere Ethnic Community
- Wellington Khmer Association

General Community Stakeholders:

- Age Concern New Zealand
- Caring Families Aotearoa National Conference
- Change Makers Resettlement
- Citizen Advice Bureau (Botany, Auckland)
- Citizen Advice Bureau (Lower Hutt)
- Citizen Advice Bureau (Upper Hutt)
- Citizen Advice Bureau (Waiheke)
- Citizen Advice Bureau (Wairarapa)
- Citizen Advice Bureau (Wellington)
- Citizens Advice Bureau & Networks (Marlborough)
- Citizens Advice Bureau & Networks (Nelson)
- Community Law (Marlborough)
- Community Law (Nelson)
- Community Law (Waikato)
- Community Law (Wairarapa)
- New Zealand Collective of Abused in State Care Charitable Trust (Upper Hutt, Palmerston North, Christchurch)

- New Zealand Law Society (Waikato/Bay of Plenty)
- Ōtaki College
- Social Services Providers Aotearoa National Conference
- Victoria University International Students Orientation
- Victoria University Social Science Teachers Conference
- Waikato University Law Faculty
- Te Kāhui Tika Tangata Human Rights Commission

Disability and Deaf Organisation Stakeholders:

- Auckland Deaf Society
- Blind Citizens NZ
- Blind Low Vision NZ
- CCS Disability Action
- Deaf Aotearoa
- Disability and Deaf Organisation Stakeholders
- Disability Connect
- Disabled Persons Assembly
- IHC
- I.Lead
- Kāpō Māori Aotearoa
- People First NZ Ngā Tāngata Tautahi
- Yes Disability

[Return to outreach and engagement section in text](#)

Submissions

Key submissions on legislation and draft Cabinet papers included:

- [Abuse in Care Legislation Bill](#)
- Department of Corrections policy proposals relating to improvements to prison safety
- Ministry of Education's *Greater use of data in education* draft Cabinet paper
- [Health and Disability Commissioner Act and Code Review](#)
- Immigration (Fiscal Sustainability and System Integrity) Amendment Bill
- [Mental Health Bill](#)
- *Modernising the approach to the census*—further comment on draft Cabinet paper
- Online Casino Gambling Bill
- Oversight of Oranga Tamariki System Legislation Amendment Bill
- Policy proposals for responding to children with offending behaviour

Submissions on the application of the OIA, LGOIMA and OA

- [Education and Training Bill](#)
- Education (Vocational Education and Training System) Amendment Bill
- Film, Videos and Publications Bill
- Fisheries Act Reform
- Gene Technology Cabinet Paper
- Local Government (Water Services) Bill
- Offshore Renewable Energy Bill
- Proposed changes to the Crimes Act 1961
- Regulatory Standards Bill
- Resource Management (Consenting and Other System Changes) Amendment Bill

Key submissions on policy or administrative proposals included:

- Application of OIA to policy costing unit
- Department of Corrections—consultation on *Options for more transparent management of extreme threat prisoners*
- Department of Internal Affairs—complaints handing process under the Digital Identity Services Trust Framework
- External consultation on proposals to review information sharing provisions in the Immigration Act 2009
- Local Government Commission Standardised Code of Conduct
- Ministry of Justice—Interplay between Crimes Act and OIA
- Ministry of Justice—Fourth National Action Plan
- NZQA review of complaints process
- Pharmac review of OIA Policy
- [Preferred Approach Paper for Here ora? Preventive measures for community safety, rehabilitation and reintegration](#)
- [Submission on the review of adult decision-making capacity law](#)
- Te Whatu Ora review of OIA policy

Key international submissions and input included:

- Ombudsman shadow report on the New Zealand Government’s follow up report to the Committee Against Torture
- Submission to United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, on Children’s rights to access justice and effective remedies
- United Nations Convention Against Corruption Second Cycle Review

Key select committee inquiry submissions included:

- [Health Committee’s Inquiry into the aged care sector’s current and future capacity to provide support services for people experiencing neurological cognitive disorders](#)

[Return to advice and guidance section in text.](#)

Agencies that engaged in Ombudsman learning

Te Puna Mātauranga online learning	Full course completion 2024/25
The OIA for Ministers and agencies	194
The LGOIMA for local government agencies	32
Managing Unreasonable Complaint Conduct	52
Total	278

Organisation type participating in online learning	Enrolments by organisation from March 2024 to June 2025 ¹⁴⁴
Central government agencies	83
Local government agencies	44
School Boards	10
Total	137

Agencies we provided in-person learning to included:

- Central West Regional School Boards
- Maanaki Whenua
- New Zealand Police
- New Zealand Parking Association
- NZQA
- Pharmac
- Public Service Commission (regular engagement to support PSC training and development across the public service)
- Te Whakarōputanga Kaitiaki Kura o Aotearoa – New Zealand School Boards Association
- TVNZ

[Return to learning section in text.](#)

144 Total enrolment numbers since 'go live' in March 2024.

Guidance and resources

Guidance and resources updated included:

- [Dealing with OIA requests involving Ministers](#)
- [Good practice for Meetings and Workshops](#)
- [Guidance for receivers](#)
- [Guidance on when to engage the Ombudsman in law reform proposals](#)
- [Making official information requests: A guide for requesters](#)
- [Model protocol on dealing with OIA requests involving Ministers](#)
- [Overview of the Protected Disclosures \(Protection of Whistleblowers\) Act 2022](#)
- [Pamphlet - About the Ombudsman](#)
- [Pamphlet - Complaints about government agencies](#)
- [Pamphlet - Disabled or Deaf? Being treated fairly by government agencies](#)
- [Pamphlet - How the Ombudsman can help](#)
- [Pamphlet - Making complaints about prisons and Community Corrections](#)
- [Pamphlet - Reporting serious wrongdoing at work \(whistleblowing\)](#)
- [Pamphlet - Schools and the Ombudsman](#)
- [Pamphlet - Official information requests](#)
- [Posters for Oranga Tamariki residences](#)
- [Public Interest: A guide to the public interest test](#)
- [The LGOIMA for local government agencies: A guide to processing requests and conducting meetings](#)
- [The OIA for Ministers and agencies: A guide to processing official information requests](#)
- [Work sheet for dealing with OIA requests that involve Ministers](#)

[Return to guidance materials section in text.](#)

Case notes and opinions

Case notes and opinions published included:¹⁴⁵

- [Advice provided to Ministers regarding the Fast-track Approvals Bill](#)
- [Complaint about Accident Compensation Corporation not notifying health practitioners about treatment injury claims](#)
- [Decision to reduce access to phone and video calls for young person in residence](#)
- [Failure by Oranga Tamariki to investigate reports of concern and complaints](#)
- [Failure to action particular recommendations from annual dam safety reviews and to clear debris from local waterway](#)
- [Minister did not hold information on who wrote or compiled tobacco policy notes](#)
- [Multiple requests for information from Health New Zealand](#)
- [Request for information about former CEO's exit payments](#)
- [Requests for information about smokefree legislation](#)
- [Request for late sibling's medical records](#)
- [Request for school dental data](#)
- [Requests for unredacted copies of the Preliminary Treaty Impact Analysis for the proposed Regulatory Standards Bill](#)

[Return to guidance materials section in text.](#)

Protected disclosures

Agency type	Protected disclosures	Enquiries	Total
Central government ministries and departments	15	24	39
Other central government organisations	23	43	66
Local government organisations	8	11	19
Education institutions	15	13	28
Ministers, Parliament and Judiciary	1	1	2
Other (including private sector organisations)	23	110	133
Total	85	202	287

¹⁴⁵ The list does not include case notes and opinions that were updated and re-published on the Ombudsman website in 2024/25, but it does include some cases and opinions decided in 2023/24 but only published this year.

The fact that a protected disclosure has been received does not mean that serious wrongdoing has been substantiated.

Enquiries may be requests for advice on how to deal with a protected disclosure that has been received, and so may not be an indication of a protected disclosure against the relevant organisation. For example, the organisation may be an appropriate authority seeking advice about how to deal with a protected disclosure that has been received about another organisation.

[Return to protected disclosures section in text.](#)

OPCAT examinations

The 121 visits and inspections were at the sites set out in the tables below.

Type of facility	Total	Unannounced	Announced
Mental Health	7	5	2
Intellectual Disability	11	3	8
Aged Care	89	87	2
Courts	7	1	6
Prison	5	2	3
Mental Health Services Older Persons	2	2	0
Totals	121	100	21
Percentages	N/A	83%	17%

[Return to OPCAT section in text.](#)

Name of facility
Aged Care
Aberleigh Rest Home
Ambridge Rose Manor
Awanui Rest Home
Banury Park
Beattie Home
Beetham HealthCare
Bert Sutcliffe Retirement Village
Birchleigh Residential Care Centre
Bradford Manor
Briargate Dementia Care Unit

Aged Care

Brooklands Care on Timandra

Brooklands Rest Home

Bupa Ashford Care Home

Bupa Bethesda Care Home

Bupa Cedar Manor Rest Home and Hospital

Bupa Glenburn Rest Home and Hospital

Bupa Liston Heights

Bupa Parklands on Papanui Retirement Village

Bupa Totara Gardens Care Home

Bupa Willowbank Retirement Village

Camellia Court Rest Home

Capella House

CHT Hillcrest Hospital

CHT Te Awamutu Home and Hospital

Clare House

Coastal View

Cooper Crest Living Well Ltd

Diana Isaac Retirement Village

Dominion Home

Edmonton Meadows Care Home

Goodwood Seadrome Ltd

Harbour View Rest Home

Heritage Lifecare Albarosa Rest Home

Heritage Lifecare Brookhaven Retirement Village

Heritage Lifecare Colwyn House

Heritage Lifecare Flaxmore Care Home

Heritage Lifecare Riverside Care Home and Hospital

Heritage Lifecare Stillwater Gardens

Heritage Lifecare Waterlea Rest Home

Holly Lea

Iona Home and Hospital

Ivan Ward Centre

Jack Inglis Aged Care Home

Aged Care

James Wattie Retirement Village

Jean Sandel Retirement Village

Kamo Home and Village

Kindred Hospital Ltd

Kumeu Village Aged Care Ltd

Lauriston Park

Leslie Groves Hospital

Lexic Care

Logan Campbell Retirement Village

Lonsdale

Manor Park Private Hospital

McKenzie Healthcare

Metlifecare Gulf Rise

Metlifecare Parkside Village

Millvale House Miramar

Millvale House Napier

Miriam Corban Retirement Village

Murray Halberg Retirement Village

Northbridge Lifecare Trust Rest Home and Hospital

Ocena Heretaunga Rest Home and Village

Ocena Lady Allum Rest Home and Village

Ocena Ohinemuri Rest Home and Village

Ohope Beach Care

Peacehaven Village

Presbyterian Support Central Cashmere Heights

Presbyterian Support Services Otago Incorporated St Andrews Home and Hospital

Radius Fulton Care Centre

Radius Heatherlea Care Centre

Radius Kensington

Rawhiti Estate

Regency Home and Hospital

Riverview Living

Rowena Jackson Retirement Village

Aged Care

Shelly Beach Dementia

St Andrews Village

Summerset Boulcott

Summerset by the Dunes

Summerset Palms Te Awa

Summerset Poutukawa Place

Tasman Rest Home and Dementia Care

Te Hopai Home and Hospital

Thornbury House

Torbay Rest Home

Trinity Home and Hospital

Westella

Courts

Christchurch High and District Court

Counties Manakau District Court

Greymouth District Court

Hastings District Court

Napier High and District Court

Wairoa District Court

Intellectual disability

Community Care Trust Regional Intellectual Disability Supported Accommodation Service, Dunedin

IDEA Regional Intellectual Disability Supported Accommodation Service, Wellington

Ka puta Ka Ora Emerge Aotearoa Regional Intellectually Disability Supported Accommodation Service, Christchurch

PACT Regional Intellectual Disability Supported Accommodation, Greymouth

NZCL Regional Intellectual Disability Supported Accommodation Service, Levin

Whaikaka (Assessment, Treatment and Rehabilitation Inpatient Unit), Hillmorton Hospital

Te Roopu Taurima Regional Intellectual Disability Supported Accommodation Service, Christchurch

Mental health

Mental Health Services for Older People, Tauranga Hospital

Kahurangi Unit, Mental Health Services for Older People, Te Nikau Grey Hospital

Wahi Oranga, Nelson Hospital

Te Whare Ahuru, Hutt Hospital

Mental health
Tawhirimatea, Kenepuru Hospital
Te Whare Ho Hou Roko, Hillmorton Hospital
Ward 27, Te Whare o Matairangi
Te Whare Awhiora, Gisborne Hospital
Prison
Auckland South Corrections Facility
Prisoners of Extreme Risk Unit, Auckland Men’s Prison
Rolleston Prison
Nikau Unit, Auckland Region Women’s Corrections Facility

[Return to OPCAT section in text.](#)

Final reports published in 2024/25 are set out in the table below.¹⁴⁶

Report	Date issued
He Puna Waiora Mental Health Inpatient Unit, North Shore Hospital Campus	2 July 2024
Henry Rongomau Bennett, Waiora Waikato Hospital, Hamilton	2 July 2024
Inpatient Mental Health Unit, Southland Hospital	2 July 2024
Kingsley Mortimer Unit, North Shore	2 July 2024
Ngā Rau Rākau, Hawke’s Bay Fallen Soldiers’ Memorial Hospital	2 July 2024
OPCAT Aged Care Monitoring: Chief Ombudsman’s Observations 2021 to 2024	4 March 2025
Prisoners of Extreme Risk Unit	17 December 2024
Te Puna Waiora, Taranaki Base Hospital	2 July 2024
Te Whare Awhiora, Gisborne Hospital	2 July 2024
Te Whare Oranga Tangata o Whakaue Unit, Rotorua Hospital	2 July 2024
Te Whetu Tawera, Auckland City Hospital	2 July 2024
Ward 6C, Dunedin Hospital	2 July 2024
Ward 9A, Wakari Hospital, Dunedin	2 July 2024
Ward 9B, Wakari Hospital, Dunedin	2 July 2024

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¹⁴⁶ Not all inspections result in a report, and not all final reports are published.

The recommendations made in final inspection reports are set out in the table below.

Facility Type	Recommendations made	Recommendations accepted
Prisons	78	71
Aged Care	40	36
Mental Health (including Mental Health Services Older Persons)	87	87
Intellectual Disability	4	4
Substance Addiction (compulsory assessment and treatment)	5	5
Total	214	203

[Return to OPCAT section in text.](#)

Throughput of complaints, protected disclosures and other contacts

1. All matters received and under consideration for reported year and previous four years

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
On hand as at 1 July	1,132	1,680	2,760	3,077	3,491
Adjustment ¹⁴⁷	+30	+37	(4)	+19	(19)
Received during the year	13,185	14,791	13,093	13,913	15,799
<i>Total under consideration</i>	<i>14,347</i>	<i>16,508</i>	<i>15,849</i>	<i>17,009</i>	<i>19,271</i>
Completed during the year	(12,639)	(13,705)	(12,772)	(13,518)	(16,144)
On hand at 30 June	1,680	2,760	3,077	3,491	3,127

147 Adjustments are changes made to reported statistics post completion of a reporting year and matters received on 1 July 2025.

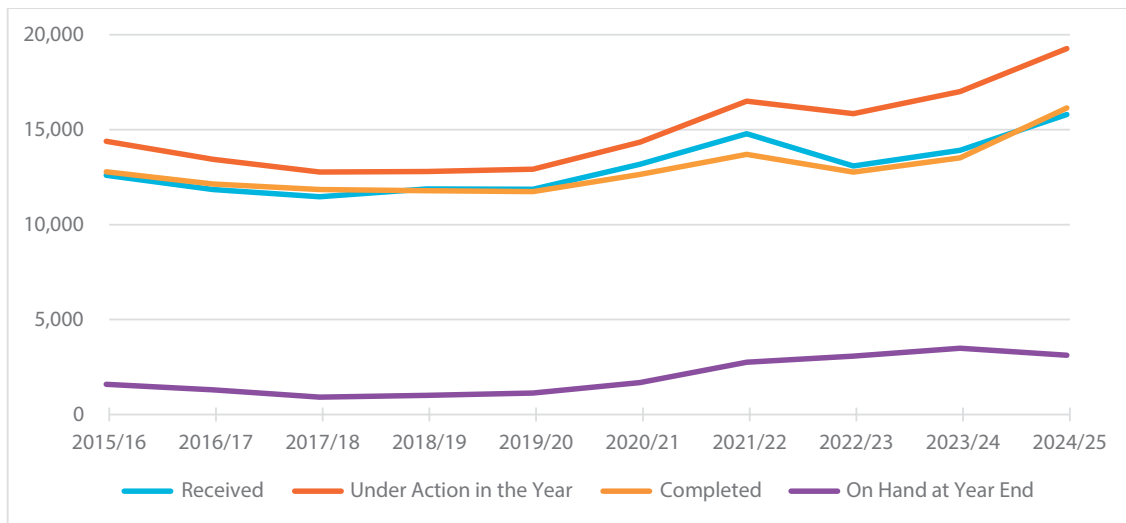


Figure 8: Overall throughput of all work over the past 10 years.

[Link to text alternative version of Figure 8.](#)

2. Breakdown of all matters received and under consideration for reported year and previous four years

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
On hand at 1 July					
Ombudsmen Act	518	840	1,379	1,402	1,721
Official Information Act	438	612	1,018	1,224	1,272
Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act	125	168	257	304	352
Protected Disclosures Act	4	3	4	47	34
Other contacts	27	34	66	50	43
Other work	50	60	36	50	69
Total	1,162	1,717	2,760	3,077	3,491
Received during the year					
Ombudsmen Act	3,862	4,730	4,028	4,443	5,269
Official Information Act	1,394	2,230	1,716	1,728	2,083
Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act	324	361	343	494	471
Protected Disclosures Act	116	71	128	206	287
Other contacts	7,443	7,374	6,839	7,010	7,661
Other work	46	25	39	32	28
Total	13,185	14,791	13,093	13,913	15,799

Completed during the year					
Ombudsmen Act	3,547	4,165	4,003	4,143	5,305
Official Information Act	1,223	1,811	1,509	1,680	2,334
Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act	284	267	295	446	524
Protected Disclosures Act	117	70	85	220	278
Other contacts	7,435	7,341	6,855	7,016	7,680
Other work	33	51	25	13	23
Total	12,639	13,705	12,772	13,518	16,144
On hand at 30 June					
Ombudsmen Act	815	1,379	1,402	1,721	1,670
Official Information Act	599	1,018	1,224	1,272	1,023
Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act	163	257	304	352	300
Protected Disclosures Act	3	4	47	34	43
Other contacts	38	66	50	43	18
Other work	62	36	50	69	73
Total	1,680	2,760	3,077	3,491	3,127

Contact type—who matters were received from

3. Contact type

	2023/24	2024/25
General public – individuals	11,335	13,016
Prisoners and prisoner advocates	1,429	1,473
Companies, associations and incorporated societies	269	328
Media	241	299
Departments, government organisations, and local authorities	350	287
Children, young people and trusted adults on their behalf	52	91
Special interest groups	35	83
Political party research units	85	52
Members of Parliament	26	34
Ombudsman self-initiated	32	31
Review agency (Privacy Commissioner, Independent Police Conduct Authority, Health and Disability Commissioner)	29	30
Researchers	11	30
Trade unions	5	23
Collective (whānau/hapū/iwi)	4	14
Ministers	7	6
Select Committees	-	2
Other	3	-
Total	13,913	15,799

Age profile of open and closed complaints and other contacts

4. Age profile – all complaints and other contacts closed during reporting year

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Aged 6 months or less from date of receipt	92%	87%	88%	85%
Aged between 7 and 12 months from date of receipt	5%	5%	4%	6%
Aged more than 12 months from date of receipt	3%	8%	7%	9%

5. Age profile – all complaints and other contacts remaining open at 30 June

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Aged 6 months or less from date of receipt	54%	51%	46%	50%
Aged between 7 and 12 months from date of receipt	35%	25%	23%	20%
Aged more than 12 months from date of receipt	11%	24%	32%	30%

Detailed analysis of complaints and other contacts

Official Information Act (OIA)

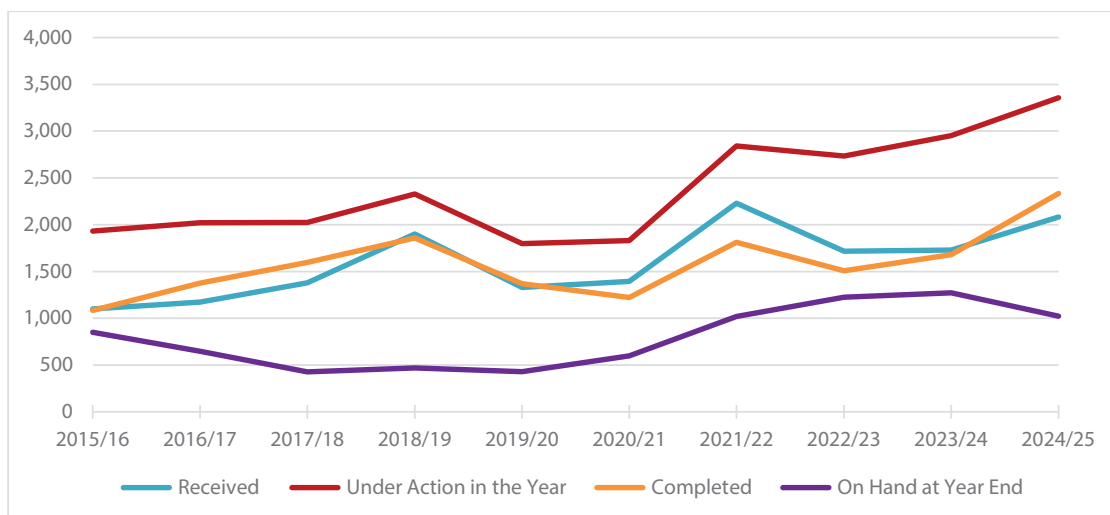


Figure 9: OIA complaints received and actioned over the past 10 years.

[Link to text alternative version of Figure 9.](#)

6. Nature of OIA complaints made	2023/24	2024/25
Refusal – general information request	837	1,048
Delay in making decision	350	418
Incomplete or inadequate response	197	195
Refusal – personal information about individual	94	182
Extension	124	122
Delay in releasing information	37	31
Other	27	19
Decision not made as soon as reasonably practicable	18	17
Charge	3	16
Manner or form of release	19	15
Refusal – statement of reasons	11	15
Refusal – personal information about body corporate	4	3
Neither confirm nor deny existence of information	3	1
Condition	-	1
Refusal – internal rules affecting decisions	4	-
Total	1,728	2,083

7. OIA complaints received from	2023/24	2024/25
General public – individuals	1,276	1,490
Media	181	249
Companies, associations, and incorporated societies	81	105
Prisoners and prisoner advocates	37	73
Special interest groups	16	48
Political party research units	81	43
Members of Parliament	21	24
Trade unions	5	17
Researchers	6	16
Departments, government organisations, and local authorities	10	9
Children, young people and trusted adults on their behalf	13	5
Collective (whānau/hapū/iwi)	1	4
Total	1,728	2,083

8. OIA complaints received against	2023/24	2024/25
Government departments	634	824
Other organisations state sector (all)	880	967
<i>Health New Zealand</i>	176	173
<i>School Boards</i>	106	84
<i>Universities</i>	49	70
<i>Others</i>	549	640
Ministers	196	279
Other	2	1
Not subject to jurisdiction	16	12
Total	1,728	2,083

9. OIA complaints received against – greater than or equal to 15 complaints	2023/24	2024/25
Government departments		
Department of Corrections	70	113
Ministry of Health	79	89
Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment	66	80
Ministry for Regulation	-	71

9. OIA complaints received against – greater than or equal to 15 complaints	2023/24	2024/25
Ministry of Education	54	62
Ministry of Social Development	51	57
Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children	43	43
Ministry for Primary Industries	25	42
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade	26	39
Ministry of Justice	43	34
Inland Revenue Department	11	31
Ministry for the Environment	10	22
Department of Internal Affairs	38	21
Department of Conservation	24	19
The Treasury	9	16
Ministers		
Minister of Health	10	31
Prime Minister	23	24
Minister of Police	10	19
Associate Minister of Health	6	18
Minister for Resources	3	15
Other organisations state sector		
New Zealand Police	226	335
Health New Zealand	176	173
Accident Compensation Corporation	38	52
New Zealand Defence Force	14	44
University of Auckland	9	29
WorkSafe New Zealand	14	22
Kāinga Ora	40	20
New Zealand Transport Agency	28	20
University of Waikato	10	15

10. How OIA complaints were dealt with	2023/24	2024/25
Outside jurisdiction		
Agency not listed in schedule	12	15
Scheduled agency otherwise outside jurisdiction	43	12
Subtotal	55	27

10. How OIA complaints were dealt with	2023/24	2024/25
Referred		
Referred to Privacy Commissioner	87	162
Subtotal	87	162
No investigation undertaken		
Withdrawn by complainant or no response from complainant	399	599
Right of review or appeal to court or tribunal	-	-
Adequate alternative remedy – complain to agency first	1	6
Adequate alternative remedy – complaint referred to agency by Ombudsman	1	2
Adequate alternative remedy – recourse to other agency	1	3
Out of time	1	1
Insufficient personal interest	-	1
Frivolous, vexatious, or not in good faith	-	-
Explanation, advice or assistance provided	57	95
Investigation unnecessary	61	79
Subtotal	521	786
Resolved without investigation		
Remedial action to benefit complainant	94	162
Remedial action to improve public sector administration	-	-
Remedial action to benefit complainant and improve public sector administration	3	1
Provision of advice/explanation by agency or Ombudsman that satisfies complainant	50	119
Subtotal	147	282
Investigation discontinued		
Withdrawn by complainant or no response from complainant	44	78
Further investigation unnecessary	34	50
Agency to review	4	1
Subtotal	82	129
Resolved during investigation		
Remedial action to benefit complainant	190	191
Remedial action to improve state sector administration	-	1
Remedial action to benefit complainant and improve public sector administration	2	2

10. How OIA complaints were dealt with	2023/24	2024/25
Provision of advice/explanation by agency or Ombudsman that satisfies complainant	21	49
Subtotal	213	243
Investigation finalised (final opinion formed)		
Administrative deficiency identified – recommendation/s	165	134
Administrative deficiency identified – no recommendation	183	174
No administrative deficiency identified	226	397
Issues cannot be determined	-	-
Subtotal	574	705
Administration – adjustment	1	-
Under consideration at 30 June	1,272	1,023
Total	2,952	3,357

11. Nature of deficiency identified where final opinion formed on OIA complaints	2023/24	2024/25
Administrative deficiency in an individual case		
Delay deemed refusal	197	139
Refusal not justified – in part	51	59
Refusal not justified – in whole	35	38
Unreasonable delay	11	15
Unreasonable extension	14	14
Unreasonable, unjust, oppressive, or discriminatory act, omission, or decision	6	12
Undue delay in releasing information	9	11
Otherwise wrong or unreasonable	21	10
Procedural deficiency	8	3
Wrong action or decision	-	3
Unreasonable charge	2	2
Inadequate advice, explanation or reasons	2	1
Inadequate statement of reasons	1	-
Administrative deficiency in the agency or system of government		
Resource deficiency in agency	-	5
Flawed agency processes or systems	2	1
Inadequate knowledge/training of agency staff	1	-

12. Nature of remedy obtained for OIA complaints	2023/24	2024/25
Individual benefit		
Decision changed	253	317
Reasons/explanation given	117	149
Apology	134	130
Omission rectified	106	115
Decision to be reconsidered	70	88
Financial remedy	1	2
Public administration benefit		
Change in practice/procedure	8	22
Law, policy, practice, or procedure to be reviewed	44	14
Provision of guidance or training to staff	29	14
Change in law/policy	-	1
Provision of additional resources	6	-

Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act (LGOIMA)

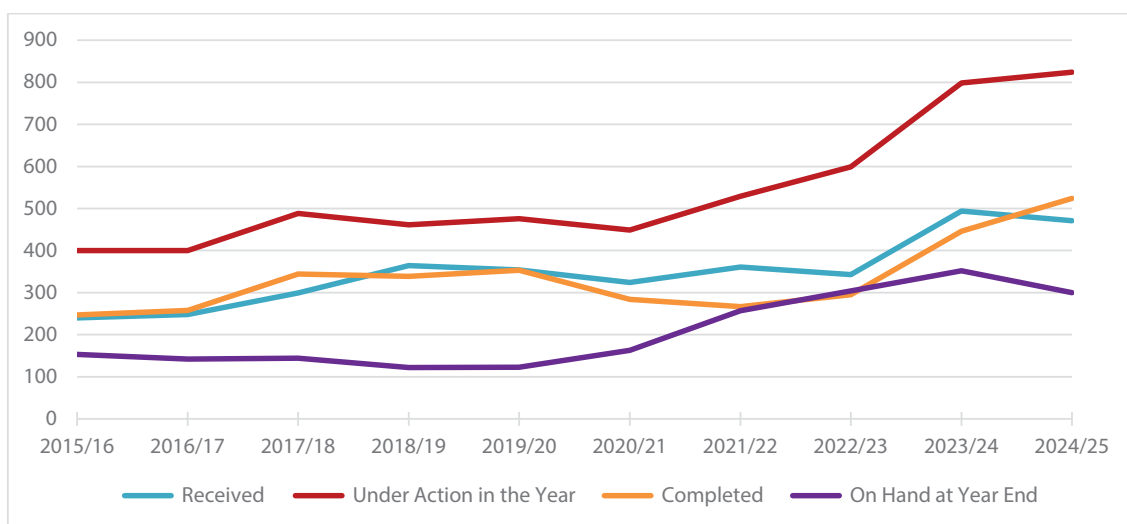


Figure 10: LGOIMA complaints received and actioned over the past 10 years.

[Link to text alternative version of Figure 10..](#)

13. Nature of LGOIMA complaints made	2023/24	2024/25
Refusal – general information request	227	241
Delay in making decision	128	86
Incomplete or inadequate response	84	85
Extension	5	15
Charge	15	11
Delay in releasing information	10	9
Decision not made as soon as reasonably practicable	9	6
Refusal – personal information about individual	7	4
Manner or form of release	3	4
Other	1	4
Refusal – personal information about body corporate	-	3
Refusal – statement of reasons	4	2
Condition	-	1
Neither confirm nor deny	1	-
Total	494	471

14. LGOIMA complaints received from	2023/24	2024/25
General public – individuals	393	401
Media	42	29
Companies, associations and incorporated societies	57	32
Special interest groups	-	5
Departments, government organisations and local authorities	-	3
Members of Parliament	-	1
Children, young people and trusted adults on their behalf	1	-
Collective (whānau/hapū/iwi)	1	-
Total	494	471

15. LGOIMA complaints received against (and greater than or equal to 15 complaints)	2023/24	2024/25
District councils	213	182
<i>Tasman District Council</i>	48 ¹⁴⁸	25
<i>Far North District Council</i>	11	18
<i>Tāupo District Council</i>	4	16
City councils	196	180
<i>Auckland Council</i>	57	43
<i>Wellington City Council</i>	45	34
<i>Tauranga City Council</i>	12	26 ¹⁴⁹
<i>Dunedin City Council</i>	4	17
<i>Christchurch City Council</i>	28	16
Regional councils	32	60
<i>Canterbury Regional Council</i>	2	19
<i>Wellington Regional Council</i>	10	18 ¹⁵⁰
Council Controlled Organisations	49	41
<i>Auckland Transport</i>	29	30
Other	4	8
Total	494	471

16. How LGOIMA complaints were dealt with	2023/24	2024/25
Outside jurisdiction		
Agency not listed in schedule	-	-
Scheduled agency otherwise outside jurisdiction	13	-
Subtotal	13	-
Referred		
Referred to Privacy Commissioner	9	10
Subtotal	9	10
No investigation undertaken		
Withdrawn by complainant or no response from complainant	72	139
Right of review or appeal to court or tribunal	-	1
Adequate alternative remedy – complain to agency first	1	6

148 28 of the 48 total LGOIMA complaints received against Tasman District Council were made by one individual.

149 13 of the 26 total LGOIMA complaints received against Tauranga City Council were made by one individual.

150 15 of the 18 total LGOIMA complaints received against Wellington Regional Council were made by one individual.

16. How LGOIMA complaints were dealt with	2023/24	2024/25
Adequate alternative remedy – recourse to other agency	-	-
Explanation, advice or assistance provided	16	27
Investigation unnecessary	26	26
Subtotal	115	199
Resolved without investigation		
Remedial action to benefit complainant	32	46
Remedial action to benefit complainant and improve public sector administration	1	1
Provision of advice/explanation by agency or Ombudsman that satisfies complainant	8	24
Subtotal	41	71
Investigation discontinued		
Withdrawn by complainant or no response from complainant	18	31
Agency to review	1	-
Further investigation unnecessary	7	12
Subtotal	26	43
Resolved during investigation		
Remedial action to benefit complainant	38	45
Remedial action to benefit complainant and improve public sector administration	1	-
Provision of advice/explanation by agency or Ombudsman that satisfies complainant	4	4
Subtotal	43	49
Investigation finalised (final opinion formed)		
Administrative deficiency identified – recommendation/s	62	28
Administrative deficiency identified – no recommendation	70	33
No administrative deficiency identified	67	91
Subtotal	199	152
Under consideration at 30 June	352	300
Total	798	824

17. Nature of deficiency identified where final opinion formed on LGOIMA complaints	2023/24	2024/25
Administrative deficiency in an individual case		
Refusal not justified – in part	19	25
Delay deemed refusal	82	21
Refusal not justified – in whole	13	7
Inadequate advice, explanation or reasons	1	3
Inadequate statement of reasons	-	2
Undue delay in releasing information	4	1
Otherwise wrong or unreasonable	4	1
Procedural deficiency	2	1
Unprofessional behaviour or misconduct by an official	-	1
Unreasonable, unjust, oppressive, or discriminatory act, omission or decision	-	1
Unreasonable charge	-	1
Unreasonable extension	5	-
Unreasonable delay	2	-
Wrong action or decision	1	-
Administrative deficiency in the agency or system of government		
Flawed agency processes or systems	1	-

18. Nature of remedy obtained for LGOIMA complaints	2023/24	2024/25
Individual benefit		
Decision changed	67	82
Omission rectified	38	27
Decision to be reconsidered	15	22
Apology	49	21
Reasons or explanation given	32	20
Public administration benefit		
Change in practice/procedure	8	4
Law, policy, practice, or procedure to be reviewed	21	2
Provision of guidance or training to staff	12	1
Provision of additional resources	3	-

Ombudsmen Act (OA)

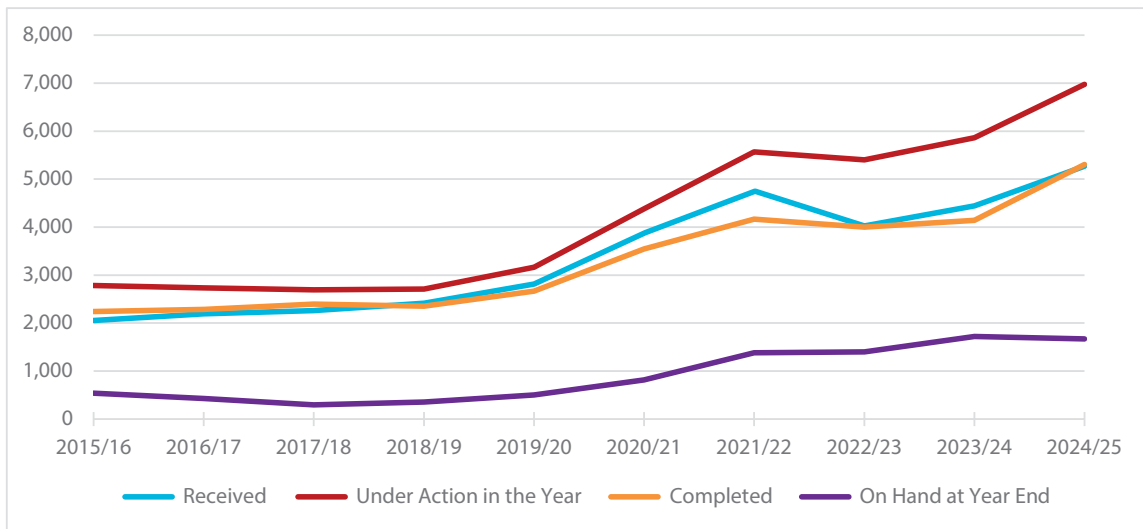


Figure 11: OA complaints received and actioned over the past 10 years.

[Link to text alternative version of Figure 11.](#)

19. OA complaints received from	2023/24	2024/25
General public – individuals	3,893	4,519
Prisoners and prisoner advocates	393	497
Companies, associations and incorporated societies	109	133
Children, young people and trusted adults on their behalf	27	60
Special interest groups	9	17
Departments, government organisations and local authorities	-	12
Collective (whānau/hapū/iwi)	2	9
Media	6	6
Trade Unions	-	5
Researcher	1	4
Own-motion	-	3
Political party research units	2	2
Members of Parliament	-	2
Review agency (Privacy Commissioner, Independent Police Conduct Authority, Health and Disability Commissioner)	1	-
Total	4,443	5,269

20. OA complaints received against	2023/24	2024/25
Government departments	2,056	2,334
Local authorities (all)	758	853
<i>District Councils</i>	320	339
<i>City Councils</i>	301	364
<i>Council controlled organisations</i>	83	95
<i>Regional Councils</i>	53	50
<i>Others</i>	1	5
Other organisations state sector (all)	1,155	1,457
<i>School Boards</i>	175	280
<i>Health New Zealand</i>	109	102
<i>Tertiary education institutions (Universities, Polytechnics, Wānanga)</i>	61	69
<i>Others</i>	810	1,006
Ministers	39	55
Offices of Parliament	-	1
Not subject to jurisdiction	435	569
Total	4,443	5,269

21. OA complaints received – greater than or equal to 15 complaints	2023/24	2024/25
Government departments		
Department of Corrections	523	581
Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment	323	438
Oranga Tamariki - Ministry for Children	404	407
Ministry of Social Development	314	346
Inland Revenue	170	168
Ministry of Education	42	57
Ministry of Justice ¹⁵¹	61	54
Ministry of Health	34	50
Department of Internal Affairs	42	44
Department of Conservation	17	22
Ministry for Primary Industries	10	20

¹⁵¹ Not including courts and tribunals.

21. OA complaints received – greater than or equal to 15 complaints	2023/24	2024/25
Local authorities		
Auckland Council	121	157
Wellington City Council	39	57
Auckland Transport	56	54
Christchurch City Council	36	30
Watercare Services Limited	18	28
Dunedin City Council	17	19
Far North District Council	26	18
Porirua City Council	10	18
Tauranga City Council	15	17
Rotorua Lakes Council	17	16
South Wairarapa District Council	8	16
Hamilton City Council	26	15
Tasman District Council	16	15
Waikato District Council	12	15
Other organisations state sector		
Accident Compensation Corporation	201	265
New Zealand Police	119	132
Health New Zealand	109	102
Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities	79	91
Health and Disability Commissioner	73	79
New Zealand Post Limited	34	77
New Zealand Transport Agency	69	53
Privacy Commissioner	51	45
Natural Hazards Commission Toka Tū Ake	28	44
Te Pūkenga - New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology	30	25
WorkSafe New Zealand	15	22
New Zealand Defence Force	6	21
Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand	12	20
University of Auckland	3	15

22. How OA complaints were dealt with	2023/24	2024/25
Outside jurisdiction		
Agency not listed in schedule	507	686
Scheduled agency otherwise outside jurisdiction	119	84
Subtotal	626	770
Referred		
Referred to Privacy Commissioner	28	34
Referred to Health and Disability Commissioner	85	89
Referred to Independent Police Conduct Authority	98	105
Referred to Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security	-	1
Subtotal	211	229
No investigation undertaken		
Withdrawn by complainant or no response from complainant	338	499
Right of appeal to Court or Tribunal	240	340
Adequate alternative remedy – complain to agency first	1,623	1,838
Adequate alternative remedy – complaint referred to agency by Ombudsman	48	40
Adequate alternative remedy – recourse to other agency	55	71
Out of time	13	21
Trivial	-	-
Frivolous, vexatious, or not in good faith	4	-
Insufficient personal interest	13	17
Explanation, advice or assistance provided	293	356
Investigation unnecessary	59	157
Subtotal	2,696	3,339
Resolved without investigation		
Remedial action to benefit complainant	64	109
Remedial action to improve state sector administration	1	3
Remedial action to benefit complainant and improve state sector administration	5	7
Provision of advice/explanation by agency or Ombudsman that satisfies complainant	14	38
Subtotal	84	157

22. How OA complaints were dealt with	2023/24	2024/25
Investigation discontinued		
Withdrawn by complainant or no response from complainant	16	46
Further investigation unnecessary	23	38
Agency to review	1	1
Insufficient personal interest	-	2
Subtotal	40	87
Resolved during investigation		
Remedial action to benefit complainant	35	74
Remedial action to improve state sector administration	-	-
Remedial action to benefit complainant and improve state sector administration	5	8
Provision of advice/explanation by agency or Ombudsman that satisfies complainant	5	5
Subtotal	45	87
Investigation finalised (final opinion formed)		
Administrative deficiency identified – recommendation/s	76	98
Administrative deficiency identified – no recommendation	22	48
No administrative deficiency identified	340	486
Issues cannot be determined	-	4
Subtotal	438	636
Administration – adjustment	3	-
Under consideration at 30 June	1,721	1,670
Total	5,864	6,975

23. Nature of deficiency identified where final opinion formed on OA complaints	2023/24	2024/25
Administrative deficiency in an individual case		
Unreasonable, unjust, oppressive or discriminatory act, omission or decision	37	64
Procedural deficiency	24	27
Wrong action or decision	-	12
Inadequate advice, explanation or reasons	14	11

23. Nature of deficiency identified where final opinion formed on OA complaints	2023/24	2024/25
Otherwise wrong or unreasonable	3	5
Unreasonable delay	6	5
Factual error or mistake	7	2
Legal error	6	2
Unprofessional behaviour or misconduct by an official	2	1
Administrative deficiency in the agency or system of government		
Flawed agency processes or systems	10	19
Inadequate knowledge or training of agency staff	1	7
Legislation - unreasonable or harsh impact or unintended consequence	10	-

24. Nature of remedy obtained for OA complaints	2023/24	2024/25
Individual benefit		
Apology	78	126
Reasons/explanation given	48	78
Omission rectified	31	67
Decision changed	46	63
Financial remedy	39	56
Decision to be reconsidered	19	39
Public administration benefit		
Provision of guidance or training to staff	34	40
Law/policy/practice/procedure to be reviewed	26	39
Change in practice/procedure	13	33
Change in law/policy	6	9

Other contacts

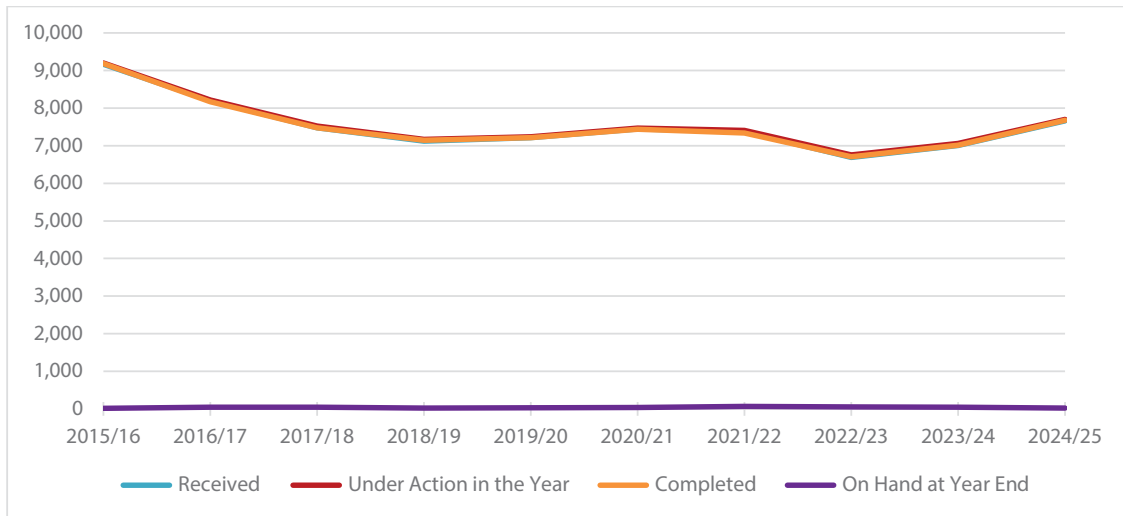


Figure 12: Other contacts received and actioned over the past 10 years.

[Link to text alternative version of Figure 12.](#)

25. Other contacts received about	2023/24	2024/25
Ombudsmen Act matters	5,015	4,932
Other	552	1,377
Copy correspondence, material sent for information only	655	587
Official Information Act matters	279	323
Agency requests for advice	291	232
Requests for information held by the Ombudsman	97	115
Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act matters	49	41
Consultation by review agency (Privacy Commissioner, Independent Police Conduct Authority, Health and Disability Commissioner)	36	32
Formal consultations	19	19
OPCAT matters	5	3
Total	7,010	7,661

26. Other contacts received from	2023/24	2024/25
General public – individuals	5,584	6,345
Prisoners and prisoner advocates	998	902
Departments, government organisations, and local authorities	326	251
Companies, associations, and incorporated societies	22	45
Review agencies (Privacy Commissioner, Independent Police Conduct Authority, Health and Disability Commissioner)	28	30
Children, young people and trusted adults on their behalf	11	26
Media	12	15
Special interest groups	10	13
Researchers	4	10
Members of Parliament	5	7
Political party research units	2	7
Ministers	5	6
Select Committee	-	2
Collective (whānau/hapū/iwi)	-	1
Trade unions	-	1
Other	3	-
Total	7,010	7,661

27. Other contacts concerned	2023/24	2024/25
Department of Corrections	1,246 ¹⁵²	1,404
Other government agencies	875 ¹⁵³	1,118
Other organisations (state sector)	466	831
Local authorities	227	339
Agencies not subject to jurisdiction	58	299
Ministers	10	29
Officers of Parliament	3	9
Aged care	-	1
Not specified	4,153 ¹⁵⁴	3,693

152 This figure has been updated to reflect an exercise to ensure accurate and proper categorisation of other contacts. The exercise saw an increased number of contacts about Department of Corrections and Other government agencies and a corresponding decrease in 'not specified' other contacts.

153 See above n 149.

154 See above n 149.

28. How other contacts were dealt with	2023/24	2024/25
Explanation, advice or assistance provided	3,196	3,307
Complain to agency first	1,208	1,622
No response required (including copy correspondence, FYI)	1,123	1,279
Individual advised to complain in writing/send relevant papers	900	897
Complain to other agency – other	120	202
Resolved – provision of advice/explanation which satisfies individual	175	100
Complain to other agency – Health and Disability Commissioner	80	77
Complain to other agency – Independent Police Conduct Authority	55	68
Complain to other agency – Privacy Commissioner	40	52
Withdrawn	53	36
Matter to be transferred to Ombudsman by other review agency	28	26
Matter referred to agency by Ombudsman	31	9
Resolved – remedial action to benefit individual	6	4
Resolved – remedial action to benefit individual and improve state sector administration	1	1
<i>Under consideration at 30 June</i>	43	18
Total	7,059	7,698

29. Nature of remedy obtained for other contacts	2023/24	2024/25
Reasons or explanation given	-	1
Provision of additional resources	1	-
Decision to be reconsidered	1	-

Geographical distribution of complaints and other contacts received in year to 30 June 2025¹⁵⁵

30. Geographical location	Other contacts	OA	OIA	LGOIMA	Other work	2024/25	2023/24
Auckland	865	947	371	62	27	2,272	1,713
Bay of Plenty	92	122	29	35	-	278	214
Northland	123	155	58	16	-	352	248
Waikato	296	321	88	20	3	728	491
Taranaki	29	42	18	1	-	90	47
Hawke's Bay	96	81	22	3	1	203	208
Manawatū/Whanganui	188	163	37	14	6	408	269
Gisborne	20	26	5	2	1	54	22
Wellington	352	423	361	61	29	1,225	880
Total North Island	2,059	2,277	989	214	67	5,606	4,092
Marlborough	30	22	2	6	-	60	64
Nelson	25	45	4	4	-	78	56
Tasman	18	21	5	12	-	56	56
Otago	101	132	58	34	1	326	225
Southland	54	46	4	3	3	110	60
Canterbury	339	362	124	34	11	870	615
West Coast	28	29	12	6	-	75	37
Chatham Islands	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Total South Island	595	657	209	99	15	1,575	1,115
Location not known	4,942	2,153	865	161	205	8,326	8,675
Overseas	82	210	24	-	-	316	80
Total	7,661	5,269	2,083	471	287	15,771	13,881

¹⁵⁵ This table includes complaints and other contacts. Complaints and other contacts may be made jointly with other persons. As a consequence, the number of complaints and other contacts recorded on the basis of region exceeds the number of issues that were the subject of a complaint or other contact.

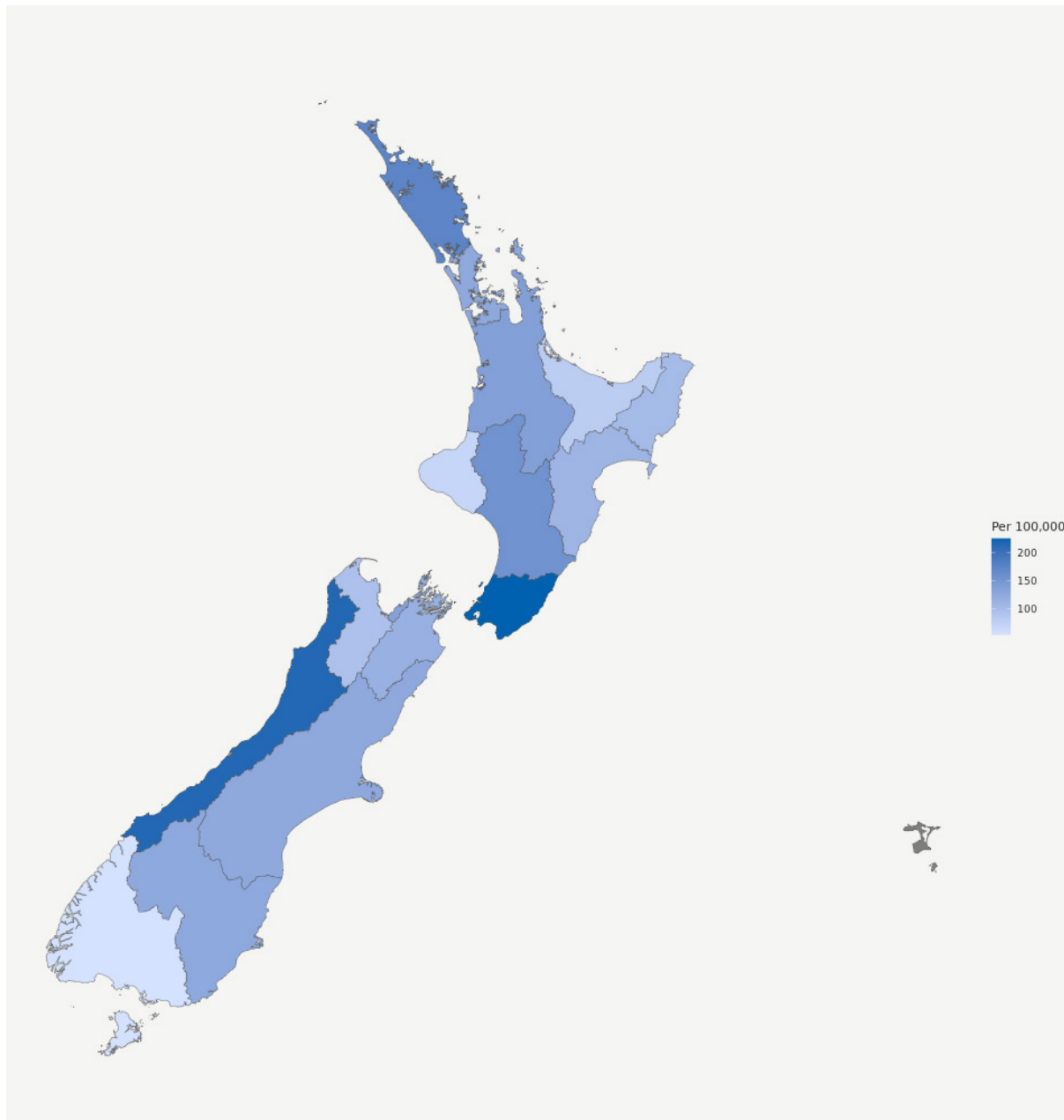


Figure 13: Map of New Zealand indicating geographical distribution of complaints and other contacts received in the year to 30 June 2025.

International engagement

International organisations and groups we engaged with in 2024/25 are listed below.

Organisation	Country
Australian Information Access Commissioners (AIAC)	Australia
Collective body for Australian National Preventive Mechanisms	Australia
Commonwealth Ombudsman	Australia
Law Society of Western Australia	Australia
New South Wales Ombudsman	Australia
Public Service Commission New South Wales	Australia
Tasmanian National Preventative Mechanism	Australia
Canada – Ontario Ombudsman	Canada
Royal Cambodian Government	Cambodia
Cook Islands Ombudsman	Cook Islands
Estonia Governance Academy	Estonia
European Union Ambassador to New Zealand	European Union
European Union Embassy to the Pacific	European Union
Office of the Attorney-General	Fiji
Public Reform Service	Fiji
Berlin Information Commissioner	Germany
Ombudsman Republik Indonesia	Indonesia
Central Information Commission	Indonesia
Ministry of State Secretariat	Indonesia
International Conference of Information Commissioners (ICIC)	International
International Ombudsman Institute (IOI)	International
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)	International
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)	International
United Nations Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture (SPT)	International
Office of the State Comptroller and Ombudsman of Israel	Israel
Kiribati Leadership Commission	Kiribati
Office of the Children’s Commissioner; Malaysian Parliamentary Special Select Committee for Women, Children and Community Development	Malaysia

Organisation	Country
Malaysia Auditor-General	Malaysia
Malta University	Malta
Papua New Guinea Ombudsman Commission	Papua New Guinea
Philippines Ombudsman	Philippines
Australasia and Pacific Ombudsman Region (APOR)	Regional
Australia New Zealand Ombudsman Association (ANZOA)	Regional
Southeast Asian Ombudsman Forum with Plus Countries (SEAOFF+)	Regional
Samoa Ombudsman	Samoa
Solomon Islands Ombudsman	Solomon Islands
Disabled Peoples <i>International (DPI)</i> Korea	South Korea
Control Yuan	Taiwan
Thailand Ombudsman	Thailand
Timor-Leste Provedor for Human Rights and Justice	Timor-Leste
Tonga Ombudsman	Tonga
Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman and University of Glasgow	United Kingdom
United Kingdom Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman	United Kingdom
Ombudsman and Executive Director of the Joint Office of Citizen Complaints for Dayton and Montgomery County, Ohio	United States of America
Vanuatu Ombudsman	Vanuatu
Ministry of Planning and Investment	Vietnam

[Return to international section in text.](#)

Directory

Legal authorities for establishing the Ombudsman

The Chief Ombudsman is appointed pursuant to sections 8 and 13 of the Ombudsmen Act 1975, and we report annually to Parliament pursuant to this Act and the Public Finance Act 1989. The Chief Ombudsman is an Officer of Parliament pursuant to section 3 of the Ombudsmen Act 1975, and the Public Finance Act 1989.

Contacting the Ombudsman

Free phone: 0800 802 602

www.ombudsman.parliament.nz

Email: info@ombudsman.parliament.nz

Post: PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143

Wellington

Level 7, 70 The Terrace

Auckland

Level 6, 55-65 Shortland Street

Appendix 1: Text alternative versions of diagrams and graphs

Ombudsman's Outcomes Framework diagram

GENERAL NOTES

This framework diagram demonstrates the linkages between the services we deliver through the Office's outputs, and the outcomes and impacts we are seeking to achieve.

The diagram features a triangle, divided horizontally into four sections and is set on two key foundations.

The first section 'Goal' forms the triangle's peak and notes the Office's key goal—it is set against a photograph of the tips of harakeke (flax); the next section (dark/black—also set against the photograph of harakeke) sets out the 'Outcomes'; below this in a blue section are the 'Impacts'; and the bottom section (light grey) sets out the Outputs. Underpinning the diagram which could be seen as the foundation of the triangle, are 'Well-run Office—timely delivery of quality services and Tiriti o Waitangi acknowledged in our work'.

Text in each section

Note: text is set out from left to right in even rows to fit the section of the triangle.

Goal—People are treated fairly.

Outcomes—High public trust in government; People's rights are protected; Robust independent oversight; New Zealand contributes to regional stability and integrity institutions.

Impacts—People participate in government decision-making; Government is responsive, efficient, effective, and accountable; Government actions are open, fair, and reasonable; People in positions of power act with integrity; People are treated humanely, with dignity by those in authority; New Zealand is a leader in anti-corruption and integrity.

Outputs—Inform the public to take constructive action to protect their rights; Improve public sector capability; Consultation to help the public sector make decisions; Enable serious wrongdoing to be disclosed and whistleblowers protected; Remove barriers to people with disabilities participating equally in society; Improve the conditions and treatment of people in detention; Ensure official information is increasingly available and not unlawfully refused; Identify flawed public sector decision-making; Learn from, and assist to develop, international best practice.

[Return to Outcomes Framework section in document.](#)

The following tables replicate the data featured in Figures 2 to 8 (excluding figure 7).

Figure 2: Protected disclosures and enquiries received over the past 10 years

Year	Received	Rate of change from previous year	Completed	Rate of change from previous year
2015/16	41	-28%	42	-29%
2016/17	45	10%	44	5%
2017/18	77	71%	79	80%
2018/19	88	14%	90	14%
2019/20	78	-11%	74	-18%
2020/21	116	49%	116	57%
2021/22	71	-39%	70	-40%
2022/23	128	80%	85	21%
2023/24	206	61%	220	159%
2024/25	287	39%	278	26%

[Return to Figure 2 in the text](#)

Figure 3: Awareness of the Protected Disclosures Act Public Survey

Year	Has heard of the PDA	Has witnessed serious wrongdoing at work	Would feel safe if made a disclosure
2018/19	9%	21%	40%
2019/20	-	-	-
2020/21	16%	26%	40%
2021/22	14%	24%	42%
2022/23	20%	23%	39%
2023/24	25%	25%	44%
2024/25	36%	31%	48%

[Return to Figure 3 in the text](#)

Figure 4: Complaints received and completed over the past 10 years

Year	Complaints received	Rate of change from previous year	Complaints completed	Rate of change from previous year
2015/16	3,394	-7%	3,571	4%
2016/17	3,613	6%	3,918	10%
2017/18	3,940	9%	4,340	11%
2018/19	4,678	19%	4,553	5%
2019/20	4,494	-4%	4,389	-4%
2020/21	5,580	24%	5,054	15%
2021/22	7,321	31%	6,243	24%
2022/23	6,086	-17%	5,807	-7%
2023/24	6,665	10%	6,629	14%
2024/25	7,823	17%	8,163	23%

[Return to Figure 4 in the text.](#)

Figure 5: Complaints and enquiries received and completed against Oranga Tamariki since 2016/17¹⁵⁶

Year	Complaints and enquiries received	Rate of change from previous year	Complaints and enquiries completed	Rate of change from previous year
2016/17	100	n/a	77	n/a
2017/18	314	214%	328	326%
2018/19	292	-7%	286	-13%
2019/20	360	23%	325	14%
2020/21	544	51%	489	50%
2021/22	477	-12%	496	1%
2022/23	725	52%	618	25%
2023/24	772	6%	637	3%
2024/25	793	3%	823	29%

[Return to Figure 5 in the text.](#)

¹⁵⁶ Time period is not ten-year period as for other tables because Oranga Tamariki was only operational from 1 April 2017, therefore, we do not have data for 2015/16.

Figure 6: Oranga Tamariki complaints received – main issues raised

Issue	Number of complaints
Care and Protection	117
Issues with social working or other OT staff	46
Feedback and complaints	43
Communication	27
Practice Standards	26
Caregiver	25
Access Arrangements	23
Care Standards	22
Decision-making	21

[Return to Figure 6 in the text.](#)

Figure 8: Overall throughput of work over the past 10 years

Year	Received	Under action in the year	Completed	On hand at year end
2015/16	12,595	14,382	12,786	1,591
2016/17	11,846	13,437	12,141	1,294
2017/18	11,468	12,770	11,846	916
2018/19	11,886	12,802	11,793	1,009
2019/20	11,862	12,912	11,740	1,132
2020/21	13,185	14,347	12,639	1,680
2021/22	14,791	16,508	13,705	2,760
2022/23	13,093	15,849	12,772	3,077
2023/24	13,913	17,009	13,518	3,491
2024/25	15,791	19,271	16,144	3,127

[Return to Figure 8 in the text](#)

Figure 9: OIA complaints received and actioned over the past 10 years

Year	Received	Under action in the year	Completed	On hand at year end
2015/16	1,100	1,933	1,084	849
2016/17	1,174	2,022	1,375	647
2017/18	1,378	2,025	1,598	427
2018/19	1,901	2,328	1,859	469
2019/20	1,329	1,798	1,371	428
2020/21	1,394	1,832	1,223	599
2021/22	2,230	2,842	1,811	1,018
2022/23	1,716	2,734	1,509	1,225
2023/24	1,728	2,952	1,608	1,272
2024/25	2,083	3,357	2,334	1,023

[Return to Figure 9 in the text.](#)

Figure 10: LGOIMA complaints received and actioned over the past 10 years

Year	Received	Under action in the year	Completed	On hand at year end
2015/16	240	400	247	153
2016/17	248	400	258	142
2017/18	299	488	344	144
2018/19	364	461	339	122
2019/20	354	476	353	123
2020/21	324	449	284	163
2021/22	361	529	267	257
2022/23	343	599	295	304
2023/24	494	798	446	352
2024/25	471	824	524	300

[Return to Figure 10 in the text.](#)

Figure 11: OA complaints received and actioned over the past 10 years

Year	Received	Under action in the year	Completed	On hand at year end
2015/16	2,054	2,781	2,241	542
2016/17	2,191	2,733	2,285	430
2017/18	2,263	2,693	2,398	296
2018/19	2,413	2,709	2,355	354
2019/20	2,811	3,165	2,665	500
2020/21	3,862	4,380	3,547	815
2021/22	4,730	5,570	4,165	1,379
2022/23	4,027	5,404	4,003	1,401
2023/24	4,443	5,864	4,143	1,721
2024/25	5,269	6,975	5,305	1,670

[Return to Figure 11 in the text](#)
Figure 12: Other contacts received and actioned over the past 10 years

Year	Received	Under action in the year	Completed	On hand at year end
2015/16	9,166	9,200	9,185	15
2016/17	8,198	8,213	8,168	45
2017/18	7,475	7,520	7,475	45
2018/19	7,120	7,165	7,143	22
2019/20	7,217	7,239	7,212	27
2020/21	7,443	7,470	7,435	38
2021/22	7,374	7,408	7,341	66
2022/23	6,839	6,905	6,706	49
2023/24	7,010	7,059	7,016	43
2024/25	7,661	7,698	7,680	18

[Return to Figure 12 in the text.](#)

