



Queensland
Government

Office of the
Director-General

Department of
Transport and Main Roads

Our ref: DG35063

Your ref: A300396

17 APR 2018

Mr Peter Russo MP
Chair
Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee
Parliament House
Corner George and Alice Streets
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Russo

Thank you for your letter of 21 March 2018 inviting submissions from stakeholders to inform the committee's consideration of the Review Report of the Office of the Queensland Ombudsman (report).

On 15 November 2017, I held a productive meeting with Ms Simone Webbe, Director, Ratio D. Pty Ltd for the purpose of sharing the Department of Transport and Main Roads' (TMR) experience with the Office of the Queensland Ombudsman (QO). The main discussion points were provided in a letter of 20 November 2017 to Ms Webbe, a copy of which is enclosed.

TMR has considered the report and supports all recommendations made. While I acknowledge that many of the recommendations are focused on internal enhancement of QO, I make special mention of those recommendations that are of particular interest to TMR.

Recommendations 54, 55 and 56 deal with the management of Public Interest Disclosures (PIDs) in Queensland. The recommendations for a new QO database, ongoing quality PID advice from QO, inclusion of a PID management template and enhanced training offerings would assist TMR to more effectively deal with managing PIDs at TMR.

Recommendations 48 and 49 about QO training is strongly supported. TMR staff do attend QO training offerings which are an excellent opportunity for learning in the integrity and good decision-making space.

Lastly, TMR supports Recommendations 25 and 33 dealing with future QO/agency liaison protocols and how agencies interact to build even stronger relationships. TMR's Ethical Standards Unit is drafting a protocol for future dealings between TMR and QO in line with these recommendations.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into the report.

Yours sincerely

Neil Scales
Director-General
Department of Transport and Main Roads

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Office of the
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Department of
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Our ref: DG34522

20 NOV 2017

Ms Simone Webbe
Director
Ratio D. Pty Ltd
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Dear Ms Webbe

Thank you for attending our meeting of 15 November 2017 in which we discussed the Strategic Review of the Office of the Queensland Ombudsman (the Ombudsman).

I note your review invites written submissions and, in this regard, I am pleased to provide you with advice about the Department of Transport and Main Road's (TMR) experience with the Ombudsman, and trust it assists you in your examination of the Ombudsman's operational efficiency and functionality.

Historically, TMR has enjoyed a cooperative and productive relationship with the Ombudsman and continues to partner with the Ombudsman to address any concerns raised about administrative decision making in TMR. TMR's Ethical Standards Unit (ESU) remains the liaison point for complaints referred to TMR from the Ombudsman and deals with approximately 120 matters each year.

TMR works closely with the Ombudsman in managing and reporting public interest disclosures (PIDs), whereby the Ombudsman provides guidance in compliance with the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010*, as well as collecting and publishing statistics about PIDs, identifying trends in relation to PIDs and evaluating public sector agencies' management of PIDs. Recently, TMR has had the benefit of accessing the new Ombudsman RaPID database which has streamlined PID reporting across agencies.

TMR officers frequently utilise the Ombudsman's professional development training, including complaints management training, good decisions training, managing unreasonable conduct and public sector ethics. These training options ensure staff remain well equipped to deal with those matters referred to TMR from the Ombudsman, and to deal with policy and procedure amendments and general organisational improvement. Further, the oversight function of the Ombudsman ensures that, as required, TMR may access the resources of the Ombudsman to ensure its service delivery continues to improve in accordance with emerging trends and community expectations.

As a supporter of ongoing organisational learning, I would like to provide the following suggestions that may improve the complaints and PID management in government:

- Departments may benefit from advice on how effectively they may have dealt with complaints as directed by the Ombudsman. It would be useful to see how often a complainant is satisfied or dissatisfied with how complaints have been addressed.
- Periodic departmental Ombudsman liaison officer meetings may be of benefit to share ideas, identify current issues, and to discuss how TMR is tracking in dealing with its management of matters referred by the Ombudsman and PIDs.
- The implementation of a liaison protocol between departments and the Ombudsman may be beneficial, outlining the expectations between agencies to ensure a high level of service provision in complaints review and PID management, as well as ensuring the appropriate resources are dedicated to dealing with Ombudsman related matters. On occasion, complaints may be referred to TMR by the Ombudsman that may appear to be trivial, frivolous, or not reasonably relate to the administration of TMR. For example Ombudsman ref: 2017/03049 was an instance where the Ombudsman referred an expression of dissatisfaction by a customer that a train was four minutes late. Matters such as this may have been better dealt with through an alternative process. TMR would be keen to work with the Ombudsman on such an approach.
- It would be beneficial to draw from other departments' improvements in dealing with Ombudsman related complaints, which may have enhanced its complaints management and service delivery systems.

Thank you for the opportunity to meet to discuss the review, and I trust that the submissions outlined above will assist the Ombudsman and TMR to continue to maintain a cohesive and proactive relationship.

Yours sincerely



Neil Scales
Director-General
Department of Transport and Main Roads