



OMBUDSMAN FOR BERMUDA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

20th June 2019

Contact: Robyn Eve
Tel: 296-6541 | E: rmeve@ombudsman.bm

Ombudsman for Bermuda's Annual Report 2018 To Be Tabled

The Ombudsman for Bermuda's Annual Report 2018 has been presented to the Speaker of the House of Assembly and is scheduled to be tabled on Friday morning. Shortly thereafter it will be available online and in print.

Ombudsman Victoria Pearman said, "I'm pleased to share some highlights about the work my team and I have been undertaking. In doing so, I hope members of the public, stakeholders and the media will read and consider the Report which accounts for the work of my Office. I heartily welcome questions and encourage your responses."

In 2018 the Ombudsman's Office handled 309 cases, including 166 new complaints, 98 new enquiries and 45 outstanding complaints that remained open as of 1st January 2018.

The Office shared some highlights of its work during 2018, including that the Ombudsman:

- opened a systemic investigation into delays in hearing applications by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, which has been affecting the timeliness of victims of crimes receiving compensation;
- progressed an investigation into the adequacy of the Government's communication about public bus cancellations and delays;
- progressed the systemic investigation into senior abuse reporting and provides the Office's first detailed update in this Report;
- continued to follow-up with the Bermuda Monetary Authority on consumer banking issues oversight and provides another update on those ongoing efforts; and
- continued to discuss with the Bermuda Hospitals Board its progress on implementing previous recommendations made. The implementation of a centralised BHB e-mail system to include community physicians was completed in 2018 – an initiative which will benefit users of King Edward VII Memorial Hospital's emergency department.

Ms. Pearman added, "Last month during the opening of the Caribbean Ombudsman Association's conference, which my Office hosted at Fairmont Southampton, I remarked about the critical role of the ombudsman institution. The Ombudsman offers a corrective to what some despair may be a new normal where principles of fairness and justice may seem under siege. It supports accountability to uphold that governments are working in the public interest and are communicating meaningfully with the public. It is not good governance for



OMBUDSMAN FOR BERMUDA

decision-makers to be unaccountable, in denial, defensive, unresponsive and dismissive. Acknowledging what went wrong is good governance.”

Ms. Pearman further commented, “When people feel fearful and that their needs are bypassed, unimportant or lost in bureaucracy, they come to the Ombudsman, who is available to listen and assist people. Not always are complaints upheld, but they are heard. When identifying deficiencies or unfair decisions by public authorities, we address this by making recommendations to put it right as well as with practical assistance and by suggesting improvements. There is a great responsibility in working to get things done right. The role of the Ombudsman is not meant to be easy. We must remember the exhortation, ‘And let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.’”

The Ombudsman is available to answer questions and discuss highlights from the Report.

END

Enclosed: Photo of Ombudsman for Bermuda, Victoria Pearman

Editor’s Note:

- The Office of the Ombudsman for Bermuda is an independent, non-government office that provides an impartial form of alternative dispute resolution which is less formal and more flexible and accessible than going through the Courts.
- The Office of the Ombudsman’s staff assists to resolve complaints about the administrative actions of public authorities, including government departments, boards and bodies established or funded by the Legislature.
- Visit us at ombudsman.bm or facebook.com/bermudaombudsman