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MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday, 10 August 2022

OMBUDSMAN BILL PASSES LOWER HOUSE

The NSW Government's bill to clarify and update laws governing the NSW Ombudsman, one of the state's independent integrity agencies, has passed the Lower House.

The NSW Ombudsman oversees the NSW public sector and investigates complaints regarding most NSW government agencies, local councils and community service providers.

Attorney General Mark Speakman, who introduced the Ombudsman Legislation Amendment Bill 2022, said the amendments will clarify and enhance the Ombudsman's powers, resolve inconsistencies, and update the legislation.

"If passed, the bill will make amendments requested by the NSW Ombudsman, Mr Paul Miller PSM to two pieces of legislation governing the functions of the Ombudsman's Office," Mr Speakman said.

"The bill proposes 24 amendments to the Ombudsman Act and three amendments to the Community Services Act."

In particular, the bill proposes an amendment to the Ombudsman Act to enable the Ombudsman to review the systems used by public authorities for handling complaints.

Other important changes proposed by the bill include:

- extending the Ombudsman's powers in relation to a public authority to a 'former' public authority
- ensuring that a detained person is able to make an oral complaint about the conduct of a public authority in a way that is not recorded or monitored
- enabling the Ombudsman to refer a complaint about the conduct of a public authority to the public authority for investigation.

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