

Ombudsman investigating State Trustees' treatment of vulnerable people

Tuesday 17 July 2018

Ombudsman Deborah Glass has begun investigating whether State Trustees is acting in the best interests of its vulnerable clients.

Ms Glass said the investigation would examine State Trustees' role as an administrator for people who are unable to manage their financial and legal affairs due to disability, illness or injury.

Ms Glass said the investigation was prompted by a sustained increase in complaints to her office about State Trustees, a state government-owned company. Complaints about State Trustees rose by 37 per cent in the year to 30 June 2017 and have remained at the same high level since. This year, an increasing number of complaints have warranted enquiries and file inspections.

"While we have been helping to resolve individual complaints about State Trustees, I have identified possible systemic issues that warrant a deeper examination," Ms Glass said.

"People have complained that State Trustees did not consult them about decisions or take their wishes into account," she said. "There have been complaints that State Trustees did not pay bills or other expenses in a timely way. Others have said communication with State Trustees is difficult.

"Many of the people who rely on State Trustees are vulnerable, and I want to ensure their rights are respected and protected."

According to its 2017 Annual Report, State Trustees administers the financial and legal affairs of about 11,000 people, managing their assets with a cumulative value in excess of \$1 billion.

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NOTE: INFORMATION ABOUT COMPLAINTS

The Victorian Ombudsman can help resolve complaints about State Trustees. However, depending on your circumstances, we may advise you to pursue the following options before we consider your complaint:

<p>State Trustees – General Consultant Write to: 1 McNab Ave, Footscray, Victoria 3011 Phone: 9667 6444 / outside metropolitan area: 1300 138 672 Fax: 9667 6410</p>
<p>State Trustees - Client Complaints Manager Write to: 1 McNab Ave, Footscray, Victoria 3011 Phone: 9667 6444 / outside metropolitan area: 1300 138 672 Fax: 9667 6410 Email: clientcomplaints@statetrustees.com.au [mailto:clientcomplaints@statetrustees.com.au]</p>
<p>If you want an administration order changed or cancelled, you need to apply to the Guardianship List of the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT). Information about how to apply is available at:</p> <p>VCAT Guardianship List Phone: 9628 9911 / toll free 1300 079 413 Information: www.vcat.vic.gov.au/get-started/guardianship-and-powers-of-attorney [http://www.vcat.vic.gov.au/get-started/guardianship-and-powers-of-attorney]</p>

The Victorian Ombudsman can be contacted on 9613 6222 or via our [online complaint form](https://www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au/Complaints/Make-a-Complaint/Complaint-Form). [https://www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au/Complaints/Make-a-Complaint/Complaint-Form]