



MAKING A COMPLAINT ABOUT POLICE

NEW POLICE COMPLAINTS SCHEME

24 August 2017

On Friday 1 September 2017, the Office of the Police Ombudsman will close its doors for the last time. The Police Ombudsman, formerly known as the Police Complaints Authority, has been responsible for the receipt of complaints and the independent oversight of investigations into police misconduct since 1985.

On Monday 4 September 2017, South Australia will have a new scheme for managing complaints and reports about police.

The new scheme, which is governed by the *Police Complaints and Discipline Act 2016*, ensures an independent and robust process for overseeing the way in which police manage and investigate allegations of police misconduct.

The Office for Public Integrity (OPI) will be responsible for independently overseeing and reviewing the way in which the police deal with complaints and reports. Unlike the previous scheme, the independent oversight body will have real-time access to police systems and will be able to intervene and give directions to police as to the assessment of complaints and reports and the manner in which they are investigated.

“I think the new scheme will reduce duplication and delay that was a significant feature of the old scheme,” said OPI CEO, Michael Riches. “The ability to independently oversee the investigation of matters in real time should give the community confidence that serious allegations of police misconduct will be dealt with appropriately.”

Fraser Stroud, the OPI Director of Police Integrity said, “Under the new scheme, complaints and reports about Police can be made to the OPI or to SAPOL. Ultimately all matters received by the OPI or SAPOL will be referred to the Internal Investigations Section (IIS) of SAPOL for assessment, unless the complaint or report raises a potential issue of corruption or some other serious allegation, in which case it will be brought to the attention of the Independent Commissioner Against Corruption (ICAC).”



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“The ICAC will be empowered to investigate any matter where the ICAC thinks he ought to conduct the investigation rather than SAPOL. The OPI will monitor the action taken by police on all complaints and reports and can intervene and give directions in respect of investigations. If the OPI disagrees with an assessment made by the IIS of a complaint or a report, the OPI can reassess the matter and IIS must then proceed according to that assessment.”

For the first time, an annual report will be prepared for Parliament by the ICAC addressing the number and general nature of sanctions imposed by the Police Commissioner in relation to breaches of discipline.

Mr Riches said, “I am confident that the new scheme will provide a more efficient and effective way of managing complaints and reports about police. It will also provide a more robust system of independent oversight.”