

## Media Release

29 November 2021

### Judicial Commission of Victoria Annual Report tabled

The Commission's 2020-2021 Annual Report, which was tabled in State Parliament on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2021, showed the Commission had received 213 new complaints and one referral, down from the 252 complaints received the previous year.

The number of cases still open dropped by more than a third, from 113 in 2019-20 to 72 in 2020-21 – largely due to improvements implemented in the Commission's complaint handling processes.

"In 2020-21, the Commission has focused on making early contact with individuals to explain the complaint handling process and the Commission's jurisdictional limits," the Commission's Director, Alexis Eddy, explained.

"Improving the understanding of the role of the Commission in the community allows complainants to redirect their complaints to the appropriate body earlier and reduces processing delays."

Under the *Judicial Commission of Victoria Act* 2016, the Commission can investigate complaints about the conduct or capacity of judicial officers and Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) members, but not complaints about the correctness of a decision. It is not a substitute for the appeals process.

The Commission's 2020-2021 Annual Report showed almost one in three complaints was about an alleged incorrect decision. A further 15% alleged a failure to give a fair hearing and 13% claimed denial of due process. Other complaints included bias and inappropriate comments.

Since the Commission was established in July 2017, it has played a valuable role as Victoria's first independent body investigating the conduct and capacity of judicial officers and VCAT members.

The Chair of the Commission, Chief Justice Anne Ferguson said: "Over the last year, the Commission has provided a key contribution to integrity in public institutions by fulfilling its obligations to complainants, Victoria's courts and tribunal and the wider community."

The Review into Sexual Harassment in Victorian Courts, commissioned by the Chief Justice and Attorney-General and led by Dr Helen Szoke has made several powerful recommendations.

The Commission is in the process of implementing the recommendations made to it to as part of tackling this important issue.

The annual report is available at: <https://www.judicialcommission.vic.gov.au/publications/annual-reports>

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