



## **Purpose – For Information**

This report provides information and a status update on the Technical Standards and Safety Authority (TSSA) Ombudsman's Office.

## **Background**

TSSA's Ombudsman Office is modelled on the International Ombudsman Association's (IOA's) Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice. Each element of the Ombudsman Office's purpose, structure and operation, shall follow the IOA's defining characteristics of independence, neutrality, informality, and confidentiality. TSSA's Ombudsman is a facilitator and specifically has no decision-making authority within the organization. It is a safe place to seek guidance on all types of issues including reporting misconduct and "whistle blowing". The confidentiality of the office provides a means of protection from retaliation as the Ombudsman will not reveal any information brought forward without explicit permission to do so unless required by law. Additionally, contacting the Ombudsman is not to be construed as a way to support litigation of any party.

TSSA has established a charter for the Ombudsman Office, which is posted on the company's web-site.

TSSA piloted the Ombudsman's Office from July 2013 to April 30, 2014 for employees. During the pilot, there was approximately five percent use from the employee population. Half of the issues were conflict situations and the remainder were suggestions for improvement. Following this success, TSSA expanded the Ombudsman Office externally to regulated parties on May 1, 2014.

## **Status**

For TSSA's fiscal year 2015 from May 1, 2014 to April 30, 2015, the Ombudsman's office had received 184 contacts. At year-end, less than five cases remained open with the remainder resolved.

The contacts have been from the public (approximately 40%), the regulated community (approximately 60%) and a few from government bodies. Typically, most of the contacts are resolved by explaining TSSA regulatory requirements and in some cases providing potential remedies that are available for resolution. To date, all regulated sectors have contacted the Ombudsman's office. The majority of the contacts are in regards to the Fuels Safety program.

The Ombudsman office has been active in providing awareness seminars at TSSA's Advisory Councils and to the industry. These presentations include how to contact the office and how it works.

The IOA certifies organizational ombudsman practitioners. The pre-requisite for certification is 2000 practicing hours, a university degree and passing IOA's practitioner's exam. TSSA's Ombudsman gained certification on April 20, 2015. Additionally, the Ombudsman has taken over 100 hours of IOA's continuing education credits.

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