Ombudsman

Fairness for all

Insights & experiences from investigating complaints about the actions of public authorities and accessing official information

Leo Donnelly, Deputy Ombudsman, New Zealand

Office of the Ombudsman

Tari o te Kaitiaki Mana Tangata

Ombudsman

"Establishing the truth –
it shouldn't be a game of
hide and seek"

TRANSPARENCY ENABLES

- Accountability
- Citizen participation and engagement
- Informed citizen choice
- Wrongs to be put right
- Public trust and confidence

4 Tiers of records relating to a decision-making process

4th tier – review of final decisions when they go wrong

3rd tier – final decisions

2nd tier – analysis, options, advice leading to final decision

1st tier – base records

HIDE THE RECORDS

"We can't respond to you because the Minister's political advisor has taken the file and says we can't have it back until after the election"

DESTROY THE RECORDS

"The Minister's office has directed us to destroy all advice and drafts inconsistent with the final decision – what do we do?"

DON'T CREATE RECORDS

"An immigration officer should not record any reasons or rationale for refusing to consider the request in either AMS notes or in the communication with the client"

DON'T CREATE RECORDS

"The rationale and reasons for the decision should not be recorded, either on the template, in the notes or in communication with the client"

In the end everything turns on the quality of the record.

Records reveal the truth.