

COMMONWEALTH OMBUDSMAN

What we do

We consider and investigate complaints from people who believe they have been treated unfairly or unreasonably by an Australian Government department or agency, including the Australian Taxation Office, Australia Post, Centrelink, Child Support Agency, and Department of Immigration and Citizenship. The Commonwealth Ombudsman is also the ACT Ombudsman.

Our aim is to resolve complaints impartially, informally and quickly. If we cannot assist with a particular complaint, we will explain why, and suggest other avenues for resolving the matter.

We cannot override the decisions of the agencies we deal with, nor issue directions to their staff. Instead, we resolve disputes through consultation and negotiation, and if necessary, by making formal recommendations to the most senior levels of government. Since the inception of the Commonwealth Ombudsman's office in 1977, we have assisted in resolving many thousands of individual complaints, and brought about significant improvements in the quality of government administration.

Our **annual reports** provide details of the numbers and types of complaints we deal with, and the ways in which they are resolved. Our **strategic plan** and **portfolio budget statements (The Commonwealth Ombudsman is part of the Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet portfolio. This is a link to their website.)** explain our goals and priorities, and how our agency's operations are organised and funded.

Vision

- Administrative action by Australian Government agencies is fair and accountable.

Mission

The office safeguards the community in its dealings with Australian Government agencies by:

- correcting administrative deficiencies through independent review of complaints about Australian Government administrative action
- fostering good public administration that is accountable, lawful, fair, transparent and responsive
- assisting people to resolve complaints about government administrative action
- developing policies and principles for accountability
- reviewing statutory compliance by agencies.

Values

- independence
- impartiality
- integrity
- accessibility
- professionalism
- team work.

What we do

- Investigate complaints about Australian Government agencies and make recommendations for resolving complaints
- Implement a Postal Industry Ombudsman function applying to public and private sector postal operators
- Foster good complaint handling in Australian Government agencies
- Highlight problems in public administration through complaint handling, own motion investigations and reporting
- Contribute to public discussion on administrative law and public administration
- Focus attention on the adverse impact government administration can have on individuals
- Promote open government
- Inspect the accuracy and comprehensiveness of records on selected law enforcement activities
- Assess the appropriateness of immigration detention arrangements in individual cases
- Conduct inquiries as requested by government
- Collaborate with State, Territory and Industry Ombudsmen
- Collaborate with Ombudsman offices in the Asia - Pacific region.

How we do it