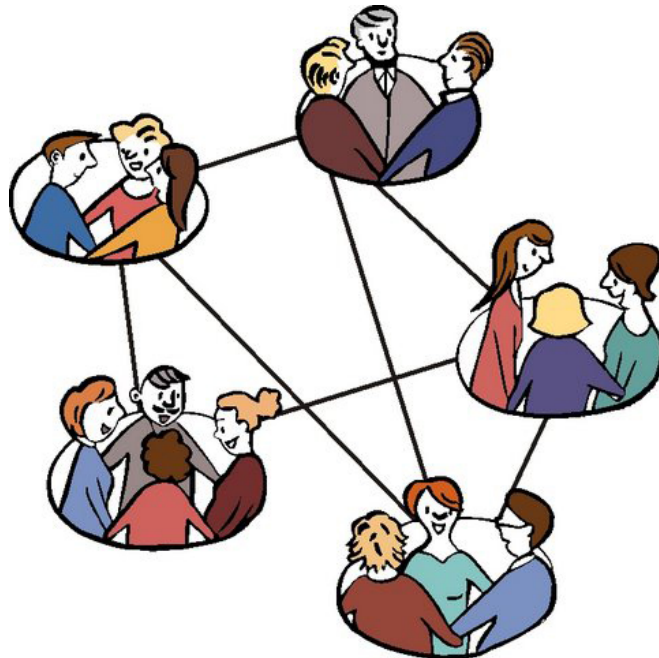




The Ombudsman: who we are

Easy Read



What is in this book?



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Before you start



This is a long document.



While it is written in Easy Read it can be hard for some people to read a document this long.



Some things you can do to make it easier are:

- read it a few pages at a time
- have someone to assist you to understand it.

What is the Office of the Ombudsman?



The Office of the Ombudsman (the Ombudsman) is an **Officer of Parliament**.



This means Parliament gave the Ombudsman the job to be the Ombudsman.



Parliament is a group of people who are elected as politicians.



These people make laws in New Zealand.



There can be more than 1 Ombudsman at a time.



Each Ombudsman has the same powers and can do the same job.



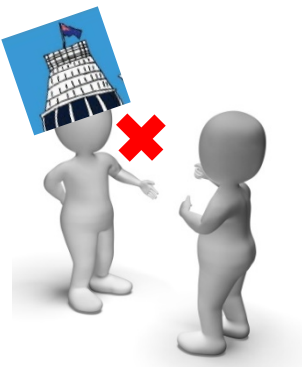
The Ombudsman can assist people when a **government agency** makes a mistake.



A government agency reports to the Government.



The Ombudsman is **independent** of the Government.



This means we do our own work and the Government does not tell us how to do it.

What does the Ombudsman do?



1. Investigate government agencies



The Ombudsman deals with people who think they have been treated unfairly by a **government agency**.



There are over 4 thousand government agencies in New Zealand.

Here are some examples of government agencies:

- State Services – ministries and government departments

The Department of Corrections is an example of a state service.



- Local government – places like your council and regional council.

Auckland Council is an example of a council.



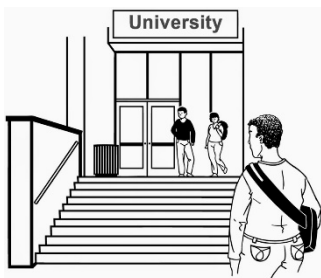
- District Health Boards (DHB) like the Auckland DHB.



- State-owned enterprises.

Businesses owned by the Government, like ACC are called **State-owned enterprises**.





- Places of study for adults, like:
 - universities
 - wānanga
 - polytechnics
 - institutes of technology.



- Boards of Trustees for schools.
- Crown entities.



The Human Rights Commission is an example of a **Crown entity**.



If you are having a problem with a government agency you can complain to the Ombudsman about it.



We will decide if we can **investigate** your complaint.



Investigate means to find out what has happened.



If we say **yes** we will try to find out if the agency has made a mistake.



If the agency has made a mistake we can ask the agency to fix it.



Sometimes we will decide the agency **has not** made a mistake.

This means they will not have to fix anything.



If the Ombudsman **cannot** look into your complaint we will tell you if someone else can assist you.



Sometimes the Ombudsman will look at something a government agency has done even if a complaint **has not** been made.



We will do this if we are worried about something the government agency **may** have done wrong.



2. Finding out about official information requests

What is official information?



Official information is information that a government agency has.



Official information is also information that a Government Minister has.



A Government Minister is like the Minister for Disability Issues and the Minister of Education.



You can ask for information from a government agency or a Government Minister if you need it.



You can complain to the Ombudsman if you are unhappy about what happened when you asked for official information.

The Ombudsman can help when:



- you did not get an answer about your official information request at all



- the agency wants to take more than 20 days to give you an answer about your request for official information



- you did get an answer but you think the agency has taken too long to give it to you



- the agency said you can have the information but has taken too long to give it to you



- the agency says you can have the information but you have to pay for it



- the agency **will not** give you the information



- the agency will only give you **some** of the information you have asked for.



- the agency won't tell you why it won't give you some or all of the information you asked for.

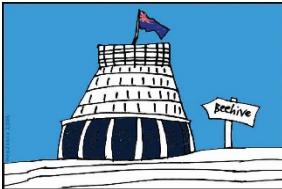


Find out more about asking for official information by reading our Easy Read leaflet:

Making or complaining about requests for official information.



3. Information about serious-wrongdoing by a government agency



Serious-wrongdoing is when a government agency has done something very wrong.



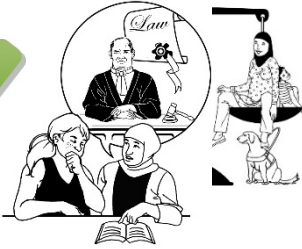
If you work at a government agency and you think someone has done something very bad you can talk to us.



This means you are called a '**whistle-blower**'.



Whistle-blowers are protected by the law.



Being protected by the law means: you must be treated fairly

This means you:

- are treated the same way as other people
- are treated with respect
- cannot be punished.



You can find out more information about whistle-blowing by reading the Easy Read leaflet called:

‘Whistle-blowing’: a guide to the Protected Disclosures Act.

4. Monitoring places of detention



The Ombudsman **monitors** places of detention to make sure they are looking after people in the right way.



Monitor means to look into something to see what is happening.



A place of detention is a place where:

- people live
- people cannot leave when they want to.



Some places of detention are:

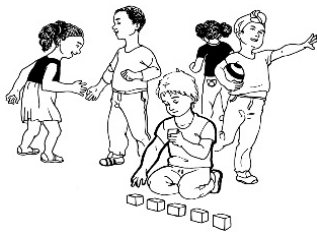


- prisons
- court cells
- **immigration** places of detention

Immigration is about when people come to live in New Zealand from another country.

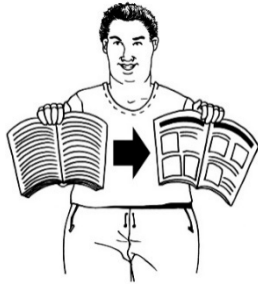


- some health and disability places like some mental health units



- childcare and protection **residences**

Residences are places where people live.



You can find out more information
monitoring places of detention by
reading the Easy Read leaflet called:
Monitoring places of detention.



5. The Disability Convention



The Ombudsman is part of the group called the **Independent Monitoring Mechanism (IMM)**.



The IMM looks at how well the Government is doing to make disabled people's lives better in New Zealand by following the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**.



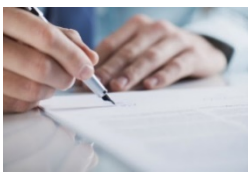
The **United Nations (UN)** is a group of countries that works together to make the world a better place to live in.



The **Disability Convention** is the short name for the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**.



This Convention was made to make the lives of disabled people better.



It was signed by the New Zealand Government.



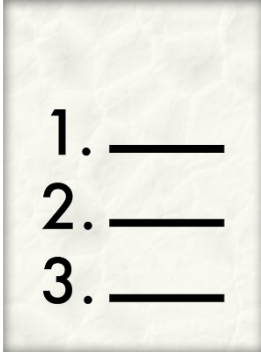
This means the Government has to:



- make the rights in the Disability Convention real for disabled people



- try to make sure disabled people can live good lives in New Zealand.



There are 3 organisations that make up the IMM group.

These are the:

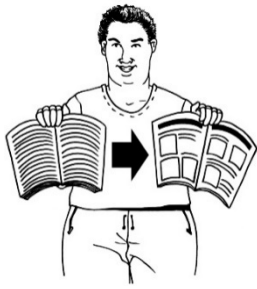


- Office of the Ombudsman



- Human Rights Commission

- Disabled People's Organisations' Coalition – a group made up of people from Disabled People's Organisations.

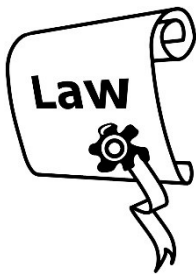


You can find out more information about the Disability Convention by reading the Easy Read leaflet called: **Fair treatment for people with disabilities.**

Other things the Ombudsman can do



The Ombudsman can also give government agencies information and ideas about:



- **legislation**

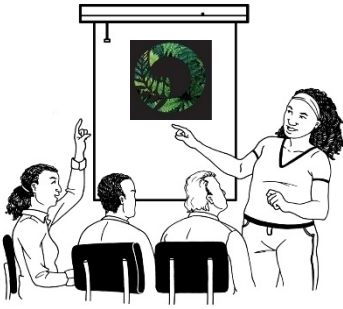
Legislation means **laws** made by the New Zealand Government.

Laws are like rules and everybody must follow these rules.



- **policies.**

A policy is a set of rules that tells people how something should done.



The Ombudsman also runs workshops to tell people about who we are and what we do.

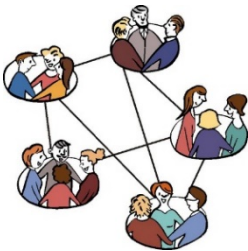
These workshops are for:



- government agencies



- people



- community groups
- organisations.

Contact us



Contact us to find out about what we do and if we can help you.



Free Phone: 0800 802 602



Fax: 04 471 22 54



Website:

www.ombudsman.parliament.nz



Send an email:

info@ombudsman.parliament.nz



Write a letter and post it to:

The Office of the Ombudsman

P.O. Box 10152

Wellington 6143



Our offices are open:

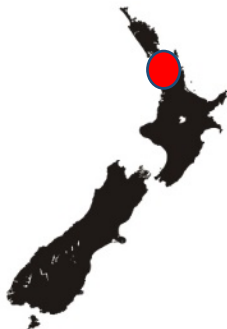
8:30am to 5pm Monday to Friday.



Call to make a time if you need to come and see us.



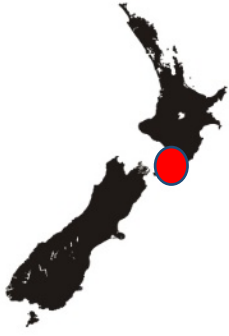
There is an Ombudsman office in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch:



Auckland

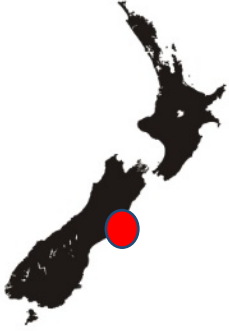
Level 10, 55–65 Shortland Street,

Auckland 1010



Wellington

Level 7, 70 The Terrace,
Wellington 6011



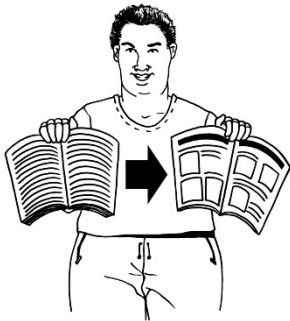
Christchurch

Level 2, 138 Victoria Street,
Christchurch 8013

More information about the Ombudsman



We have made other booklets that tell you about our work.



They are all in Easy Read.

The other booklets we have are about:



Making complaints about government agencies



Making or complaining about requests for official information



‘Whistle-blowing’: a guide to the Protected Disclosures Act



Making complaints about prisons and Community Corrections



Monitoring places of detention



Fair treatment for people with disabilities.



This information has been translated into Easy Read by
People First New Zealand Inc.– Ngā Tāngata Tuatahi

