



Ombudsman
Tuia kia ōrite • Fairness for all

Large Print version



The Ombudsman works to protect people's rights, their dignity, and mana. The Ombudsman is committed to Te Ao Māori and ensuring obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi are met.

What the Ombudsman can do for you

If you think you haven't been treated fairly by a government agency you can complain to the Ombudsman.

The Ombudsman has wide powers to resolve and investigate complaints. The Ombudsman considers whether an agency's decisions or actions were unreasonable, unfair, or wrong. If they were, the Ombudsman will say so and ask them to put it right. Alternatively, the Ombudsman may agree with the steps the agency has taken.

The Ombudsman is impartial and independent and will give your complaint careful and fair consideration.

You should try to raise your concerns with the agency first, and then come to the Ombudsman if you can't sort it out.

The Ombudsman can't usually investigate complaints if there is another solution, such as a right of review or appeal.

The Ombudsman can't investigate court decisions.

How to make a complaint

1. First, try to resolve the issue with the agency. Many agencies have a complaints process. If they don't, write to the head of the agency, such as the chief executive or chairperson. The Ombudsman may decide not to consider your complaint unless you've done this.
2. You can make a complaint to the Ombudsman using the online form www.ombudsman.parliament.nz/get-help-public or you can email or post your complaint. Call if you want to talk the matter through.

3. Describe the decision or action you want to complain about, and explain why you think it was unfair. Be clear and concise. Stick to the main facts. If the Ombudsman needs more information, you will be given the opportunity to provide it.

4. Provide key letters, documents or other evidence that show you've already tried to sort out the issue with the agency. Say why you are not happy with the agency's response.

5. Explain the outcome you want.

Don't delay. It may be hard for the Ombudsman to consider something that happened more than 12 months ago.

Complaining for someone else

Whānau, a support person or friend can make a complaint for someone else. If you want someone to make a complaint for you – or you want to represent someone – you will need to arrange permission. See the Ombudsman New Zealand website for help on how to do this.

What happens when you make a complaint?

After you've sent your complaint to the Ombudsman you'll be advised when it has been received.

The Ombudsman will first decide whether or not your complaint can be considered.

If it can't be, you'll be told why and directed to other options or agencies who can help.

If it's a matter the Ombudsman can deal with, the Ombudsman's staff may be able to resolve your complaint by talking to you and the agency you have complained about. An investigation may not be necessary.

When an investigation proceeds, the Ombudsman will seek all relevant information.

You'll be kept informed throughout the complaint handling process.

When the investigation ends, the Ombudsman can form an opinion on whether the agency acted unreasonably or unfairly.

If they think the agency acted reasonably and fairly, you have an opportunity to comment.

If they think the agency acted unreasonably or unfairly, the Ombudsman can recommend a solution.

The Ombudsman may publish information about the outcome of a complaint, if it's important for other people to know about. Your privacy will be protected where necessary.

Who the Ombudsman can help with

You have the right to be treated fairly by the public sector agencies you deal with.

These include:

- government departments and ministries
- city, district, and regional councils
- state-owned enterprises and crown entities
- universities, polytechnics, and wānanga

- school boards
- Oranga Tamariki and any publicly funded care or custody providers for children and young people.

Have you been treated unfairly by them? Are you unhappy about how they responded to your complaint?

The Ombudsman may be able to help you.

The Ombudsman's services are free and available to everyone.

Contact the Ombudsman Whakapā Kaitiaki Mana Tangata

Office of the Ombudsman

Tari o te Kaitiaki Mana Tangata

Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5.00pm

Freephone 0800 802 602

Email info@ombudsman.parliament.nz

Website www.ombudsman.parliament.nz

PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143

Facebook: [@ombudsmannz](https://www.facebook.com/ombudsmannz)



www.ombudsman.parliament.nz/resources/complaints-about-government-agencies

Use this QR code for more information and pamphlets in accessible formats and other languages. Additional languages and formats are available on request.

Use NZ Relay www.nzrelay.co.nz to contact the Ombudsman if you are Deaf or hard of hearing or have a speech impairment.

Complaints about government agencies

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