

## FACT SHEET

The Land Access Ombudsman (LAO) provides a free, fair and independent dispute resolution service for landholders and resource companies.

### What do we do?

We investigate alleged breaches of conduct and compensation agreements (CCAs) and make good agreements (MGAs), and make practical recommendations to resolve the dispute.

We aim to resolve disputes quickly and efficiently, with as little formality and technicality as possible.

The LAO operates independently of the Government and is not subject to direction by anyone.

### What are the benefits of going to the LAO?

- Free, fair and independent dispute resolution service
- Aims to resolve disputes quickly and efficiently, with as little formality and technicality as possible
- Travels to you when needed
- No legal representation required
- Opportunity to avoid litigation

### Who can refer disputes?

Both landholders and resource companies can refer disputes to the LAO — as long as they have an existing CCA or MGA.

Disputes relating to the negotiation of a CCA or MGA should be referred to:

*Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy (DNRME)*  
Phone: 137 107  
Email: [resources.info@dnrme.qld.gov.au](mailto:resources.info@dnrme.qld.gov.au)

### How do I refer a dispute?

Before you refer a dispute, **you must first make a reasonable attempt to resolve the situation with the other party.**

If your attempts to resolve fail, you can refer the dispute to the LAO in the following ways:

- Complete the online Dispute Form
- Download the PDF Dispute Form and submit via email
- Download the PDF Dispute Form and submit via post
- Telephone us on 1800 717 550.

Please contact us with any queries or if you would like assistance completing the Dispute Form — we are here to help.

Phone (free call):

**1800 717 550**

*Toll free from landlines. Calls from mobile phones may attract charges. Let us know you're calling from a mobile and we'll call you back.*

**Address:** Reply Paid 87700, PO Box 15148,  
City East QLD 4002

**Email:** [enquiries@lao.org.au](mailto:enquiries@lao.org.au)

**Website:** [www.lao.org.au](http://www.lao.org.au).

### How much does it cost?

Our service is free to all parties.

### What can the LAO investigate?

For us to be able to investigate an alleged breach:

- you must have an existing CCA or MGA
- you must reasonably believe the other party is not complying with their obligations under the agreement.

### What can't the LAO investigate?

The LAO has no jurisdiction to help with the negotiation of CCAs or MGAs.

The LAO also cannot investigate:

- a CCA or MGA still subject to a minimum negotiation period or cooling off period
- the content of legislation or government policies
- a decision made by Cabinet, a Minister or a chief executive of a government department
- a matter that is or has been the subject of a court proceeding or arbitration
- a matter that is, or has been, the subject of an investigation by a department
- compensation agreements for mining leases and mining claims under the *Mineral Resources Act 1989*
- access agreements.

We also have to stop our investigation if, at any time, the matter comes under investigation by a department or is the subject of a court proceeding or arbitration.

### What is the LAO's process?

Our dispute resolution process involves three key stages:

1. **Assessment** — When we receive your Dispute Form we contact you to confirm the issues and assess whether or not we can investigate.
2. **Investigation** — If we decide to investigate, we appoint an LAO investigator who will take reasonable steps to look into and help resolve the issue. This may include:
  - requesting additional information from both parties and/or government agencies
  - holding meetings and interviewing the parties
  - undertaking site visits
  - providing alternative dispute resolution options.
3. **Outcome** — Once our investigation is complete, we will provide advice about the merits of each party's position and make recommendations on how the dispute could be resolved. Our recommendations are not binding and are provided to parties as information or advice only.

Additional detail about our process is available on our website.