

FACT SHEET

Postal Industry Ombudsman – Information for Postal Operators

The Postal Industry Ombudsman (PIO) is one of the functions of the Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman. We investigate complaints about postal or similar services provided by Australia Post, and other private postal operators registered with the PIO scheme.

Who can join the Postal Industry Ombudsman scheme?

Anyone who provides a postal or similar service can register. A postal or similar service is any service connected with the acceptance, security, allocation, transport or retention of mail. It includes mail that is delivered to an address or held for collection by a person, and packet and delivery services. It does not include unaddressed ('junk') mail.

Membership is voluntary. You can de-register at any time.

Why join?

Membership benefits include:

- demonstrating a commitment to customer service
- access to an independent, external and fair complaint-handling scheme with experience in handling postal issues
- feedback from us on any areas of your services and products that are causing customer dissatisfaction
- expert assistance from us in establishing your own in-house complaint-handling procedures
- specialist resolution of more difficult or complex complaints.

What will we investigate?

Not every complaint we receive is investigated. The PIO is able to investigate:

- a registered postal operator's actions relating to the provision of a postal or similar service
- the actions of contractors and subcontractors engaged by a registered postal operator to provide that service.

We are only able to investigate complaints about postal services, not any other type of service your business may provide.

Contact us

ombudsman.gov.au
1300 362 072

GPO Box 442
Canberra ACT 2601

The Ombudsman has offices in:

- » Adelaide
- » Brisbane
- » Canberra
- » Melbourne
- » Perth
- » Sydney

The PIO also has the power to initiate an investigation without a complaint; for example, service issues that may arise across the industry.

What we won't investigate

We will not investigate:

- a complaint from a postal operator against another postal operator (including Australia Post)
- a complaint made more than 12 months after the action that caused the complaint
- action relating to the employment of staff by a postal operator
- a matter being considered by a court or tribunal (unless there are special reasons)
- a complaint about action that happened before the postal operator registered with the PIO.

We can choose not to investigate if it is considered that:

- the complaint is frivolous or vexatious or not made in good faith
- the complainant does not have sufficient interest in the matter
- further investigation would not be warranted in all the circumstances.

What happens at the end of an investigation?

We can provide a report and make recommendations to the postal operator where an action is considered contrary to law, unreasonable, unjust or improperly discriminatory, or otherwise wrong in all the circumstances. If a postal operator takes no action on the recommendations, the PIO may provide a report for tabling in Parliament.

During an investigation, we may suggest that the postal operator:

- provides an explanation to the complainant
- takes corrective action, such as an apology, or compensation
- considers altering a policy, procedure or the information provided to customers.

What registered operators can expect

You can expect the PIO to:

- offer an independent, fair and robust complaint-handling process
- not advocate for consumer groups
- not criticise a postal operator without giving the operator an opportunity to explain
- explain our fee and give the operator an opportunity to resolve problems itself before increasing the fee
- encourage operators to develop their own internal complaint-handling processes.

We will aim to resolve disputes as quickly and informally as possible.

What we expect

The PIO expects that postal operators who register:

- will implement and maintain their own internal complaint-handling processes
- will be prepared to take primary responsibility to deal with complaints where they have an in-house complaint-handling procedure
- will take reasonable steps to ensure that customers are aware of the internal complaints and the PIO scheme
- are honest and open in their dealings with the PIO
- are prepared to pay the PIO's investigation fees.

Fees

We charge a fee to cover the cost of the scheme. The fee will depend on the level of complexity involved in resolving the matter. We will advise the fee to be charged. Details of the fee structure and fee dispute procedure are at ombudsman.gov.au/about/postal-industry-ombudsman

Recovery of fees

Fees are charged annually at the end of the financial year. The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) collects fees on behalf of the PIO and will send an invoice to you directly.

How to join the scheme

To register, complete the form at ombudsman.gov.au/about/postal-industry-ombudsman or call **1300 362 072**. Registration is free.