



ANNUAL
REPORT
2024-25

Letter of compliance

29 September 2025

The Honourable Dale Last MP
Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, Minister for Manufacturing and
Minister for Regional and Rural Development
1 William St
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Minister,

I am pleased to present the Land Access Ombudsman's Annual Report for
the financial year of 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025.

This report is produced under the requirements of the *Land Access
Ombudsman Act 2017*. It does not contain financial information.

Yours sincerely,



Jane Pires
Land Access Ombudsman

About this report

The Land Access Ombudsman (LAO) provides a dispute resolution service for landholders and resource authority holders with Conduct and Compensation Agreements (CCAs) or Make Good Agreements (MGAs). For the benefit of our stakeholders and the Queensland public, this annual report provides information about our performance for the Financial Year of 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025. It includes our activities and achievements for the financial year and summarises our future priorities.

Interpreter Service



The LAO is committed to providing accessible services to Queenslanders from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. If you have difficulty in understanding the annual report, you can contact us on 1800 717 550 and we will arrange an interpreter to effectively communicate the report to you, free of charge.

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We acknowledge and pay our respects to the past, present and emerging Traditional Custodians and Elders of the state of Queensland and the land on which we operate. We respect the continuation of cultural, spiritual, and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

About us

Role of the Land Access Ombudsman (LAO)

Our primary function is to investigate disputes involving alleged breaches of Conduct and Compensation Agreements (CCAs) and Make Good Agreements (MGAs).

We assess parties' positions, give advice, and make recommendations about how disputes could be resolved. We do this efficiently and as simply as possible. In the interest of improving or preserving the long-term relationship between parties, where

necessary, we will monitor the matter to ensure recommendations or agreements are carried out.

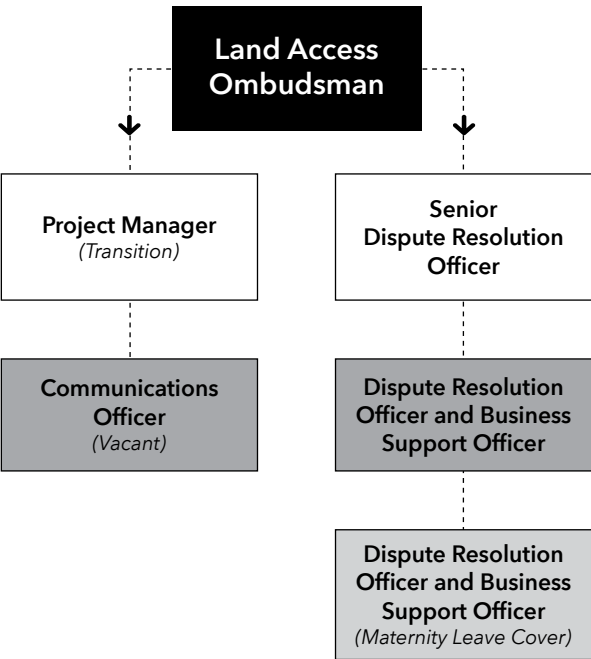
Importantly, we work to identify systemic issues. We report these issues and provide advice to government and industry to encourage best practice land access relations and improved relationships between Queensland's landholders and resource authority holders.

Structure

The Land Access Ombudsman (the Ombudsman), Ms Jane Pires, operates independently and is not subject to direction by anyone. The Ombudsman reports on the progress and activities of the Office to the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, Minister for Manufacturing and Minister for Regional and Rural Development, the Honourable Dale Last MP.

As of 30 June 2025, the Office comprised four employees: a Project Manager and three Dispute Resolution Officers. The dispute resolution team, led by the Senior Dispute Resolution Officer, manages enquiries, investigates and resolves disputes, and identifies systemic issues and trends. The Senior Dispute Resolution Officer supervises two Dispute Resolution and Business Support Officers. Recruitment for a Communications Officer is currently underway. The Communications Officer supports the business activities of the LAO by managing stakeholder engagement and communications activities to promote awareness of, and access to the LAO services.

In February 2025, a Project Manager commenced to lead the transition of the LAO from a government department to an industry-funded statutory body with an Advisory Council. Changes to the LAO Act will see the LAO's role expanded over the next 12 months with the changes due to take effect from April 2026.



Our Values



Honesty

We will be accountable and responsible for our actions.



Reliability

We will be dependable. We will follow through on our actions and commitments.



Adaptability

We will adapt to industry changes and our operating environment.



Accountability

We will be proactive. We will take ownership over our learning to enhance continuous improvement.



Communication

We will actively engage through open and transparent dialogue.



Respect

We will act fairly. Accepting the opinions and individuality of others.

Our jurisdiction



Matters we can investigate

We investigate matters referred to us when the party:

- » has an existing CCA or MGA
- » believes the other party is not complying with their obligations under the agreement
- » has made a reasonable attempt to resolve the issue.



Matters we cannot investigate

We cannot investigate:

- » when the CCA or MGA is under negotiation, or 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 an 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
- » matters outside of Queensland.

Our process



1. Assessment

When a dispute is referred to the LAO, we gather information to determine whether we can investigate the issue. This might include:

- » finding out what (if any) attempts have been made to resolve the dispute (including if it has previously been before court or investigated by government)
- » requesting information from both parties
- » reviewing the CCA or MGA.

2. Investigation

If we can investigate the matter, our dispute resolution team will take reasonable steps to examine and help resolve the issue. This could include:

- » requesting information from both parties and (potentially) government departments
- » holding meetings and interviews with each party, separately or together
- » visiting and inspecting sites
- » providing alternative dispute resolution options
- » consulting with technical experts.

3. Facilitation

Our goal is to preserve the long-term relationship between parties to find a mutually beneficial outcome. Where appropriate, investigations may progress to a facilitation stage. At this stage, the case remains open, and our dispute resolution team regularly monitors whether agreed actions are being fulfilled.

4. Outcome

On completing an investigation, the LAO issues a Draft Notice of Investigation Outcome and invites both parties to respond. Comments from both parties are considered before the Ombudsman issuing a final Notice of Outcome.

If a dispute is resolved through our investigation, the Notice will include details of the resolution.

If either party does not feel the dispute is resolved, the notice will include:

- » advice about the merits of each party's position
- » recommendations about how the dispute could or should be resolved
- » reasons for the advice and recommendations.

Ombudsman message

**As Land Access Ombudsman, I am pleased to present the 2024-25
*Annual Report for the Office of the Land Access Ombudsman (LAO).***

This year we continued to provide independent and accessible dispute resolution services while engaging with stakeholders in the Queensland regions. We have embraced the outcomes from the Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Manufacturing and Regional and Rural Development (DNRMMRRD) consultation review and look forward to being able to provide support to stakeholders on a broader range of land access disputes.

In late 2024, our dispute resolution team members travelled to Moranbah, Dysart, and Clermont to conduct our pop-up offices for the first time. The aim of these visits was to build on and strengthen stakeholder ties and provide a dispute resolution service in areas of continued resource activity and industry expansion. In total, we received two referrals, which reinforced the importance of our ongoing presence in these regions. We will continue to explore opportunities for regional engagement in areas where resource activity is expanding.

We look forward to sustainable change and growth in the industry and welcome the impending jurisdiction expansion of the LAO as a result of the Queensland Resources Industry Development Plan (QRIDP) outcomes. This jurisdiction expansion will be a key focus for the coming 12 months bringing growth to the team physically and professionally.

As we prepare to introduce alternative dispute resolution pathways for our expanded jurisdiction, we remain committed to supporting landholders and resource authority holders by continuing to provide education on land access matters and assisting with disputes related to CCAs or MGAs. We will maintain our impartial and accessible service, ensuring stakeholders receive the guidance and support they need during this transition. The upcoming changes will further enhance our ability to assist with a broader range of land access disputes, reflecting our ongoing dedication to delivering fair and effective outcomes.

The LAO will continue to engage with the resource industry, landholders, state government, and peak bodies to deepen our understanding of the evolving needs of parties involved in disputes over existing CCAs or MGAs, as well as broader land access concerns arising in resource development areas. The Land Access Ombudsman is committed to being a key part of the upcoming statutory changes, enhancing our ability to support Queensland's resource communities, landholders, and resource authority holders in addressing land access issues.

Our landscape

Our Outcomes

During 2024–25, the LAO received 49 contacts. Of these, 42 referrals fell outside the LAO's jurisdiction and were directed to the appropriate entities. Our team commenced preliminary enquiries on four referrals, which did not proceed to investigation once assessed.

The number of contacts remained steady compared with previous years. While many referrals were outside the LAO's remit, our dispute resolution team provided alternative pathways and referrals to appropriate government departments and organisations. Through this work, we continued to raise awareness of our role and supported stakeholders in accessing the correct avenues for assistance.

With regulatory review, industry expansion and the complexities of land use across our regions, we continue to learn about the dynamic environment we operate in and the varying degree of issues in the land access space. With this ever-changing environment, our team continue to adapt respectfully and professionally, managing the ongoing changes as they have worked through the year. I thank my team for their work and commitment to providing a service that is respectful, impartial, and adaptable as we navigate through this time of change for the LAO.

Monitoring systemic issues

No systemic issues were identified across the land access space. We continue to see and hear concerns from communities with high resource activity. These concerns are shared with and reported to the related Queensland Government department to improve coexistence practices, land access and Make Good frameworks.

Strengthening partnerships

The LAO continues to engage with state government agencies, including the Department of Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (DETSI), the Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Manufacturing and Regional and Rural Development (DNRMMRRD), Coexistence Queensland, and the Land Court of Queensland, to stay informed about current land access concerns and coordinate engagement initiatives. These collaborations provide valuable opportunities for the LAO to directly connect with resource communities and raise awareness of our services.

The LAO also maintains its engagement with the resource and agricultural sectors to share information and promote awareness of our role, with a particular focus on the Surat Basin and Bowen Basin regions, where communities are experiencing higher levels of resource activity. This ongoing engagement ensures we remain responsive to the needs of stakeholders and continue to provide accessible and impartial support.

Looking ahead, the LAO is excited to expand our engagement focus across Queensland when our remit is broadened to include land access agreements across the petroleum and gas, mineral, and coal sectors. This expansion will allow us to support an even wider range of stakeholders and strengthen our commitment to addressing land access concerns across the state.

Our plans

Our key priorities for 2025-26 include:

- » Executing our 2025 – 2028 strategic plan
- » Working with government and key industry stakeholders to prepare for jurisdiction growth for the LAO per the QRIDP outcomes
- » Strengthening our community engagement activities to build lasting connections in Queensland's regions of high resource activity and continued growth
- » Commencing preparation of our first LAO Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)
- » Enhancing our team's skills and capacity to support the LAO's expanded jurisdiction.

My thanks

I extend my sincere thanks to landholders, community members, government entities, peak bodies and stakeholders across Queensland for their invaluable support of the Land Access Ombudsman (LAO) this year. Your willingness to share your experiences has provided us with deeper insights into the challenges and opportunities faced by regions experiencing resource activity, helping us better understand and respond to your needs.

I also express my gratitude to representatives from the resource industry, government agencies, and community leaders for their ongoing collaboration. Your contributions are vital in shaping constructive and balanced land access outcomes that benefit all parties involved.

To those who accessed our services, thank you for placing your trust in us. Every referral, enquiry, and conversation has helped us refine and adapt our approach to delivering fair, impartial, and effective dispute resolution.

Our visits to Moranbah, Dysart, Clermont, Biloela, Dalby, Chinchilla and Roma underscored the importance of maintaining strong local connections. I look forward to strengthening these relationships further and building new ones across Queensland's resource regions in the year ahead.

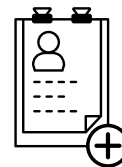
Finally, I want to acknowledge and thank my dedicated team for their professionalism, resilience, and commitment during this period of change. Your efforts in preparing for the LAO's expanded jurisdiction reflect not only adaptability but also a dedicated focus on delivering a service that is accessible, respectful, and effective for all stakeholders.

As we move into 2025–26, I am excited about the opportunities ahead. With our expanded remit, we will continue to grow our presence in Queensland's communities and provide even stronger support to landholders, resource authority holders, and the regions where they work together. Together, we will ensure that the LAO remains a trusted and impartial resource for all Queenslanders navigating land access concerns.



Jane Pires
Land Access Ombudsman

Dispute referrals in 2024-25



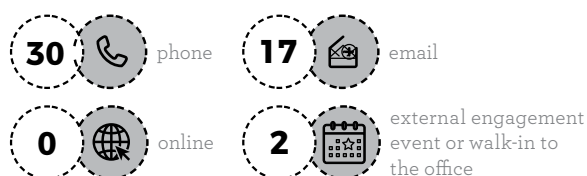
Referrals received

Between 1 July 2024 and 30 June 2025, the office received 49 contacts about possible dispute referrals.

42 contacts were determined to be out-of-jurisdiction and referred to other entities to provide help and support.

Of the 49 dispute contacts received, we commenced preliminary enquiries on four, which did not proceed to the investigation stage once assessed.

Three enquiries about the LAO or its services were received.



Referrals to other bodies

We received and referred 42 enquiries to other bodies as they were assessed by the team to be out of our jurisdiction under section 36 of the *Land Access Ombudsman Act 2017 (the Act)*.

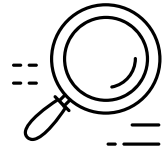
Themes in out-of-jurisdiction enquiries include:

- » Enquiries about negotiating or renegotiating CCA's
- » Requests for Legal Advice
- » Complaints about a decision of a Queensland local council
- » Complaints about property developers
- » Complaints or body corporates
- » Complaint about interstate government agencies
- » Complaint about decisions of Queensland state government departments
- » Complaints/enquiries about resource issue not related to CCAs or MGAs
- » Complaint about disputes with neighbours
- » Complaints about the amount of compensation being received
- » Complaints about alleged misconduct by government departments
- » Complaints about road access.

Where dispute referrals were out-of-jurisdiction, the LAO referred the enquiry to the below organisation or body:

Organisation	Number of forwarded referrals
Legal Advice	13
DNRMMRRD	11
Local Council	6
Queensland Ombudsman	3
DETSI	3
Crime and Corruption Commission	2
Office of Ground Water Impact Assessment	2
Department of Regional Development and Water	2
Real Estate Institute of Queensland	1
Valuer-General	1
NSW Ombudsman	1
Department of Primary Industries	1
Department of Transport and Main Roads	1
Commonwealth Ombudsman	1
Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal	1
Land Court	1

Investigations



While the LAO did not undertake any full dispute resolution investigations during the 2024–25 financial year, we provided support through preliminary enquiries where specific land access concerns were raised. These enquiries allowed us to engage with stakeholders, gather information, and explore potential pathways for resolution.

The following is an example of cases that were referred to the LAO. After conducting preliminary enquiries, these cases were not investigated further.

Case example: Self-reported breach and access dispute

Case overview

In late 2024, Coexistence Queensland referred a matter involving a resource authority holder that had self-reported a breach to the Department of Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (DETSI). The dispute centred on access to infrastructure after a contractor incorrectly used produced water for dust suppression on an access road.

A contractor hired by the resource authority holder allegedly incorrectly used produced water when completing dust suppression on an access road. The resource authority holder knew the use of this water would breach their Environmental Authority (EA) and reported the incident to DETSI. The landholder identified that produced water had allegedly been used on the access road and was concerned it would breach their organic certification. The landholder quarantined the impacted area so that their cattle would not access it. This stopped the resource authority holder from being able to access their infrastructure and continue operations. The landholder's organic certifier advised that the impacted area would need to be quarantined for a minimum of 3 years. The landholder informed the resource authority holder they would have to move the cattle yards and the resource authority holder would be liable for the loss under the CCA.

The outcome the resource company was looking for was for the landholder to:

- » allow their insurance provider to access the property and complete a soil test to determine whether contamination had occurred, and

- » continue to resolve the potential contamination matter without being locked out of the property, enabling them to establish any loss.

Our actions

The LAO reached out to the resource authority holder for further detail on the dispute and where the matter stood. The resource authority holder was advised that the LAO could not investigate a matter that was currently being investigated by a state department or is the subject of court proceeding or arbitration. To clarify the status of the incident, the LAO contacted DETSI to confirm their investigation was underway and reviewed the CCA along with other supporting documentation provided. The resource authority holder advised the LAO that they had initiated the dispute resolution clause in their CCA and the parties would be attending an independently facilitated mediation.

The LAO determined that:

- » time needed to be allowed for DETSI to complete their investigation,
- » a dispute surrounding the application of the CCA did exist, and
- » the parties were already engaged in an alternative dispute resolution process.

The final recommendation was for the resource authority holder to continue mediation with the landholder, facilitated by an independent mediator agreed upon by both parties, to try to resolve the issue without arbitration. The resource authority holder was also encouraged to contact DETSI for updates on their investigation into the alleged breach. If the parties failed to reach an agreement through mediation, the LAO advised that it may investigate the concerns at a later stage.



Notice of Investigation

As per the process and the Act, despite four preliminary enquiries being commenced in 2024-25, we did not issue a Notice of Investigation Outcome (section 51 notice).

Notice about legislation breaches

No formal referrals were made in 2024–25 regarding investigations under section 53 of the *Mineral and Energy Resources (Common Provisions) Act 2014*, section 54 of the *Water Act 2000*, or section 55 of the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*.

Engagement



Our priority under the Act is to promote an understanding of the benefits and functions of the LAO service to ensure that Queenslanders know who we are and how we can help with land access issues.

In 2024-25 the LAO continued to build our presence in Queensland's resource activity regions. Getting out and about and being active in the regions allows Queenslanders experiencing a land access dispute to access our service directly and speak with our dispute resolution team in person.

This section provides an overview of key activities.

Community engagement

In 2024-25, the LAO worked to:

- » Continue our pop-up office and community engagement activities in the regions to build on community knowledge of the service in key Queensland communities
- » Continue to engage with key stakeholders and develop new relationships in high-resource activity communities
- » Strengthen industry partnerships.

Activities for the year included Ombudsman Jane Pires' participation in a Coexistence Queensland session on 23 September, which featured a delegate from Texas sharing perspectives on oil, gas, and renewables. This event highlighted the value of learning from international experiences and provided an opportunity to reflect on how lessons from other jurisdictions can inform land access practices in Queensland.

In March, Ms Pires attended the Biloela Community Leaders Council with Coexistence Queensland, held on 26 and 27 March. This forum created space for open dialogue with community leaders, offering valuable insights into the challenges faced by regional communities. The engagement reinforced the importance of building relationships that extend beyond dispute resolution, enabling the LAO to contribute to broader conversations about coexistence and land use.

In May, the LAO attended the Australian Energy Producers Conference and Exhibition, engaging with stakeholders across the energy sector. Participation in this national forum raised awareness of the LAO and provided valuable insights into emerging issues and trends that may influence future land access disputes in Queensland. Building on the success of this engagement, the LAO intends to participate in future conferences to continue strengthening connections and ensuring our service remains responsive to industry developments.

In the 2024-25 financial year, the LAO continued our pop-up office program in the Surat Basin and the Bowen Basin holding pop-up offices in Moranbah, Dysart, Clermont, Dalby, Chinchilla and Roma with our dispute resolution service.

While staffing constraints limited the frequency of visits, the pop-up offices demonstrated their effectiveness by raising community awareness and encouraging early engagement with the service. Looking ahead, the program will continue to evolve, with a focus on building consistency and expanding reach into regions experiencing high levels of resource activity.



This year the following community visits took place:

Location	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
Biloela									●			
Dalby									●			
Chinchilla									●			
Roma									●			
Moranbah				●								
Dysart				●								
Clermont				●								

Online engagement

The LAO website remained a central channel for Queenslanders seeking information and support. During the year, 364 users accessed the News and Resources page, while 341 visited the Events page to learn about upcoming pop-up offices. A further 352 users sought information on CCAs, MGAs, and how the LAO can assist with disputes. Additionally, many users looked for guidance on the LAO service more broadly including how we can help as a dispute resolution body, what a CCA is, and where to go for assistance with disputes about agreements. This shows not only strong demand for information but also highlights the need to continue developing clear and practical resources tailored to stakeholder needs.

Direct communication complemented website engagement. In August, the LAO distributed a newsletter to 118 stakeholders, achieving a strong open rate of 52.54 per cent (62 opens). This result demonstrates that stakeholders are interested in LAO updates but are also engaging closely with the information provided, reinforcing the value of regular, targeted communication.

The LAO's social media channels also grew significantly. The Facebook page experienced a 10% increase in followers, with the audience spread across Queensland and particularly concentrated in resource activity regions such as Mackay, Dalby, Emerald, Toowoomba, Bundaberg, Chinchilla, Townsville, and

Kingaroy. The LinkedIn page grew by 20% in the same period, building a broader professional network that includes stakeholders in key regions such as Townsville and Rockhampton. This growth demonstrates that stakeholders value timely, shareable content about LAO resources, industry updates, and government or community news. It also highlights the role of social media in strengthening ties with community organisations and industry partners who help extend the LAO's reach by sharing our information further.

Online engagement supported steady levels of enquiries. Some of these enquiries related to the negotiation or renegotiation of CCAs, as well as concerns about Offset Deeds and compensation matters linked to CCAs. This outcome reflects the impact of increased online visibility and confirms the value of providing clear, accessible guidance that helps stakeholders navigate land access issues.

Looking ahead, the LAO will continue to refine its digital engagement approach, using insights from website traffic, newsletters, and social media activity to expand both reach and relevance. Our focus will remain on ensuring that landholders, resource authority holders, and communities know where to find support when they need it, and that the LAO is recognised as a trusted source of information and dispute resolution services across Queensland's resource regions.

Financial Information



The financial statements for the LAO are included in the Department of Resources 2024-25 Annual Report.
Separate financial statements are not required for the LAO.



Appendix one:

Glossary

Term	Definition
(The) Act	<i>Land Access Ombudsman Act 2017 (Qld)</i>
Case	The issues, situation and context surrounding a given land access dispute referral or investigation.
CCA (Conduct and Compensation Agreement)	A legally binding agreement between a landholder and a resource authority holder, setting out conditions and compensation for land access.
DETSI (Department of Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation)	The Queensland Government department responsible for environmental, tourism, science, and innovation matters.
Dispute	A conflict-based issue brought to the Land Access Ombudsman.
DNRMMRRD (Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Manufacturing and Regional and Rural Development)	The Queensland Government department responsible for natural resources, mining, manufacturing, and regional and rural development.
EA (Environmental Authority)	A licence or permit that authorises environmentally relevant activities under Queensland legislation.
Investigation	The process of LAO staff formally investigating a land access dispute referral that is found to be within the LAO's jurisdiction.
Landholder	The individual or business who owns or leases the land on which the disputed activity is taking place.
LAO (Land Access Ombudsman)	An independent statutory office that investigates certain land access disputes.
MGA (Make Good Agreement)	An agreement between a landholder and a resource authority holder outlining obligations for "making good" any impacts to water bores.
MP (Member of Parliament)	An elected representative in the Queensland Parliament.
Offset Deed (Offset Deeds)	A type of land access agreement that sets out conditions or compensation related to land access activities, often used alongside or in place of CCAs or MGAs.
Out-of-jurisdiction	A matter that is not, under legislation, within the Land Access Ombudsman's authority to investigate or manage.
QRIDP (Queensland Resources Industry Development Plan)	A Queensland Government initiative setting out long-term strategies for the resources industry.
RAP (Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan)	An internal plan outlining actions to advance reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
Referral	The contact a landholder, resource authority holder or their representative makes with the Office of the Land Access Ombudsman regarding a dispute and our ability to investigate it. Depending on context, it can also mean the action of LAO staff referring out-of-jurisdiction matters to another entity.
Resource Authority Holder	The company or organisation that has authority to access land for resource exploration, production, or extraction.
(The) State	The State of Queensland.



**LAND ACCESS
OMBUDSMAN**

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Keep in touch   