

## How to make complaints to the ACCC

The ACCC is often asked what the procedures are for making complaints about suspected breaches of, or inquiries about, the Trade Practices Act. It's a straightforward process but, depending on the seriousness of the matter, may entail some work by you before making contact.

The first step is up to you — and it's as easy as contacting your local office by telephone, fax or letter — although it's probably a good idea to telephone first to make sure the ACCC is the right agency. **The ACCC has a network of regional offices and these are listed on the inside back cover.**

There isn't a fee or charge for making a complaint or inquiry — and they can be made anonymously, but this usually limits the ACCC's ability to fully investigate the matter and bring it to a successful conclusion.

If you want to keep preliminary discussions informal the ACCC is happy to do so and will treat them confidentially if requested.

It's important to keep in mind that the ACCC is a public enforcement agency and may need to take action independent of you — in the public interest. However, where this is necessary it will preserve your interests and/or identity.

If it's a matter that doesn't involve the Trade Practices Act or the ACCC, you'll be referred to the right agency or at least given other options.

If English is a difficulty the ACCC will arrange for a translator service, either over the phone or in person, whichever is most convenient for you.

If you live in an isolated area where making contact may be difficult or too expensive the ACCC can help in a number of ways, e.g. by telephoning you, or by asking the nearest office to talk to you. ACCC offices are open between 8.30 am and 5.30 pm.

The next steps are the ACCC's. Staff will explain your rights and obligations under the Trade Practices Act, and will also give you an idea of how the ACCC is likely to respond to your situation.

You will be asked what avenues you have pursued — such as trying to sort out the problem with the other party involved or, if you are a business, by discussing it with a trade association or industry body, seeking alternative suppliers etc.

If you haven't, the ACCC may suggest you try them before it goes any further with the matter.

If you have tried all other avenues, the ACCC will need as much information and documentary evidence as possible supporting your allegation before it can decide whether or not it can help you.

The type of information and documentation may include the details of the problem, step by step, and in date order; witness details and what they were witness to; correspondence; advertisements; invoices; receipts; agreements; order forms and anything else you can think of.

Whatever action the ACCC decides to take — talking to the other party, seeking court enforceable undertakings in the case of businesses, or even starting court proceedings — it will discuss options with you and keep you informed.

You should keep in mind that the ACCC cannot give legal advice. If you need it you should consult a solicitor.

### KR Darling Downs changes pork ads

Darling Downs Bacon Co-operative Association Limited, producer of KR Darling Downs brand ham, bacon and smallgoods, has given the ACCC an undertaking that it will amend its advertising to reflect the fact that not all of its products are made from 100% Australian pork.

The undertaking follows a recent ACCC investigation into claims made by Darling Downs in television and newspaper advertisements that all KR Darling Downs products are made from 100% Australian pork.

Only KR Darling Downs refrigerated products are actually made from 100% Australian pork. Between December 1996 and February 1998 KR Darling Downs canned leg ham and shoulder ham products were made in the USA from pork grown in the USA.

In February 1998 Darling Downs ceased producing canned leg ham and shoulder ham products in the USA under the KR Darling Downs label but holds sufficient stock to last until approximately early 1999.