



Neighbour Disputes

If you have a problem with your neighbour, or your neighbour has a problem with you, it is important to try to resolve it as early as possible. Once a problem escalates, it can result in entrenched conflict that becomes disabling for all concerned and very difficult to resolve.

The best first step is always communication. If you can, talk to your neighbour. Discuss the practical aspects of the problem, how it is affecting you both, and what needs to be done to solve it. Be sure to treat your neighbour with courtesy and respect, and listen to what they have to say. Keep a record of all contact you have regarding the problem.

Investigate your options for what best suits your particular situation. There may be a range of remedies available, both legal and non-legal, and it is always a good idea to have a 'Plan B'.

Be prepared to compromise. Whether a problem is solved through talking or through legal action, the end result often involves compromise. So it can be to your advantage if you consider the issues carefully at the outset and work out which bits you can live with... and which bits you can't.

If contact with your neighbour becomes violent or threatening, call the police. ARPRA can't assist in a neighbour dispute if two neighbours are also members. This would cause a conflict of interest. If your neighbour is causing issues, then you should report them to your community manager. There may be a remedy under the *Residential Land Lease Communities Act* in some circumstances.

Using the legal system offers certain advantages but also involves significant risks. It is often preferable to try to resolve your dispute by other means.

Mediation is available across NSW through Community Justice Centres (CJCs). It is a free and confidential service that can save you expense and delay, not to mention the stress, that's involved in taking the matter to court.

CJC can help you resolve your dispute quickly and for free using mediation. Thousands of people use CJC every year—and around 79% of them reach an agreement.

There are several ways to contact a Community Justice Centre. You can:

- Call **1800 990 777** (freecall Australia)
- E-mail your name, contact phone number, and a brief description of your dispute to **cjc@justice.nsw.gov.au**

For further information, please log on to **www.cjc.justice.nsw.gov.au**, or if you require ARPRA to provide a formal referral to the Community Justice Centre, please contact us at **1300 798 399**.

www.arpra.org.au