

Things between neighbours don't always go smoothly. It's always best to try to resolve any disputes with your neighbours by talking to them and seeing if you can reach a mutual agreement. You can even write them a letter setting out the problem and how you'd like to resolve it. But if those don't work, the next best step is mediation. Citizens Advice Bureau offers a low-cost Community Mediation Service where neighbours in a dispute can come together with trained mediators to negotiate a fair and workable solution for everyone.

## **What is mediation?**

Mediation is an alternative way of resolving a dispute where two parties sit down together and, guided by mediators, negotiate a practical and fair solution to their problem. It gives everyone the opportunity to tell their side of the story, define issues, consider options, and settle on a solution that suits them both. Mediation is guided by two experienced and professionally-qualified mediators. They're impartial and don't give any advice or make any decisions for you; they're only there to help you focus on the best way forward.

If mediation is successful, the result is a mutual agreement that the parties write in their own words. This isn't legally binding, but it can be used as a basis for court applications.

## **How does mediation work?**

Once you and the other party have agreed to mediation, we'll book a separate pre-mediation interview for each of you. This is an opportunity for you to tell your side of the story without the other party there. It's also a good time to ask any questions or raise any issues you're unsure about. The mediator will explain how mediation works so you're fully prepared.

After your pre-mediation interview, we'll book the mediation itself. Both parties have to attend this together and in the presence of our mediators. Citizens Advice Bureau uses a co-mediation model with two mediators to make sure the process is balanced and unbiased.

## **How much does community mediation cost?**

A pre-mediation appointment costs \$50 per party. A mediation costs \$75 per party.

## **Types of community disputes we can help with:**

### **Dividing Fences**

- erecting a new fence
- claiming for a fence already erected
- damage and repair of dividing fences

### **Encroaching roots and branches**

- branches that overhang into your property
- roots that extend underneath your property
- cutting of roots and branches
- disputes over damage to property or trees

### **Dog Ownership**

- dangerous dogs
- dog control
- persistent barking
- removal of dog mess

### **Harassment**

### **Public Nuisance Disputes**

- high noise levels
- cars/ parking problems

## **Need more information?**

Contact Citizens Advice Bureau to find out more information about mediation at our Perth office.

(08) 9221 5711

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Disclaimer: This document is provided by Citizens Advice Bureau and is intended as a guide only. This information may not be appropriate to your specific situation and you should seek independent legal advice for your individual situation. Published January 2017.