

# Credit Ombud ready to tackle debt counselling

By [Artwell Dlamini](#)

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The Credit Ombud is ready to open its doors formally to handle debt counselling disputes, according to Credit Ombud Manie van Schalkwyk, who said late on Tuesday, 12 April 2011, that his office had formally extended its jurisdiction to debt counselling.

Traditionally, the Credit Ombud assists consumers and small businesses when they have complaints about listings on credit bureaux.

Presenting the latest annual report on Tuesday, Van Schalkwyk said his office was ready to handle debt counselling disputes.

The Credit Ombud had also been approached by credit providers, debt counsellors, payment distribution agents and the National Credit Regulator (NCR) to incorporate and provide an ombud service for debt counselling matters.

"We will now ensure compliance with the various codes of conduct adopted by credit providers, debt counsellors and payment distribution agents," Van Schalkwyk said.

"In the year ahead we're looking forward to helping consumers under debt review who previously had limited means of recourse in disputes with their debt counsellors and/or their credit providers," he said.

Van Schalkwyk also said the inclusion of debt counselling matters in the Credit Ombud's jurisdiction would have a positive effect on volumes of debt review disputes clogging up the judicial system.

"Hopefully most of these cases will now be resolved out of court," he said.