



ENERGY & WATER
OMBUDSMAN SA



Your Concern



Our Review



Resolution



Annual Report 2021-22



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About the Energy & Water Ombudsman SA

Who we are

The Scheme

Energy and water services are important to all stakeholders because they are essential community services; they are not considered optional. That is why independent ombudsman schemes exist across Australia to deal with issues that arise between service providers and customers.

The Energy & Water Ombudsman SA is the approved independent scheme in South Australia.

Role

Our role is to facilitate the prompt resolution of complaints and disputes between the consumers of energy, water and sewerage services and the providers of those services (our Members) by providing a free, independent, accessible, fair and informal service to consumers. We are also recognised as an external dispute resolution (EDR) scheme to handle privacy-related complaints under the Privacy Act 1988.

Principles

The principles that guide our activities are:

- dealing with complaints in a fair, just, informal and expeditious manner
- acting independently, while maintaining good working relationships with Members and other stakeholders
- being accessible to energy and water consumers in South Australia and ensuring there are no barriers to access, such as geographic location, language, physical or mental capability or financial status
- providing a free service to consumers
- making effective use of technology to assist in quality complaint handling, referral and reporting
- working together with Members, other complaint-handling bodies, government agencies and consumer and community organisations.

Energy and water services are important to all stakeholders because they are essential community services; they are not considered optional.

Origins

The Energy & Water Ombudsman SA originated from the privatisation of the South Australian electricity industry in 1999.

It became a licence condition for all entities providing electricity services that they participate in an independent dispute resolution scheme to ensure fair practice and effective dispute resolution between the electricity providers and their customers. The Scheme was subsequently expanded to include consumers of gas and water services. In 2012, we also became an external dispute resolution (EDR) scheme to handle privacy-related complaints.

The industry

Our Members are the licensed or authorised electricity and gas distribution, transmission and retail entities, and water and sewerage service providers. They now include exempt embedded networks, exempt network service providers and exempt energy sellers. A list of current Members can be found under Our Organisation.

How we work

In any consumer setting things can go wrong. That is why it is important that consumers have access to the Energy & Water Ombudsman SA.

What we do

We are an independent service that can investigate and resolve disputes between electricity, gas and water retailers and distributors and their customers. Customers can contact us about a range of issues including:

- connection, supply and sale of energy or water services by a Member
- disconnection or restriction of supply
- billing disputes

- administration of credit and payment services
- security deposits
- the impact on land or other property of actions by a Member
- the conduct of Members' employees, servants, officers, contractors or agents
- complaints about acts or practices of Members that may interfere with the privacy of an individual under the Privacy Act 1988
- any other matters referred by a Member by agreement with the Ombudsman and the persons affected.

Our full range of services and complaint resolution processes are explained in this report, together with the way we have provided the services in the past financial year.

What we don't do

Our functions do not extend across all areas. We cannot deal with:

- the setting of prices and tariffs
- commercial activities outside the scope of a Member's authorisation or licence
- the content of government policies, legislation, licences and codes
- matters before a court, tribunal or arbitrator
- customer contributions to the cost of capital works
- disputes between Members.

Our approach

We are an independent and fair service that can investigate and resolve disputes between energy and water retailers and distributors and their customers.

We are not an advocacy service for either party in a dispute, nor can we provide legal advice.

We are not a government department.

We put our emphasis on working with our Members and their customers to help them solve problems. We want to find solutions that not only deal with a single problem, but also minimise future complaints and help Members build more responsive and robust complaint-handling systems.

Complaint reporting

We have made two changes to our reporting for this year's Annual Report.

The first is that our focus is primarily on discussing "complaints" rather than the broader category of "cases", which includes both "complaints" and "enquiries".

Please note that while this change is reflected in most of the report, some sections still reference cases e.g., page 6.

Enquiries are simply requests for information or assistance. A complaint is an actual expression of dissatisfaction with an energy or water service supplier. For information about how complaints are further categorised, see page 16.

The second change is to our methodology. We have not included cases – whether complaints or enquiries – deemed to have insufficient information. To facilitate comparison between years, figures for 2020-21 have been adjusted in line with the new methodology. They thus are in some cases different from those presented in the 2020-21 Annual Report.

Cases with insufficient information are most commonly live chats that are abandoned part way through or phone calls that get cut off and cannot be returned. We have noticed a significant increase in these cases since the introduction of live chat in 2019, including an increase from 220 in 2020-21 to 276 in 2021-22.



At a glance



6,816

CASES RECEIVED

2% ↓



6,805

CASES RESOLVED

3% ↓



< 30 DAYS

TIME TO RESOLVE

88%



CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

94%



CONTACT VIA ONLINE

32%

81% = 5,447

ELECTRICITY CASES



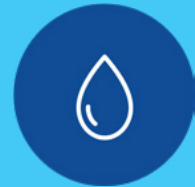
13% = 862

GAS CASES



6% = 410

WATER CASES



203 SCHEME MEMBERS

NEW SCHEME MEMBERS

74% ↑

18.8 FULL TIME EQUIVALENTS

STAFF





Mission Statement

Our mission is to facilitate the prompt resolution of complaints and disputes between consumers of electricity, gas and water services and Members of the Scheme by providing a free, independent, accessible, fair and informal service to consumers.

Board of Directors



Peter Bicknell
Chair



Geoff Barton
Industry Director



Sue Chase
Consumer Director



Margaret Cross
Consumer Director



Mark Henley
Consumer Director



Kylie Johnson
Industry Director



Patrick Makinson
Industry Director



Kay Matthias
Consumer Director



Anthony Sinclair
Industry Director

Chair's Report

On behalf of the Board I am pleased to provide this introduction to the 2021-22 Annual Report of the Energy & Water Ombudsman SA.



During the year, the Scheme and the Board's priorities were largely affected by events and issues of the previous two years.

Consistent with our Strategic Plan, we gave particular attention to our COVID-19 response, focusing on regional and vulnerable customers and the impact of new and emerging technologies.

It is pleasing to report that action taken by the regulators, and the response of retailers, protected many customers from the more severe consequences of the pandemic, notably the risk of disconnections. As a consequence, there were significantly fewer referrals to Energy and Water Ombudsman schemes across Australia.

This did, however, mean that our Scheme experienced a fall in income. In response, the Board reviewed its long-term budget, reconsidered its priorities, and ensured staffing was fit for purpose. This allowed us to reduce expenditure while maintaining capacity to respond to client issues and maintain quality services to Members and their customers.

The Board also maintained close relationships with the regulators – especially the Essential Services Commission of South Australia and the Australian Energy Regulator – and with industry. We are conscious that the lifting of pandemic-related customer protections will increase payment pressures on customers. This will be a challenging time for retailers, customers and ombudsman schemes.

With an eye to the future, the Board has reset its Strategic Plan for the next three years. Our aim is to ensure the Scheme's long-term viability while giving priority to providing quality services and responding to the needs of vulnerable customers and those who face difficulties accessing the Scheme.

The Strategic Plan also takes into account the significant and very welcome growth in membership, especially among small-scale and off-grid energy services. The Board has amended the Constitution to facilitate the involvement of these new Members in general meetings, including the AGM, using technological processes.

There were three significant initiatives in relation to the Board's governance responsibilities during the year. William Buck was reappointed as the company's auditor for a five-year term, Peter Hine was engaged to undertake our five-year independent Scheme Review, and Jane Jeffreys was engaged to conduct an independent

review of the Board and its performance. Both processes reflected well on the Scheme and the Board while offering constructive recommendations for enhancement.

In part as result of these external reviews, but also from its own considerations, the Board established a committee, chaired by Consumer Director, Margaret Cross, to consult with key stakeholders and review and modernise our Constitution. Their recommendations will be considered in due course.

Jane Jeffreys also was engaged to provide an external perspective of Mr Sandy Canale's application for a further five-year term as Ombudsman, as his current contract expires in November 2022. Following careful consideration, the Board was pleased to offer Mr Canale a further five-year contract as of December 2022, which he has accepted.

In respect to the Board's membership, during the year Anne Westley resigned as the Water Industry Director and was replaced by Kylie Johnson, who will complete her term. Patrick Makinson and Anthony Sinclair were re-elected as Electricity Industry Directors and Geoff Barton as Gas Industry Director, all for three-year terms.

I consider it an honour to be the Chair of such a significant organisation and acknowledge the Directors who work together independently, yet collectively, to give thoughtful oversight to the Scheme.

On behalf of the Board, I express my appreciation to our staff who have again responded to the unusual circumstances and were able to maintain high-quality services to Members and their customers with excellent spirit and morale. I particularly thank the Ombudsman for his leadership, industry knowledge and readiness to work with the Board.

Peter Bicknell AM
Chair

Our aim is to ensure the Scheme's long-term viability while giving priority to providing quality services and responding to the needs of vulnerable customers and those who face difficulties accessing the Scheme.

Ombudsman's Report

I am delighted to provide you with an overview of the key events and challenges that helped shape the work of the Scheme in the 2021-22 financial year.



Our five-yearly independent review of the Scheme was undertaken in late 2021, as required by our Constitution. This review allows us to track our progress and determine what areas of our work need improvement. The review comprised three online surveys – with 502 South Australian residents, 170 Energy & Water Ombudsman SA (EWOSA) customers, and our staff – and interviews with 56 key internal and external stakeholders.

The review shows that the Scheme is held in very high regard by Members, customers and stakeholders.

Overall complaint satisfaction ratings were 8.6 out of 10, with 91% of customers saying they would recommend the Scheme to others. The knowledge of our staff was highly rated, as was the way in which they dealt with customers – nine out of 10 customers said staff were fair, polite and courteous.

The Scheme received high ratings for governance and operations, with almost nine out of 10 stakeholders saying its information and complaint-handling processes were efficient and that the Board and management worked effectively together.

Importantly, the Scheme is now recognised by more South Australians than ever before, with 76% of those surveyed aware of it compared to 51% in 2016.

Areas of focus identified in the review are as follows.

- Stakeholders were consistent in their views that the major challenge for the Scheme moving forward will be the need to diversify its response to emerging technologies and the issues arising from these changes.
- The overwhelming majority were of the view that the Scheme should be a “one stop shop” for energy and water complaints. However, there needs to be a clear distinction between what is covered by consumer and energy law and what is dealt with by the Ombudsman.
- Stakeholders identified that some groups in the community may be less aware of the Scheme or find it more difficult to access the Scheme, including older people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, people from regional and remote communities and First Nations people.

These points will be addressed by the Scheme and are included in our strategic and business plans.

Continuing reduced complaint numbers

After two years of emergency management of the COVID-19 pandemic, South Australia is now in a new period of "COVID normal".

As noted by the Chair, complaint levels during 2021-22 have remained consistent with the previous year, in part due to regulatory support for COVID-affected businesses and individuals, such as a moratorium on energy disconnections. Lower complaint levels and thus operational income required us to seek further efficiencies in our business during the year.

Complaint numbers may again rise in the coming year due to the removal of pandemic supports, residual debt levels from the pandemic, rising interest rates and hikes in energy prices. This will create new challenges.

Australia is also in the middle of a significant energy transition, which will benefit many but may leave others behind. The transition has implications for consumer protections, with some new products and services falling outside the jurisdiction of energy ombudsman schemes.

To meet these challenges, in April 2022 we revised our Strategic Plan. The new plan ensures we can respond quickly and flexibly to any growth in demand for dispute resolution services over the next three years.

The Scheme continues to attract fewer complaint numbers than before COVID.

Overall complaint levels remained comparable to 2020-21, with credit complaints – those relating to non-payment of bills, payment difficulties, disconnections and disputes on credit status – continuing at the lower levels recorded in March 2020. The month of April saw a 14-year low in monthly complaint numbers due to issues such as low unemployment, seasonal fluctuations, milder weather conditions and the absence of major electricity disruptions.

I am pleased about the growing recognition of the payment difficulties that some consumers face. Important developments during the year may assist customers to better manage their energy bills and seek assistance when they need it. The Australian Energy Regulator (AER) released a Better Bills Guideline to mandate major changes to energy bills by 31 March 2023. Customers will be able to look at their bills and quickly see whether they can get a better deal and how to switch. The AER's draft Consumer Vulnerability Strategy was released on 20 December 2021 and we welcome its emphasis on support for vulnerable customers.

**I am pleased
about the growing
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some consumers face.**

We have taken numerous steps to ensure our organisation is operating with the highest possible efficiency.

Member growth

We welcomed a significant number of new Members during the year.

The majority of new Members are small-scale and off-grid energy services. Many were previously exempted from membership but are now required to join the Scheme by the Essential Services Commission of South Australia (ESCOSA). The Australian Energy Regulator (AER) also strengthened its processes to ensure embedded networks join the Scheme, as they are required to do.

New Members may bring different paradigms to the Scheme, while growing Member numbers may impact the Scheme's resources. Membership growth and diversity offer both opportunity and challenge to EWOSA. We look forward to working with all of our new Members, including new authorised retailers who have entered the market, to improve customer outcomes.

Organisational efficiency

We have taken numerous steps to ensure our organisation is operating with the highest possible efficiency.

In response to the pandemic, our workforce moved off-site in late March 2020. We continued this practice two days a week during the year, while maintaining our level of service to customers and Members. This also provided our staff with greater flexibility without diluting the benefit of face-to-face interactions.

As a result of lower complaint levels, we reviewed our capital works program to moderate the need for future investment and revised our staffing levels. We also have pursued efficiency measures, notably achieving faster resolution of cases through structural and process reforms.

The energy transition

Over the past three years we have seen a growing proportion of cases that fall outside our jurisdiction. This is in part driven by disruptive changes in the energy market arising from new technologies, services and products. Many of these emerging offerings are from players new to the energy market, such as large corporates from other sectors.

Households and businesses are adopting these new products and services, such as virtual power plants, battery storage and electric vehicles. Many of these products and services are not covered by existing energy-specific protections, such as EWOSA. As a result, some consumers must now rely on Australian Consumer Law to resolve disputes.

Other consumers may be left behind in this energy transition – and may pay a greater percentage of the state’s overall energy bill – so sufficient protections will need to be in place to ensure that all can benefit.

During the year, we contributed to national and South Australian discussions on this emerging and significant issue. For example, we engaged with the AER on its review of the retailer authorisation and exemption frameworks. These frameworks are the gateway for energy products and services to be captured under the National Energy Customer Framework.

Our Board has taken a strong position about the vital role of the energy regulator in devising reforms to protect consumers in the new energy market, such as fit-for-purpose external dispute resolution and other safeguards. The Board has also developed a set of principles to guide discussions about future participation of the Scheme in the evolving market.

Valued relationships

EWOSA’s aim is to provide independent and fair dispute resolution services for energy and water consumers. We do not do this in isolation and I thank all of those who have contributed to or supported us in our work.

Foremost, I acknowledge Members’ consistent efforts to resolve complaints early and deal with my office in a courteous and professional manner.

We continue to engage with regulators, governments, community organisations and the media to provide better protections for consumers and to promote our work. I am particularly grateful for the productive dialogue we have with the AER and ESCOSA.

I acknowledge my fellow ombudsman, who form part of the Australia and New Zealand Energy and Water Ombudsman Network. By working together I am confident we can navigate emerging energy and water issues that impact consumers.

I would like to thank the Board, and in particular the Chair, Peter Bicknell, for their support, advice and strategic insights throughout the year. Their leadership has been instrumental in driving a responsive and ever-improving service.

Lastly, my warmest thanks go to my staff for their professionalism, efficiency and camaraderie. Their hard work and commitment has delivered the Scheme’s strong customer satisfaction ratings and – most importantly – positive outcomes for energy and water consumers in South Australia.

Sandy Canale

Energy & Water Ombudsman SA

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Case management

The difference between Enquiries and Complaints

A **CASE** is a contact with us, registered and classified as either an 'enquiry' or a 'complaint'.

An **ENQUIRY** is a request for information or assistance, where we do our best to provide the most appropriate response. On occasions, we refer an enquiry to another body, such as a regulator or a government department.

A **COMPLAINT** is an expression of dissatisfaction with a Member (an energy or water service supplier) regarding a policy, practice or customer service performance. We endeavour to provide a response or resolution to the complaint using various means, such as conciliation or direct intervention through an Ombudsman's determination.

We use the following categories within our complaint-handling process:

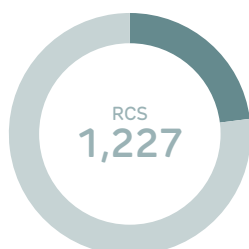
- Refer to Customer Service (RCS)
- Refer to Higher Level (RHL)
- Explanation of Resolution
- Consultation
- Conciliation
- Investigation
- Determination



Enquiries

The provision of timely and accurate information is an important component of our role. Typically, one of our staff will provide information on industry codes and regulations that may apply to a customer's issue or will explain details shown on a bill to customers. Staff may advise on how to raise an issue with the customer's supplier.

If the issue is outside the jurisdiction of the Scheme, we refer the customer to the appropriate organisation.



Complaints

Refer to Customer Service (RCS)

Under our Charter, an energy or water service supplier must have the opportunity to consider a complaint before we do. If they have not, the contact with us is recorded as a Refer to Customer Service (RCS) complaint and the customer is asked to contact the supplier's customer service section to try to resolve the issue.

Before doing this, we provide the customer with an overview of their rights and responsibilities.

Refer to Higher Level (RHL)

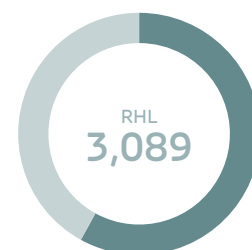
If a customer has been unable to resolve an issue with an energy or water service supplier, we accept the issue as a complaint.

If the customer has contacted the Member, we will refer the complaint to the Member's higher-level dispute resolution section under our Refer to Higher Level (RHL) procedure. This type of referral provides the Member with an opportunity to resolve the customer's complaint at a more senior level.

Exceptions include complaints about disconnections that are imminent or have already taken place, which are fast-tracked.

We tell customers that if they are not satisfied with the resolution or the time taken to resolve their complaints, they should contact us again.

We do not close RHL complaints until advised by the Member that the complaint has been resolved. This way, we maintain a watching brief over the resolution. If the customer tells us they are not satisfied with the outcome, or the complaint is not resolved within the specified timeframe, it may be upgraded to a Conciliation or an Investigation and is not recorded in our statistics as a new complaint.



Explanation of Resolution

A case is classified as Explanation of Resolution where the customer is not satisfied with the resolution provided by the Member, even though we consider it to be fair and reasonable. In this instance, we provide an explanation and any relevant information to the customer about why the resolution is considered to be fair and reasonable.



Consultation

A Consultation occurs when a customer is without energy or water supply. This includes customer disconnections or restrictions to water supply for non-payment of accounts.





Conciliation

Prior to investigating a case, we may facilitate a resolution between the customers and the energy or water service supplier for straightforward matters. The customer is provided with written details of the outcome of a conciliated case.



Investigation

When a case has been accepted for Investigation, the Member is asked to provide information on the case. This may include details about the customer's billing history, previous contacts between the Member and the customer relevant to the complaint, the cause of any outage, or whether informed consent was given to a market contract. If the customer has supporting information, we ask that they also provide that.

Where appropriate, we may also get independent technical or legal advice or seek the opinion of a regulatory body such as the Australian Energy Regulator, the Essential Services Commission (of South Australia) or the Office of the Technical Regulator.

Investigations will normally also include reviews of whether the requirements and provisions of the relevant energy and water codes and regulations have been met.

Our aim is to establish an objective and independent view of the issues and to negotiate a fair and reasonable outcome.



Ombudsman Determination

At the completion of an Investigation, and in the absence of a conciliated settlement of a complaint, the Ombudsman can make a Determination to resolve the complaint.

All matters closed by the Scheme were resolved at the lower levels during 2021-22, negating the need for any Determinations.

Resolutions

SUBJECT:	DEBT LIABILITY
ISSUES:	DEFAULT LISTING
UTILITY:	ELECTRICITY
CUSTOMER TYPE:	RESIDENTIAL
CASE TYPE:	INVESTIGATION

THE ISSUE:

Ms X was living at a property where the electricity account was in another tenant's name. When she moved out, there was an outstanding account debt of over \$15,000. This was referred to a collection agency in both her name and the account holder's name.

OUR REVIEW:

We reviewed the call Ms X made to request that she be added as an authorised party to discuss the account with the supplier. We found that the provider instead incorrectly added her as a financially responsible party. It neither obtained her consent for this, nor advised her that she was financially responsible for the account.

RESOLUTION:

Ms X's name was removed from the outstanding debt and the default listing against her name was removed. The outstanding debt remained solely in the name of the account holder.

SUBJECT:	METERING - BILLING
ISSUES:	DELAYED METER REPLACEMENT AND ESTIMATED BILLING
UTILITY:	ELECTRICITY
CUSTOMER TYPE:	RESIDENTIAL
CASE TYPE:	INVESTIGATION

THE ISSUE:

Ms J noticed noises coming from her controlled load electricity meter. Her distributor attended, disconnected this meter and connected her hot water service to the peak usage meter. However, she continued to receive estimated bills for the meter which had been removed.

OUR REVIEW:

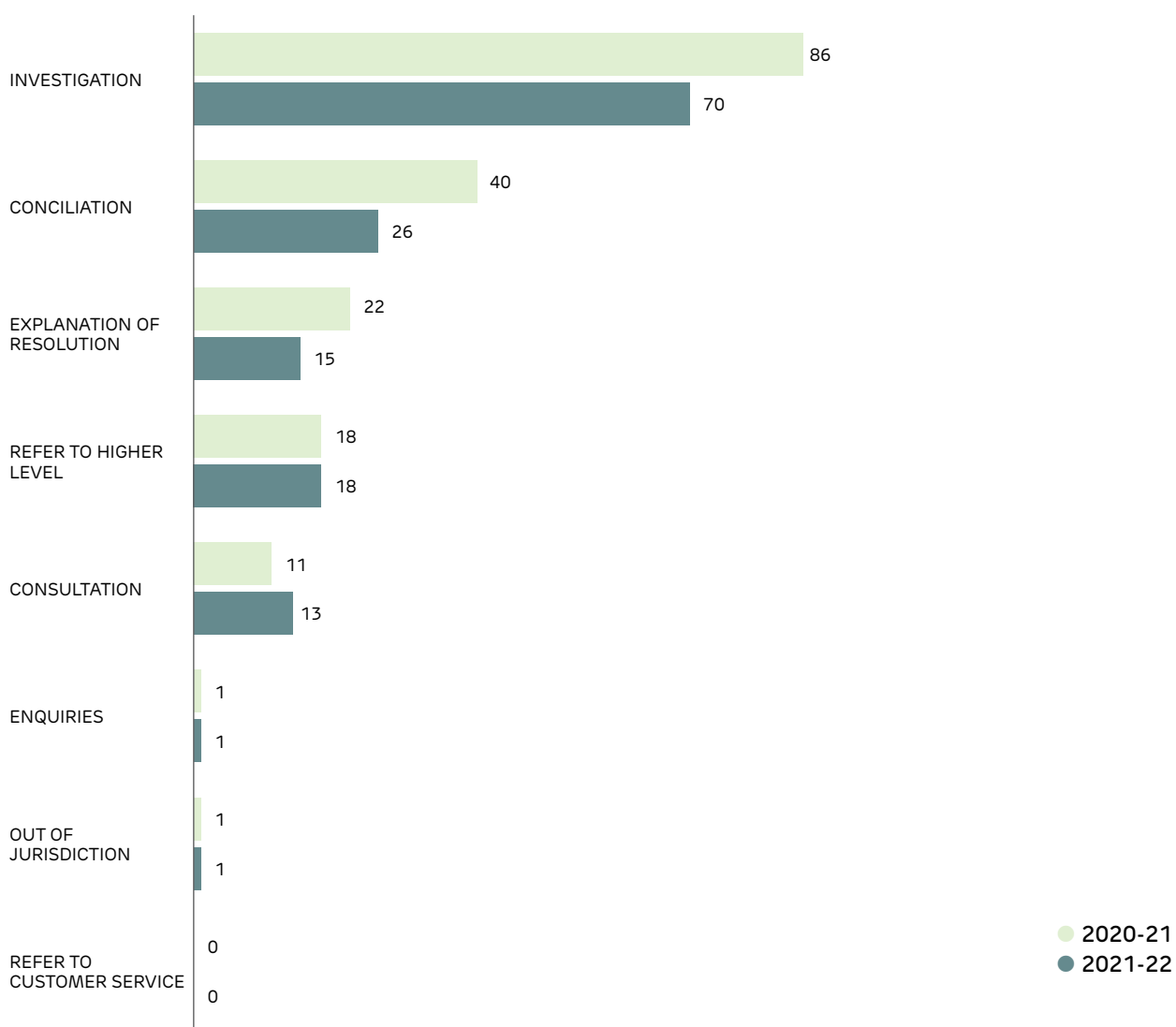
We found that when meter readers attended the property, they could not locate the controlled load meter and so Ms J was billed based on estimated controlled load usage. She was thus being double charged for her hot water: the peak meter charge and an estimated controlled load meter charge, despite that meter having been removed.

RESOLUTION:

Ms J's meters were replaced with a new meter that has both peak and controlled load added, and adjustments were made to her account to credit the double charging. A credit also was provided as a gesture of goodwill, and a payment plan was offered for the remaining balance.

Resolution of cases within timeframes

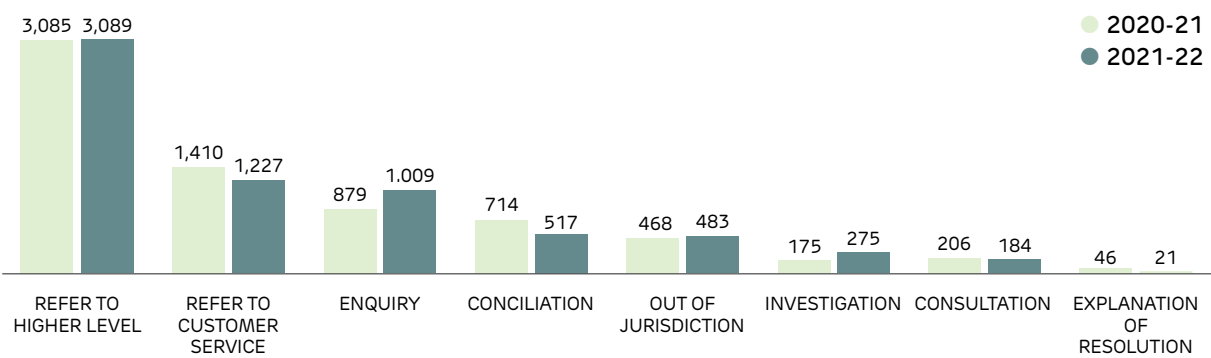
The figures below show our performance for this financial year in relation to the amount of time taken to resolve cases. There have been significant improvements in the Average Time (Days) to Resolve across some categories, particularly Investigation and Conciliation.



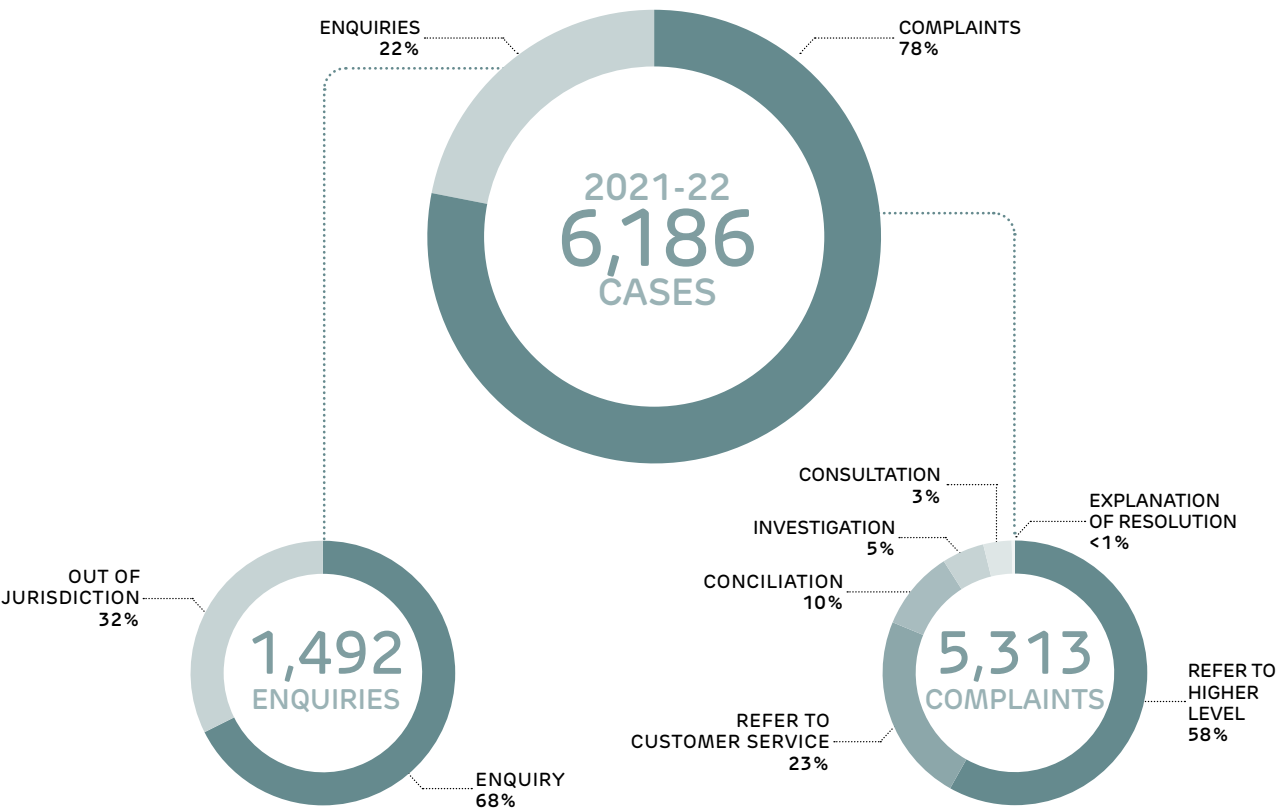
AVERAGE TIME (DAYS) TO RESOLVE

Cases resolved

The following charts show cases resolved during 2021-22, compared with the previous year.



CASES RESOLVED, BY CASE TYPE



CASES RESOLVED, BY LEVEL

Cases received: yearly and monthly trends

The volume of cases received by the Scheme increased progressively from its inception in 2000 to peak at 21,130 in 2012-13. A particularly large rise in 2012-13 was caused by complaints arising from billing system conversions. There was a steady decline to just 8,828 cases in 2016-17, followed by two years of increases largely caused by an influx of cases about metering competition.

Case volumes again decreased significantly in 2019-20, most markedly during the period where financial and regulatory emergency support was provided in response to COVID-19. The 2021-22 figure of 6,816 total cases received was the lowest since 2008.

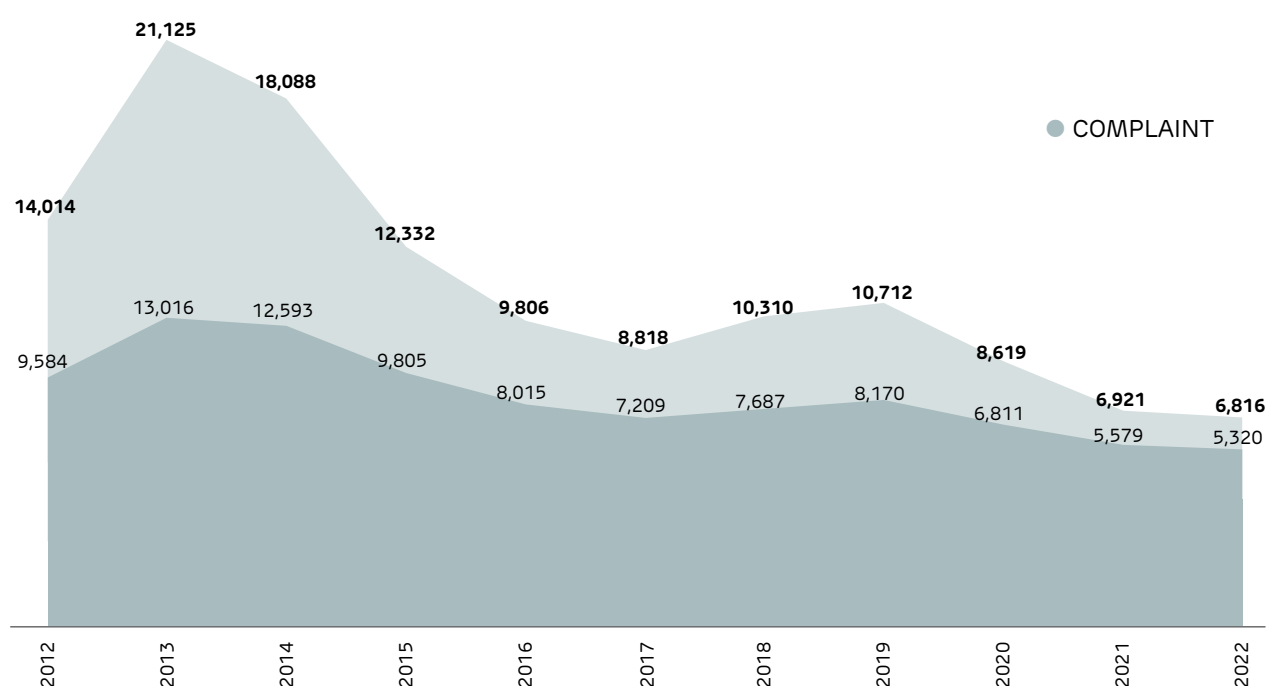
We receive a number of General Enquiries each year, and these are included in the chart below. They relate to requests for general information, general advice or clarification of a customer's rights while deciding whether to lodge a complaint, provision of feedback without wishing to lodge a complaint and suggestions or issues outside our jurisdiction.

Since 2014-15, the proportion of complaints has been relatively steady at about 80% of all cases each year. During significant events in 2013 the proportion of complaints reduced to 59% of cases, then also during the rise in cases during 2018-2019 the proportion of complaints reduced to 75% of all cases.

Since the inception of the Scheme, the definitions of case types and the way they are recorded have evolved. For this reason, the 2012 figures provided below are indicative only.

The next chart shows the number of complaints received monthly for three successive years up to 2021-22, revealing two variations from the norm.

TOTAL CASES

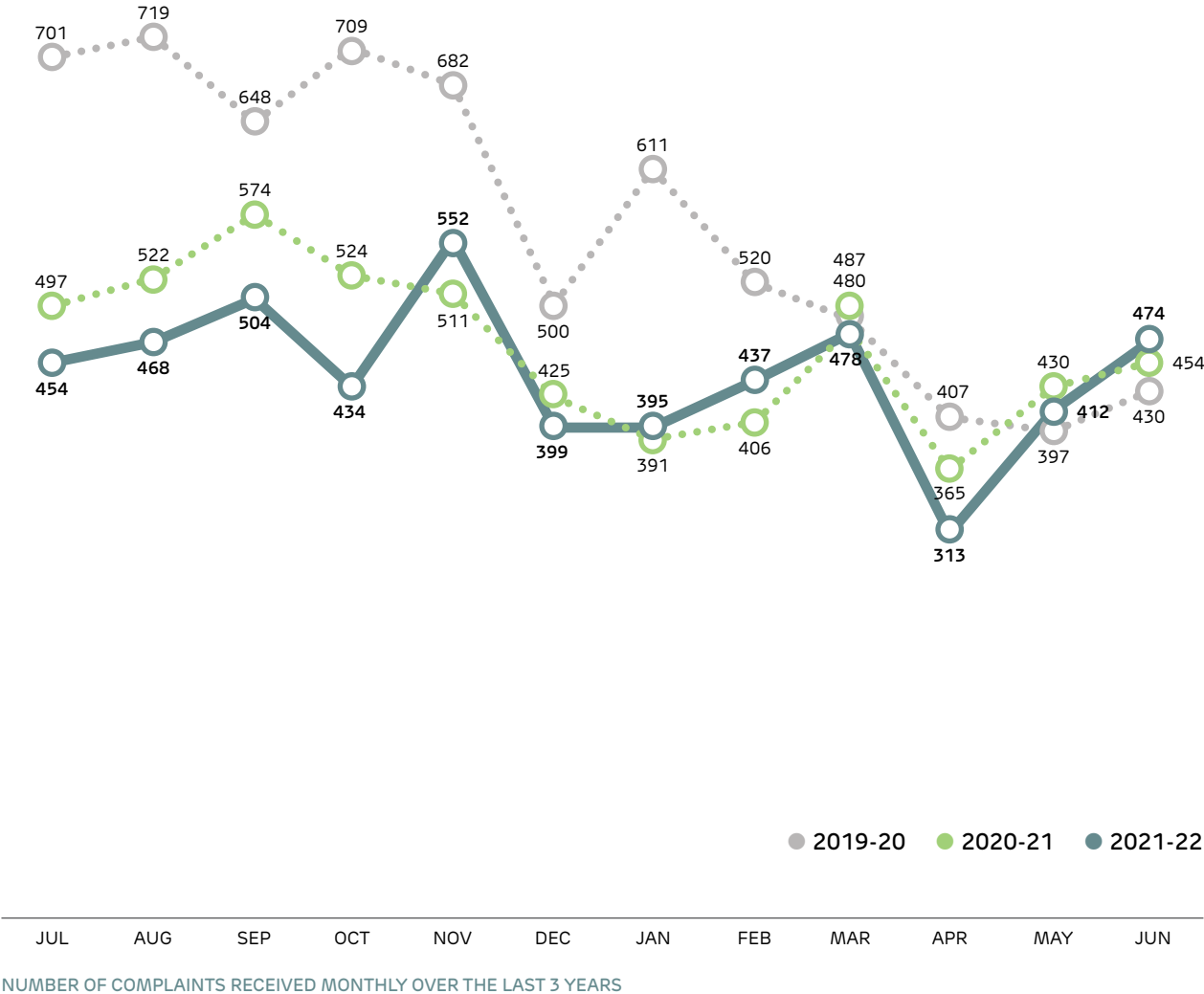
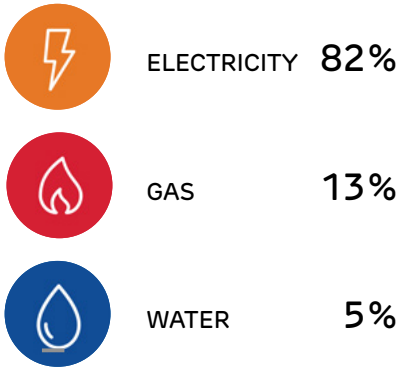


NUMBER OF CASES RECEIVED BY YEAR OVER THE LAST 10 YEARS (FY)

December is usually our quietest month, but in 2019-20 there was a significant decline from March onwards, aligning with the economic disruption caused by COVID-19. This occurred again in 2020-21 and 2021-22. As noted in the Ombudsman’s report, this may be attributed to various factors.

In 2021-22 there also was a spike in complaints in November, coinciding with a peak in the Time-of-Use tariff issue complaints with the largest suppliers.

COMPLAINTS BY INDUSTRY SECTOR



Primary and Additional Issues

The Scheme assigns a Primary Issue to each complaint received, though there may also be Additional Issues attached. These represent other major issues that are relevant to the complaint. The table below includes both Primary and Additional Issues. In 2021-22, Customer Service was the most frequent Additional Issue.

	2021-22		
	Primary Issues	Additional Issues	Total
Billing	3,136	1,136	4,272
Customer Service	87	1,432	1,519
Provision	791	236	1,027
Credit	394	213	607
Marketing	229	141	370
Transfer	201	56	257
General Enquiry	111	126	237
Supply	189	39	228
Land	167	52	219
Privacy	15	11	26
Grand Total	5,320	2,890	8,210

PRIMARY AND ADDITIONAL ISSUES – COMPLAINTS ONLY

Resolutions

SUBJECT:	BACK BILLING FOLLOWING UNDERCHARGING FOR ELECTRICITY
ISSUES:	BILLING – HIGH – BACK BILLING
UTILITY:	ELECTRICITY
CUSTOMER TYPE:	BUSINESS
CASE TYPE:	INVESTIGATION

THE ISSUE:

For two years a small business customer received monthly bills for less than the amount recorded on the meters. There also was a delay in billing. The energy provider issued a catchup bill in June 2021 to cover the undercharging from May 2018 to July 2020 and delayed charges from July 2020 until June 2021.

OUR REVIEW:

We reviewed the usage data, conducted a bill reconciliation and established the correct charges that should apply. We also established that the catchup bill had sought to recover undercharging beyond nine months, which the rules did not permit.

RESOLUTION:

The supplier applied a credit of \$88,300 to the account to fix the error and comply with the rules. It also offered additional time to pay the remaining charges by instalments.

SUBJECT:	HIGH BILL
ISSUES:	BILLING – HIGH BILL DUE TO FAULTY METER
UTILITY:	GAS
CUSTOMER TYPE:	RESIDENTIAL
CASE TYPE:	INVESTIGATION

THE ISSUE:

Mr L received two quarterly bills that were five times higher than for the corresponding periods in the previous two years. He complained to his supplier, which removed his meter for testing.

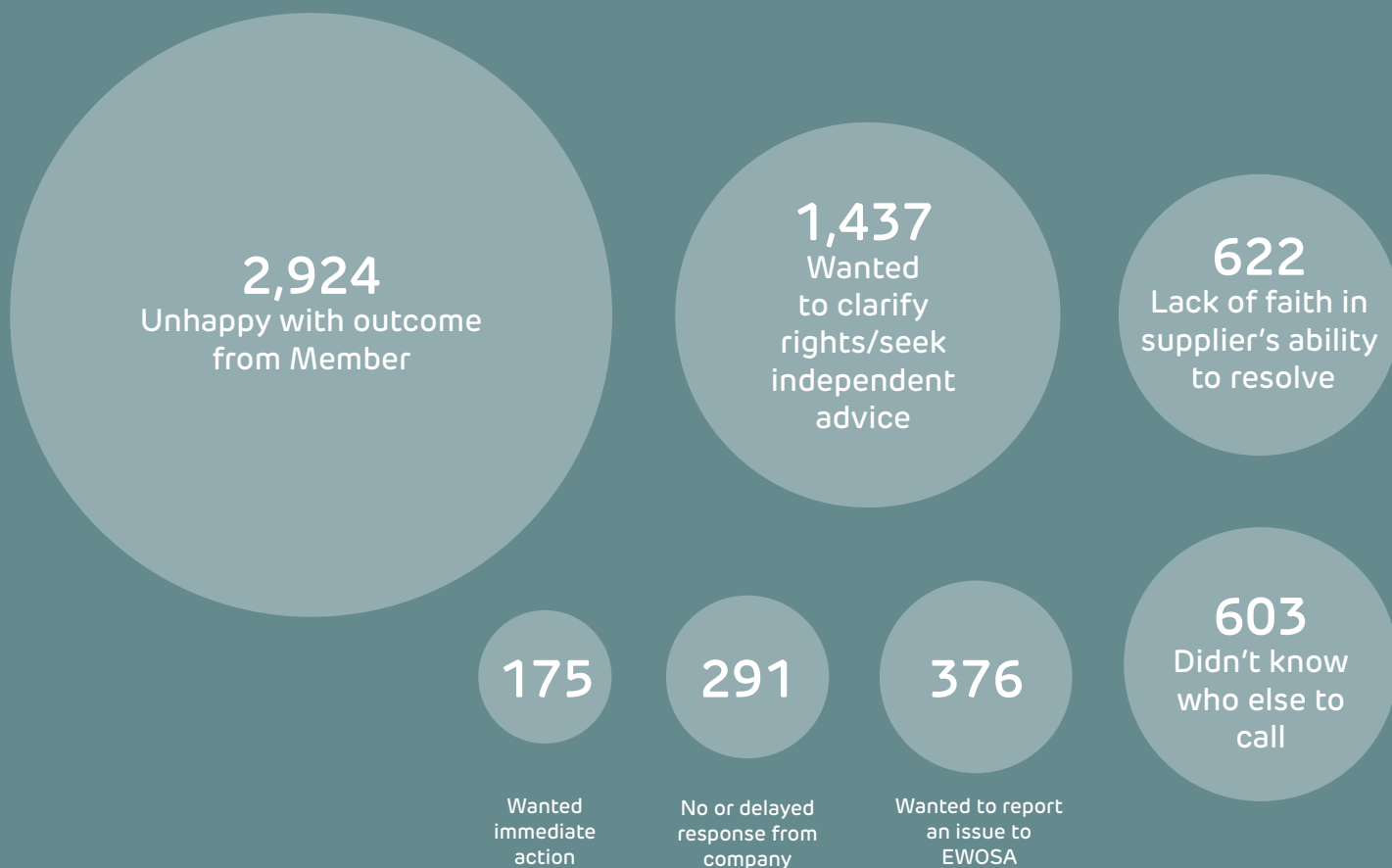
OUR REVIEW:

We found that the meter had passed an accuracy test, but that a further review of its internal workings by the gas distributor found a fault with the meter index (numbers).

RESOLUTION:

The supplier agreed to cancel the two higher bills and calculate a credit, based on the actual usage for the same time 12 months prior, which resulted in a \$1,750 credit. A further goodwill credit was applied for the inconvenience caused.

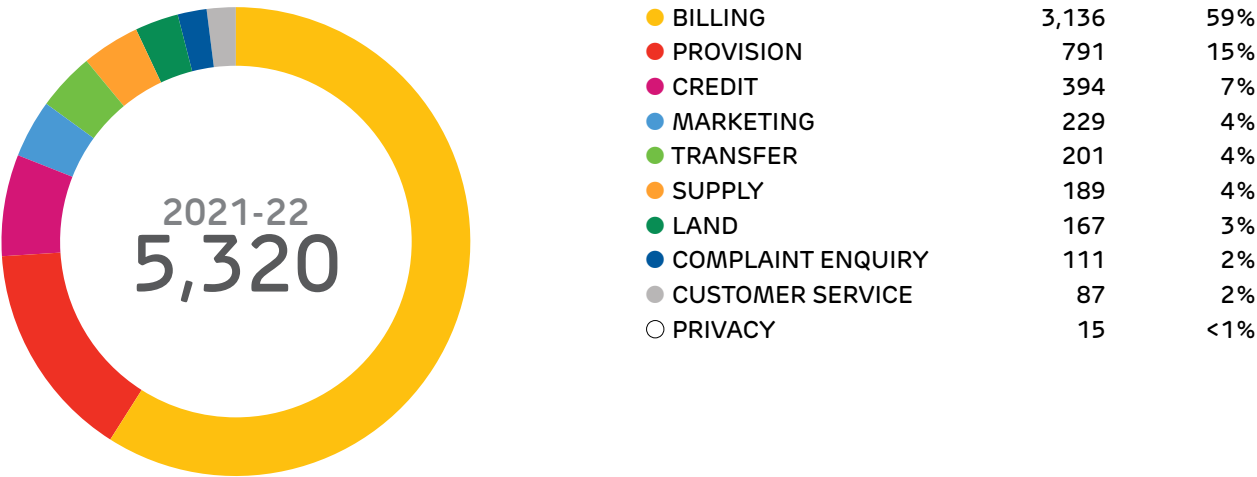
Reasons for Contact (all cases received)



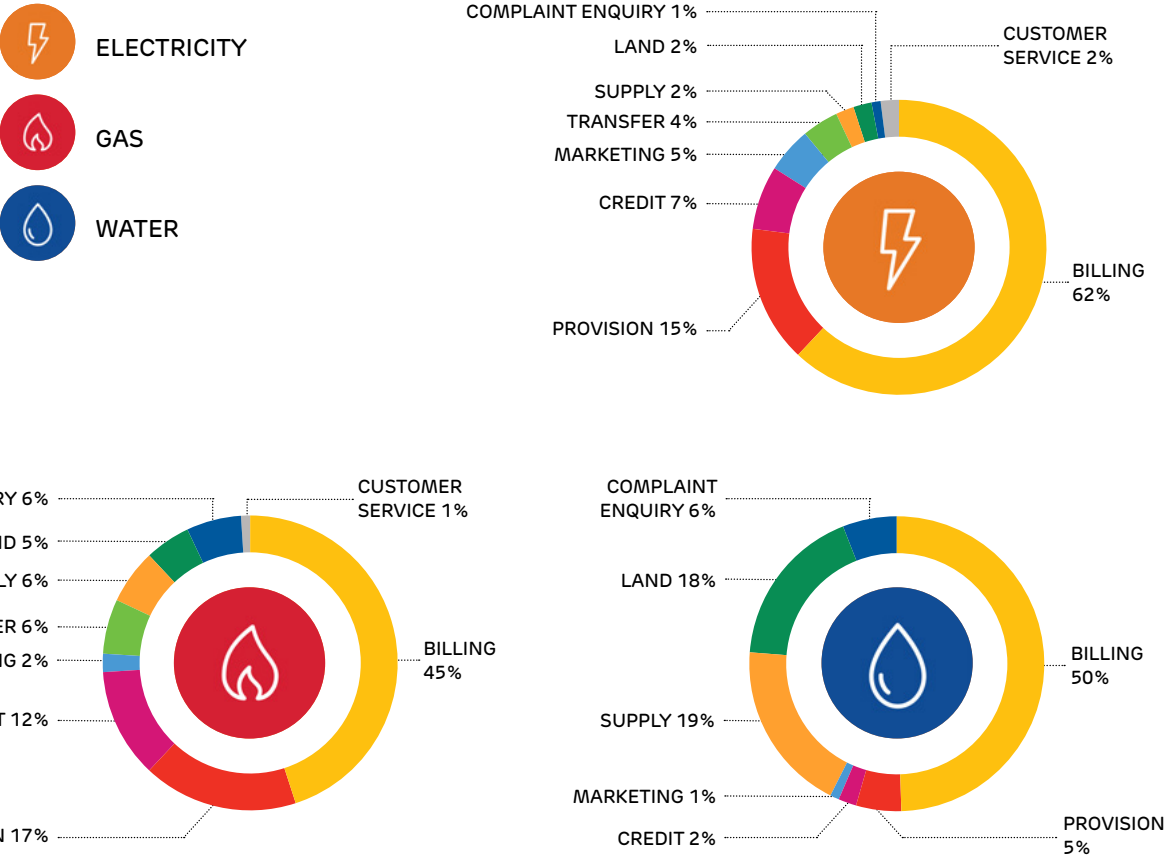
Method of Contact



Complaints received by type



Complaints received by industry

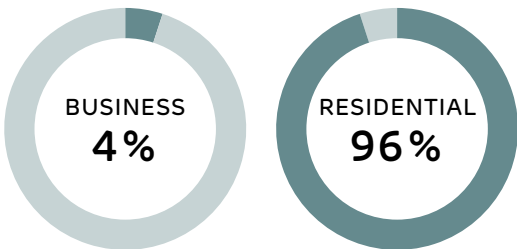


Where Complaints came from

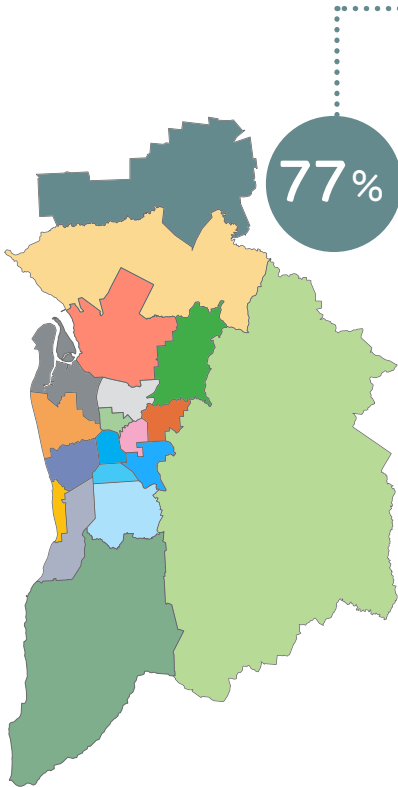
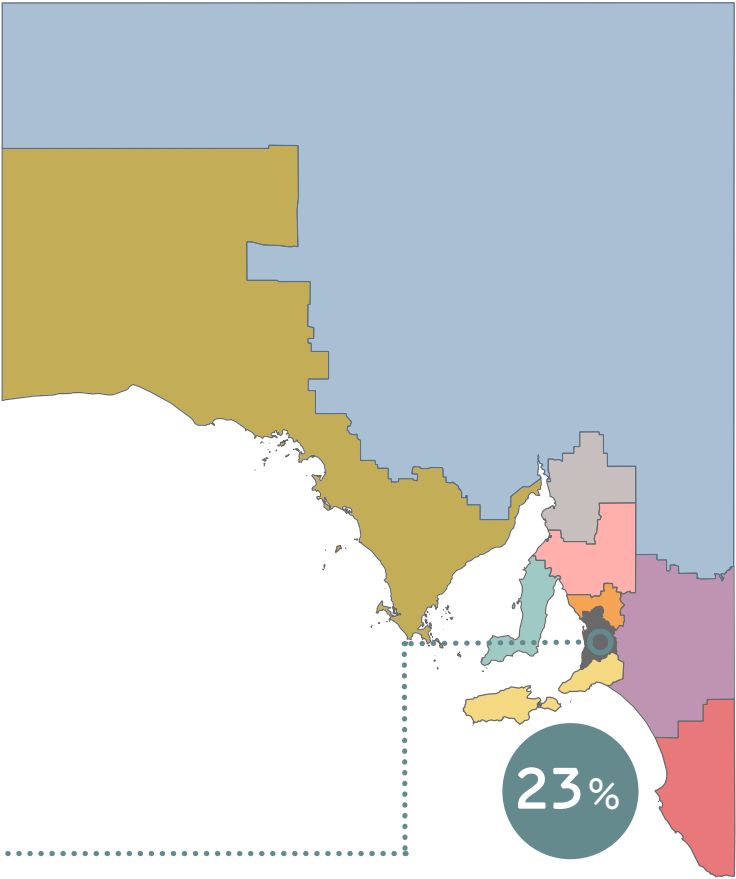
Complaints received per 10,000 population

REGIONAL AREAS

- Barossa
- Eyre Peninsula and South West
- Fleurieu - Kangaroo Island
- Limestone Coast
- Lower North
- Mid North
- Murray and Mallee
- Outback - North and East
- Yorke Peninsula



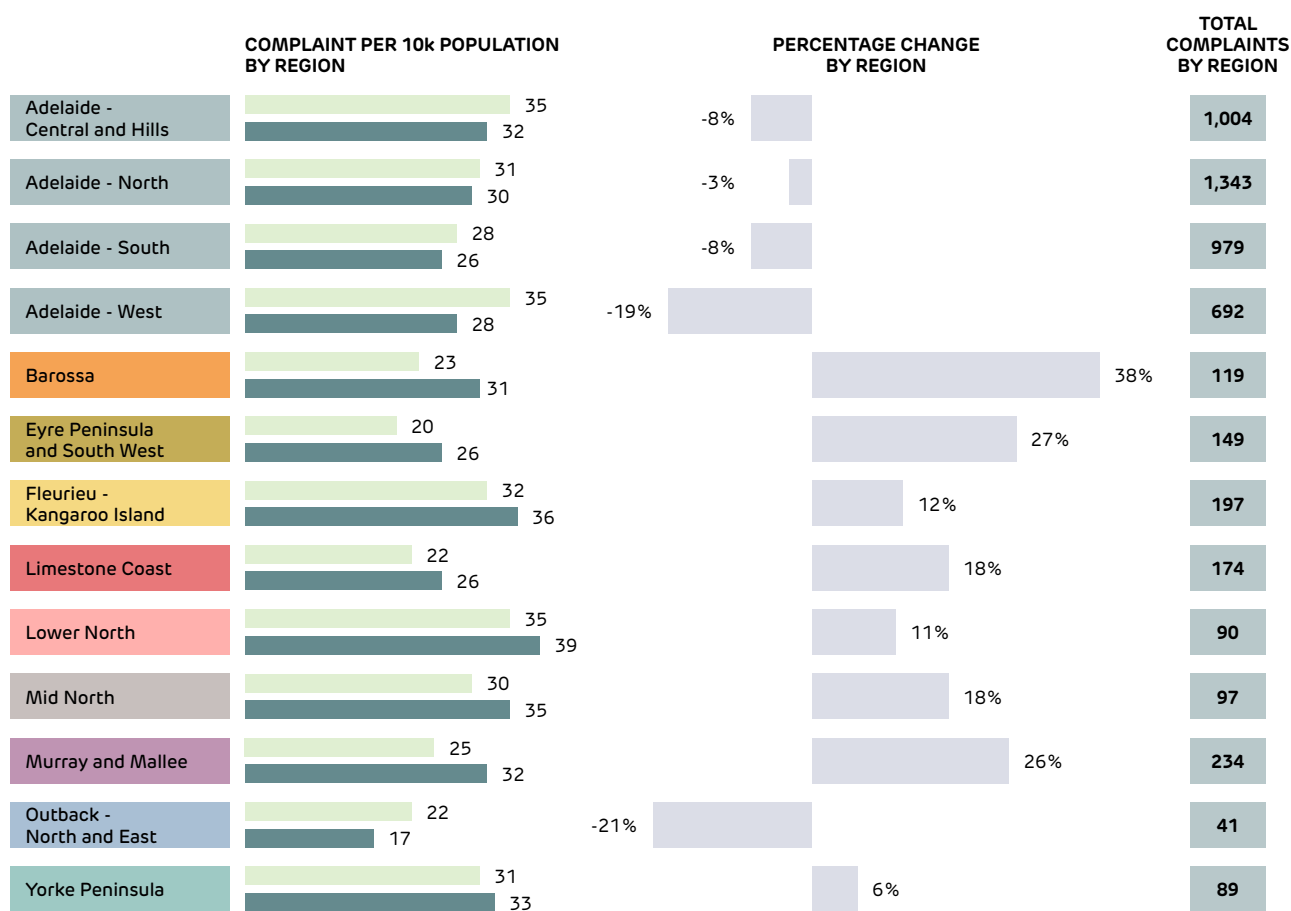
SOURCE OF CONTACT (BUSINESS OR RESIDENTIAL)



METROPOLITAN AREAS

	COMPLAINTS	% OF TOTAL	COMPLAINTS PER 10k
Adelaide City	133	3%	52
Adelaide Hills	243	6%	31
Burnside	134	3%	29
Campbelltown (SA)	166	4%	31
Charles Sturt	342	9%	29
Gawler - Two Wells	145	4%	38
Holdfast Bay	121	3%	34
Marion	245	6%	25
Mitcham	194	5%	29
Norwood - Payneham - St Peters	137	3%	37
Onkaparinga	419	10%	24
Playford	325	8%	33
Port Adelaide - East	230	6%	31
Port Adelaide - West	156	4%	26
Prospect - Walkerville	76	2%	25
Salisbury	370	9%	26
Tea Tree Gully	273	7%	28
Unley	115	3%	30
West Torrens	194	5%	30

COMPLAINTS PER 10K POPULATION – METRO ADELAIDE



COMPLAINTS PER 10,000 POPULATION BY REGION ● 2020-21 ● 2021-22

	YEAR OF RECEIVED DATE	METROPOLITAN				RURAL & REGIONAL SA
		ADELAIDE - NORTH	ADELAIDE - CENTRAL AND HILLS	ADELAIDE - WEST	ADELAIDE - SOUTH	
BILLING	2020-21	52.9%	54.7%	55.8%	56.8%	55.7%
	2021-22	58.4%	58.0%	61.5%	55.3%	63.2%
PROVISION	2020-21	21.6%	17.1%	15.7%	17.9%	17.5%
	2021-22	15.5%	13.6%	13.2%	18.1%	15.0%
CREDIT	2020-21	7.4%	12.4%	10.4%	8.5%	7.7%
	2021-22	5.9%	9.8%	8.3%	6.6%	6.0%
MARKETING	2020-21	3.3%	3.7%	3.7%	3.8%	3.8%
	2021-22	5.7%	5.1%	3.9%	2.0%	3.8%
TRANSFER	2020-21	3.8%	3.8%	3.0%	3.8%	3.9%
	2021-22	3.3%	4.5%	4.2%	5.1%	2.7%
LAND	2020-21	3.4%	3.0%	5.6%	3.5%	4.4%
	2021-22	3.0%	2.2%	2.6%	4.9%	2.9%
SUPPLY	2020-21	3.0%	2.2%	2.2%	1.4%	4.2%
	2021-22	3.2%	3.3%	2.9%	3.5%	3.8%
OTHER	2020-21	4.5%	3.3%	3.7%	4.4%	3.0%
	2021-22	5.1%	3.5%	3.6%	4.5%	2.6%

COMPLAINTS BY ISSUE AND REGION

Major issues

This section focuses on complaints and excludes discussion of enquiries and out-of-jurisdiction issues. The Scheme received 5,320 complaints during 2021-22. We categorise issues as follows:



Complaint type

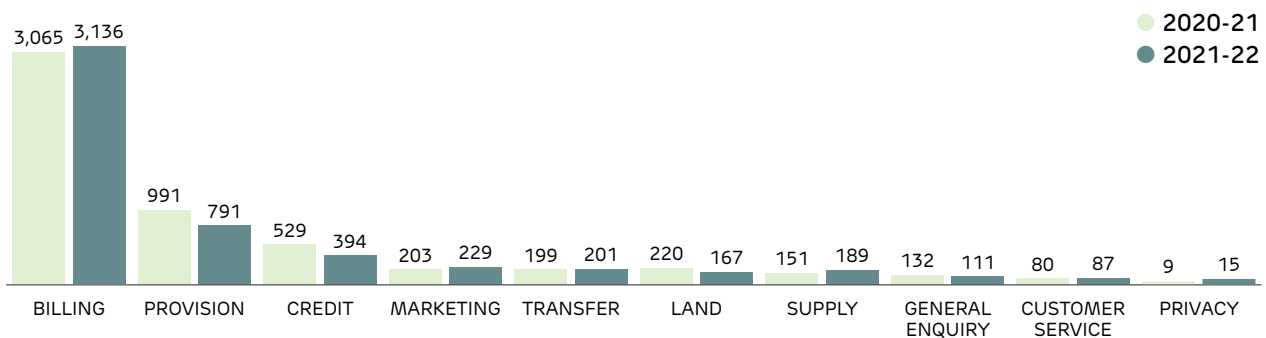
Description

Billing	Complaints about tariff costs, conditions, timing, charges applied and other billing matters
Provision	Provision of service: connection, disconnection, meter reading and other meter complaints
Credit	Payment difficulties, disconnection (imminent and actual), liability and problems with credit references
Marketing	Market and retailer conduct, contract issues
Transfer	Transfers of the customer's account
Supply	Outages, variations in voltage or flow, quality
Land	Issues relating to the customer's property

While a complaint can have more than one issue recorded against it, this major issues section provides information on complaints by Primary Issue.

The three top complaint issues for 2021-22 were Billing, Provision and Credit. The chart below shows the number of complaints by issue, comparing 2020-21 and 2021-22.

Effective 1 July 2021, the Scheme revised the categorisation of issues to ensure closer alignment to the energy and water ombudsman schemes interstate and also to ensure relevancy to current issues in South Australia. Most of the higher-level issue categories remain unchanged and historical comparisons of trends have been assessed against the current issues structure.



COMPLAINTS RECEIVED BY ISSUE TYPE

Billing

Billing complaint numbers increased by 2% in 2021-22, compared to the previous year. However, in common with other ombudsman schemes, Billing issues continue to generate the highest number of complaints.

The increases by sub-issues were:

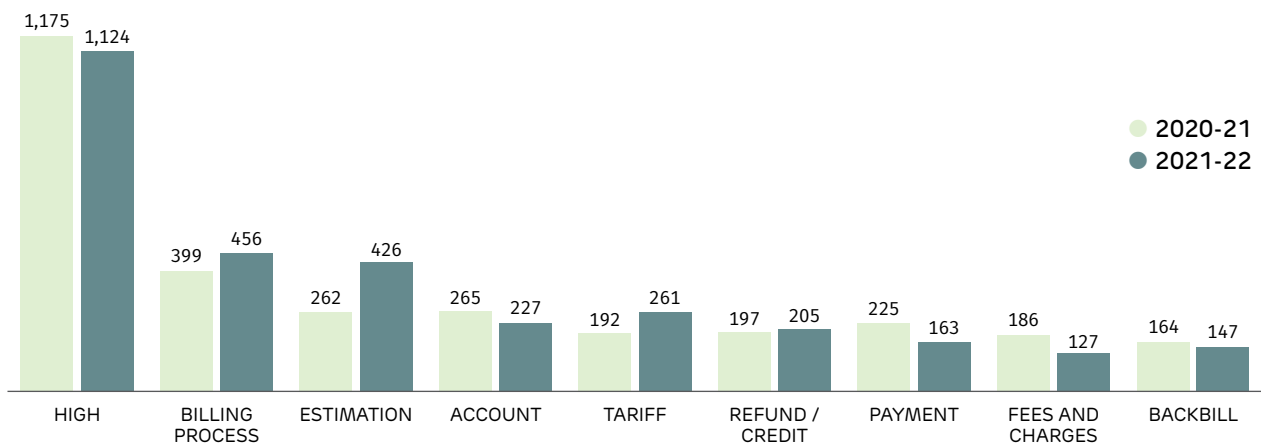
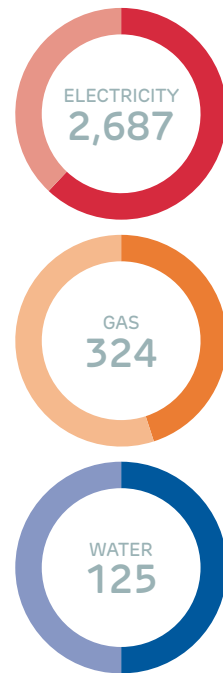
- Tariff (36%)
- Estimation (63%)
- Billing Process (14%)
- Refund/Credit (4%)

The decreases by sub-issues were:

- Account (14%)
- Backbill (10%)
- Fees and Charges (32%)
- High (4%)
- Payment (28%)

The increase in the Tariff sub-issue is notable as it follows a 20% decrease in 2020-21. The increase in Estimation was primarily attributed to improved categorisation. The Fees and Charges decrease is significant.

BILLING COMPLAINTS



BILLING COMPLAINTS BY TYPE

2021-22 Scheme Review

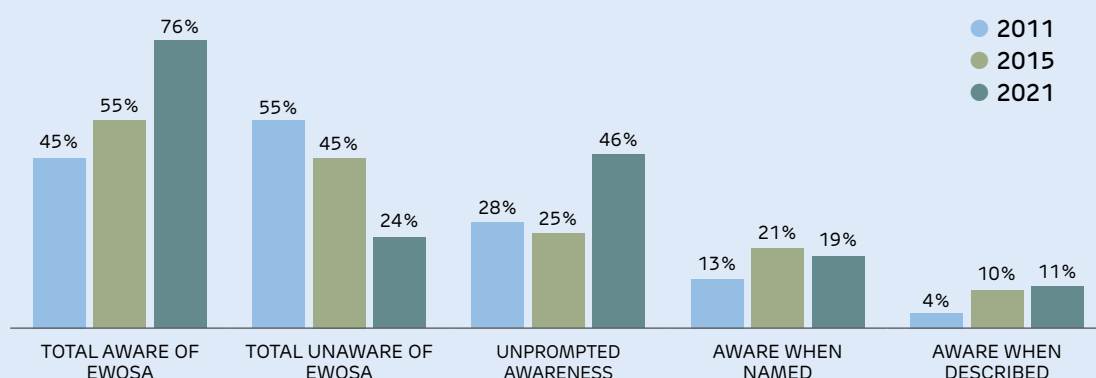
The fourth independent review of the Scheme was held during the year. The Constitution of the Energy and Water Ombudsman (SA) Limited requires that a review be held at least every five years. The most recent was 2016.

The Terms of Reference were consistent with the National Benchmarks for Industry-Based Customer Dispute Resolution Schemes. Data and information were collected by Front Window Consulting using the following methodologies:

- an Online Survey of 502 South Australian residents
- an Online Survey of 170 EWOSA customers
- an Online Survey of EWOSA staff
- Executive Depth Interviews with 56 Stakeholders conducted via telephone

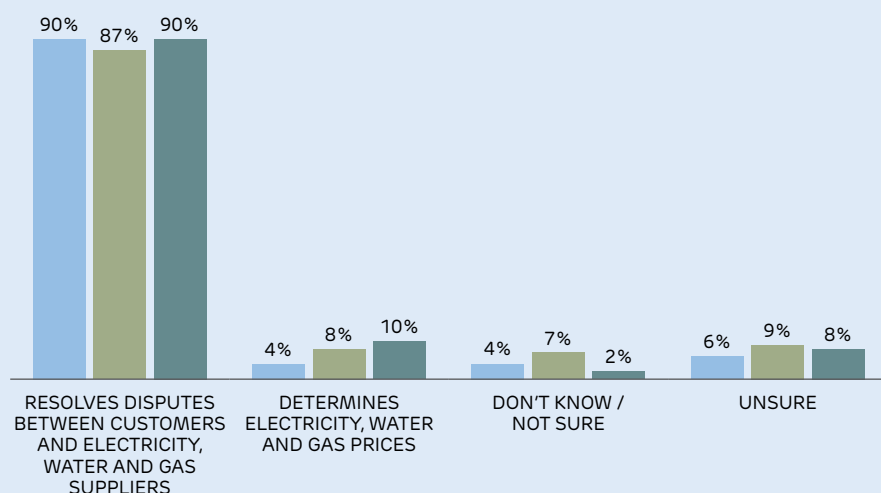
Total awareness of Energy & Water Ombudsman SA

Total awareness of the Scheme has increased significantly – from 55% in 2016 to 76%.



Role of the Energy and Water Ombudsman

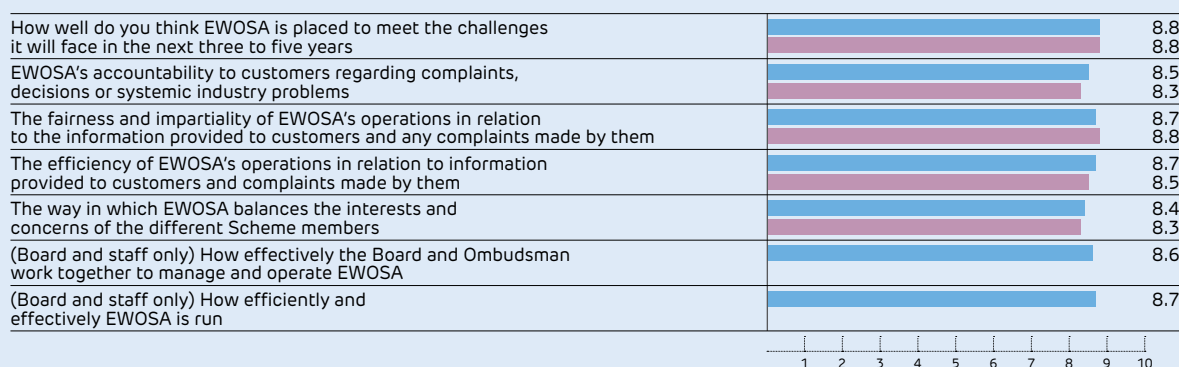
90% of those spontaneously aware of the Scheme correctly suggested that it resolves disputes between customers and electricity, water and gas companies (in line with the 87% recorded in 2015 and 90% recorded in 2011).



Summary of ratings questions 2021

The overwhelming majority of satisfaction ratings were very high, for both Board, key staff and external stakeholders.

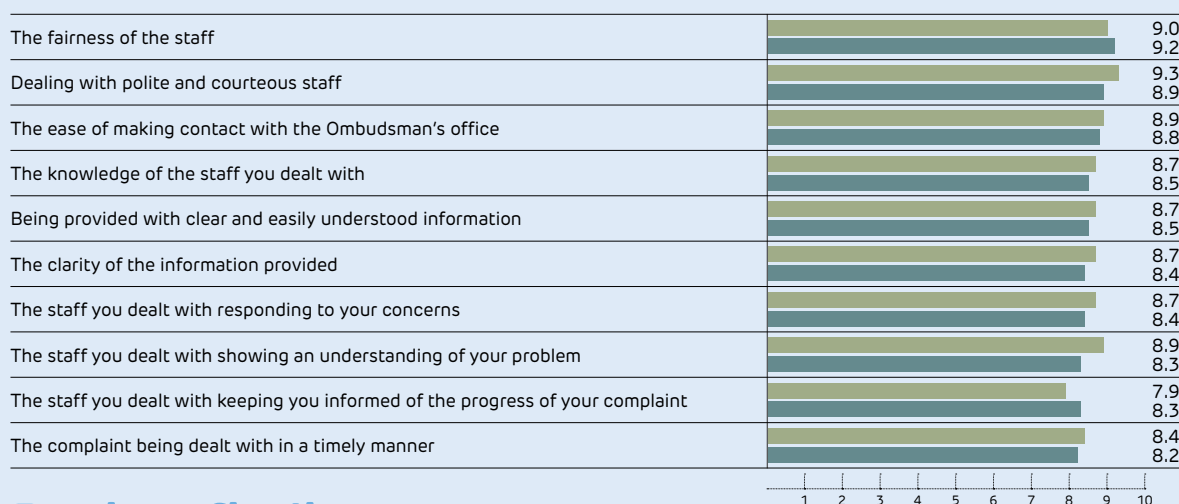
● BOARD AND KEY STAFF ● EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS



Customer satisfaction

High and consistent customer satisfaction ratings have been maintained.

● 2015-16 ● 2021-22



Review findings

Overall, the Scheme is held in very high regard by Members, customers and stakeholders and is considered to be delivering on its objectives in a fair and balanced, professional manner:

"In a nutshell, there is a general consensus that the core role of EWOSA is to facilitate, investigate and resolve disputes between energy and water suppliers in a fair and reasonable manner. Almost all of the stakeholders interviewed rated EWOSA as nine out ten for achieving these objectives."

Peter Hines, Independent Scheme Reviewer

The Scheme's major achievements over the past five years are considered to be:

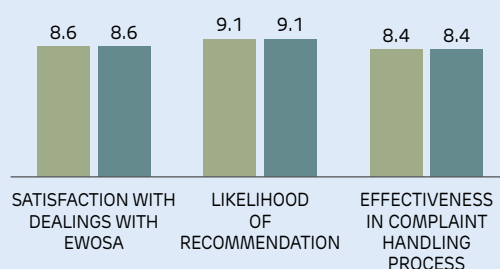
- agility in responding to COVID-19 (both internally and externally)
- management of staff and budgets
- response to the rapidly changing energy market
- rapport with Members of the Scheme.

The main challenges in the next five years are considered to be:

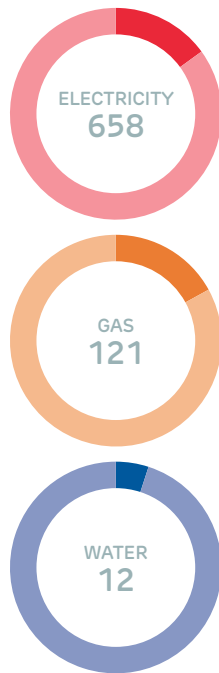
- the ongoing response to COVID-19
- handling emerging technologies
- adequately representing smaller members of the Scheme
- broadening access to the Scheme for those currently less represented.

Overall customer key metrics

● 2015 ● 2021



PROVISION COMPLAINTS



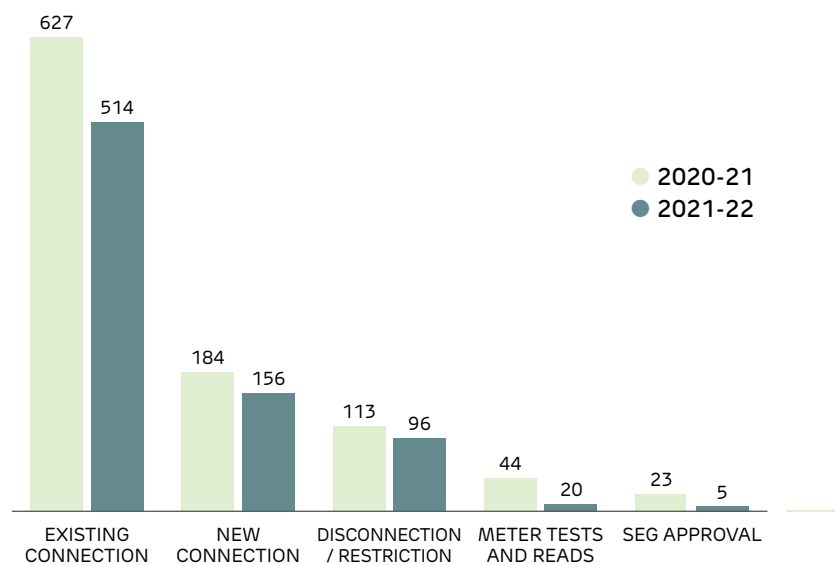
Provision

Provision was the second most significant issue for the Scheme in 2021-22, but complaint numbers decreased by 20% compared to the previous year.

There were significant decreases in the following sub-issues:

- SEG Approval (78%)
- New Connection (15%)
- Meter Tests and Reads (55%)

The other decreases were Disconnection (15%) and Existing Connection (18%).



PROVISION BY SERVICE TYPE

Credit

Credit was the third most significant issue for the Scheme in 2021-22, though numbers decreased by 26% compared to the previous year.

The most significant decrease was:

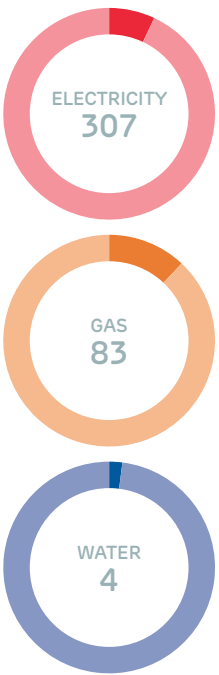
- Credit Action Taken in Error (39%)

Other decreases were Credit Action Disputed Liability (26%) and Payment Difficulties (36%).

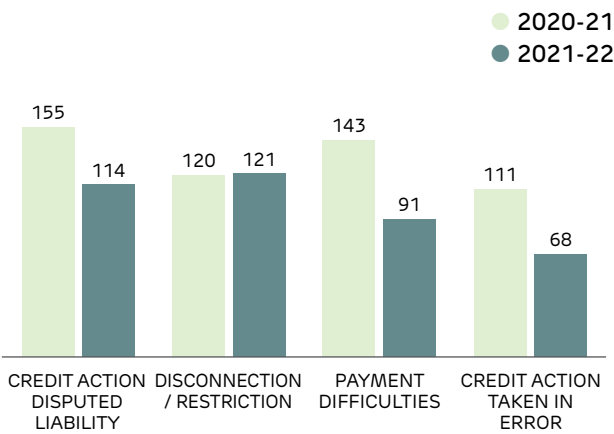
There was a small increase in Disconnection/Restriction (1%).

The Scheme continues to work closely with regulators to identify and address any systemic issues associated with credit complaints.

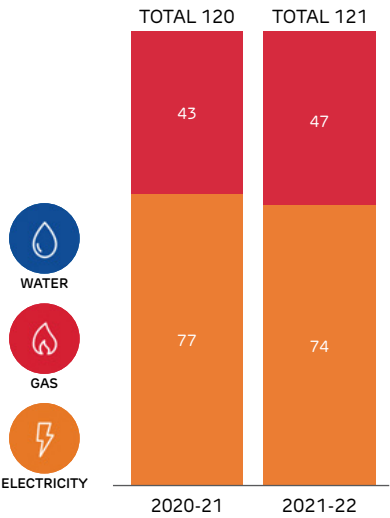
CREDIT COMPLAINTS



Disconnection complaints represented 31% of all Credit complaints



CREDIT BY PRODUCT TYPE



DISCONNECTION BY PRODUCT TYPE

Credit

Rural and Metropolitan Areas

The number of Payment Difficulty complaints decreased by 36% in 2021-22, compared to the previous year.

The table below provides a detailed breakdown by region.

REGION	2020-21			2021-22			% CHANGE IN NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS	
	NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS	% OF TOTAL PAYMENT DIFFICULTIES	COMPLAINTS PER 100,000 PEOPLE	NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS	% OF TOTAL PAYMENT DIFFICULTIES	COMPLAINTS PER 10,000 PEOPLE		
ADELAIDE - CENTRAL AND HILLS	12	8%	3.9	17	19%	5.5	5	42%
ADELAIDE - NORTH	49	34%	10.9	36	40%	8.0	-13	-27%
ADELAIDE - SOUTH	34	24%	9.0	12	13%	3.2	-22	-65%
ADELAIDE - WEST	19	13%	7.8	4	4%	1.6	-15	-79%
RURAL & REGIONAL SA	25	17%	6.4	20	22%	5.1	-5	-20%
ADDRESS NOT CONFIRMED	4	3%		2	2%		-2	-50%
TOTAL	143	100%		91	100%		-52	-36%

PAYMENT DIFFICULTIES BY RURAL AND METROPOLITAN AREAS

Marketing and Transfer

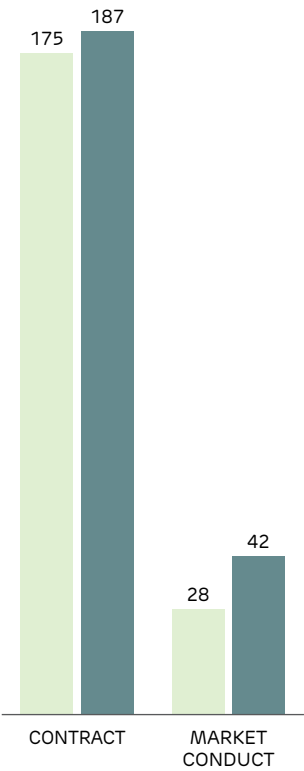
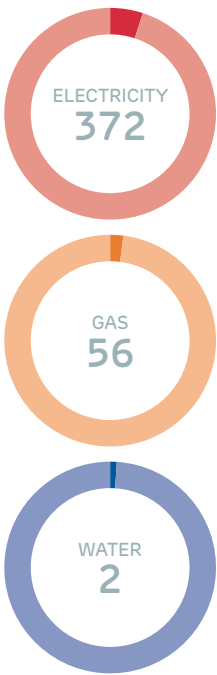
Marketing complaint numbers increased by 13% in 2021-22, compared to the previous year.
The Market Conduct sub-issue increased by 50%.
The Contract sub-issue also increased (7%).

Transfer complaint numbers increased slightly (1%).
The following Transfer sub-issues increased:

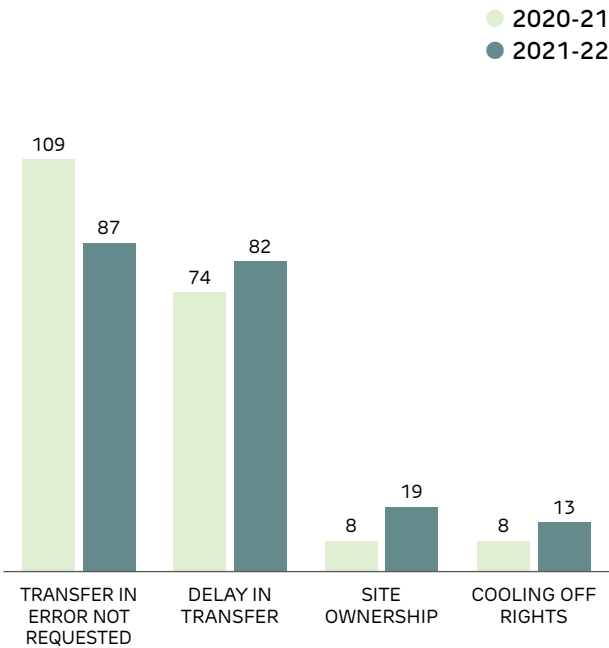
- Site Ownership (138%)
- Delay in Transfer (11%)
- Cooling Off Rights (63%)

The Transfer in Error Not Requested sub-issue significantly decreased (20%).

MARKETING AND TRANSFER COMPLAINTS

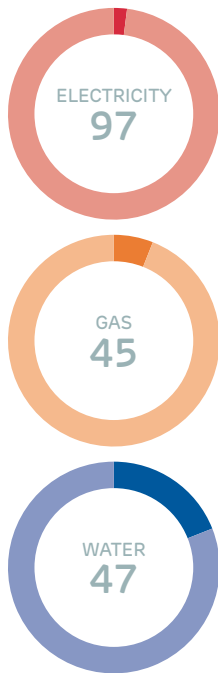


MARKETING COMPLAINTS BY TYPE



TRANSFER COMPLAINTS BY TYPE

SUPPLY COMPLAINTS



Supply

Supply complaint numbers increased by 25% in 2021-22, compared to the previous year.

The following sub-issues increased:

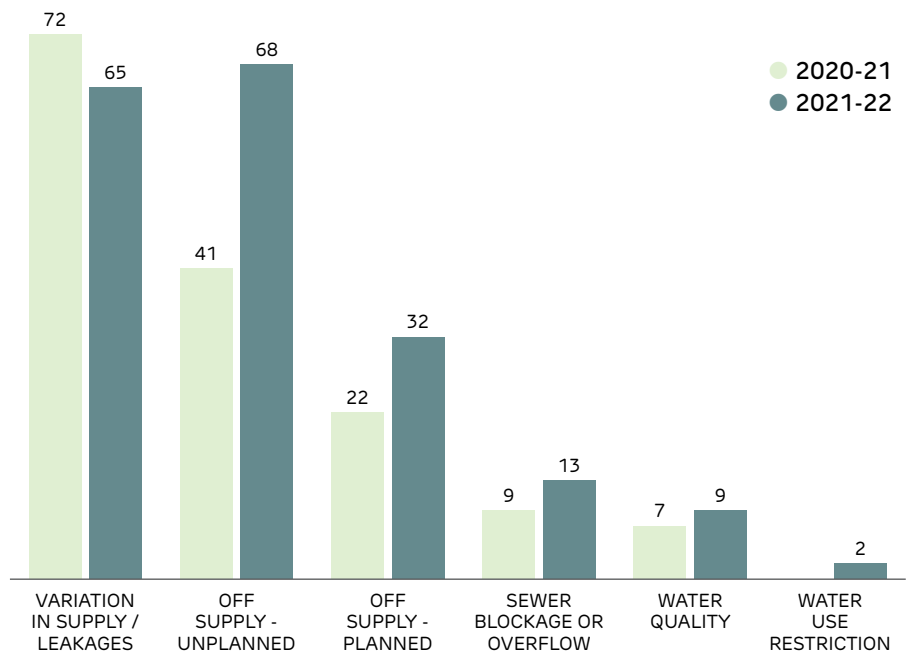
- Off Supply – Unplanned (66%)
- Off Supply – Planned (45%)
- Sewer Blockage or Overflow (44%)
- Water Quality (29%)

The following sub-issues decreased:

- Variation in Supply / Leakages (10%)

There was a newly created Supply sub-issue category:

- Water Use Restriction with 2 complaints received.



SUPPLY COMPLAINTS BY TYPE

Land

Land complaint numbers decreased by 24% in 2021-22 compared to the previous year.

The following sub-issues decreased:

- Property Damage (22%)
- Network Assets (37%)

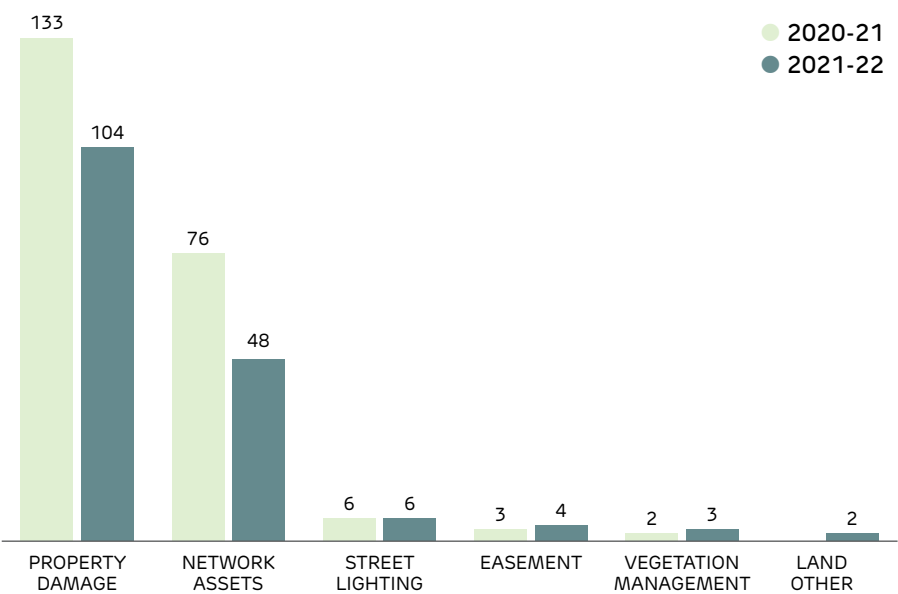
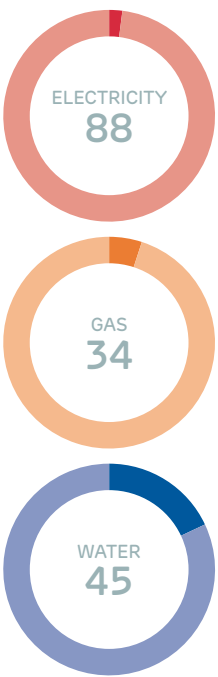
The following sub-issues only slightly increased:

- Easement
- Vegetation Management
- Street Lighting

There was a newly created Land sub-issue category:

- Land Other had two complaints received

LAND COMPLAINTS

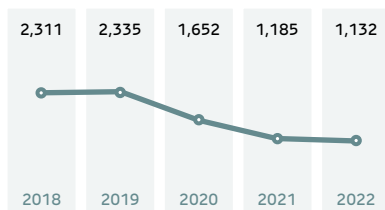


LAND COMPLAINTS BY TYPE

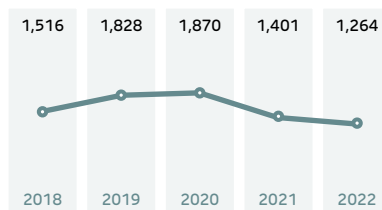
Member Performance

Complaints received by Member - 5 years (FY)

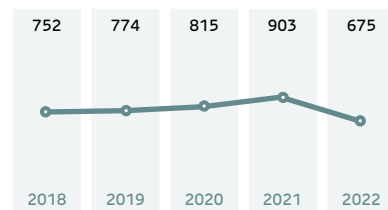
AGL



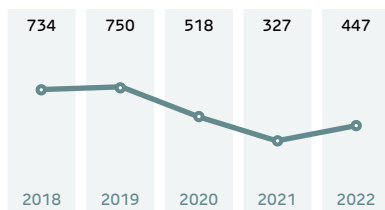
ORIGIN ENERGY



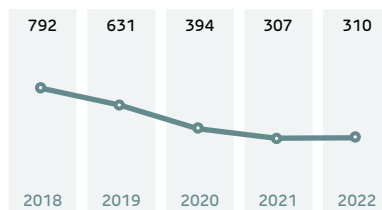
SIMPLY ENERGY



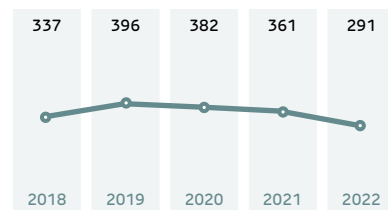
ALINTA ENERGY



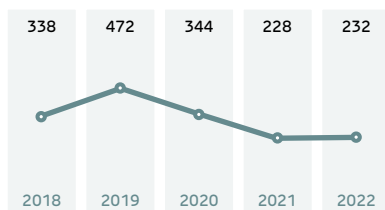
ENERGYAUSTRALIA



SA POWER NETWORKS



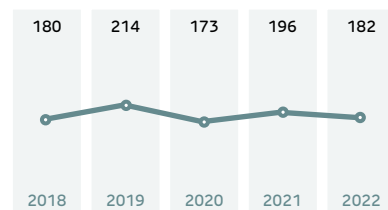
LUMO ENERGY



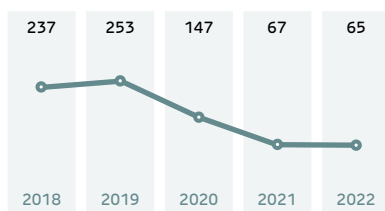
SA WATER



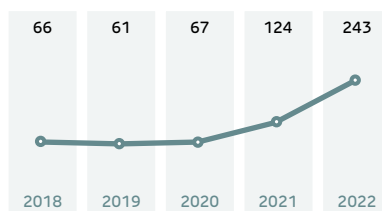
AUSTRALIAN GAS NETWORKS



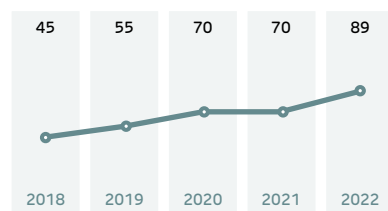
POWERDIRECT



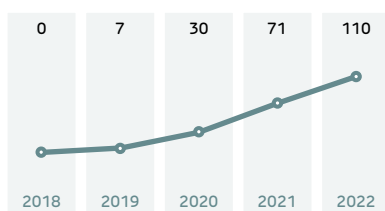
OTHERS



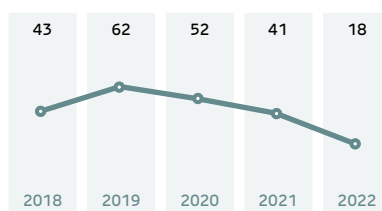
DODO POWER AND GAS



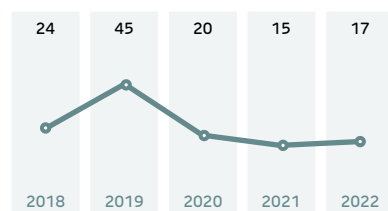
ENERGY LOCALS



MOMENTUM ENERGY

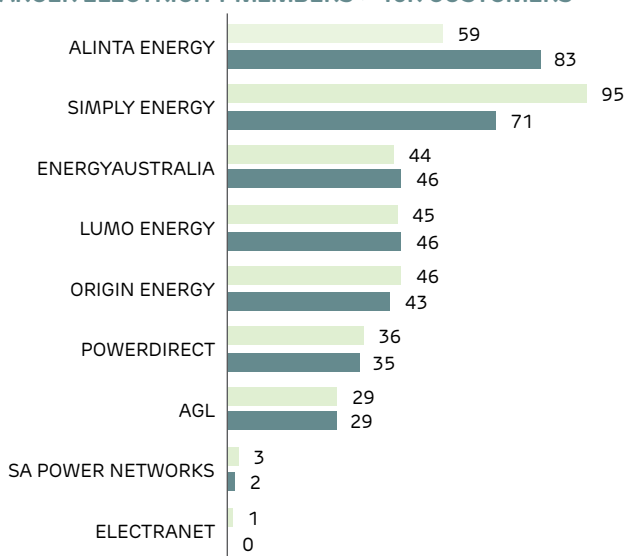


RED ENERGY



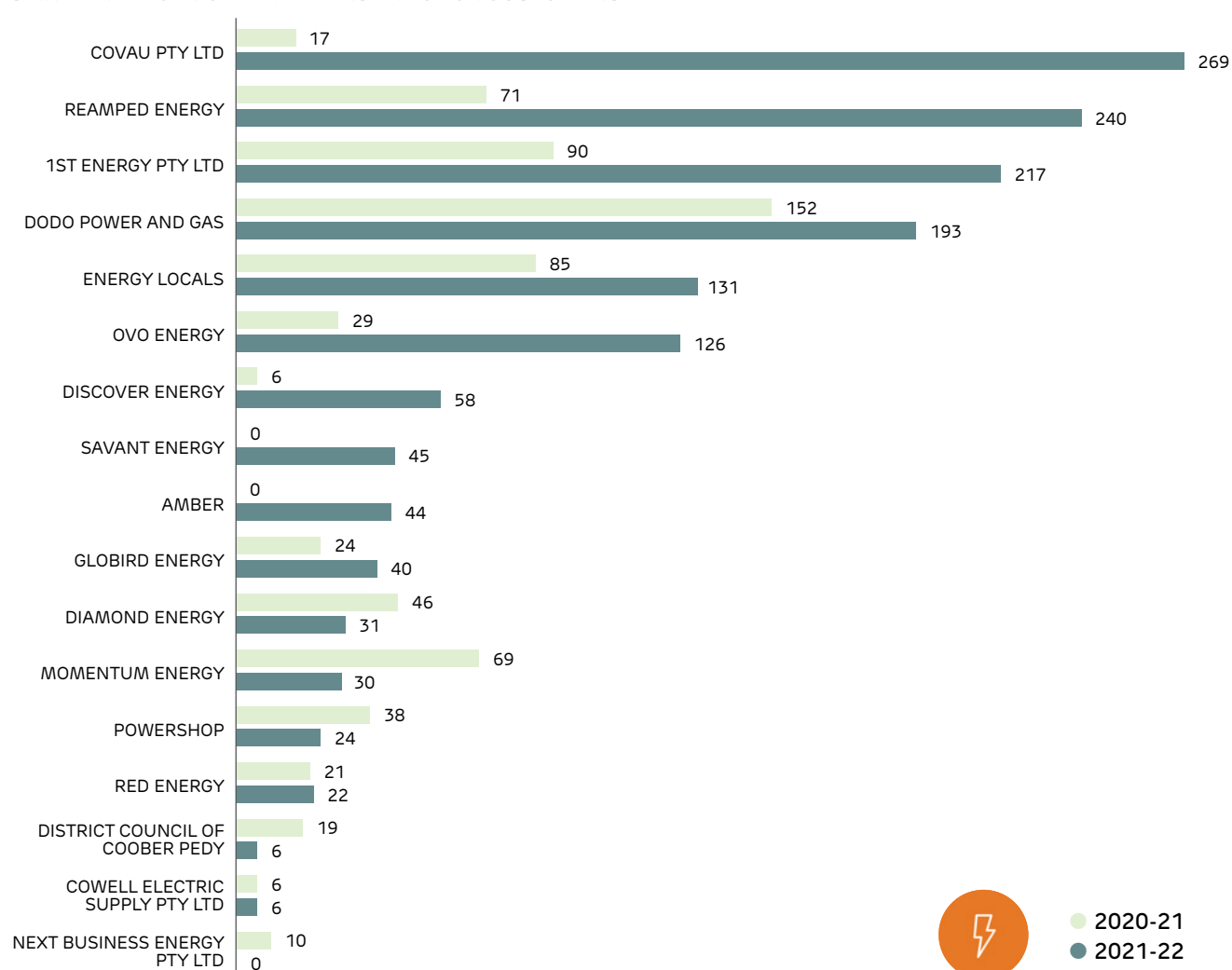
Complaints received by Members per 10,000

LARGER ELECTRICITY MEMBERS > 10K CUSTOMERS



In previous years, the figures in this section included all cases (enquiries and complaints) per 10,000 customers. For this year, this has been changed to show only complaints per 10,000 customers.

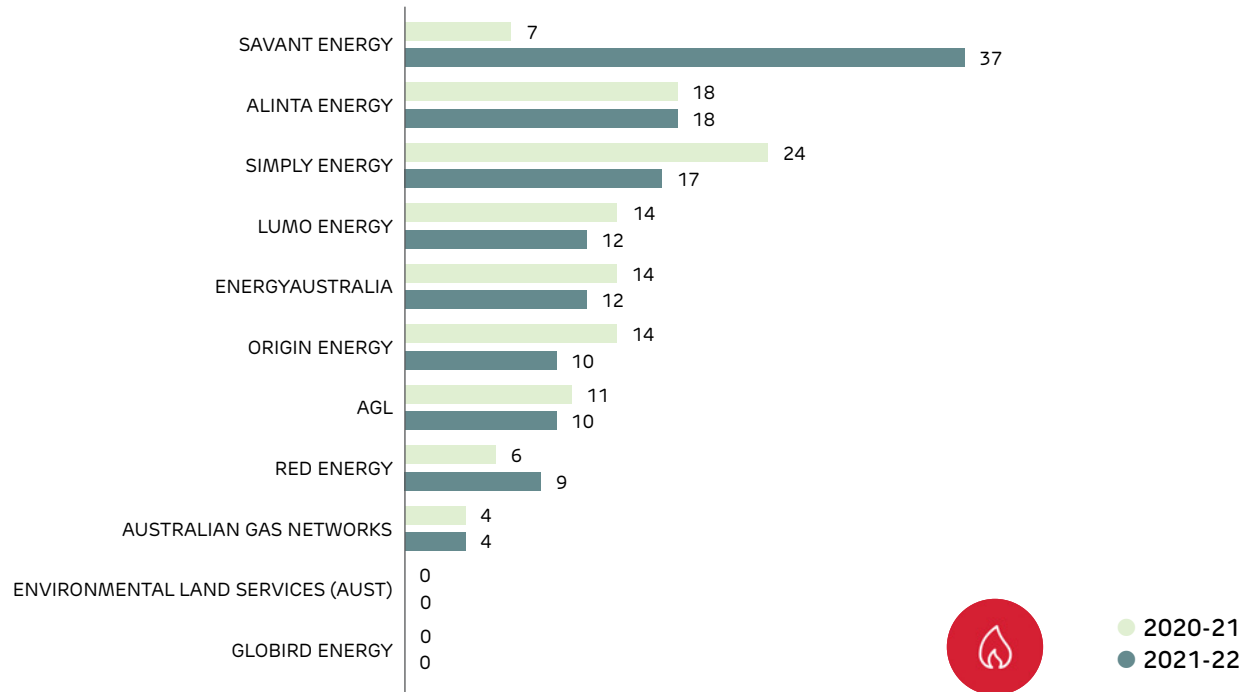
SMALLER ELECTRICITY MEMBERS 1K TO 10K CUSTOMERS



● 2020-21
● 2021-22

Complaints received by Members per 10,000

GAS MEMBERS WITH > 1K CUSTOMERS



WATER MEMBERS WITH > 10K CUSTOMERS



Resolutions

SUBJECT:	MISSING SOLAR BENEFITS
ISSUES:	BILLING – HIGH – FEED IN TARIFF/RATES INCORRECT
UTILITY:	ELECTRICITY
CUSTOMER TYPE:	RESIDENTIAL
CASE TYPE:	INVESTIGATION

THE ISSUE:

Mr C contacted us about a meter fault that meant he had received no solar benefits or usage charges on his bills since transferring to his electricity supplier.

OUR REVIEW:

Mr C had previously been told that the fault had been fixed but he had not received any supporting evidence or any corrected bills. We requested a copy of the meter data and corrected bills. A review confirmed the meter communications fault had been fixed and that correct data for Mr C's use and solar export was available.

RESOLUTION:

Corrected bills were issued; these created a credit balance due to the solar benefits. The supplier provided a goodwill credit. The Scheme also provided Mr C with information about Energy Made Easy to compare products available from other suppliers.

SUBJECT:	SOLAR METER UPGRADE COMPLAINT
ISSUES:	PROVISION – EXISTING CONNECTION – SOLAR METER UPGRADE DELAY
UTILITY:	ELECTRICITY
CUSTOMER TYPE:	RESIDENTIAL
CASE TYPE:	INVESTIGATION

THE ISSUE:

Mr P installed a new solar system but continued to receive high bills, which he paid. He raised this with his supplier and a subsequent enquiry revealed that his meter had not been upgraded to a solar-compatible meter. A new solar meter was then installed, but Mr P sought compensation due to the installation delay.

OUR REVIEW:

We found the supplier received the initial request to install the solar meter, but the installer did not include all the information on the solar meter installation request. The installer never followed up on this.

RESOLUTION:

We confirmed that Mr P's supplier was not at fault and had no obligation to compensate him for missed solar benefits.

Systemic issues

Once we have identified potential systemic issues, we may, where appropriate, investigate the issues.

How we define a systemic issue

A systemic issue is one that has the potential to affect a number of customers. It may arise from an energy or water supplier's policies or practices, or their application, and may be caused by a range of matters in isolation or together. These include, but are not limited to, a system change, a policy or procedure change, lack of regulatory compliance or the conduct of an energy or water supplier's employee, agent or contractor.

Our role

We have a responsibility to identify and record systemic issues and potential compliance issues and, as appropriate, notify the relevant provider and regulatory body or responsible authority.

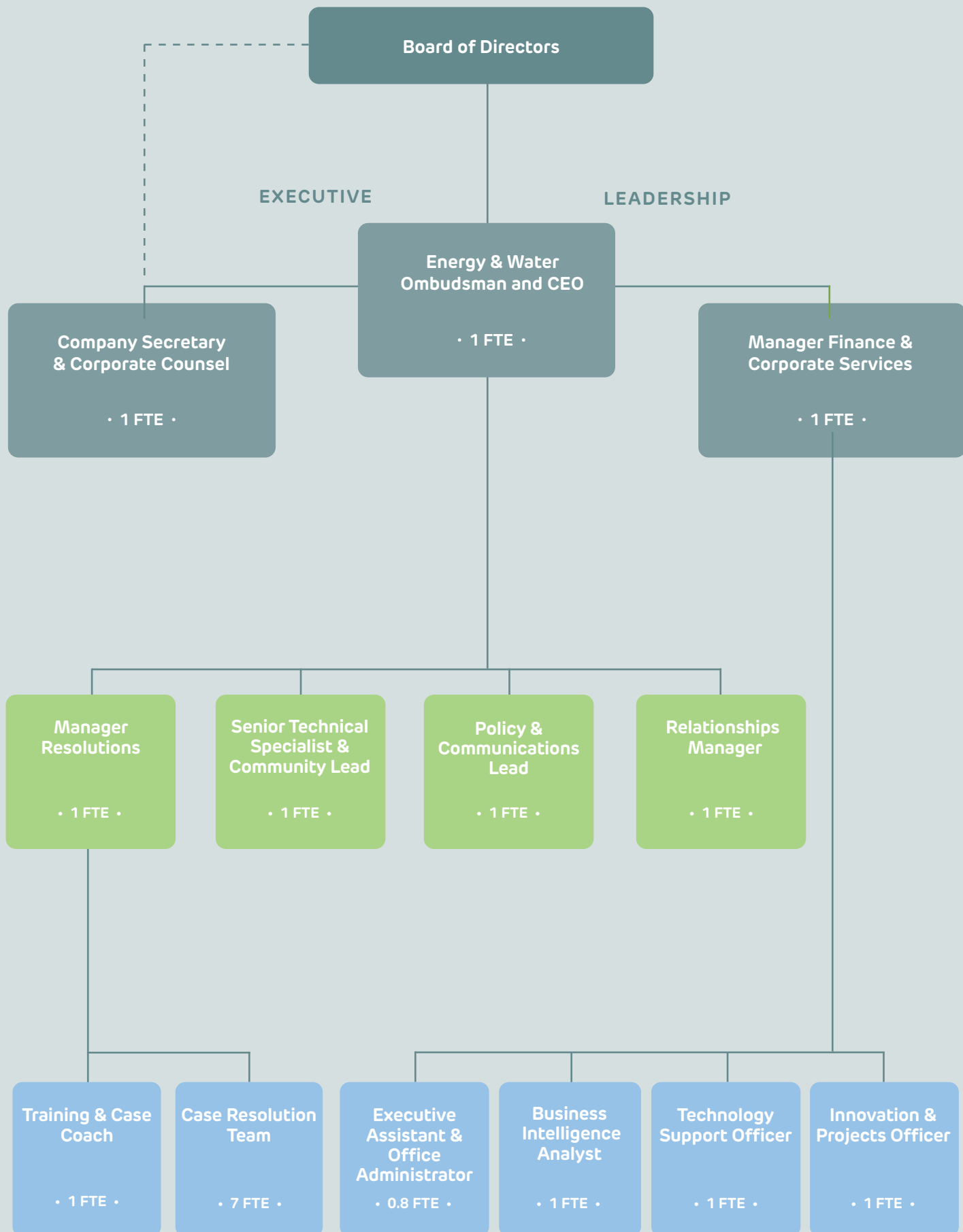
Once we have identified potential systemic issues, we may, where appropriate, investigate the issues. Where the Ombudsman finds that an issue is systemic, it is referred to the relevant Member's senior management for remedial action. The Ombudsman will continue to monitor the issue until a resolution is achieved that he considers a reasonable outcome for the customers affected.

The Ombudsman may also refer to a Member's senior management any opportunities identified to improve the Member's policies or practices in the interests of reducing complaints. The Ombudsman may report systemic or other important issues to the relevant government minister or to regulatory bodies.

Should a provider be found to have breached legislation, regulations or their licence or authorisation conditions, it is up to the regulatory body or responsible authority to take relevant action. The Ombudsman does not have any punitive powers.

We identified and resolved the following 17 systemic issues during the year – the same number as the previous year:

- Delays in remedying an issue of little or no hot water
- Customer not advised of tariff change prior to meter upgrade
- Full concession not being applied
- Meter upgrade with no prior notice and tariff changed with no prior notification
- Delayed billing and delayed refunds for VPP customer
- Delayed notification to customer of change in rates
- Supplier has no provision to pay in person or at post office
- Privacy breach
- Incorrect energy efficiency and price comparison information
- Gas customers being charged supply after trying to close account
- Systematic issue with accepting meter data
- Country lands conversion account error
- Issue impacting the interval meter data flow to Market Participants following their transition to a new Market Data Management system
- Missing meter data
- Customer not receiving their electronic bills
- Delayed meter reads
- Member has above average disconnection and payment difficulty complaints.



Our Organisation

Key Developments in 2021-22

Strategic Plan 2021-24

The Board revised its Strategic Plan, which outlines our focus areas, objectives and key strategies over the next three years. The focus areas are:

1. Best Practice Dispute Resolution
2. Consumer Engagement
3. Member Relationships
4. Policy Influence
5. Environmental Adaptability
6. Our People and Organisational Capability.

Dispute resolution process and Case Management System

We commenced work on the development of our future cloud-based Case Management System (CMS) in line with our long-term strategy to move into a cloud-based IT operating environment. We expect to complete the work in early 2022-23.

We have also undertaken several projects in conjunction with our CMS change, including the following:

- review and implementation of workflow changes for efficiencies and improvements
- development of a formalised policy, process and protocols when dealing with vulnerable customers
- refreshing our correspondence templates for Plain English and simplicity
- refreshing our web complaints form
- review and refresh of CMS fields (including objectives, obsolete fields)
- development of a Dispute Resolution Guide (internal document)

A key change from our workflow review is the introduction of a new case type, Early Resolution, to replace Conciliation, effective from 1 July 2022. This new case type aims to further expedite the dispute resolution process by providing the customer and supplier with an opportunity to negotiate an outcome before a detailed investigation is conducted.

These initiatives are aimed at delivering a more robust, secure and contemporary suite of solutions which will bring about cost savings and a better experience for our stakeholders.

Organisational Structure

We undertook a review of our organisational structure in response to the sustained reduction in case volumes. As a result, we reduced our Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) levels to 18.2 from 1 July 2022. This change will allow us to operate sustainably while maintaining current service levels

People and culture

We pay special attention to the wellbeing of our people. Our work can be highly stressful at times, so it is important that we provide appropriate conditions, support and systems to enable our people to excel at their tasks.

We provide the following benefits:

- protecting against bullying through an Anti-Bullying Policy
- ensuring anti-discrimination and equal opportunity through a formalised policy
- providing drug and alcohol use guidance through a Drug and Alcohol Use Directive
- enabling flexible working arrangements as outlined in a Directive and Guidelines
- providing grievance processes as specified in a Grievance Policy
- encouraging no smoking through a No Smoking Directive
- providing Group Salary Continuance cover for all staff
- ensuring personal and physical security as outlined in a Personal and Physical Security Directive
- outlining risk management processes in a Risk Management Policy
- offering working from home arrangements
- ensuring work health and safety processes as outlined in a Work Health and Safety Policy
- offering salary sacrifice options.

We completed several initiatives during the year to continuously develop our staff and enhance the benefits available to them, including:

- providing up/cross skilling to all case management staff to enhance overall competency and expertise
- conducting various technical training sessions on key topics such as industry issues and dispute resolution process areas of focus
- providing soft skills training to staff, including managing complainant expectations and conduct
- privacy training
- workplace bullying and harassment training
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness training

Our Training and Case Coach provides on-the-job training and ongoing support to our CROs and deputises for our Manager Resolutions in their absence. This arrangement ensures our staff receive the floor support they require in resolving cases.

Policy Influence

In line with our revised Strategic Plan, we actively shared information with key stakeholders about the impact of existing and proposed policies and practices on the Scheme, Members and consumers. Highlights included:

- bilaterals with market bodies, government and regulators on emerging issues including the provision of data
- quarterly meetings with regulators and energy and water schemes
- enhanced engagement with decision makers on issues including disconnections, payment difficulty, the reference price, family violence, prepayment meters, metering, tariffs, consumer vulnerability, Distributed Energy Resources, tenants, COVID-19 support measures and new energy products and services
- active participation in public workshops and forums to contribute to rule change

processes, market reviews and policy and regulatory developments

- provision of 16 written submissions to policy and regulatory consultations
- collaboration with other energy and water schemes to amplify our voice and provide five joint submissions to policy and regulatory consultations.

During the year, we also sustained our engagement with regulators to identify and report actual or potential systemic issues, to ensure prompt identification and resolution of systemic issues. We provided data to enable compliance and enforcement action to be undertaken where necessary.

We also worked with the Australian Energy Regulator to develop a process to enable systematic reporting of regulatory breaches.

Stakeholders

Our stakeholders are important to us and enable us to deliver high quality services. Stakeholder engagement this year has included:

- maintaining strong Member relationships, evidenced through the results of the Member Survey
- improving our reporting to Members about performance and trends
- hosting Member workshops to provide industry updates, engage Members on recent initiatives and gain feedback for the Scheme
- enhancing collaboration with regulators and the Office of the Technical Regulator
- producing a Mid-Year Report to supplement the Annual Report
- publishing a quarterly newsletter on our website, which provides stakeholders with information on emerging consumer trends, topical issues and policy matters
- growing our engagement on social media
- membership of the Code builders' group to develop the National Customer Code for Energy Comparators and Moving Services

- membership of the Energy Charter First Nations Engagement Working Group
- membership of the Customer Outcomes Group for the Energy Charter Better Together Project, to research the impacts of COVID-19 on our customers and communities
- participating in the SA Power Networks Flexible Exports Reference Group and Tariff Working Group
- supporting the Board in hosting a Whyalla Workshop to engage with local community members in Whyalla and better understand regional issues
- liaison with First Nations representatives which culminated in a series of cultural capability training sessions for all staff
- engaging with the Australian Energy Council to develop communications tools on tariffs.

We also are a lead member of the Thriving Communities Partnership SA Chapter, a cross-sector collaboration with the goal of ensuring that everybody has fair access to the modern essential services they need to thrive in contemporary Australia. This year, the Chapter launched a national Better Practice Guide for supporting vulnerable customers through Staff Awareness and Training

The Ombudsman responded to requests for media interviews during the year.

New Members

Last year, the Essential Services Commission (of South Australia) issued its Final Inquiry Report on its regulatory approach to small-scale networks covering water and sewerage networks with 50,000 connections or less, off-grid electricity networks, and reticulated natural gas and liquid petroleum gas (LPG) networks.

As a result, by 30 June 2022, a total of 77 small-scale network providers joined as Members of the Scheme. They serve approximately 85,000 customers combined. We do not anticipate a large increase in complaint volumes as a result of accepting the new Members.

We have held roadshows on these changes and have received positive feedback from new Members throughout the year.

Community Engagement

We developed a Community Engagement Plan to enhance our engagement with the following communities identified in the Independent Scheme Review:

- First Nations people
- culturally and linguistically diverse people
- older people
- people in remote and regional areas
- low income and vulnerable people.

Engagement strategies include regional workshops, enhanced engagement with the community sector and targeted communications including social media. We will be rolling this plan out over the next two years. Actions to date include:

- monitoring the move to energy payment in Aboriginal outback areas and the transition to prepayment metering
- enhanced liaison with peak community organisations
- engagement with elected Members offices to support provision of information to constituents
- preparations for regional visits
- compilation of case studies for use in communications strategies.

We maintained contact with our key community stakeholders, enabling us to track emerging issues and respond as appropriate.

Technology

Technology plays a crucial part in ensuring our services are delivered efficiently, effectively and with minimal disruption. In addition to our new cloud-based Case Management System, we undertook several projects which aim to support our transition into a cloud-based environment such as:

- upgrading our firewall and establishing a new cloud-ready Virtual Private Network (VPN)
- updating our disaster recovery plan to accommodate the recent and anticipated changes to our infrastructure
- implementing a Sharepoint-based Board paper document storage system
- shifting a significant portion of our electronic and previously-hardcopy documents into a cloud-based storage platform.

Further work is underway to move the remaining documents and streamline the system's user interface.

We have also made material progress with data analytics technology as discussed in the next section.

Business Intelligence

We have made significant investment in time and resources to further develop our Business Intelligence capability. We have undertaken several projects which aim to enhance the way we capture, process and report on data using contemporary data analytics solutions. Key achievements during the year include:

- establishing a Data Governance Framework which sets out key principles on how we manage data internally
- developing a new Member application and records management system
- completing a review and validation of customer address data spanning seven years of records against official address data source (Geocoded National Address File)

- commencing a project to migrate our on-premises data warehouse to a new cloud-based data "lakehouse"
- implementing a new Quality Assurance records management and workflow system
- developing an automated system that improves our ability to consolidate and analyse customer interval data (NEM12)
- various improvements to reporting including refreshing our issues, objectives and case categorisation for enhanced reporting and issue identification and visibility.

Work Health and Safety

We are strongly committed to the health and safety of our staff and strive to maintain a workplace free from injuries. We encourage personal wellbeing and promote the protection of the environment.

Work health and safety is a standing agenda item at each regular team meeting. Additionally, ergonomic assessments and voluntary health checks are conducted annually, and we encourage staff participation in various health and wellbeing activities, such as free flu vaccinations.

Workplace safety inspections are conducted quarterly.

The first aid kit, which includes a defibrillator, is restocked quarterly or as necessary and all electrical equipment is tested and tagged annually.

An Employee Assistance Program provides staff and their immediate family members with support and free counselling for work and personal matters.

Managing the impact of COVID-19

We put in place a number of initiatives to ensure continuity of high-quality service while supporting our staff and those most vulnerable in the community during the pandemic.

Staff were given the flexibility to work three days in the office and two days at home, which they report as beneficial. Our contact centre and other aspects of our business were able to operate as normal with these arrangements in place.

In the office, we followed safety protocols based on SA Health guidelines and maintained measures to ensure social separation was observed.

We used online tools to collaborate with each other and external stakeholders, including Microsoft Teams and Zoom Meetings. We were able to keep holding our daily morning scrum across all staff via Zoom.

We encouraged all staff to use our free and confidential Employee Assistance Program should they feel the need to do so, particularly during times of isolation. Our managers also regularly contacted their staff individually to check on their wellbeing.

We also introduced a COVID-19 vaccination policy.

Quality Assurance

Quality is paramount in everything we do. Our Quality Assurance program continues to be developed and adapted to the changing complaint landscape. The program ensures that all customers and Members receive a high level of service and consistency in case management.

Our Quality Assurance program includes the following elements to ensure cases are handled according to standards:

- on-the-job supervision and coaching
- peer review
- Ombudsman review
- independent Quality Assurance Review

The Quality Assurance review is undertaken by our Senior Technical Specialist, with the outcome fed back into individual Learning and Development plans and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for staff members.

Supporting our Quality Assurance program is a robust internal reporting mechanism which assists management in identifying and monitoring quality and productivity.

Internal Audit

Our internal auditors executed the audit under the oversight of the Board and the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee. This year's audit focused on Work Health and Safety and Human Resources Policies. The audit did not find any significant deficiencies.

Gender diversity

We have a strong commitment to gender diversity, as demonstrated by high female participation at all levels of the organisation.

The figures below are as at 30 June 2022.

Board	Male	56%
	Female	44%
Management	Male	75%
	Female	25%
Staff	Male	47%
	Female	53%
Overall	Male	54%
	Female	46%

Board of Directors

The Board comprises four Industry Directors elected by Scheme Members, four Consumer Directors nominated by the Essential Services Commission (of South Australia) and an Independent Chair.

Chair

Peter Bicknell AM, BA, M Soc Admin, JP – appointed March 22, 2015

Directors

The Directors of the Company as at June 30, 2022 were:

- Peter Bicknell, AM, Independent Chair
- Geoff Barton, Gas Industry Director (Australian Gas Networks)
- Sue Chase, AM, Consumer Director
- Margaret Cross, Consumer Director
- Mark Henley, Consumer Director
- Kylie Johnson, Water Industry Director (SA Water)
- Patrick Makinson, Electricity Industry Director (SA Power Networks)
- Kay Matthias, Consumer Director
- Anthony Sinclair, Electricity Industry Director (AGL)

Secretary

Pia Bentick, Company Secretary & Corporate Counsel

Management Team



MANAGEMENT TEAM:
DAVID EGGERS
MANAGER RESOLUTIONS,
PIA BENTICK
COMPANY SECRETARY &
CORPORATE COUNSEL,
RE OUANO
MANAGER FINANCE &
CORPORATE SERVICES,
SANDY CANALE
OMBUDSMAN & CEO

Resolutions

SUBJECT:	BILLING
ISSUES:	FAULTY METER
UTILITY:	ELECTRICITY
CUSTOMER TYPE:	RESIDENTIAL
CASE TYPE:	INVESTIGATION

THE ISSUE:

Ms B moved into an apartment and arranged to have electricity connected. When her first bill was higher than expected she disputed it. The supplier confirmed the bill was based on an estimated read as the meter was faulty. It attempted to replace the meter but was unable to do so as the meter panel needed to be altered by the customer.

OUR REVIEW:

We worked with the supplier to provide the specific technical information to Ms B to enable the rectification works to occur so the faulty meter could be replaced.

RESOLUTION:

While the supplier had the ability to bill and recover the disputed estimated usage, it agreed to hold recovery of the charge to allow time for Ms B to arrange for the alteration requirements to the meter box. The supplier committed to replacing the faulty meter when the alteration work was completed and review the disputed estimated usage.

SUBJECT:	HIGH BILL COMPLAINT.
ISSUES:	BILLING – HIGH – DISPUTED, CUSTOMER SERVICE – FAILURE TO RESPOND
UTILITY:	GAS
CUSTOMER TYPE:	RESIDENTIAL
CASE TYPE:	CONCILIATION

THE ISSUE:

Mrs A was surprised by a gas bill for approximately \$1,000. She asked her supplier to review this high usage, as well as her concerns about a noise emanating from the gas meter.

OUR REVIEW:

The supplier arranged for the meter reading to be checked and for the distributor to replace the existing meter. It stated that the charges as billed were correct, and our review found that Mrs A had been billed the correct amount based on the meter data.

RESOLUTION:

The supplier provided Mrs A with a \$250 credit as a gesture of goodwill and offered her time to pay the residual balance owing.

Members



Electricity Members

1st Energy Pty Ltd
 Across Australia Parks & Resorts Pty Ltd
 AGL Sales (Queensland Electricity) Pty Ltd
 AGL Sales Pty Ltd
 AGL South Australia Pty Ltd
 AKM Syndicate Pty Ltd t/a Cobdogla Station Caravan Park
 Alinta Energy Retail Sales Pty Ltd
 Amber Electric Pty Ltd
 Ardrossan Progress Association Inc.
 Ashbrook Apartments RV Pty Ltd
 Australian Tourist Park Management Pty Ltd
 B A Calvert & G G Calvert t/a Kingston-on-Murray Caravan Park
 Barossa Village Inc.
 Befficient by GSI Pty Ltd t/a Benergy Pty Ltd
 BHP Olympic Dam Corporation Pty Ltd
 Blue NRG Pty Ltd
 Boandik Lodge Inc.
 Burton Lifestyle Villages Pty Ltd
 Caravan Park Op Co Pty Ltd t/a Windsor Gardens Caravan Park
 City of Onkaparinga
 Clayton Church Homes Inc
 CleanPeak Energy Retail Pty Ltd
 CleanTech Energy Pty Ltd t/a Delorean Energy Retail
 Coastal Parks Port Willunga Pty Ltd t/a Big4 Port Willunga Tourist Park
 Community Corporation 22654 inc.
 Community Corporation 26052 Inc
 Community Corporation 41346 Inc
 Community Corporation No. 40515, Incorporated
 Community Corporation No. 41210, Incorporated
 Coober Pedy Council
 CovaU Pty Ltd
 Cowell Electric Supply Pty Ltd
 CPE Mascot Pty Ltd
 CPE Tonsley Pty Ltd
 Dalfoam Pty Ltd (Yunta Power)
 Davval (SA) Pty Ltd t/a Belair National Park Caravan Park
 Diamond Energy Pty Ltd
 Discover Energy Pty Ltd
 Discovery Holiday Parks Pty Ltd
 District Council of Loxton Waikerie
 District Council of Yankalilla

Edithburgh Progress Association Inc.
 Edwards Hotels Pty Ltd
 ElectraNet Pty Ltd
 Electricity in a Box
 Elysian Energy Pty Ltd
 Energy Locals Pty Ltd
 Energy Services Management Pty Ltd t/a Glow power
 EnergyAustralia Pty Ltd
 Enerven Energy Infrastructure Pty Ltd t/a Enerven
 Erwin Vogt Foundation Incorporated t/a U City Energy
 Eyria Investments Unit Trust t/a Port Lincoln tourist Park
 G D & E Dunn Trading as Beachside Caravan Park
 Gawler South Tourist Park Pty Ltd
 GCP (SA) Pty Ltd t/a Gawler Caravan Park
 Glenbrook Apartments Pty Ltd
 GloBird Energy Pty Ltd
 Hanwha Energy Retail Australia Pty Ltd t/a Nectr
 HICP PTY LTD t/a Hindmarsh Island Caravan Park
 Highway 1 Caravan & Tourist Park
 International Power (Retail) Pty Ltd t/a Simply Energy
 James Brown Memorial Trust t/a Kalyra Bellevue Heights Village
 Jeril Enterprises Pty Ltd t/a Andamooka Power House
 K Browney & R.W Browney t/a Kadina Caravan Park
 Kenmae Pty Ltd as trustee for the Tavern Trust
 Leabrook Place Pty Ltd
 Localvolts Pty Ltd
 Lumo Energy (SA) Pty Ltd
 M2 Energy Pty Ltd t/a Dodo Power & Gas
 Maximum Energy Retail Pty Ltd t/a Circular Energy
 McLaren Vale Pty Ltd t/a McLaren Vale Lakeside Caravan Park
 Minda Incorporated
 Mojo Power East Pty Ltd
 Mojo Power Pty Ltd
 Momentum Energy Pty Ltd
 Mount Barker District Council
 Mt View Homes Incorporated
 Municipal Council of Roxby Downs
 Murraylink Transmission Partnership
 Next Business Energy Pty Ltd
 Nuriootpa Centennial Park Authority t/a

BIG4 Barossa Tourist Park
 OneSteel Manufacturing Pty Ltd
 Online Power and Gas Pty Ltd t/a Future X Power
 Origin Energy Electricity Ltd
 OVO Energy Pty Ltd
 Pandora Lifestyle Villages
 Pine Country Caravan Park
 Port Clinton Progress Association Inc.
 Power Club Limited
 Powerdirect Pty Ltd
 PowerHub Pty Ltd
 Powershop Australia Pty Ltd
 Powow Power Pty Ltd
 Progressive Green Pty Ltd t/a Flow Power
 Q Energy Limited
 ReAmped Energy
 Red Energy Pty Ltd
 Riverglen Services Pty Ltd
 SA Power Networks
 Sanctuary Energy Pty Ltd
 Savant Energy Power Networks Pty Ltd
 Shell Energy Retail Pty Ltd
 Sheryl Pietsch t/a Stockport Caravan & Tourist Park
 Skyway Pet Pty Ltd t/a Murray Bridge Tourist Park
 Social Energy Australia Pty Ltd
 Southern Cross Care (SA, NT & VIC) Incorporated
 Stansbury Progress Association Inc.
 Stockland Aevum Pty Limited t/a Somerton Park Retirement Village
 Stockland Salford Living Pty Limited t/a Unity Retirement Village
 Strata Plan No 12753 Inc
 Sumo Power Pty Ltd
 Sustainable Savings Pty Ltd
 Tango Energy Pty Ltd
 Telstra Energy (Retail) Pty Ltd
 The Trustee for Lennerth & Zeuner Trust t/a Minlaton Caravan Park
 The Trustee for The Sturt River Park Trust t/a Sturt River Park
 Uniting SA Ltd
 Voysey Holdings Pty Ltd t/a Highview Holiday Village
 Wakefield Regional Council
 WINconnect Pty Ltd
 Woodcroft Park Pty Ltd
 ZEN Energy Retail Pty Ltd



AGL South Australia Pty Ltd
 Alinta Energy Retail Sales Pty Ltd
 Australian Gas Networks Limited
 CleanTech Energy Pty Ltd t/a Delorean
 Energy Retail
 CovaU Pty Ltd
 CPE Tonsley Pty Ltd
 Discover Energy Pty Ltd
 Elgas Limited
 EnergyAustralia Pty Ltd
 Environmental Land Services (Aust)
 GloBird Energy Pty Ltd
 International Power (Retail) Pty Ltd t/a
 Simply Energy
 Lumo Energy SA Pty Ltd
 Origin Energy LPG Limited
 Origin Energy Retail Limited
 OVO Energy Pty Ltd
 Red Energy Pty Ltd
 Savant Energy Power Networks Pty Ltd
 Telstra Energy (Retail) Pty Ltd
 WINconnect Pty Ltd



Adelaide Hills Council
 Adelaide Plains Council t/a District
 Council of Mallala
 Alano Utilities Pty Ltd t/a Alano Water
 Alexandrina Council
 Barunga West Council
 Berri Barmera Council
 City of Charles Sturt
 City of Onkaparinga
 City of Playford
 City of Port Adelaide Enfield
 City of Port Lincoln
 City of Salisbury
 City of Tea Tree Gully
 Clare & Gilbert Valleys Council
 Coober Pedy Council
 Coorong District Council
 Copper Coast Council
 Corporation of the City of Port Augusta
 Corporation of the City of Whyalla
 CPE Tonsley Pty Ltd
 District Council of Ceduna
 District Council of Elliston
 District Council of Franklin Harbour
 District Council of Grant
 District Council of Karoonda East
 Murray
 District Council of Kimba
 District Council of Lower Eyre Peninsula
 District Council of Mount Barker
 District Council of Mount Remarkable
 District Council of Orroroo Carrieton
 District Council of Peterborough
 District Council of Robe
 District Council of Streaky Bay
 District Council of Tumby Bay
 ERA Water Regional Subsidiary
 FB Pipeline Pty Ltd
 Kangaroo Island Council
 Kingston District Council
 Light Regional Council
 Lightsview ReWater Supply Co Pty Ltd
 Mid Murray Council
 Monarto Water Network Limited
 Municipal Council of Roxby Downs
 Naracoorte Lucindale Council
 Northern Areas Council
 NWIC Pty Ltd
 Port Pirie Regional Council
 Regional Council of Goyder
 Renmark Paringa Council

Robusto Investments Pty Ltd t/a
 Compass Springs
 Rural City of Murray Bridge
 SA Water Corporation
 Southern Mallee District Council
 Tatiara District Council
 The Barossa Council
 The Corporation of the City of Marion
 The Flinders Ranges Council
 Wakefield Regional Council
 Wattle Range Council
 Wudinna District Council
 Yorke Peninsula Council

Corporate Governance Statement

This Corporate Governance Statement has been approved by the Board on 25 May 2022. It is reviewed annually and reflects the 4th edition of the ASX Corporate Council's Principles and Recommendations.

The Energy and Water Ombudsman (SA) Limited is a public company limited by guarantee and incorporated under the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth). The Board of Directors are committed to achieving and demonstrating the highest standards of corporate governance. The Company's corporate governance framework was developed in accordance with the Corporate Governance Principles and Recommendations released by the ASX Corporate Governance Council, as far as they apply to the Company. The Board continuously reviews the framework and practices to ensure they meet the interests of the Members.

The Board's main responsibilities are the formal administration of the Company, policy matters, oversight of the Scheme's operation and maintaining the independence of the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Scheme and the resolution of individual complaints. These roles are complementary and, generally, the Ombudsman attends Board meetings as an observer and an advisor as appropriate.

The Company's main corporate governance practices are set out below.

1. The Board of Directors

The Company is governed by a Board whose principal source and rules of governance include:

- the Constitution and Charter
- the Board Charter
- Charters of the Board Committees, and
- Board Policy positions.

Board Composition

As required by the Company's Constitution, the Board consists of nine directors being:

- two directors elected by Electricity Members, one director elected by Gas Members and one director elected by Water Members ("Industry Directors")
- four persons nominated by the Essential Services Commission (of South Australia) ("the Commission") to represent customers of electricity, gas and water services or public interest groups relevant to such services ("Consumer Directors"), and
- an independent Chair.

The current directors of the Company are:

- Peter Bicknell, Independent Chair
- Geoff Barton, Gas Industry Director (Australian Gas Networks)
- Sue Chase, Consumer Director
- Margaret Cross, Consumer Director
- Mark Henley, Consumer Director
- Kylie Johnson, Water Industry Director (SA Water)
- Patrick Makinson, Electricity Industry Director (SA Power Networks)
- Kay Matthias, Consumer Director
- Anthony Sinclair, Electricity Industry Director (AGL)

Board Skills

As far as the structure of the Scheme allows, the appropriate mix and balance of skills available is considered and appropriate checks are undertaken before appointing a person a director.

New directors will be inducted to the Scheme and appropriate professional development opportunities are provided to develop and maintain the skills and knowledge needed to perform their role as directors effectively.

Gender Diversity

The Company is committed to gender diversity which is demonstrated by high female participation at all levels of the organisation.

Currently 44% of the Board of Directors are female, 33% of the management team are female, and the rest of the staff are seven male and nine female members. The overall percentage is 50/50 female and male.

Independent Chair

The Directors appoint, with the Commission's approval, a person to be the independent Chair of the Board for a three-year term. The Chair is eligible for reappointment for a subsequent term or terms of three years.

The Chair of any meeting has an ordinary vote but does not have a casting vote on any matter.

Peter Bicknell AM, BA, M Soc Admin, JP, was appointed the independent Chair on 22 March 2015 and he was reappointed for another term of three years from 22 March 2018 and from 22 March 2021.

Written Agreements

The Company has written agreements with each director setting out the terms of their appointment. These include Deeds of Access and Indemnity, which contain the arrangements which the Company and the Director have made concerning indemnities, insurance, Company records and confidentiality and letters of appointment setting out details of directors' fees and the committees on which they may serve.

Term of Office

The Company's Constitution specifies that the industry directors may not hold office for more than three years without submitting himself or herself for re-election.

The consumer directors can hold office for a term of up to three years and they are eligible to be nominated and re-appointed for a further term or terms. However, neither the consumer directors nor the independent Chair can serve more than nine consecutive years as a director.

Board Processes

The Board currently holds six formal meetings per year, with additional meetings called or resolutions in writing passed if necessary, to address any important or urgent business.

Conflict of Interest

Directors must advise the Board of any personal interest that could potentially conflict with those of the Company. No director is perceived to have any personal conflicts of interest because they are employed by a Member of the Company.

The potential for conflict of interest is inherent in the structure of the Company and it is accepted that there may be circumstances where a director needs to abstain from voting on matters they may feel conflicted with.

A director is not counted in the quorum of a Board meeting considering any contract or proposed contract in which he or she has an interest and is not entitled to vote on the matter. The details are recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

Chair and Ombudsman

The Chair is responsible for leading the Board, ensuring directors are properly briefed in all matters relevant to their role and responsibilities, facilitating discussions and managing the Board's relationship with the Company's management team.

The Ombudsman is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Scheme, implementing company strategies and policies and the resolution of individual complaints.

Sandy Canale was first appointed the Ombudsman in December 2007 and re-appointed in 2012 and in 2017 for further terms of five years.

Company Secretary

The Board appoints a Company Secretary for such term and upon such terms and conditions as the Board thinks fit. The appointment of the Company Secretary is formally resolved by the Board in accordance with section 204D of the Corporations Act.

The Company Secretary is accountable to, and reports directly to the Board, through the Chair. The Company Secretary provides independent and objective governance advice to the directors, who have direct access to and may seek information from the Company Secretary, to assist them in carrying out their duties as directors.

The Board appointed Pia Bentick, FCIS, FGIA, Barrister (np), CertEDC as the Company Secretary in March 2000. She is also the Corporate Counsel and a member of the senior management team.

Independent Professional Advice

Directors may obtain independent professional advice at the Company's expense, on matters relevant to the Company's affairs to assist them in carrying out their duties as directors, subject to providing prior notice to the Chair. Copy of any advice received by a director may be made available to other members of the Board.

Corporate Reporting

The Ombudsman, the Manager Finance and Corporate Services and the Company Secretary make a financial reporting certification to the Board for each financial year to confirm the integrity of the Company's financial statements, risk management and internal compliance.

Board Performance Assessment

The Board reviews its own and its committees' performance regularly. An external Board Performance Assessment will be conducted every five years, consistent with the Scheme Review, unless the Chair/Board otherwise determines. The last external Board Review was completed in 2022.

2. Board Committees

The Company's Constitution provides for the Board to appoint, from time to time, a Designated Committee, comprising an equal number of industry directors (being directors nominated by the Members) and consumer directors/the independent Chair (being directors appointed from groups representing customers of electricity, gas and water services or representing public interest issues relevant to electricity, gas and water services or directors appointed otherwise than by Members). The Designated Committee will be responsible for formulating business plans and annual funding figures and making recommendations to the Board and may be charged with other responsibilities delegated by the Board.

In addition to the Designated Committee, the Board can establish other committees as appropriate. Members of Committees can be directors and officers of the Company and any other persons the Board may select. The Board may delegate any of its powers and/or functions (except powers conferred and duties imposed on the directors by law which are incapable of delegation) to a committee or an officer of the Company.

The Board has established committees as set out below and has approved a formal Charter for each Committee detailing their roles and responsibilities. Other committees may be established from time to time for specific purposes.

Finance, Audit & Risk Committee

The Finance, Audit & Risk Committee is responsible for oversight of, and advice and recommendations to the Board of Directors on:

1. Financial Management - business plans, annual funding figure, budgets and target cash levels
2. Risk management – operational risks
3. Internal audit function.

The current Members of the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee are:

- Patrick Makinson, Chair
- Margaret Cross
- Sue Chase
- Kylie Johnson

Peter Bicknell, the Independent Chair of the Board, attends as an observer.

Remuneration and Executive Review Committee

The Remuneration and Executive Review Committee assists the Board in reviewing the remuneration of the Independent Chair, of the Directors' and of the Ombudsman/CEO and the performance appraisals of the Ombudsman/CEO, the Company Secretary and the Independent Chair and in selecting an Independent Chair as required.

The current members of the Remuneration Committee are:

- Geoff Barton, Chair
- Kay Matthias
- Anthony Sinclair
- Mark Henley

Peter Bicknell, the Independent Chair of the Board, attends as an observer.

3. Conduct and Ethics

Code of Conduct

The Board has adopted a code of conduct that details the conduct and behaviour it expects from its workers in the performance of their duties. All workers are expected to perform their duties with professionalism, efficiency, fairness, impartiality, honesty and sensitivity.

4. Risk Management

Risk Management Plan

The Company has a Risk Management Plan to assist in achieving its risk management objectives – to ensure protection against financial loss, to ensure legal and regulatory obligations are satisfied and that business opportunities and risks are identified and properly managed and appropriately monitored by the Board. However, the Board recognises that no cost-effective internal control framework will preclude all errors and irregularities.

The Senior Management Team assists the Board and the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee in ensuring compliance with internal controls and risk management plans by regularly reviewing the effectiveness of the compliance and control systems and by regularly reporting to the Board and the Committee.

5. Communication with Members and the holding of General Meetings

The Board encourages full participation of members at general meetings to ensure high level of accountability and identification with the Company's strategy and goals. Important issues are presented to the members as single resolutions. Proxy forms are issued to all eligible members with the notice of general meetings.

The Company intends to hold hybrid or wholly virtual general meetings going forward, to build in flexibility and to increase the opportunity for members to participate and to be heard at the meetings.

Members are required to vote on the Annual Funding figure for the Company, the aggregate remuneration of directors and changes to the Company's Constitution. A copy of the Constitution is available to any member who requests it from the Company Secretary and on the Company's website www.ewosa.com.au.

Other means of communication with members include:

- the Annual Report, which is available to all members and on the Company's website
- the Financial Report which is posted to all members
- stakeholder meetings with the Ombudsman and regular meetings with the operational staff at the operational levels.

Feedback from members is also regularly sought through various surveys and informal feedback opportunities.

Financial Statements

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

	2022 \$	2021 \$
Revenue from ordinary activities	3,322,099	2,955,354
Expenses from ordinary activities:		
Accounting and audit fee	38,951	61,354
Depreciation	283,841	289,301
Employee benefit	2,251,271	2,298,196
Total other expenses	925,779	854,104
Income tax expense	-	-
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	(177,743)	(547,601)
Total comprehensive income for the year	(177,743)	(547,601)

Financial Statements

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 JUNE 2022

	2022 \$	2021 \$
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	1,164,444	1,242,661
Trade and other receivables	138,630	98,890
Other current assets	124,422	119,222
Other financial assets	1,805,305	1,896,313
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	3,232,801	3,357,086
NON CURRENT ASSETS		
Property, plant and equipment	970,097	1,062,891
TOTAL NON CURRENT ASSETS	970,097	1,062,891
TOTAL ASSETS	4,202,898	4,419,977
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Trade and other payables	151,579	98,535
Financial liability payable	139,305	112,279
Employee benefits	263,705	286,038
Other current liabilities	49,907	30,032
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	604,496	526,884
NON CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Financial liability payable	510,832	650,137
Employee benefits	57,549	35,192
TOTAL NON CURRENT LIABILITIES	568,381	685,329
TOTAL LIABILITIES	1,172,877	1,212,213
NET ASSETS	3,030,021	3,207,764
EQUITY		
Accumulated surplus	3,030,021	3,207,764
TOTAL EQUITY	3,030,021	3,207,764

Financial Statements

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

	2022 \$	2021 \$
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Receipts from members (inclusive of goods and services tax)	3,621,399	3,215,836
Payments to suppliers and employees (inclusive of goods and services tax)	(3,466,487)	(3,324,728)
Net cash inflow/(outflow) from operating activities 13	154,912	(108,892)
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
Proceeds from sale of property, plant and equipment	-	3,010
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	(205,217)	(98,652)
Proceeds from other financial assets	1,996,314	2,548,632
Payments for other financial assets	(1,905,305)	(2,368,892)
Interest received	18,443	32,686
Net cash inflow/(outflow) from investing activities	(95,765)	116,785
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES		
Financing lease principal payments	(112,311)	(66,511)
Financing lease interest payments	(25,053)	(27,650)
Net cash outflow from financing activities	(137,364)	(94,161)
Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents	(78,217)	(86,269)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of year	1,242,661	1,328,930
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT END OF YEAR	1,164,444	1,242,661

Resolutions

SUBJECT:	REINSTATEMENT OF PROPERTY FOLLOWING WATER INFRASTRUCTURE REPAIRS
ISSUES:	LEAK AND DRIVEWAY REINSTATEMENT
UTILITY:	WATER
CUSTOMER TYPE:	RESIDENTIAL
CASE TYPE:	INVESTIGATION

THE ISSUE:

After Mr V reported a water leak at his property, the supplier cut out a section of the driveway to repair a distribution pipe. The supplier later advised that it proposed to repair the driveway with a patch, but Mr V was not happy and sought compensation for the cost to reinstate the driveway. The supplier declined and notified Mr V that repairs as proposed would be completed at the end of November 2021.

OUR REVIEW:

We found that prior to the repairs proceeding, Mr V contacted the supplier raising concerns about the appearance of a patch and requesting that the entire driveway be replaced. The parties subsequently agreed to proceed with the repair on the understanding that Mr V could return to the water supplier if unhappy with the result.

Mr V contacted us in December as the repairs had not been completed. We worked with the supplier to have the repairs undertaken as agreed; they were completed on 16 December. Mr V advised that they were dissatisfied and again sought replacement of the entire driveway.

RESOLUTION:

The parties agreed that the company would pay Mr V \$4,430 – the estimated cost to replace the damaged section of the driveway. Mr V would then have the driveway repaired or replaced as he wished.

SUBJECT:	CONTRACT TERMS AND CONDITIONS
ISSUES:	MARKETING – CONTRACT – FAIRNESS OF CONDITIONS
UTILITY:	ELECTRICITY
CUSTOMER TYPE:	RESIDENTIAL
CASE TYPE:	FACILITATION

THE ISSUE:

Ms U signed up for term-of-life contracts for fixed solar feed-in tariffs and plan discounts at her two properties. When her energy provider was later bought out, its customers retained their contracts while they migrated to the new owner. However, Ms U then received notification from the new provider that her plans were being terminated and that new, less attractive contracts were being offered.

OUR REVIEW:

We found that when Ms U migrated to the new company she was given a copy of the Terms and Conditions which addressed the requirement to give 20 business days' notice that a contract would be terminated. Her energy provider had fulfilled its obligations under Rule 48 of the National Energy Retail Rules in issuing her a notification that her contracts would be changing, and Ms U had not agreed to new market retail contracts.

RESOLUTION:

Ms U's energy provider decided that one of the evergreen contracts would be retained and Ms U would continue to receive the benefits of that contract. Ms U agreed to a market retail contract for the other property. This was backdated to when the previous contract ended, providing the benefit of more competitive rates and discounts.

SUBJECT:	LIABILITY
ISSUES:	BILLING – SHARED WATER SUPPLY
UTILITY:	WATER
CUSTOMER TYPE:	RESIDENTIAL
CASE TYPE:	INVESTIGATION

THE ISSUE:

Mr Q lives in a property with a strata title, where one water meter supplies two dwellings. The water supplier bills Mr Q and his neighbour on a 50/50 basis regardless of the volume of water each property uses. Mr Q believed this was unfair and was concerned that he was being charged for his and his neighbour's water usage.

OUR REVIEW:

We found that Mr Q was being billed for 50% of what is recorded on the meter, and the water supplier tested the meter (at its cost) to confirm its accuracy.

The Water Retail Code allows for usage charges to be apportioned equally between customers who share a single meter, and the strata agreement for the property in question apportions a 50/50 split between the two tenants. This agreement can be changed if the Strata Corporation asks the water supplier to do so.

RESOLUTION:

We found that Mr Q was billed accurately.

SUBJECT:	HIGH BILL
ISSUES:	BILLING – HIGH – DISPUTED
UTILITY:	GAS
CUSTOMER TYPE:	RESIDENTIAL
CASE TYPE:	INVESTIGATION

THE ISSUE:

Ms K contacted our office after receiving a higher-than-expected winter gas bill – more than \$600, compared with her usual quarterly bill of around \$250.

OUR REVIEW:

We found that Ms K had asked her gas supplier to investigate and that a special read had been raised to check the accuracy of the disputed bill. However, she told us that she had not been informed of the outcome of this special read, and that no billing adjustments had been made. The matter was escalated to our Investigation stage, a meter test was completed, and this confirmed that the meter was recording accurately. A review of the bills found that Ms K had been correctly billed.

RESOLUTION:

The gas supplier provided a goodwill credit to acknowledge the delay in resolution and an affordable payment plan. Our office also provided Ms K with information about Energy Made Easy to compare products available from other suppliers.



ENERGY & WATER
OMBUDSMAN SA

Annual Report **2021-22**

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