

TRANSITIONING MARKETS



ANNUAL REPORT

2022-23

Energy & Water Ombudsman SA acknowledges and respects the important connection of all First Nations people to their lands and waters. Together we can learn, as we listen and observe the world's oldest living culture, therefore harmonising with their customs and traditions.

Front Cover

Electricity, Shutterstock

Gas, Shutterstock

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Flinders Ranges Solar Farm, Shutterstock

Wind Farm, South Australian Coast, Shutterstock

Solar Farm, South Australian Coast, Shutterstock

Residential Solar Panel Installation, Shutterstock

Hydrogen Park, Australian Gas Infrastructure Group

Adelaide Desalination Plant, SA Water

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ABOUT THE ENERGY & WATER OMBUDSMAN SA

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.

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 capacity 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.

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.

This ensures fair practice and effective dispute resolution between the electricity providers and their customers.

The Scheme was subsequently expanded to include customers 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 also include exempt embedded networks, exempt network service providers, exempt energy sellers and small scale networks. A list of current Members can be found under Our Organisation.

How we work

In any customer setting things can go wrong, that is why it is important that customers have access to the Energy & Water Ombudsman SA.

What we do

Our role is to facilitate the prompt resolution of disputes between the consumers of energy and water services and the providers of those services, by providing a free, independent, accessible, fair and informal service to consumers. 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 is 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.

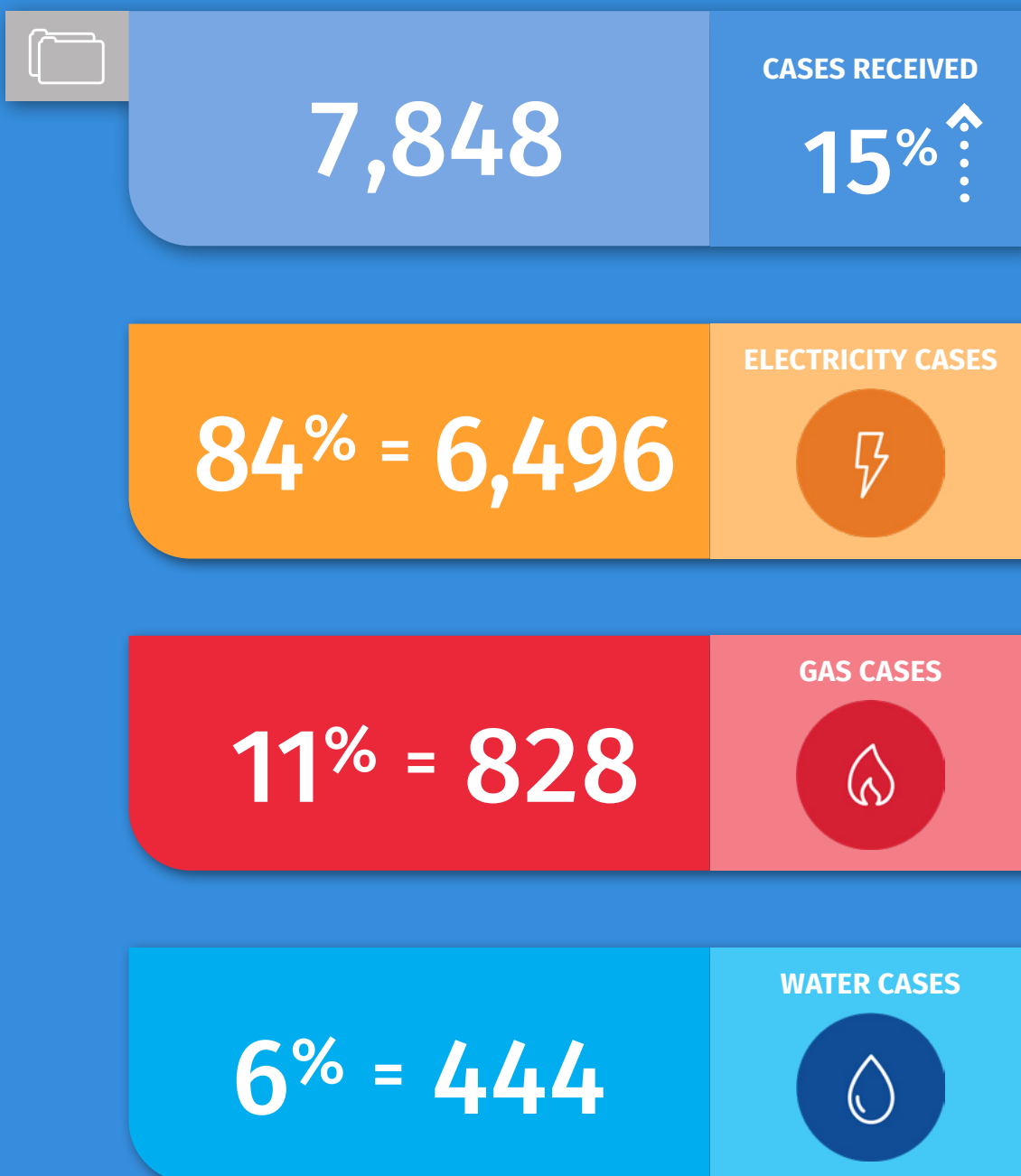
Our approach

We 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.

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

AT A GLANCE

A snapshot of the essential insights for the 2022-23 Financial Year.



In addition to the above there were 80 cases received that were non energy or water. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number, so may not always add to 100%.



7,796

CASES RESOLVED

15% ↑



< 30 DAYS

TIME TO RESOLVE

89%



CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

95%



CONTACT VIA ONLINE

33%



SCHEME MEMBERS

202

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 AM
Chair

Geoff Barton
Industry Director

Sue Chase AM
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 2022-23 Annual Report of the Energy & Water Ombudsman SA.



I am pleased to report that this year, as we moved on from the urgent issues presented by Covid-19, the Energy and Water Ombudsman SA (EWOSA) maintained its services to Members and their customers while also ensuring the organisation's sustainability and taking steps to guarantee appropriate responses to future challenges.

The past few years have been difficult for customers, providers, regulators and governments, but we have learnt a great deal and important steps have been taken to ensure our organisation's viability and maintain critical services to customers.

In common with other energy ombudsman Schemes, EWOSA acknowledges the action taken by all parties, in particular the common resolve to ensure services to the most vulnerable are maintained. This cooperative resolve needs to be maintained over this next phase.

As noted last year, a period of low complaints, due to the positive actions of the regulators and providers, resulted in a drop in income for the Scheme. The Board has carefully reviewed all expenditure but given priority to ensuring we maintain the high-calibre staff resources needed to guarantee a quality service as we return to a more 'business as usual' phase.

As expected, we have received increasing levels of cases recently. The enhanced level of cooperation with Members, developed in more critical times, has been of assistance in achieving the best outcome possible for customers.

To keep abreast of issues impacting consumers, during the year the Board met with Jim Cox, the Deputy Chair of the Australian Energy Regulator, and Adam Wilson, the CEO of the Essential Services Commission of South Australia, as well as with financial counsellors.

While maintaining a focus on regional consumers, the Board also considered reports from our staff on hardship and cases that are difficult to resolve.

With the regulation of energy increasingly being driven nationally, collaborating with interstate energy and water ombudsman Schemes continues to be important both for our policy input to key national stakeholders and to provide a measure of consistency across the states. This year EWOSA hosted the Board Chairs and Ombudsmen from across Australia and New Zealand, with

deliberations focussing on key policies, harmonisation of services, efficiencies of purchasing and future planning.

Over the past few years, the Board has been mindful of the fact that there is an increasing number of Members with significantly fewer consumers than the large industry Members that have been the foundation of the Scheme. The regulators have required they be members so as to provide an independent dispute resolution process for their customers, but the supply of energy or water is not their major focus. As part of our attempts to find an efficient way for these Members to appropriately engage within general meetings, the Board provided for virtual access at two meetings during the year and will continue to evaluate the cost/benefit of such processes.

There was no change in Board membership during the year. Kylie Johnson was re-elected as Water Industry Director for a further three-year term.

Once again, I want to publicly thank our staff for the consistently high standard of response they provide to Members and their customers. In particular, I acknowledge Sandy Canale's leadership to his staff and the Board.

Since my third and last term as Board Chair expires in March 2024, this will be my last introduction to the Board's Annual Report.

It has been a great honour for me to have been the Chair of such a significant organisation for the last eight years. I acknowledge the integrity, policy understanding and commitment of the Directors and staff throughout this time and wish them and the Scheme best wishes for the future.

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 2022-23.



Although lockdowns kept us indoors during the Covid-19 pandemic, business did not stand still, especially in terms of innovation in products and services. This applied in the energy and essential services sector as much as anywhere.

I would therefore like to focus on what we have seen changing since this time last year, and what this likely means for customers, Members and our Scheme.

In 2022-23, the first full financial year post-Covid, we saw a 16% increase in complaints compared with the previous year as people returned to the workplace and businesses resumed full operations.

However, complaint levels were still below those for 2019-20, the last year before the pandemic affected us all. Complaints fell in each of the two following years – by 18% in 2020-21 and 22% in 2021-22.

There is still much work to be done, however. While the financial and economic impact of Covid-19 has lessened, some of the financial supports, such as a moratorium on disconnections, are ending. Together with increased debt in many households, mortgage/rent stress, and cost-of-living increases over the past 12 months, this means that financial pressures are significant and pervasive across the community.

In 2022-23 we received 3,939 billing complaints, a 26% increase on the previous year and the highest total since 2014-15.

I am delighted to say that there is great confidence in our ability to handle all complaints efficiently.

Our most recent five-year review (2021-2022) showed that the Scheme is held in very high regard by our stakeholders and the general population, and this positive pattern is reflected in our 2022-23 survey results. It is pleasing to note that we are seen in the general community as an effective independent problem-solver and that we achieve fair and balanced results for those who use our services and for our Members.

Digging a little deeper into these results, overall customer satisfaction ratings for 2022-23 were 95%, with 96% of customers saying they would recommend the Scheme to others.

Customer protections

The Scheme does not have input into the cost of energy and water, nor does it regulate costs charged to customers. We are here to help resolve disputes that arise between customers and their energy and water providers.

It is clear that the nature of these disputes is evolving as energy and water markets continue to change – providing both new challenges and opportunities. Customers have more choice in products, services, and providers.

Our role is to assist them in understanding what the market is offering, and to help them engage with providers to ensure clarity, transparency, and fairness.

We continue to work with Energy and Water Ombudsman Schemes interstate to ensure that customer protections are maintained as the nature and types of services evolve. This involves consideration of the jurisdiction of Ombudsman, as well as providing submissions to energy and water market bodies as they assess regulations applying to such services.

The Australian Energy Regulator developed a Better Bills Guideline during the year, and this is scheduled to be implemented by September 2023. It will allow customers to quickly review their bills and see if they can get a better deal.

Areas of focus

We continue to review the Scheme's business processes and take steps to ensure we operate as efficiently as possible. During the year, we rolled out our new cloud-based Case Management System, which has enabled:

- streamlined processes that let us focus on key performance measures
- reduced times for complaint handling and simplified responses for customers
- better case management and identification of systemic issues.

A range of specific and systemic issues also were identified during the year; these are dealt with in detail through the body of this report.

Our primary role is to help resolve disputes that arise between customers and their energy and water providers. The nature of these disputes is evolving as energy and water markets continue to change – providing both new challenges and opportunities.

We continue to work with the other Energy and Water Ombudsman Schemes interstate to ensure that customer protections are maintained as the nature and types of services evolve.

However, there are several key areas of focus that are front-of-mind for our Scheme and Members, given current financial pressures and innovation in new products and services. These include the following:

- Working with our Member companies to support customers who experience payment difficulties. This financial year saw an increase in the Default Market Offer of between 22-29%, which will seriously affect many. It will be important for Members to build the flexibility and resilience needed in their systems to cope with the pressures facing users on multiple fronts
- Increased engagement with specific-needs groups, particularly those with English as a Second Language (ESL), aged customers and customers with a disability
- New market entrants from a non-typical sector (e.g. telecommunications, retail, or grocery businesses). These may be large or small providers, with a range of experience in the sector
- New products and services that are subject to the Australian Consumer Law but are not currently within the scope of the Scheme
- Continuing to improve the business by refining complaint handling processes to improve closure times and enhancing our new Case Management System.

As the transition from fossil fuels to other forms of supply continues to gather pace, the important work, from our perspective, revolves around ensuring the Scheme remains fit-for-purpose: that is, providing fair, clear and consistent support, advice and information as markets and services evolve.

In closing, I want to reiterate that the effective management of the Scheme is based on valued relationships with all players, including customers, Members, and regulatory bodies. Our Members are key in achieving effective outcomes during disputes and we are thankful for their support of our initiatives and willingness to find solutions.

My thanks are due to the Scheme's Chairperson, Peter Bicknell, who will be retiring in March 2024. He has always worked very hard with the other Directors to take the Scheme forward and make it a strong and relevant part of the regulatory landscape in South Australia.

Sandy Canale
Energy & Water Ombudsman SA

RESOLUTIONS

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| SUBJECT: | HIGH BILL |
| ISSUES: | BILLING – BACKBILL – DISPUTES USAGE |
| UTILITY: | ELECTRICITY |
| CUSTOMER TYPE: | BUSINESS |
| CASE TYPE: | INVESTIGATION |

THE ISSUE

Ms T received a high catch-up bill due to previous undercharges.

OUR REVIEW

We found Ms T's provider had changed her rates from a flat rate to time-of-use rates and backdated the charges six months.

This worked well for Ms T as her café operates mostly during off-peak times.

In reversing the previous six months' bills, Ms T's provider issued a new bill on the cheaper time-of-use rates. This left the account in credit by \$4,600, which represented payments already made by Ms T during the six-month period.

Ms T found the credit on her online account and transferred the credit balance to other accounts that she had with her provider. Her provider then re-issued the bills for the next quarter and the six-month period previously billed, which resulted in \$2,100 in new charges.

As the payments for this billing period had been transferred to other accounts, it left the account in debit.

RESOLUTION

We explained to Ms T that the \$2,100 was not an undercharge, but represented a reduced amount based on the cheaper time-of-use rates, the difference being caused when the credit payment for this period was used by Ms T to pay other accounts with the same provider.

Ms T's provider applied a \$200 credit to her account in recognition of the inconvenience caused by this matter.

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| SUBJECT: | RECOVERY OF UNDERCHARGES |
| ISSUES: | BILLING – HIGH BILL – DISPUTED USAGE |
| UTILITY: | WATER |
| CUSTOMER TYPE: | RESIDENTIAL |
| CASE TYPE: | INVESTIGATION |

THE ISSUE

Ms H received two high water bills for around \$1,600 for the period March to July 2022. She applied for a leakage allowance, which was initially declined because it did not meet time frames for submitting the application. After further consideration, her provider reduced the outstanding balance to \$800.

However, Ms H was dissatisfied because she wanted the bill reduced to around \$250 per quarter for the property, which she said was consistent with the leakage allowance policy of her water provider in her home state.

OUR REVIEW

We reviewed the provider's billing, meter reads, meter test results and leakage allowance.

We found the billing was accurate and that the provider had applied the leakage allowance in a manner consistent with its policy. We also confirmed that the policy was consistent with that of Ms H's provider in her home state.

RESOLUTION

Ms H was informed that her bills were accurate, and that the leakage allowance was correctly applied and consistent with the practice in other jurisdictions.

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'.

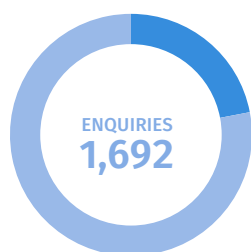
An **ENQUIRY** is a request for information or assistance, where we do our best to provide the most appropriate response. On occasions, we refer an enquiry to another body, such as a regulator or a government department.

A **COMPLAINT** is an expression of dissatisfaction with a Member (an energy or water service provider) 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:

- Referral to Customer Service
- Escalated Referral
- Explanation of Outcome
- Consultation
- Early Resolution
- Investigation
- Binding Decision

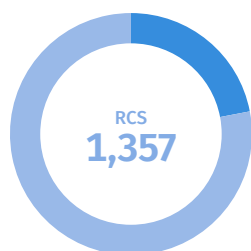
The figures in this section are the number of cases resolved.



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 provider.

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



Complaints

Referral to Customer Service

Under our Charter, an energy or water service provider must have the opportunity to consider a complaint before we do. If they have not, the contact with us is recorded as a Referral to Customer Service complaint and the customer is asked to contact the provider'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.

Escalated Referral

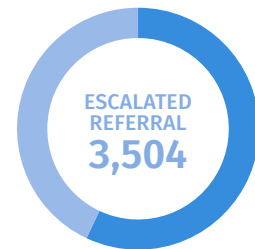
If a customer has been unable to resolve an issue with an energy or water service provider, we accept the issue as a complaint.

If the customer has contacted the Member, we will refer the complaint to the Member's higher-level dispute resolution section under our Escalated Referral 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 Escalated Referral 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 as a case-managed complaint and is not recorded in our statistics as a new complaint. The **Escalated Referral** case type replaces **Refer to Higher Level** used in previous years.



* INCLUDES 142 RHLS CLOSED IN 2022-23

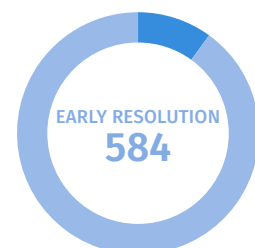
Consultation

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.



Early Resolution

Prior to investigating a case, we may facilitate an agreed resolution between the customer and the energy or water service provider. The customer and provider are provided with written details of the agreed outcome of an Early Resolution case. This **Early Resolution** case type replaces **Conciliation** used in previous years.



* INCLUDES 21 CONCILIATIONS CLOSED IN 2022-23



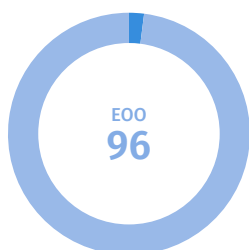
Investigation

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.

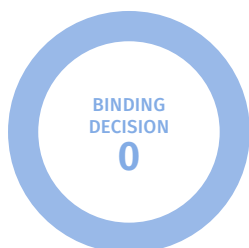
Our aim is to establish an objective and independent view of the issues and to negotiate a fair and reasonable outcome.



Explanation of Outcome

A case is classified as Explanation of Outcome 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. **Explanation of Outcome** is an updated label for **Explanation of Resolution** used in previous years.



Binding Decision

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.

RESOLUTIONS

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| SUBJECT: | FINANCIAL HARDSHIP |
| ISSUES: | CREDIT - PAYMENT DIFFICULTIES – UNABLE TO PAY |
| UTILITY: | GAS |
| CUSTOMER TYPE: | RESIDENTIAL |
| CASE TYPE: | INVESTIGATION |

THE ISSUE

Ms E was experiencing financial hardship and was unable to pay in full an accumulated debt of \$3,900.

OUR REVIEW

In August 2021 Ms E set up a payment arrangement of \$31 per fortnight for her gas account that included an outstanding balance from a previous address.

In September 2022 she reduced this to \$25 per fortnight.

Ms E closed the account in February 2023 and claims she was unaware that the outstanding balance would need to be paid. She believed that she only needed to maintain the fortnightly payments.

We found no evidence that this was advised to Ms E by her provider.

RESOLUTION

Although energy providers are not obligated to provide hardship payment assistance for closed accounts, an agreement was reached for a debt reduction strategy if Ms E engaged a financial counsellor within six weeks.

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| SUBJECT: | ESTIMATED BILLS |
| ISSUES: | BILLING – ESTIMATION – ACCURACY AND METER ACCESS |
| UTILITY: | ELECTRICITY |
| CUSTOMER TYPE: | BUSINESS |
| CASE TYPE: | INVESTIGATION |

THE ISSUE

Mr M contacted our office about estimated bills because his provider did not obtain actual read data from his manually read smart meter.

OUR REVIEW

We found that Mr M's bills between August 2020 and November 2022 did not match the meter data, but overall, he was billed for less than was recorded on the meter.

We also found that his provider revised bills issued between January 2021 and January 2023 because updated actual meter data was obtained. The provider had correctly limited the recovery of undercharges according to energy rules when applying a \$1,800 credit.

However, we found estimated use for some periods where actual data was not obtained was not in line with Mr M's actual historical use. We calculated Mr M would have been billed \$800 less had his provider billed those periods in line with his actual historical use.

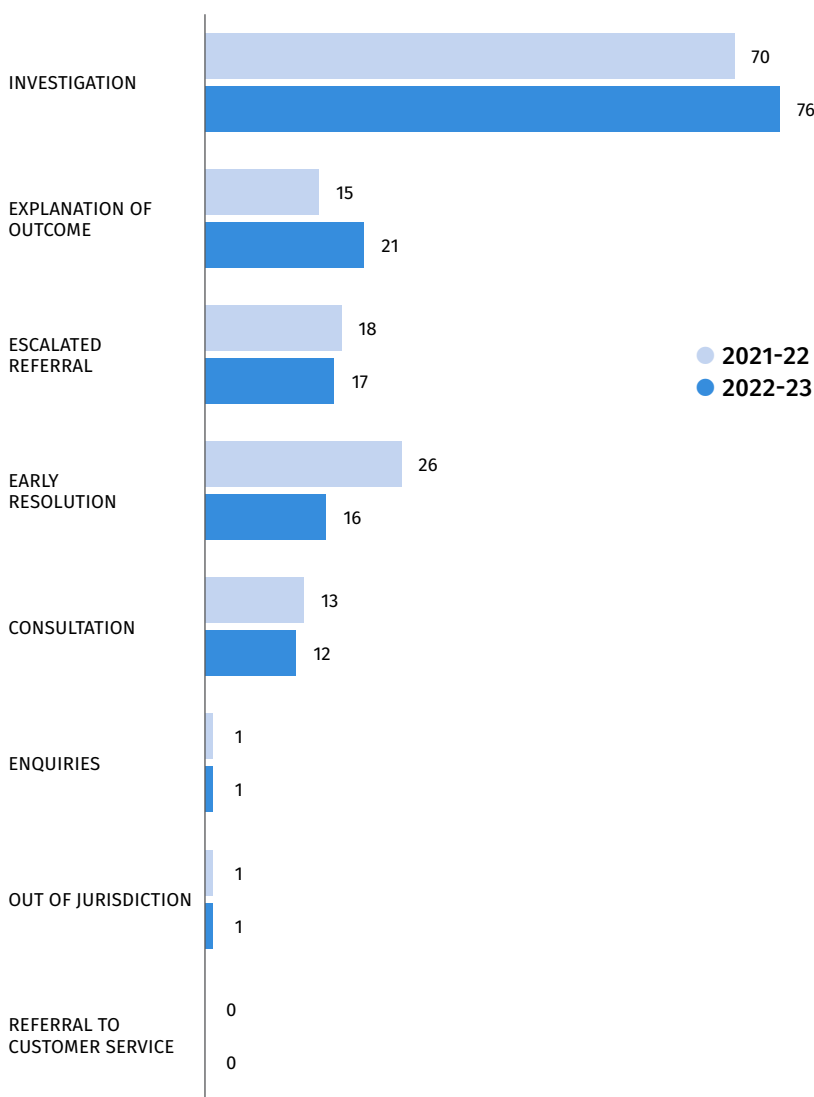
RESOLUTION

A \$1,000 credit was applied to Mr M's account to bring the estimated use billed in line with his previous actual use and as a gesture of goodwill.

The provider also updated the site access details to ensure the meter provider will attend the property each quarter to obtain the actual meter data.

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.

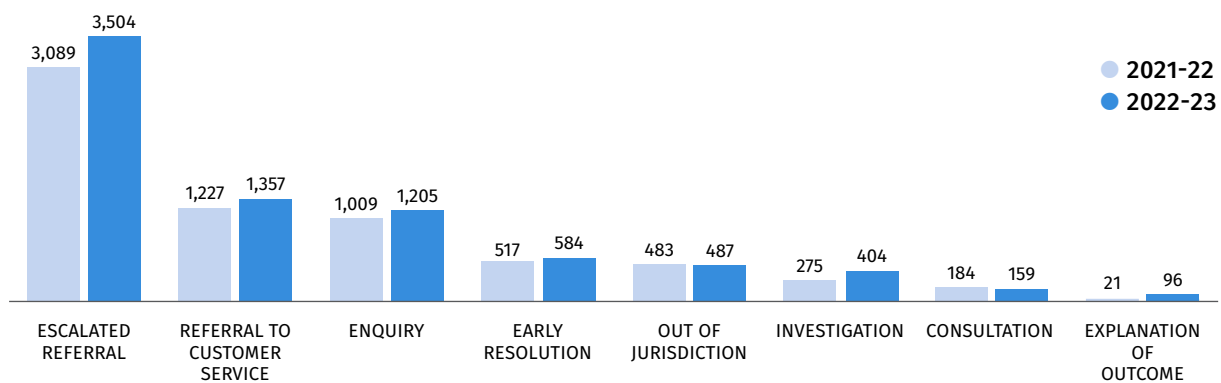


In 2022-23, the Escalated Referral case type replaced Refer to Higher Level, and Early Resolution replaced Conciliation. The charts in this report group these cases with their predecessors for comparison purposes, noting they are distinct case types having similar processes.

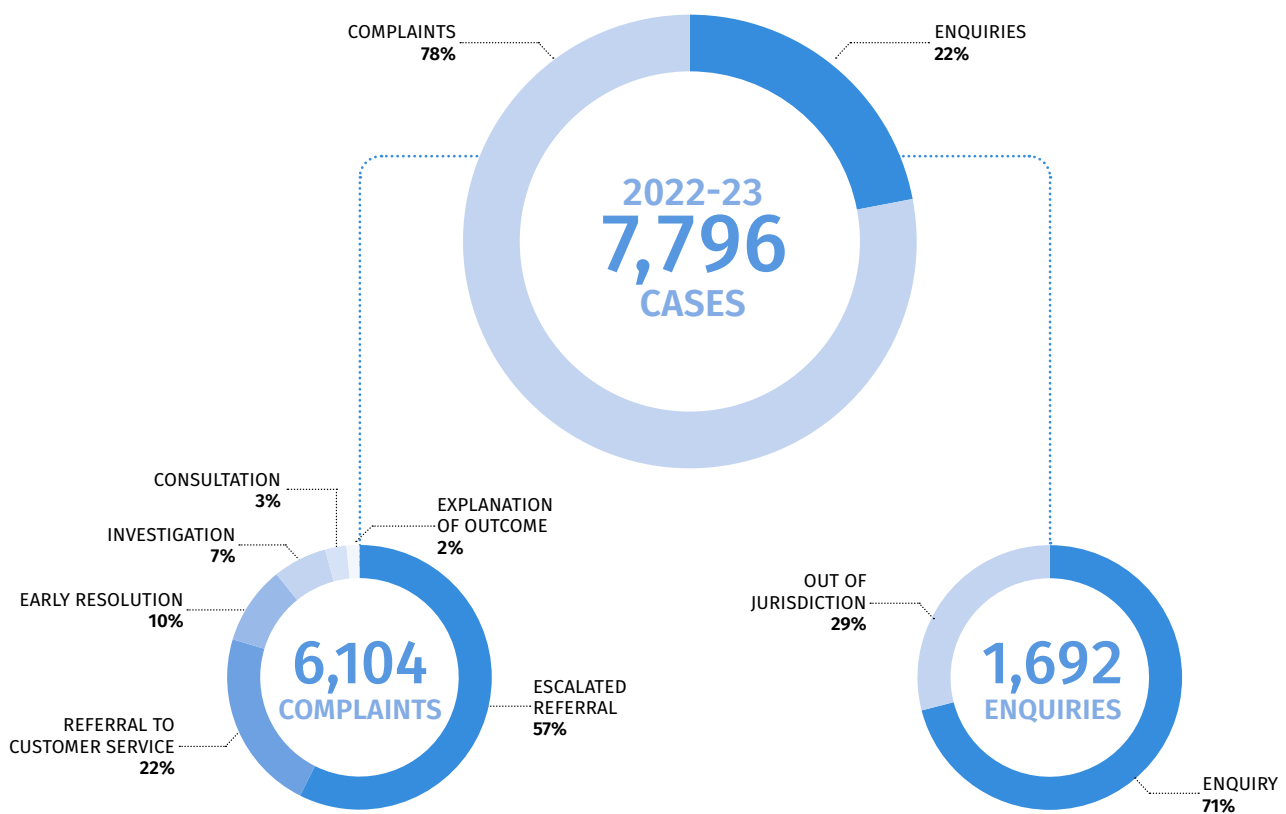
AVERAGE TIME (DAYS) TO RESOLVE

Cases resolved

The following charts show cases resolved during 2022-23, compared with the previous year.



CASES RESOLVED, BY CASE TYPE



CASES RESOLVED, BY LEVEL

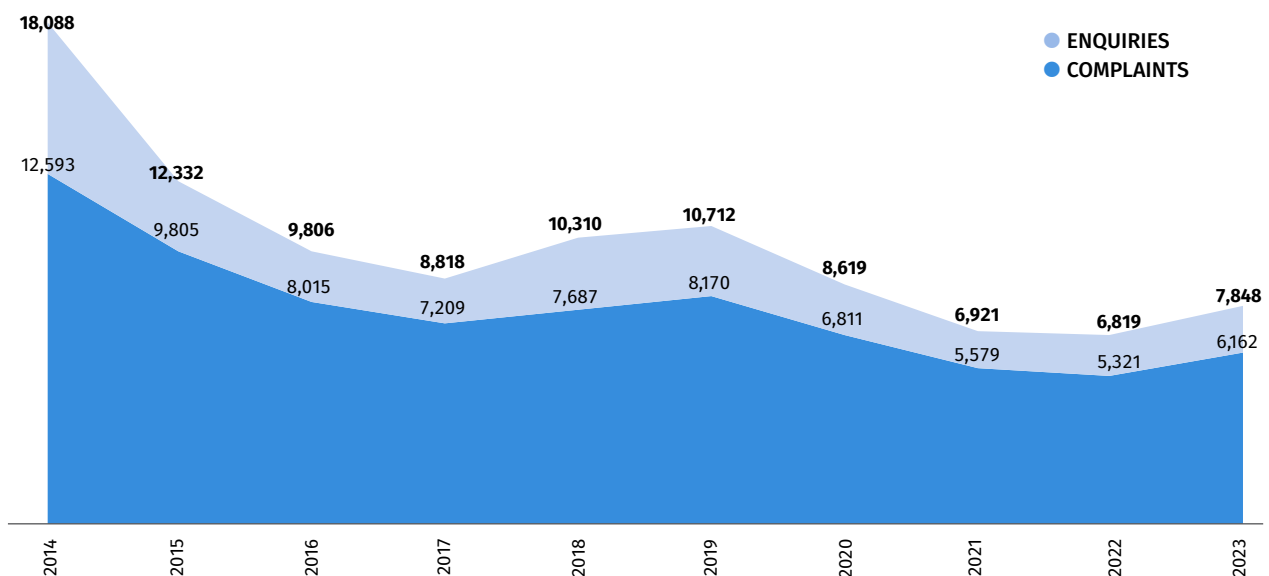
Cases received: yearly and monthly trends

Before 2016 there had been a period of elevated case volumes related to billing system conversions. Following this period was a steady decline to just 8,818 cases by 2016-17, which was followed by two years of increases largely caused by an influx of cases about metering competition.

Case volumes again decreased significantly in 2019-20 influenced by regulatory changes and other economic conditions during the Covid-19 pandemic. The number of complaints received in 2021-22 was the lowest since 2008, then in 2022-23 the number increased by 16% to 6,162 complaints which is higher than the previous two years. There had been a consistent decline in the number of complaints and overall case volume each year since 2018-19, then 2022-23 marked the first year of increased volume.

Over the previous 10 years the proportion of complaints has been relatively steady at about 80% of all cases each year.

TOTAL CASES



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

The next chart shows the number of cases received monthly for three successive years up to 2022-23.

Over the last three years April has featured as the month with the lowest volume of cases received. This is influenced by various factors including the seasons and also due to the number of public holidays in April.

The volume of cases in 2022-23 was higher in almost every month compared to the previous two years, peaking in August with nearly 800 cases and then a secondary peak in November.

This is consistent with the established trend of annual peaks following the winter billing periods, where energy use is relatively high. Other factors including the timing and extent of tariff rate increases in this period has influenced the monthly trend.

CASES BY INDUSTRY SECTOR



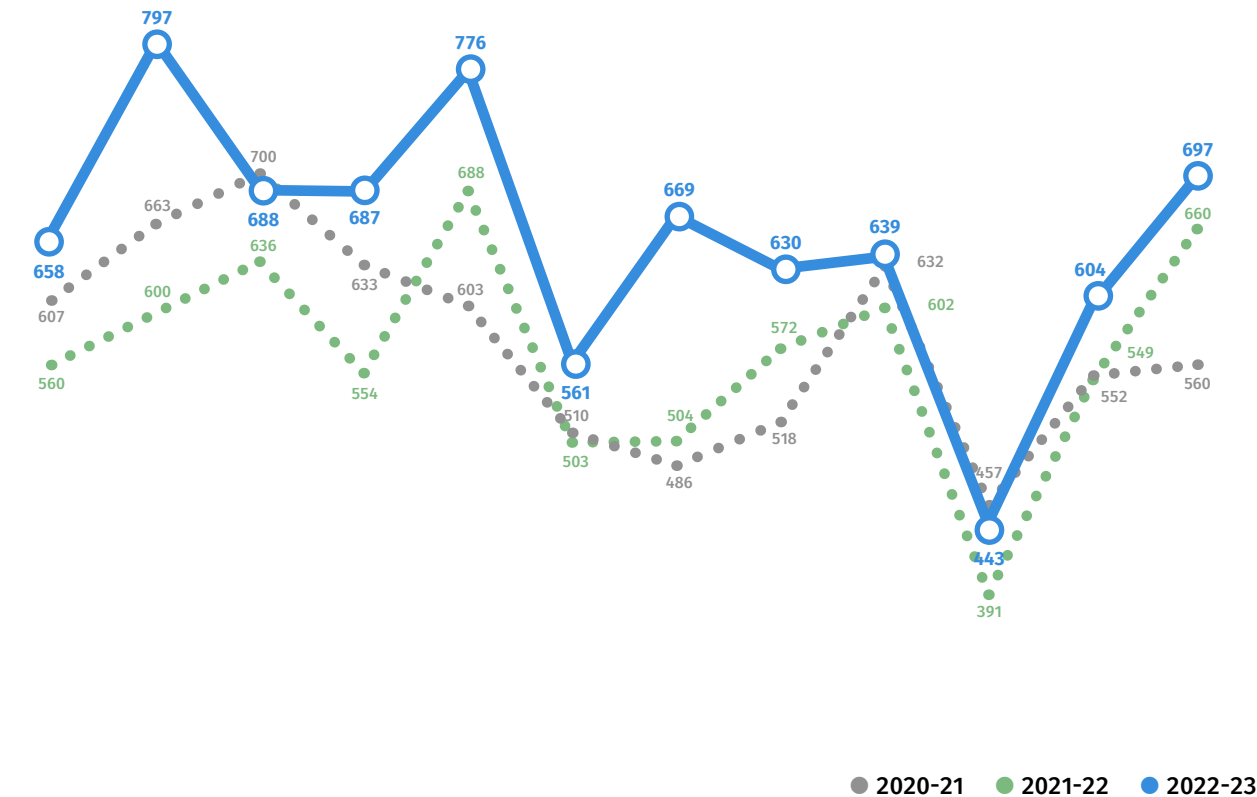
ELECTRICITY 84%



GAS 11%



WATER 6%



NUMBER OF CASES RECEIVED MONTHLY OVER THE LAST 3 YEARS

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 2022-23, Customer Service was the most frequent Additional Issue.

| | 2022-23 | | |
|--------------------|----------------|-------------------|---------------|
| | Primary Issues | Additional Issues | Total |
| Billing | 3,939 | 1,162 | 5,101 |
| Customer Service | 166 | 2,067 | 2,233 |
| Provision | 719 | 248 | 967 |
| Credit | 355 | 198 | 553 |
| Marketing | 239 | 109 | 348 |
| Supply | 270 | 72 | 342 |
| Transfer | 210 | 56 | 266 |
| General Enquiry | 86 | 130 | 216 |
| Land | 167 | 51 | 218 |
| Privacy | 11 | 21 | 32 |
| Grand Total | 6,162 | 4,114 | 10,276 |

PRIMARY AND ADDITIONAL ISSUES – COMPLAINTS ONLY

RESOLUTIONS

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| SUBJECT: | TREE TRIMMING |
| ISSUES: | LAND – PROPERTY DAMAGE – REIMBURSEMENT CLAIM |
| UTILITY: | ELECTRICITY |
| CUSTOMER TYPE: | RESIDENTIAL |
| CASE TYPE: | INVESTIGATION |

THE ISSUE

Mr B was seeking reimbursement of costs incurred to remove a tree from his property that he claimed became unsafe after his distributor's unbalanced tree trimming.

He accepted that his distributor had appropriately trimmed the part of the tree that was within the clearance zone around the power line, but claimed the failure to trim the rest of the tree left it unbalanced, which caused a crack in its fork.

OUR REVIEW

A review of the relevant legislation and regulations around tree trimming found that a distributor has no duty to carry out any additional vegetation management beyond what is required to maintain the prescribed clearance.

Additionally, we found that a distributor incurs no liability for not trimming more than it is legally required to do.

We found the distributor in this case acted compliantly and was not responsible for the overall management of the tree.

RESOLUTION

Mr B was advised that the distributor had acted compliantly under the regulatory requirements and therefore had no obligation to reimburse the \$1,100 he was seeking.

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| SUBJECT: | UNPLANNED OUTAGE |
| ISSUES: | SUPPLY – OFF SUPPLY - UNPLANNED – DAMAGE/LOSS |
| UTILITY: | ELECTRICITY |
| CUSTOMER TYPE: | RESIDENTIAL |
| CASE TYPE: | INVESTIGATION |

THE ISSUE

Mr F was seeking reimbursement of costs incurred to engage an electrician and to cover fridge and freezer losses after an unplanned outage.

OUR REVIEW

We found that Mr F was one of 10 customers affected by an underground cable fault. The fault was fixed within two hours and the distributor went to each property to restore supply.

However, a safety issue with Mr F's installation meant his supply could not be reconnected until the wiring was upgraded by his electrician. Due to a long weekend, the electrician could not attend for three days.

Once the work was completed and the site deemed compliant, the distributor restored the electricity within three hours of being notified.

We found that the distributor did not delay the reconnection and was not required to reimburse Mr F for his costs.

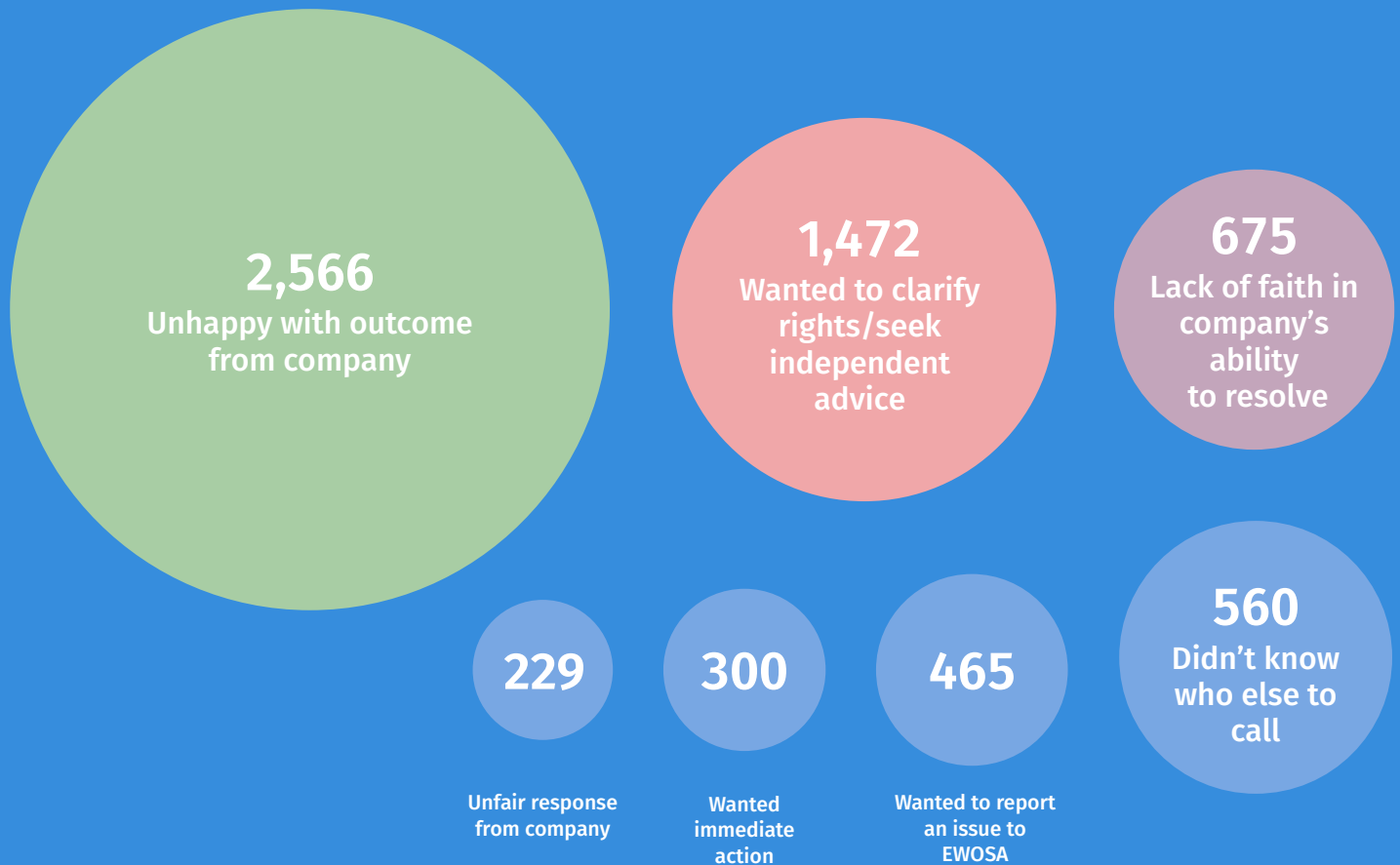
We also found that the wiring issue meant that no electricity had been recorded on the meter for eight years. Mr F had not paid for any consumption for this period.

RESOLUTION

Mr F did not receive any reimbursement of costs as his distributor did not cause the reconnection delay.

The distributor undertook not to recover the usage undercharge as a gesture of goodwill.

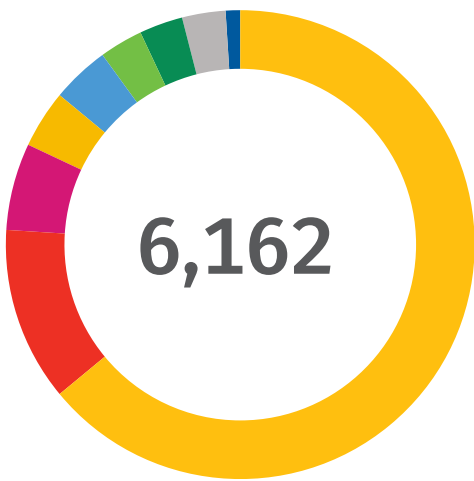
Reasons for Contact (all cases received)



Method of Contact

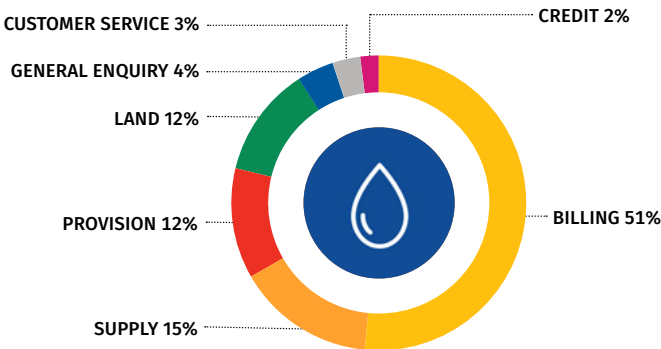
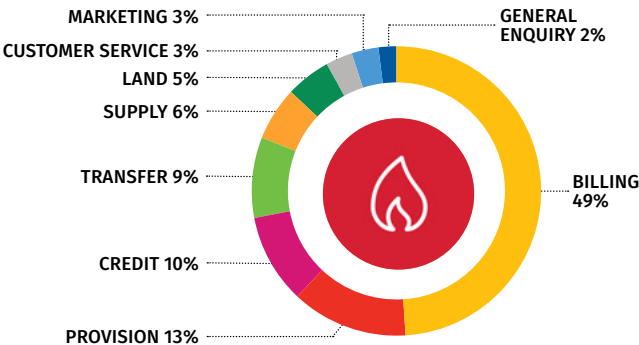
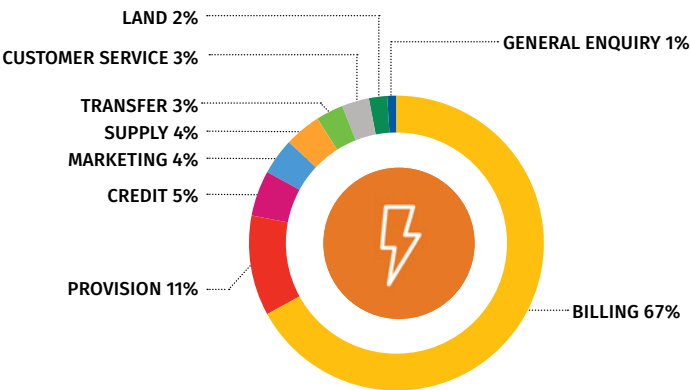
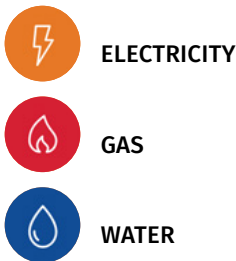


Complaints received by type



| | | |
|------------------|-------|-----|
| BILLING | 3,939 | 64% |
| PROVISION | 719 | 12% |
| CREDIT | 355 | 6% |
| SUPPLY | 270 | 4% |
| MARKETING | 239 | 4% |
| TRANSFER | 210 | 3% |
| LAND | 167 | 3% |
| CUSTOMER SERVICE | 166 | 3% |
| GENERAL ENQUIRY | 86 | 1% |
| PRIVACY | 11 | <1% |

Complaints received by industry



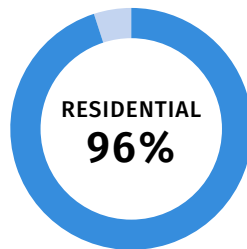
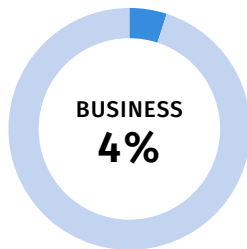
Where Complaints came from

Complaints received per 10,000 population

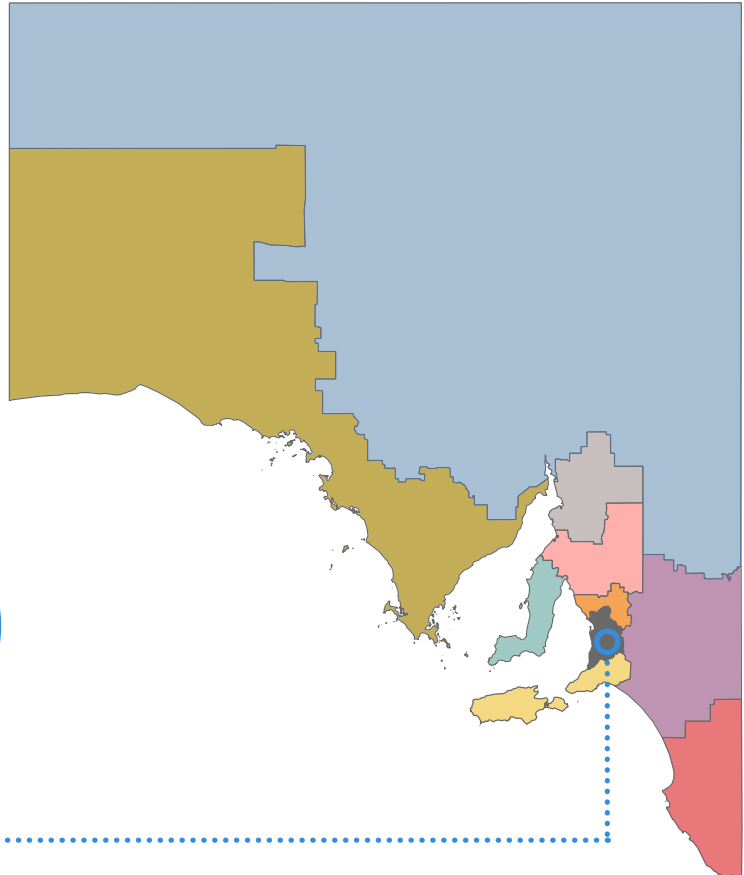
REGIONAL AREAS

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

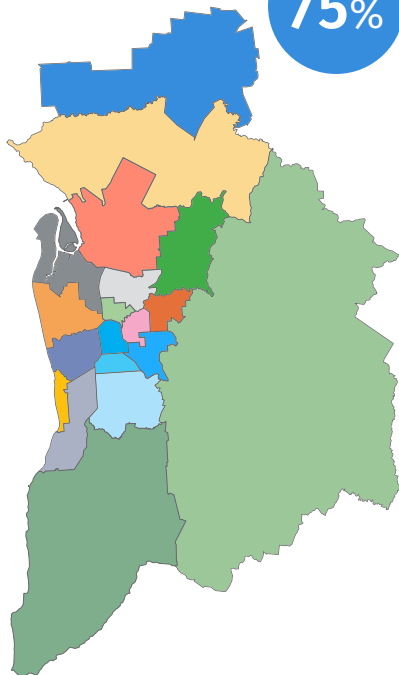
25%



SOURCE OF CONTACT (BUSINESS OR RESIDENTIAL)



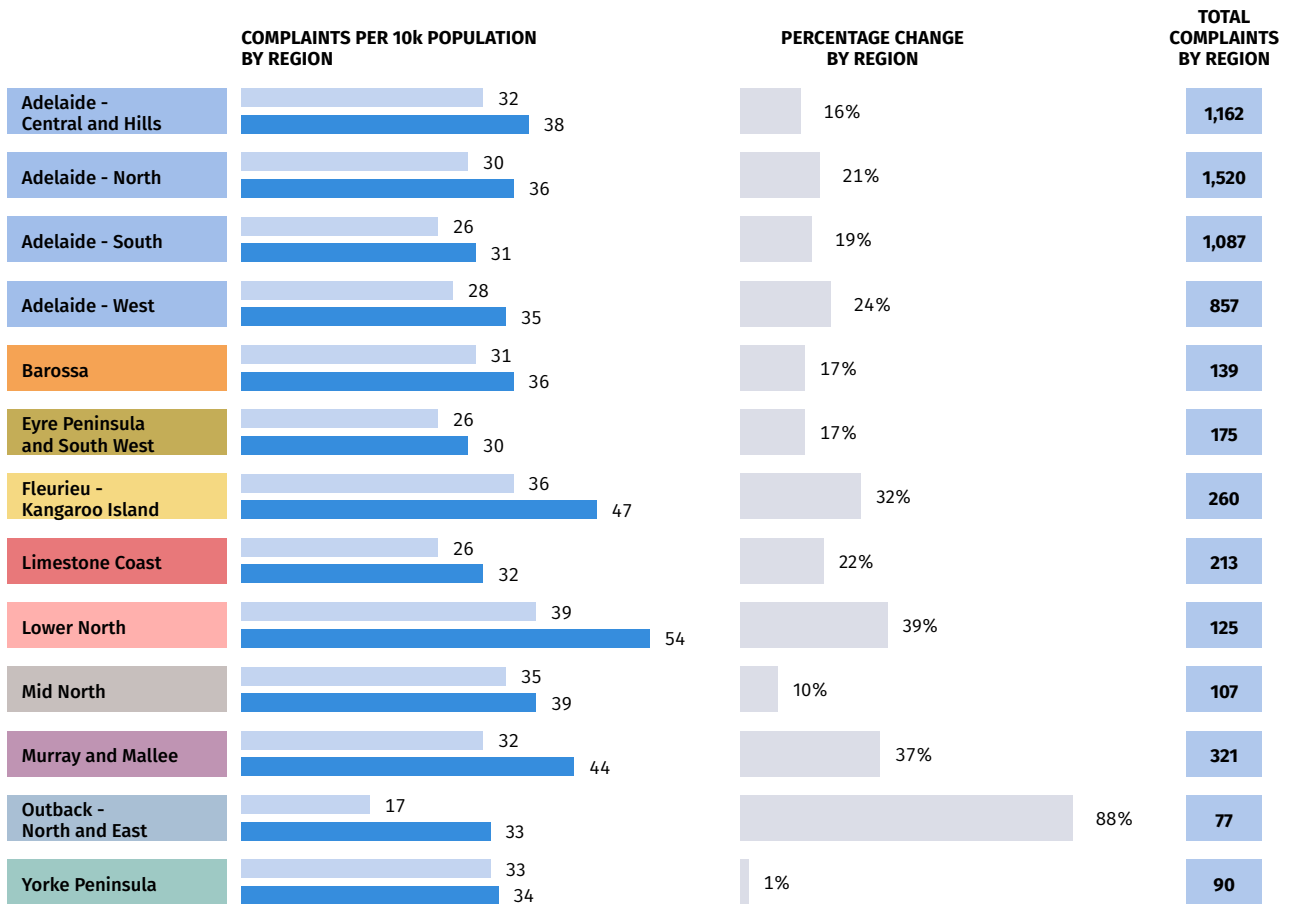
75%



METROPOLITAN AREAS

| | COMPLAINTS | % OF TOTAL | COMPLAINTS PER 10k |
|--------------------------------|------------|------------|--------------------|
| Port Adelaide - East | 240 | 5% | 52 |
| Adelaide Hills | 374 | 8% | 48 |
| Gawler - Two Wells | 172 | 4% | 46 |
| Norwood - Payneham - St Peters | 163 | 4% | 44 |
| Adelaide City | 113 | 2% | 44 |
| Playford | 365 | 8% | 37 |
| Port Adelaide - West | 219 | 5% | 36 |
| Charles Sturt | 416 | 9% | 35 |
| West Torrens | 222 | 5% | 34 |
| Tea Tree Gully | 325 | 7% | 34 |
| Holdfast Bay | 117 | 3% | 33 |
| Burnside | 149 | 3% | 32 |
| Onkaparinga | 488 | 11% | 32 |
| Campbelltown (SA) | 168 | 4% | 31 |
| Marion | 286 | 6% | 30 |
| Mitcham | 196 | 4% | 30 |
| Salisbury | 418 | 9% | 29 |
| Unley | 112 | 2% | 29 |
| Prospect - Walkerville | 83 | 2% | 28 |

COMPLAINTS PER 10K POPULATION – METRO ADELAIDE

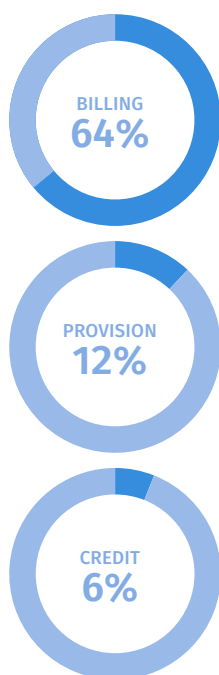


COMPLAINTS PER 10,000 POPULATION BY REGION ● 2021-22 ● 2022-23

| | YEAR OF RECEIVED DATE | METROPOLITAN | | | | RURAL & REGIONAL SA |
|-----------|-----------------------|------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|---------------------|
| | | ADELAIDE - NORTH | ADELAIDE - CENTRAL AND HILLS | ADELAIDE - WEST | ADELAIDE - SOUTH | |
| BILLING | FY 2022 | 58.4% | 58.0% | 61.5% | 55.3% | 63.2% |
| | FY 2023 | 64.8% | 62.2% | 61.0% | 67.0% | 65.2% |
| PROVISION | FY 2022 | 15.5% | 13.6% | 13.2% | 18.1% | 15.0% |
| | FY 2023 | 9.5% | 12.9% | 13.9% | 10.2% | 12.2% |
| CREDIT | FY 2022 | 5.9% | 9.8% | 8.3% | 6.6% | 6.0% |
| | FY 2023 | 7.6% | 5.0% | 5.5% | 4.6% | 5.5% |
| SUPPLY | FY 2022 | 3.2% | 3.3% | 2.9% | 3.5% | 3.8% |
| | FY 2023 | 3.6% | 6.0% | 4.2% | 3.3% | 4.4% |
| MARKETING | FY 2022 | 5.7% | 5.1% | 3.9% | 2.0% | 3.8% |
| | FY 2023 | 3.7% | 4.0% | 3.3% | 4.3% | 3.9% |
| TRANSFER | FY 2022 | 3.3% | 4.5% | 4.2% | 5.1% | 2.7% |
| | FY 2023 | 3.8% | 2.7% | 3.6% | 3.6% | 3.3% |
| LAND | FY 2022 | 3.0% | 2.2% | 2.6% | 4.9% | 2.9% |
| | FY 2023 | 3.4% | 3.1% | 3.5% | 1.9% | 1.7% |
| OTHER | FY 2022 | 5.1% | 3.5% | 3.6% | 4.5% | 2.6% |
| | FY 2023 | 3.5% | 4.0% | 5.0% | 5.0% | 3.8% |

COMPLAINTS BY ISSUE AND REGION

TOP 3 COMPLAINTS
2022-23



Major issues

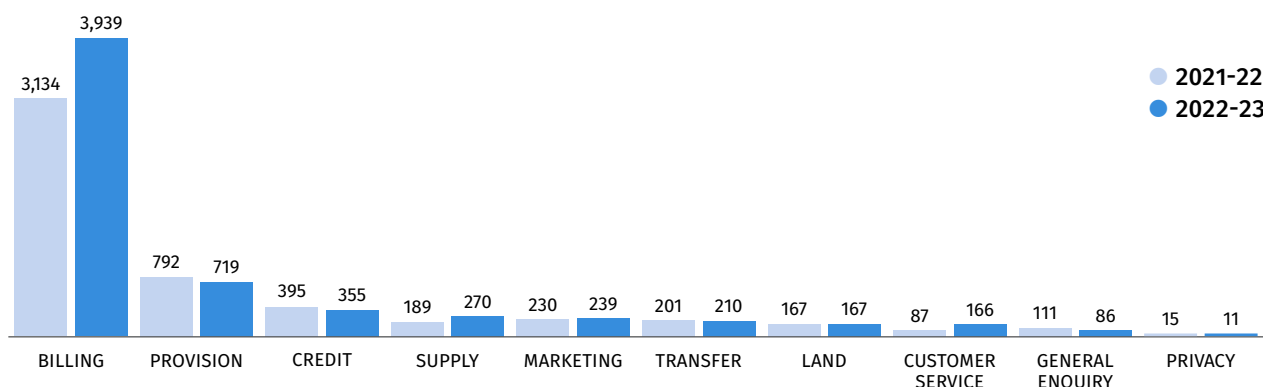
This section focuses on complaints and excludes discussion of enquiries and out-of-jurisdiction issues. The Scheme received 6,162 complaints during 2022-23. We categorise issues as follows:

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 |
| Supply | Outages, variations in voltage or flow, quality |
| Marketing | Market and retailer conduct, contract issues |
| Transfer | Transfers of the customer's account |
| Land | Issues relating to the customer's property |

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

The three top complaint issues for 2022-23 were Billing, Provision and Credit. The chart below shows the number of complaints by issue, comparing 2021-22 and 2022-23, with the most prominent increase being Billing issues.



COMPLAINTS RECEIVED BY ISSUE TYPE

Billing

Billing complaint numbers increased by 26% in 2022-23, the biggest increase among the major issues when compared to the previous year. This coincided with a significant increase in costs experienced by customers in 2022-23. In common with other ombudsman Schemes, Billing issues continue to generate the highest number of complaints.

The increases by sub-issues were:

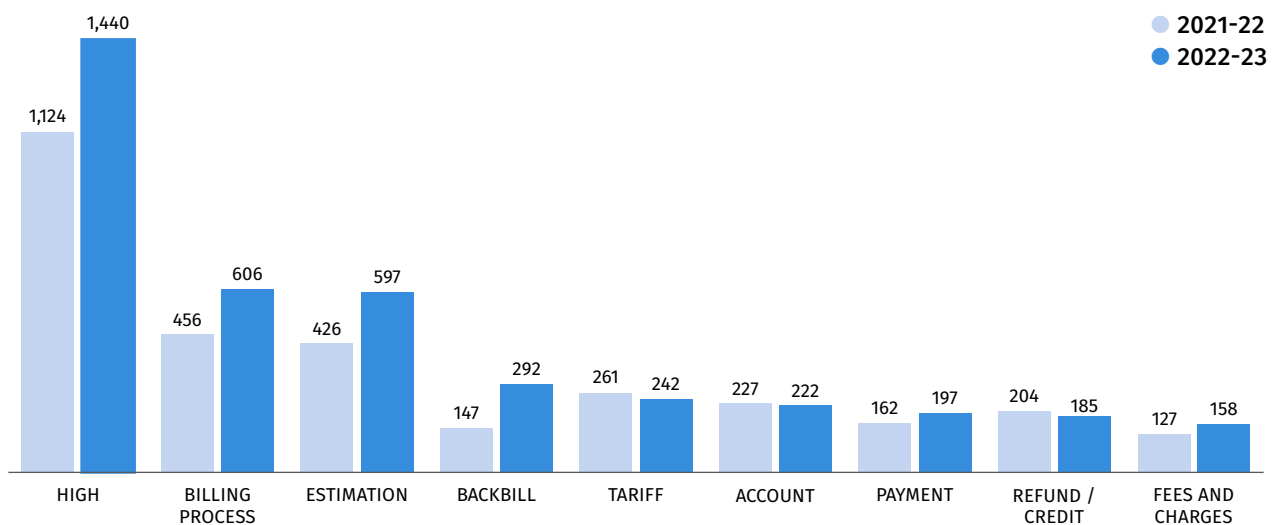
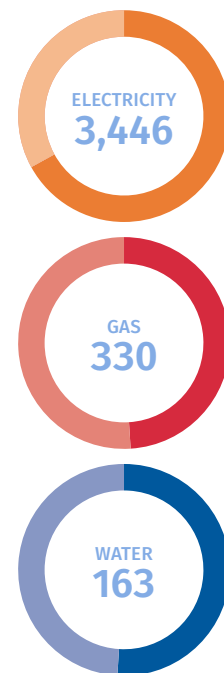
- Backbill (99%)
- Estimation (40%)
- Billing Process (33%)
- High (28%)
- Fees and Charges (24%)
- Payment (21%).

The decreases by sub-issues were:

- Refund / Credit (9%)
- Tariff (7%)
- Account (2%).

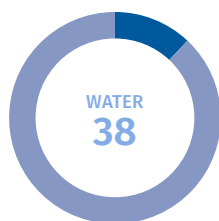
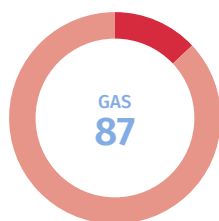
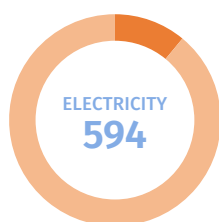
The increase in Backbill and Estimation complaints has been partly influenced by some retailers undergoing changes or updates to their billing systems.

BILLING COMPLAINTS



BILLING COMPLAINTS BY TYPE

PROVISION COMPLAINTS



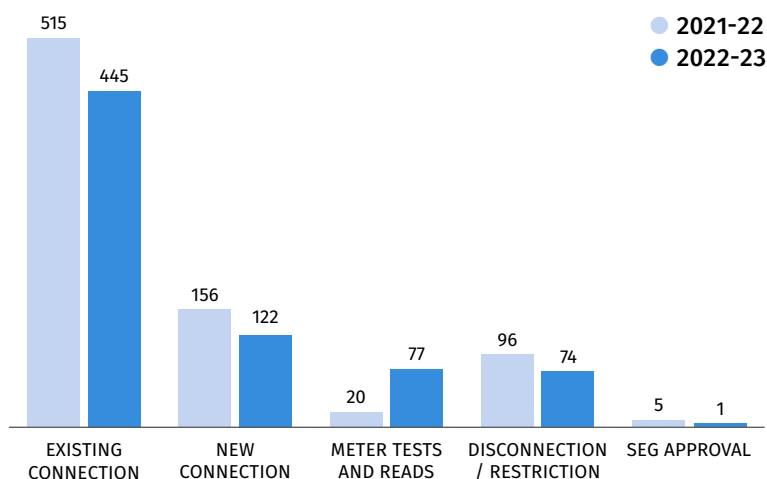
Provision

Provision was the second most significant issue for the Scheme in 2022-23, but complaint numbers decreased by 9% compared to the previous year.

Meter Tests and Reads was the only sub-issue that increased significantly (285%), but this was not a large volume overall. There was a small increase in SEG approval complaints.

There were significant decreases in the following sub-issues:

- Disconnection / Restriction (23%)
- New Connection (22%)
- Existing Connection (14%).



PROVISION BY SERVICE TYPE

Credit

Credit was the third most significant issue for the Scheme in 2022-23, though numbers decreased by 10% compared to the previous year.

The most significant decreases were:

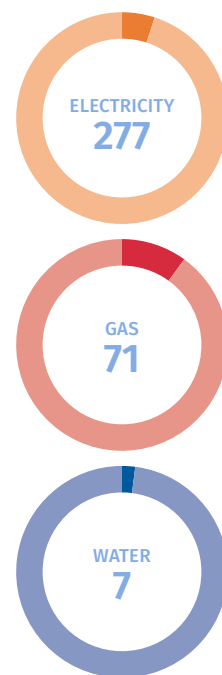
- Credit Action Disputed Liability (39%)
- Credit Action Taken in Error (25%).

There was a small decrease in Disconnection/Restriction (7%).

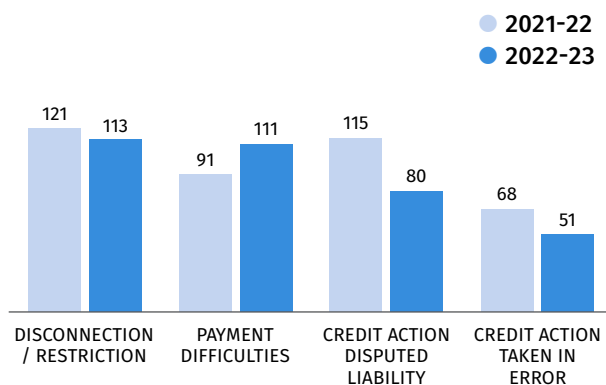
Payment Difficulty was the only sub-issue to increase (22%), however the volume of these complaints remains relatively low compared to earlier years.

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

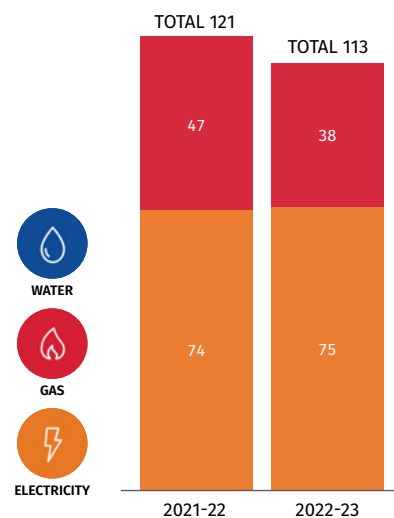
CREDIT COMPLAINTS



Disconnection complaints represented 32% of all Credit complaints



CREDIT BY PRODUCT TYPE



DISCONNECTION BY PRODUCT TYPE

Credit – Payment Difficulty

Rural and Metropolitan Areas

The number of Payment Difficulty complaints increased by 22% in 2022-23, compared to the previous year.

The table below provides a detailed breakdown by region.

| REGION | 2021-22 | | | 2022-23 | | | % 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 | 17 | 19% | 5.5 | 20 | 18% | 6.5 | 3 | 18% |
| ADELAIDE - NORTH | 36 | 40% | 8.0 | 36 | 32% | 8.5 | 0 | 0% |
| ADELAIDE - SOUTH | 12 | 13% | 3.2 | 18 | 16% | 5.1 | 6 | 50% |
| ADELAIDE - WEST | 4 | 4% | 1.6 | 15 | 14% | 6.2 | 11 | 275% |
| RURAL & REGIONAL SA | 20 | 22% | 5.1 | 21 | 19% | 5.4 | 1 | 5% |
| ADDRESS NOT CONFIRMED | 2 | 2% | | 1 | 1% | | -1 | -50% |
| TOTAL | 91 | 100% | | 111 | 100% | | 20 | 22% |

PAYMENT DIFFICULTIES BY RURAL AND METROPOLITAN AREAS

Supply

Supply complaint numbers increased significantly (43%) in 2022-23, compared to the previous year mostly due to an increase in Off Supply complaints.

The following sub-issues increased:

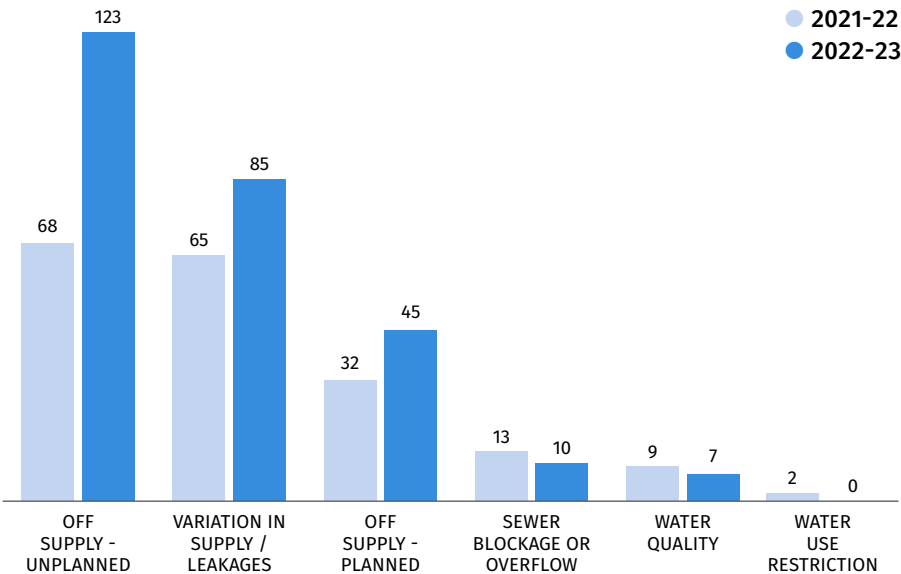
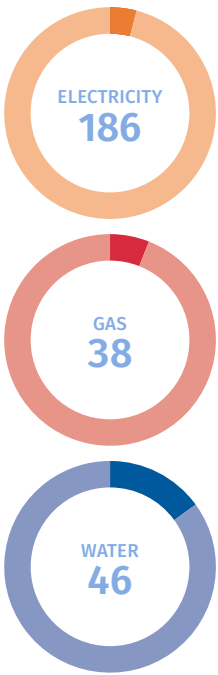
- Off Supply – Unplanned (81%)
- Off Supply – Planned (40%)
- Variation in Supply/Leakages (31%).

The following sub-issues decreased:

- Sewer Blockage or Overflow (23%)
- Water Quality (22%).

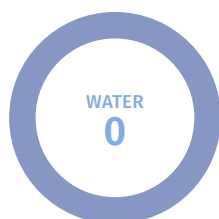
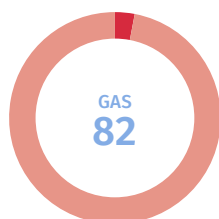
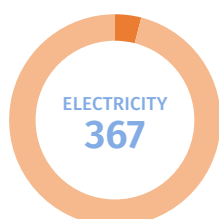
There were no Water Use Restriction complaints in 2022-23.

SUPPLY COMPLAINTS



SUPPLY COMPLAINTS BY TYPE

MARKETING AND TRANSFER COMPLAINTS



Marketing and Transfer

Marketing complaint numbers increased slightly by 4% in 2022-23, compared to the previous year.

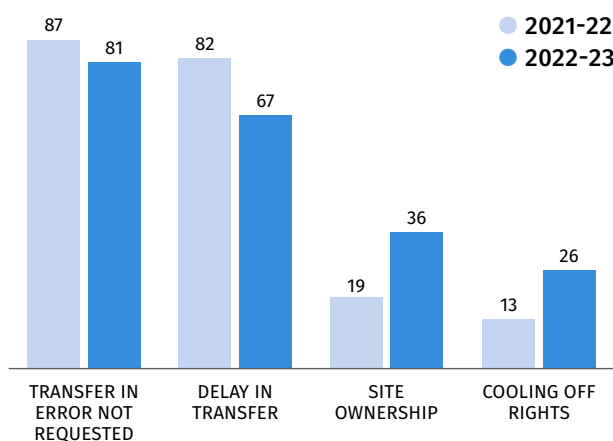
The Contract sub-issue also increased (5%).

The Market Conduct sub-issue decreased by 2%.

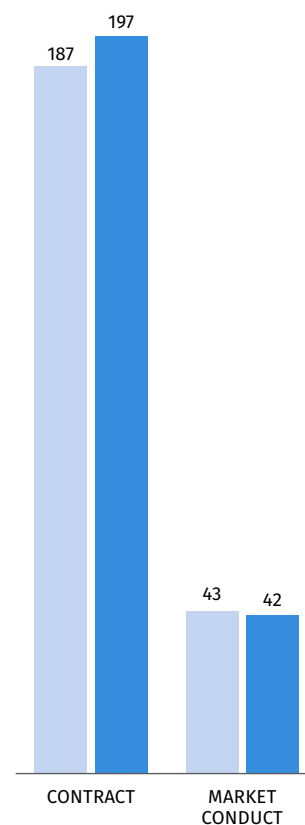
Transfer complaint numbers also increased slightly by 4%. The following Transfer sub-issues increased significantly:

- Cooling Off Rights (100%)
- Site Ownership (89%).

Delay in Transfer sub-issue significantly decreased (18%). Transfer in Error Not Requested decreased slightly (7%).



TRANSFER COMPLAINTS BY TYPE



MARKETING COMPLAINTS BY TYPE

Land

Land complaint numbers were equal to the previous year.

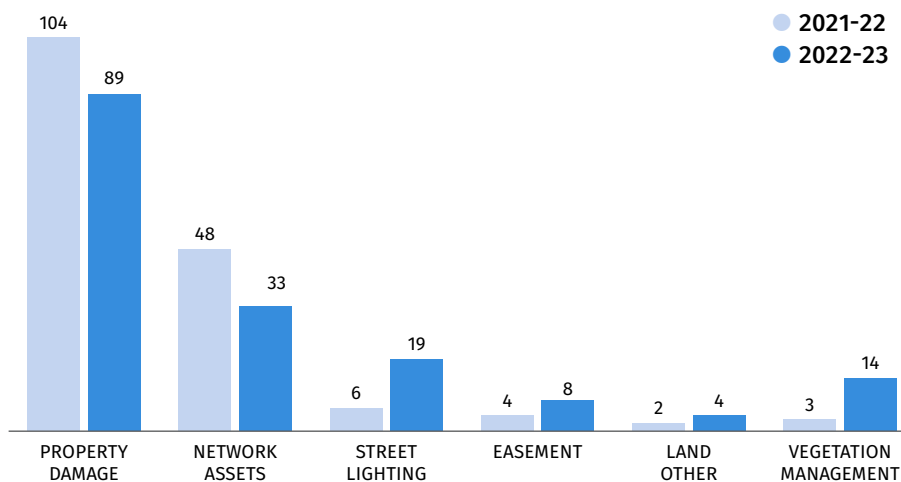
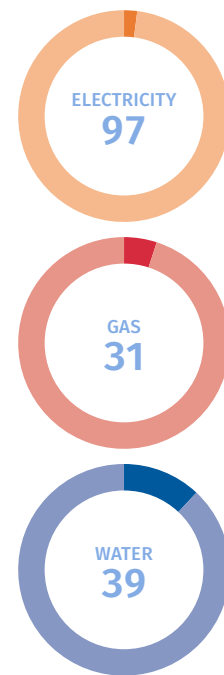
The following sub-issues decreased:

- Property Damage (17%)
- Network Assets (31%).

The following sub-issues increased:

- Street Lighting
- Easement
- Land Other
- Vegetation Management.

LAND COMPLAINTS



LAND COMPLAINTS BY TYPE

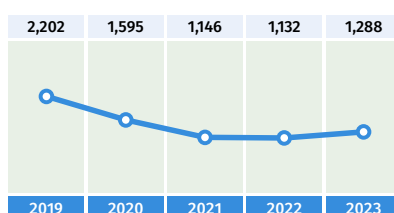
MEMBER PERFORMANCE

Complaints received by Member - 5 years (FY)

Origin Energy



AGL



Simply Energy



Alinta Energy



SA Power Networks



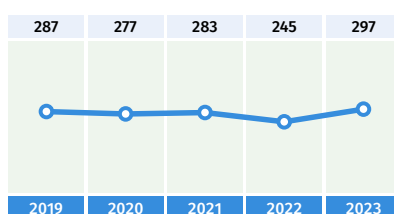
EnergyAustralia



Lumo Energy



SA Water



Australian Gas Networks



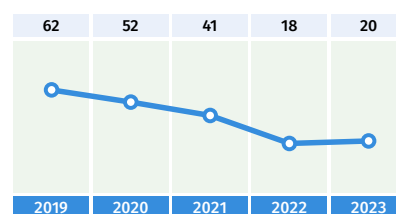
Dodo Power and Gas



Energy Locals



Momentum Energy



Red Energy



Sumo Power

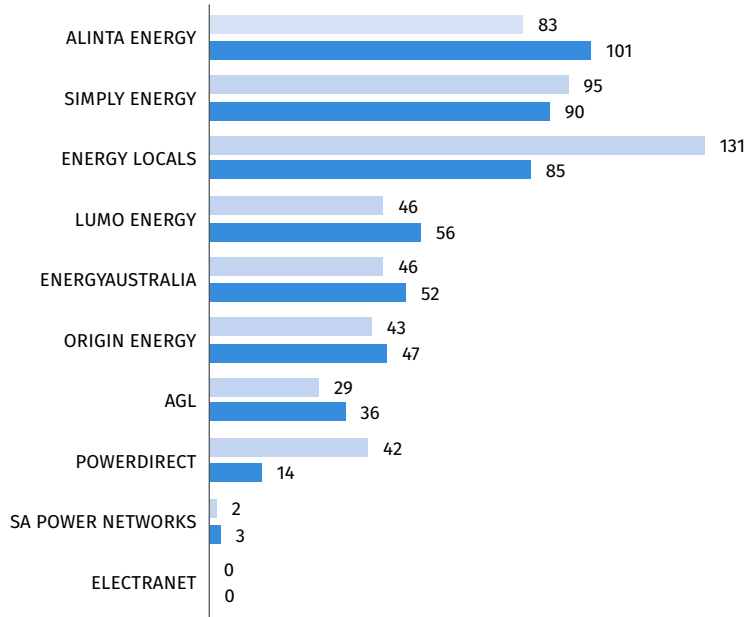


Others

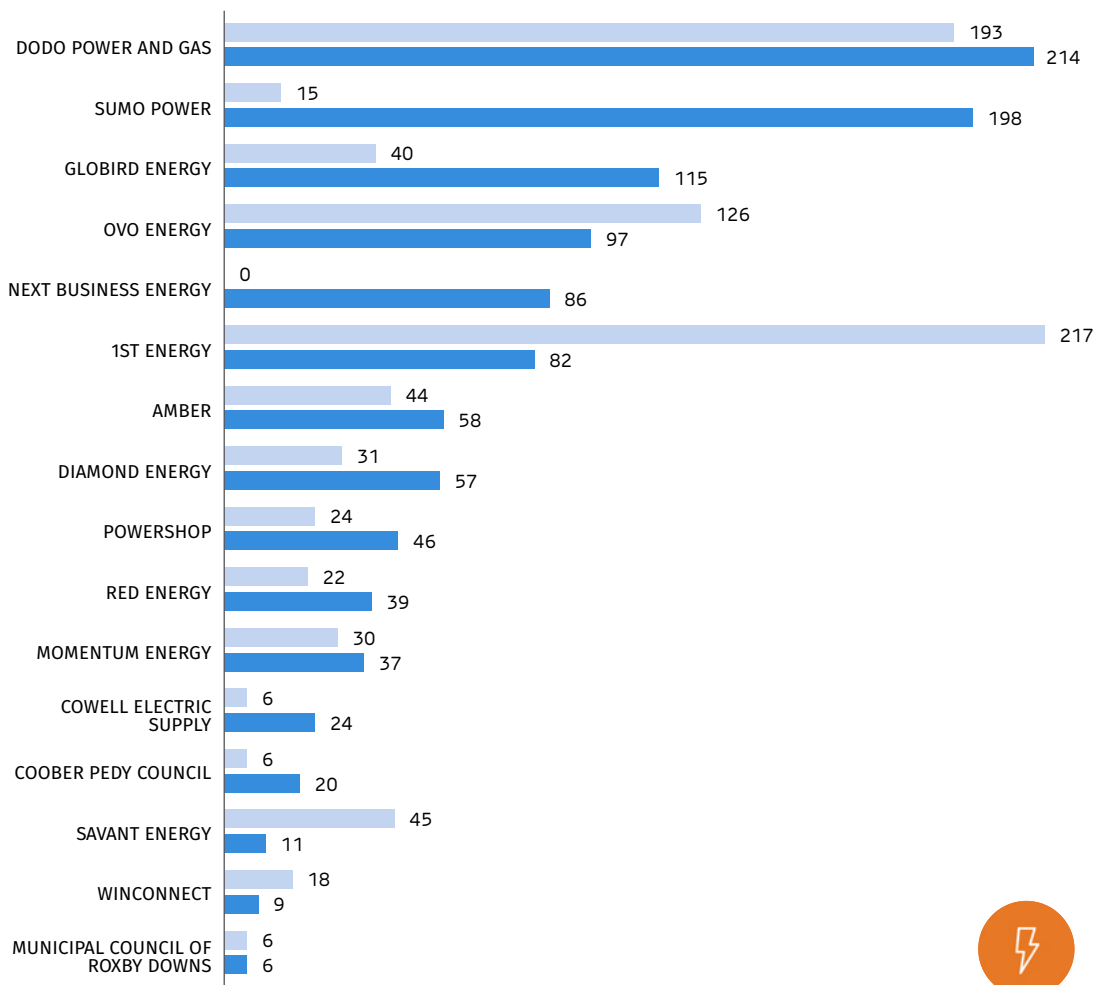


Complaints received by Members per 10,000 Customers

LARGER ELECTRICITY MEMBERS > 10K CUSTOMERS



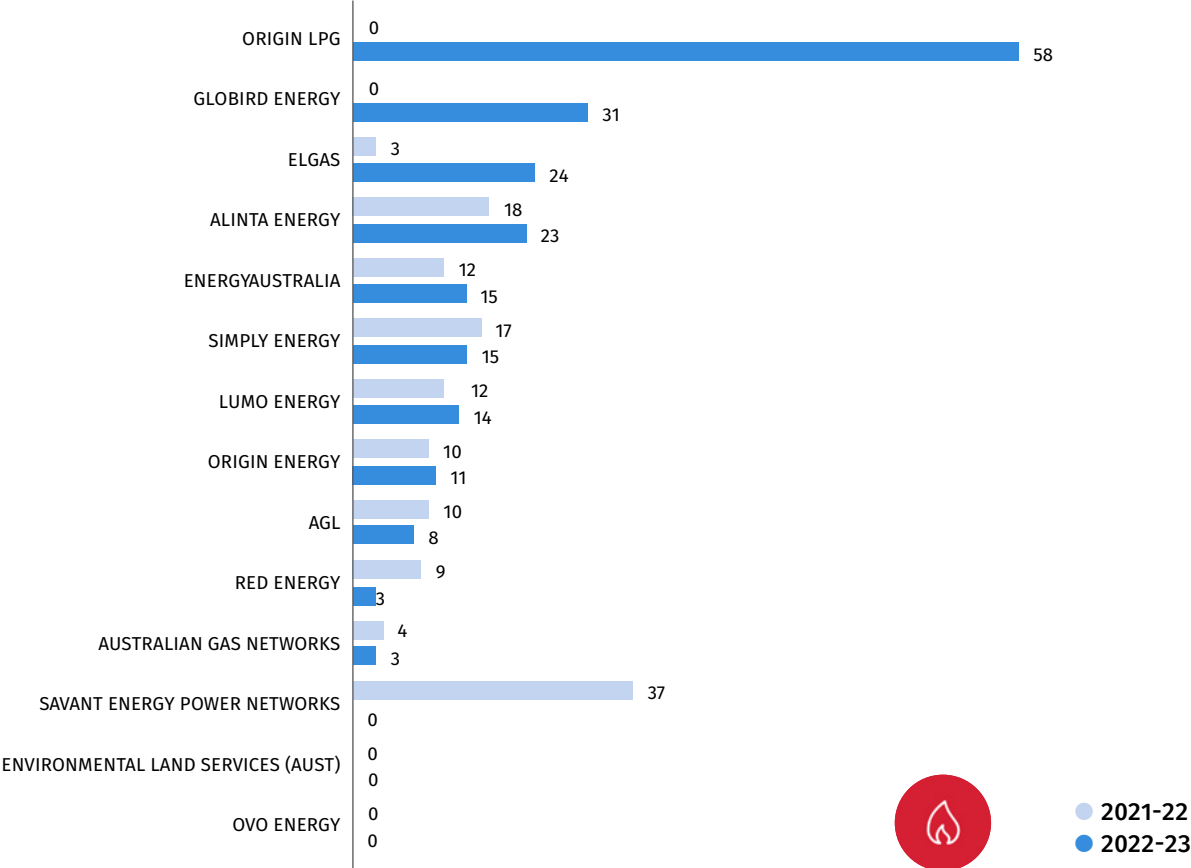
SMALLER ELECTRICITY MEMBERS 1K TO 10K CUSTOMERS



● 2021-22
● 2022-23

Complaints received by Members per 10,000 Customers

GAS MEMBERS WITH > 1K CUSTOMERS



WATER MEMBERS WITH > 10K CUSTOMERS



RESOLUTIONS

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| SUBJECT: | SEWER OVERFLOWS |
| ISSUES: | SUPPLY – SEWER OVERFLOW – INFORMATION |
| UTILITY: | SEWERAGE |
| CUSTOMER TYPE: | RESIDENTIAL |
| CASE TYPE: | INVESTIGATION |

THE ISSUE

Ms A advised she had experienced sewerage overflow on her property every year since she bought it in 2019.

She wanted the provider to install a reflux valve or provide an alternative sewer connection at no cost to her.

OUR REVIEW

We found that the overflows occurred due to tree root intrusion and foreign objects blocking the sewer main.

The provider had Ms A's property on a preventative maintenance program, which includes a yearly inspection. It complied with this program, and we were satisfied that it took reasonable steps to prevent the overflows.

RESOLUTION

Ms A agreed to install a reflux valve, an additional overflow relief gully and non-return grates to all floor wastes at her expense to mitigate future sewerage overflows.

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| SUBJECT: | CONTRACT PRICING DISPUTE |
| ISSUES: | BILLING – HIGH – FEED IN TARIFF/RATES INCORRECT |
| UTILITY: | ELECTRICITY |
| CUSTOMER TYPE: | RESIDENTIAL |
| CASE TYPE: | INVESTIGATION |

THE ISSUE

Mr J reported that after a smart meter was installed at his property, his electricity pricing structure should have changed to a time-of-use tariff, but instead incorrectly reverted to single-rate tariff.

He contacted his provider, as he believed his electricity bills should have been lower on the time-of-use tariff. Mr J said he was told the availability of this tariff was dependent upon the appliances installed at the property.

However, he later found out this was incorrect and that his provider was able to offer a time-of-use tariff.

He wanted the provider to adjust his bills based on the time-of-use pricing.

OUR REVIEW

We found Mr J's provider had charged all electricity use on a single-rate tariff rather than a time-of-use tariff.

However, when we compared these charges with what would have been billed on a time-of-use tariff we found he was not financially disadvantaged.

RESOLUTION

As there was no disadvantage, Mr J's provider did not adjust his billing, but did provide a \$150 goodwill credit for the inconvenience caused.

SYSTEMIC ISSUES

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.

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 provider'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 provider'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.

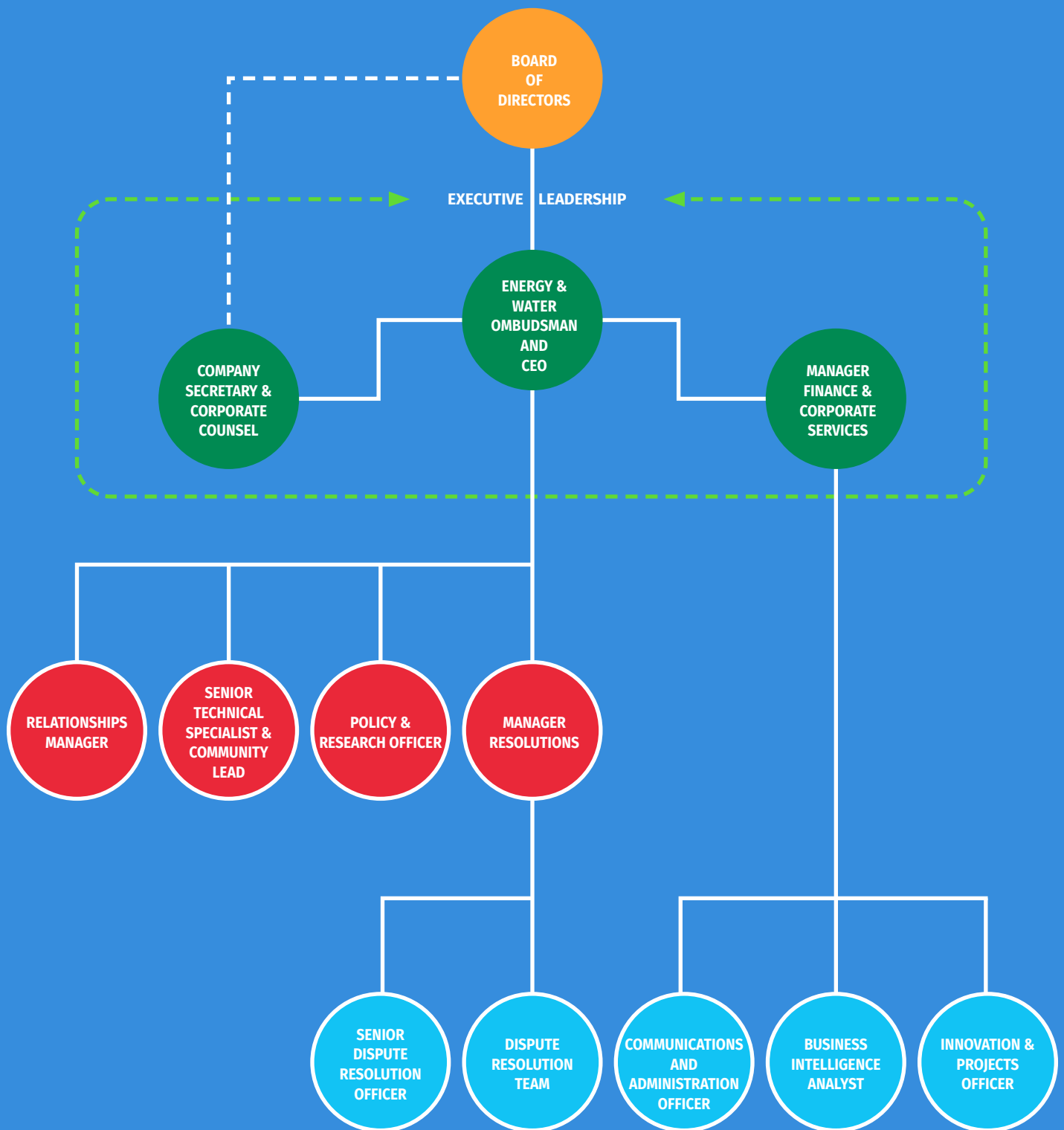
The Ombudsman may also refer to a Member's senior management any opportunities identified to improve the Member's policies or practices in order to reduce complaints. The Ombudsman may report systemic or other important issues to the relevant government minister or to regulatory bodies.

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 financial year:

- Delayed bills
- Delayed meter reads
- Provider not accepting customer self-read
- Solar export not being credited as solar export but charged as peak usage
- Backdating of price changes following tariff reassignment

- Incorrect Time of Use billing related to daylight saving
- Direct debits cancelled and incorrectly charged two dishonour fees
- Customers unable to input their account number when calling
- Off-peak controlled load charges removed from tariff reassignment letter
- No Access letter to customers with remotely read interval meter asking for access and threats to disconnect
- Customer waiting to be billed on final readings of removed meter and actual usage on new meter
- Customer billed for a period after transfer away date and not reimbursed
- Delayed billed after meter upgrade
- Time of Use opt-out advised on letter but opt-out not available
- Delayed faulty meter replacements without exemptions
- Customer transferred on basis of 12 month fixed plan but advised shortly after of placement on new tariff
- Incorrect programming of controlled load register.



OUR ORGANISATION

Key Developments in 2022-23

Strategic Plan 2022-25

The Board updated 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

To be an independent, innovative, and fair Scheme that is recognised by Members, consumers and other stakeholders as a leading industry-based dispute resolution body.

2. Consumer Engagement

To engage with consumers so they can better understand their energy and water services, resolve complaints with their providers, and access the Scheme.

3. Member Relationships

To establish and maintain positive, impartial relationships with Members to understand complaint drivers, improve complaint-handling procedures and achieve early resolution of complaints.

4. Policy Influence

To influence policy by actively sharing information with key State and Federal stakeholders about the impact of existing and proposed policies and practices on the Scheme, Members, and consumers.

5. Environmental Adaptability

To be an agile and responsive organisation in a time of significant change in the economy and in energy and water services.

6. Our People and Organisational Capability

Continuously improve to guarantee a professional, agile, and robust organisation that is sustainable and delivers best-practice dispute resolution to energy and water consumers.

The Scheme's independent status and reputation, data and analysis capability, and comprehensive engagement program make it well placed to influence policy in what is a dynamic and disruptive period in the energy and water service sectors.

Learning and development

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

- training on our new workflow and dispute resolution processes
- further developing skills for all case management staff to enhance overall competency and expertise
- conducting various technical training sessions on key topics such as industry issues, privacy and dispute resolution
- providing soft skills training to staff, including managing complainant expectations and conduct
- workplace bullying and harassment training.

Our Senior Dispute Resolution Officer provides on-the-job training and ongoing support to our Dispute Resolution Officers. This arrangement ensures our staff receive the floor support they require in resolving cases.

Technology

Technology plays a crucial part in ensuring our services are delivered efficiently, effectively and with minimal disruption.

This year, we rolled out our new cloud-based Case Management System, or CMS (see below). In addition to delivering a modern, more stable, secure, and resilient solution, the new system incorporates key efficiency measures in our dispute resolution processes which we expect to result in faster resolution of cases.

We also upgraded our website's content management system to the latest version to further support our transition into a cloud-based environment. The upgrade largely involved backend changes and enables us to better manage our website content, while providing enhanced security, resilience and a solid base for rolling out future enhancements to our website.

We have also completed several technology-based improvements to our business intelligence platforms as discussed in the next section.

Business Intelligence

We have invested effort in further developing our Business Intelligence capability with several projects that enhance the way we capture, process and report on data using contemporary data analytics solutions. Key achievements during the year include:

- migration of our data and corresponding reports into a new cloud-based platform
- cleaning and migration of data and records from the legacy system into the new Case Management System
- transitioning and redesign of reporting, analytics and billing systems to effectively draw information and insights from our various data sources
- development of an automated case allocation algorithm that improves the efficiency of workload distribution
- transition of customer feedback surveys to a new platform with refinements, including automation of surveying and feedback analysis
- new applications of natural language processing that give us improved insights into text data.

Dispute resolution process and Case Management System

The rollout of our new Case Management System enabled us to complete important changes to how we manage our dispute resolution services. These were embedded in our Case Management System change, delivering:

- improved outcomes from streamlined workflows and business processes
- improved data use and analytics with improved feedback
- development of a new case type for reporting, Early Resolution with associated policy, process and protocol documentation
- streamlined allocation and classification of cases to speed up handling
- improved collection of investigation outcome data.

These initiatives provide a more robust, secure and contemporary suite of solutions that deliver cost savings and a better experience for our stakeholders.

Work Health and Safety

We are strongly committed to the health and safety of our staff. We strive to maintain a workplace free from injuries.

Our Work Health and Safety Policy outlines the principles and processes that promote and maintain work health and safety at the workplace.

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

We further promote health and wellbeing in the workplace through:

- providing drug and alcohol use guidance through a Drug and Alcohol Use Directive
- assistance to quit smoking with subsidised quit programs supported by a No Smoking Directive.

In addition, we also provide the following workplace protections:

- protecting against bullying, harassment and discrimination through an Anti-Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Policy
- ensuring anti-discrimination and equal opportunity through a formalised policy
- providing grievance processes as specified in a Grievance Policy.

We also have personal and physical security policies and procedures in place to ensure the safety of our staff.

Employee Reward and Recognition

Our staff are at the core of what we do. We pride ourselves in offering contemporary employment benefits to our staff such as:

- flexible working arrangements, including working from home on two prescribed days a week with three days in the office
- providing Group Salary Continuance cover for all staff

- providing Group Personal Accident Insurance for all staff and members of the Board
- offering salary sacrifice options
- providing access to contemporary information, communication, and technology systems
- access to learning and development opportunities.

We also recently completed a market review and adjustment of our staff salaries to ensure we remain competitive in the marketplace.

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:

- 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 to identify and monitor quality and productivity.

Internal Review Process

A complainant has a right to an independent review if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of our investigation.

If there are grounds for a review, and such review is approved by a senior manager, the review will be undertaken by an independent Dispute Resolution Officer.

Internal reviews may result in the following outcomes:

- no effect on original decision made – this is where the grounds for review do not affect the case outcome and the complaint remains closed
- complaint upheld – this is where the grounds for review affect the outcome and a new investigation is opened.

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 compliance with Australian Privacy Principles and adherence to best practice. The audit did not find any significant deficiencies.

Gender diversity

We have a strong commitment to inclusion and diversity in all areas. Diversity, inclusion and equity are front-of-mind for us in both business and cultural arenas.

We operate in an environment where all South Australians are in our constituency, so supporting diversity is critical to understanding our customers, and to meeting their needs as well as freeing up the initiative and responsiveness of staff.

Stakeholder and community engagement

This year has seen us continue to work with stakeholders to improve communication, feedback, and the quality of information we provide. This has included:

- a review and rewrite of documents and templates to simplify language and adopt a more standardised plain English style
- review and expansion of factsheets and other publications in languages other than English
- continuation of regional visits that include an opportunity for feedback, questions and engagement with a variety of community groups.

Environmental policy

During the year we established an Environmental Sustainability Committee to raise awareness of our environmental impacts and implement effective strategies to minimise and lessen our ecological footprint.

The Committee aims to develop a detailed Sustainability Plan that coordinates a range of initiatives across work areas.

Board of Directors

The Board is composed of 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 of June 30, 2023 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)

Management Team

- Ben Perry, Manager Resolutions
- Ben McAvenna, Relationships Manager
- Pia Bentick, Company Secretary & Corporate Counsel
- Re Ouano, Manager Finance & Corporate Services
- Sandy Canale, Ombudsman & CEO

MEMBERS



1st Energy

Across Australia Parks & Resorts Pty Ltd
AGL Sales (Queensland Electricity) Pty Ltd
AGL Sales Pty Ltd
AGL South Australia Pty Ltd
Aldinga Beach Holiday Park
Alinta Energy
Amber Electric
Ampol Energy (Retail) Pty Ltd
Andamooka Power House
Ardrossan Caravan Park
Ashbrook Apartments
Barossa Village Inc.
Beachside Caravan Park
Belair National Park Caravan Park
benergy
BHP Olympic Dam Corporation Pty Ltd
BIG4 Barossa Tourist Park
BIG4 Normanville Jetty Holiday Park
BIG4 Port Willunga Tourist Park
Blue NRG
Boandik Lodge
Burton Lifestyle Villages
Circular Energy
Clayton Church Homes
CleanPeak Energy
Cobdogla Station Caravan 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 Energy
Cowell Electric Supply
CPE Tonsley Pty Ltd
Dalfoam Pty Ltd
Delorean Energy Retail

Diamond Energy

Discover Energy
Discovery Parks, G'day Group
Dodo Power & Gas
Edithburgh Caravan Park
ElectraNet
Electricity in a Box
Energy Locals; iO Energy Retailing Services
EnergyAustralia
Enerven
Flow Power
Future X Power
Gawler Caravan Park
Gawler Gateway Tourist Park
Glenbrook Apartments
GloBird Energy
Glow power
Highview Holiday Village, Ardrossan;
Gulfhaven Caravan Park, Port Victoria
Highway 1 Holiday and Lifestyle Park
Hindmarsh Island Caravan Park
Kadina Caravan Park
Kalyra Bellevue Heights Village
Kingston-on-Murray Caravan Park
Leabrook Place
Liberty Primary Steel, Liberty Onesteel
Localvolts
Loxton Riverfront Holiday Park
Lumo Energy
McLaren Vale Lakeside Caravan Park
Minda Incorporated
Minlaton Caravan Park
Moana Beach Tourist Park; Christies Beach Tourist Park
Mojo Power
Momentum Energy
Mount Barker District Council, Mount Barker Caravan Park
Mt View Homes
Municipal Council of Roxby Downs
Murray Bridge Tourist Park
Murraylink Transmission Partnership
Nectr

Next Business Energy

Origin Energy
OVO Energy
Pacific Blue
Pine Country Caravan Park
Port Clinton Caravan Park
Port Lincoln Tourist Park
Port Wakefield Caravan Park and Balaklava Caravan Park
PowerHub
Powershop
Powow Power
Qenergy
ReAmped Energy
Red Energy
SA Power Networks
Sanctuary Energy
Savant Energy
Shell Energy
Simply Energy
Social Energy
Somerton Park Retirement Village
Southern Cross Care (SA, NT & VIC) Incorporated
Stansbury Caravan Park
Stockport Caravan & Tourist Park
Sturt River Park
Sumo Power
Sustainable Savings
Telstra Energy Pty Ltd
The Mansions
The Palms Residential Park, Hillier Park Residential Village
The Trustee for the Tavern Trust
U City Energy
Uniting SA
Unity Retirement Village
Victor Harbour Beachfront Holiday Park
Waikerie Lifestyle Village, Virginia Residential Park, Naracoorte Holiday Park
WINconnect
Windsor Gardens Caravan Park
Woodcroft Park
ZEN Energy



AGL South Australia Pty Ltd
Alabrillife Village
Alinta Energy
Australian Gas Networks
CovaU Energy
CPE Tonsley Pty Ltd
Delorean Energy Retail
Discover Energy
Elgas
EnergyAustralia
Environmental Land Services (Aust) Pty Ltd
GloBird Energy
Lumo Energy
Origin Energy
Origin LPG
OVO Energy
Red Energy
Savant Energy
Simply Energy
Telstra Energy Pty Ltd
WINconnect



Adelaide Hills Council
Alano Water
Alexandrina Council
Barunga West Council
Berri Barmerra Council
City of Charles Sturt
City of Marion
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
Compass Springs
Coober Pedy Council
Coorong District Council
Copper Coast Council
CPE Tonsley Pty Ltd
District Council of Ceduna
District Council of Cleve
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 Mallala
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
FB Pipeline
Kangaroo Island Council
Kingston District Council
Light Regional Council
Lightsview ReWater
Michell Infrastructure Pty Ltd
Mid Murray Council
Monarto Water Network Limited
Municipal Council of Roxby Downs
Naracoorte Lucindale Council
Northern Areas Council
NWIC Pty Ltd
Port Augusta City Council
Port Pirie Regional Council
Regional Council of Goyder
Renmark Paringa Council
Rural City of Murray Bridge
SA Water
Southern Mallee District Council
Tatiara District Council
The Barossa Council
The Corporation of the City of Whyalla
The Flinders Ranges Council
Wakefield Regional Council
Wattle Range Council
Wudinna District Council
Yorke Peninsula Council

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

ENERGY AND WATER OMBUDSMAN (SA) LIMITED

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

| | 2023 \$ | 2022 \$ |
|--|--------------|------------------|
| Revenue from ordinary activities | 3,742,732 | 3,322,099 |
| Expenses from ordinary activities: | | |
| Accounting and audit fee | 39,474 | 38,951 |
| Depreciation | 298,226 | 283,841 |
| Employee benefit | 2,277,304 | 2,251,271 |
| Total other expenses | 1,118,056 | 925,779 |
| Income tax expense | - | - |
| Surplus/(deficit) for the year | 9,672 | (177,743) |
| Total comprehensive income for the year | 9,672 | (177,743) |

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

ENERGY AND WATER OMBUDSMAN (SA) LIMITED

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 JUNE 2023

| | 2023 \$ | 2022 \$ |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| CURRENT ASSETS | | |
| Cash and cash equivalents | 1,067,212 | 1,164,444 |
| Trade and other receivables | 150,015 | 139,630 |
| Other current assets | 190,563 | 124,422 |
| Other financial assets | 1,818,656 | 1,805,305 |
| TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS | 3,226,446 | 3,232,801 |
| NON CURRENT ASSETS | | |
| Property, plant and equipment | 860,234 | 970,097 |
| TOTAL NON CURRENT ASSETS | 860,234 | 970,097 |
| TOTAL ASSETS | 4,086,680 | 4,202,898 |
| CURRENT LIABILITIES | | |
| Trade and other payables | 116,885 | 151,579 |
| Financial liability payable | 155,645 | 139,305 |
| Employee benefits | 322,849 | 263,705 |
| Other current liabilities | 26,139 | 49,907 |
| TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES | 621,518 | 604,496 |
| NON CURRENT LIABILITIES | | |
| Financial liability payable | 370,682 | 510,832 |
| Employee benefits | 54,787 | 57,549 |
| TOTAL NON CURRENT LIABILITIES | 425,469 | 568,381 |
| TOTAL LIABILITIES | 1,046,987 | 1,172,877 |
| NET ASSETS | 3,039,693 | 3,030,021 |
| EQUITY | | |
| Accumulated surplus | 3,039,693 | 3,030,021 |
| TOTAL EQUITY | 3,039,693 | 3,030,021 |

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

ENERGY AND WATER OMBUDSMAN (SA) LIMITED

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

| | 2023 \$ | 2022 \$ |
|--|------------------|------------------|
| CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES | | |
| Receipts from members (inclusive of goods and services tax) | 3,992,431 | 3,621,399 |
| Payments to providers and employees (inclusive of goods and services tax) | (3,746,692) | (3,466,487) |
| Net cash inflow/(outflow) from operating activities | 245,739 | 154,912 |
| CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES | | |
| Proceeds from sale of property, plant and equipment | 550 | - |
| Purchase of property, plant and equipment | (177,825) | (205,217) |
| Proceeds from other financial assets | 1,805,305 | 1,996,314 |
| Payments for other financial assets | (1,818,656) | (1,905,305) |
| Interest received | 15,862 | 18,443 |
| Net cash inflow/(outflow) from investing activities | (174,764) | (95,765) |
| CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES | | |
| Financing lease principal and interest payments | (168,207) | (137,364) |
| Net cash outflow from financing activities | (168,207) | (137,364) |
| Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents | (97,232) | (78,217) |
| Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of year | 1,164,444 | 1,242,661 |
| CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT END OF YEAR | 1,067,212 | 1,164,444 |

RESOLUTIONS

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| SUBJECT: | DISPUTED ACCOUNT BALANCE |
| ISSUES: | BILLING – ACCOUNT – STATEMENTS |
| UTILITY: | ELECTRICITY |
| CUSTOMER TYPE: | RESIDENTIAL |
| CASE TYPE: | INVESTIGATION |

THE ISSUE

Ms G received a delayed bill that included payments she had made after the billing period covered by that bill. She was concerned that her account balance may be incorrect because these payments were included in the wrong accounting period.

OUR REVIEW

We found the charges billed and payments received by the provider reconciled, confirming the balance of Ms G's account was correct.

RESOLUTION

The provider provided a copy of the account statement to Ms G, confirming the reconciled account balance. It also provided a \$200 goodwill credit to the account for the inconvenience caused.

| | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| SUBJECT: | ACCESS TO A CONTRACT |
| ISSUES: | MARKETING – CONTRACT – TARIFF |
| UTILITY: | ELECTRICITY |
| CUSTOMER TYPE: | RESIDENTIAL |
| CASE TYPE: | INVESTIGATION |

THE ISSUE

Mr G wanted his provider to honour a two-year extension of his fixed-rate energy plan that he said he was offered and accepted in November 2022.

OUR REVIEW

The initial two-year contract was formed in March 2019. It stated that at the end of the contract a new plan would be put in place and that Mr G would be notified 20 business days prior to any changes to the rates being made.

The contract was extended in 2021 without any changes. We found no evidence that a new two-year fixed-rate plan was offered and entered into in November 2022 as Mr G claimed.

We did find that in February 2023 the provider advised Mr G that his plan would be ending in March 2023 and his rates would be changing.

RESOLUTION

The provider applied a \$100 credit to Mr G's account as a gesture of goodwill.

ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23



ENERGY & WATER
OMBUDSMAN SA

Energy and Water Ombudsman (SA) Limited
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