



ENERGY & WATER
OMBUDSMAN SA

Annual Report 2024-25

1800 665 565 | ewosa.com.au

Annual Report 2024-25

Mission Statement

Our mission is to facilitate the prompt resolution of complaints between customers of electricity, gas and water services and members of our scheme by providing a free, independent, accessible, fair and informal service to customers.

About This Report

The data in this report covers 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number so may not total exactly 100%.

Case study names have been changed to protect customer anonymity. Photos are representative and do not depict the individuals described.



More on Our Website

For more information about this year's cases, visit ewosa.com.au.

The web version of this report features interactive data visualisations, so you can go deeper into the data.



EWOSA acknowledges the Traditional Owners of country on which we operate throughout South Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and culture.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.



Scan here!

Contents

| | |
|----------------------------|----|
| About EWOSA | 2 |
| At a Glance | 3 |
| Message from the Chair | 4 |
| Message from the Ombudsman | 6 |
| Governance | |
| Board of Directors | 8 |
| Organisational Chart | 9 |
| Case Management | |
| Cases this Year | 10 |
| Cases Resolved | 11 |
| Our Performance | 13 |
| Electricity Complaints | 14 |
| Gas Complaints | 15 |
| Water Complaints | 16 |
| Complaint Issues | 17 |
| Complaints by Region | 22 |
| Membership | |
| Our Members | 23 |
| Member Performance | 25 |
| Policy Influence | |
| Outcomes in Focus | 28 |
| Systemic Issues | 30 |
| Key Developments | 31 |
| Financial Statements | 33 |

About EWOSA

Who We Are

The Energy and Water Ombudsman SA (EWOSA) is South Australia's approved independent scheme for resolving complaints between customers and their energy or water providers. We do this by providing a free, impartial, and accessible dispute resolution service to customers.

EWOSA was established in 1999, following the privatisation of the South Australian electricity industry, which required licensed providers to participate in an independent dispute resolution scheme.

The scheme has since expanded to include gas, water, and sewerage providers, including small-scale networks and embedded networks. From 2012, we were authorised to handle privacy complaints under the *Privacy Act 1988*.



Our Approach

Our work doesn't stop at resolving individual complaints. We work closely with our members to identify and address recurring issues, helping to improve internal complaint-handling processes across the sector. While we seek fair outcomes, we remain impartial – we do not advocate for either customers or providers.

Our Scope

We can assist with:

- Connection, supply and sale of energy or water services by a member
- Disconnections or supply restrictions
- Billing disputes
- Credit and payment services
- Security deposits
- Impacts on land or property from a member's activities
- Conduct of members' staff or contractors
- Privacy breaches
- Other issues referred by a member, with agreement from the Ombudsman and those involved

We do not handle:

- Setting of prices and tariffs
- Commercial activities beyond a member's license or authorisation
- Government policies or legislation
- Matters before a court or tribunal
- Customer contributions toward capital works
- Disputes between members

Guiding Principles



Fair, informal and timely complaint resolution



Maintaining **independence** while fostering good relationships with members and stakeholders



Accessibility for all South Australians



Free service for customers



Effective use of **technology** to improve service



Collaboration with members, regulators, complaint bodies, customer groups, and community organisations

At a Glance



9,289
cases received

↓3%
from last year



92%

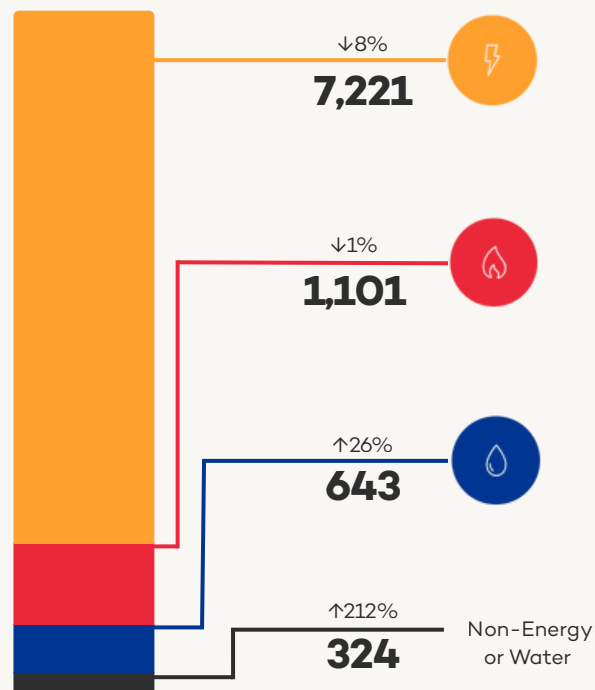
cases closed in <30 days



94%

customer satisfaction

Cases by Industry



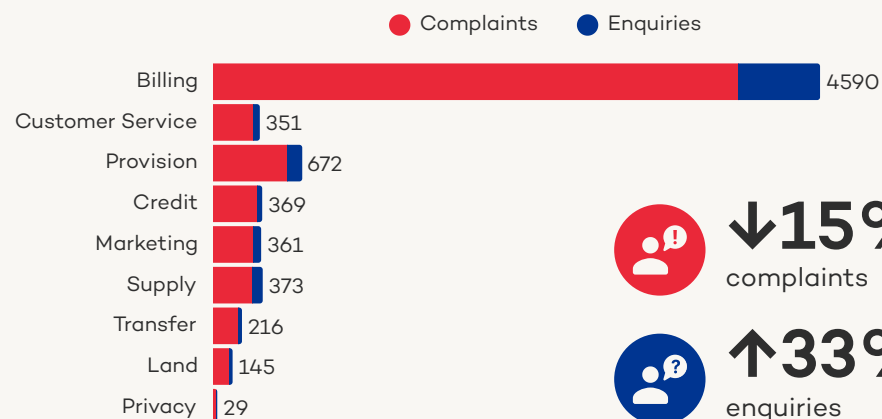
9,051
Individuals

238
Businesses

1,525
Rural

4,605
Metro

Cases by Issue



↓15%

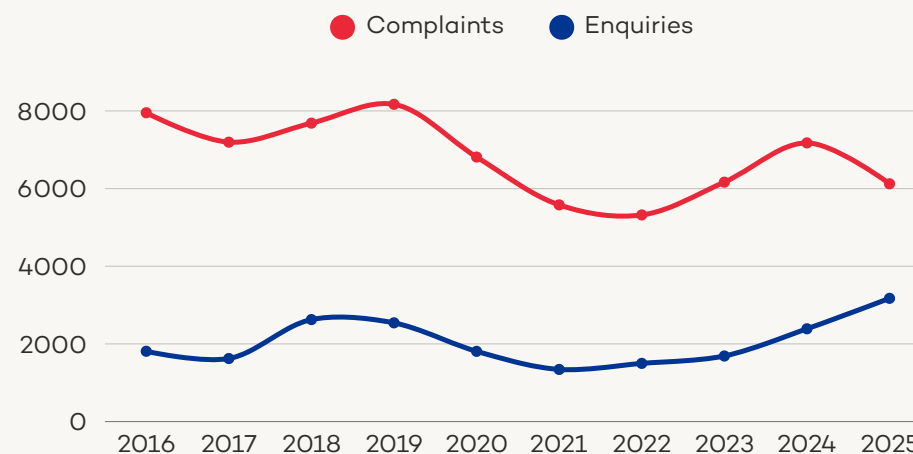
complaints



↑33%

enquiries

Case History



Message from the Chair

Greg May



It is my pleasure to present the 2024-25 Annual Report of the Energy and Water Ombudsman SA on behalf of the Board.

This has been my first full financial year as Chair, and it has been both rewarding and heartening to see the organisation continue to provide a trusted, independent, and highly effective dispute resolution service to South Australian energy and water customers. In a sector that is becoming increasingly complex, it is vital that people have access to an independent and accessible service to help resolve complaints with their providers.

Supporting Trust and Satisfaction

EWOSA's reputation continues to be affirmed by the people it serves. In our March 2025 customer feedback survey, 95% of complainants said they would be likely to recommend EWOSA to others.

It's also a great place to work. Our October 2024 employee feedback survey showed 93% favourable responses, a strong indicator of a positive and engaged workplace culture.

The Board, too, is full of fine people committed to good governance and continuous improvement. It is a privilege to work alongside such capable colleagues who keep the trinity of customers, staff and members at the centre of our work.

Managing Risk and Embracing Innovation

A key focus for the Board this year has been strengthening risk management and future readiness. One of the most important initiatives has been the development of our Artificial Intelligence Policy and strategic approach. These provide a framework for exploring AI opportunities that enhance complaint handling while ensuring risks to the scheme and our customers are well managed.

Cybersecurity also remains a priority. Staff undertook cybersecurity awareness training during the year, and our broader information security approach continues to evolve to meet emerging risks. You can read more about these developments in the Key Developments section of this report.



Preparing for the Energy Transition

Looking ahead, one of the key risks for energy customers and our scheme lies in the transition to renewable energy. If handled poorly, energy costs could increase, with large investments in generation, transmission, and distribution infrastructure to keep the lights on ultimately translating into higher prices for customers.

But handled well, customer energy resources (CER) – like rooftop solar, home batteries, and electric vehicles – have the potential to support grid reliability and provide real financial benefits, including for those who don't own CER, through lower energy prices.

In July 2024, the National CER Roadmap was released, prioritising stronger protections for CER users. In March 2025, the Commonwealth Government released the Better Energy Customer Experiences consultation paper, proposing a modernised framework for energy customer protections – including provisions for CER and enhanced dispute resolution mechanisms.

EWOSA strongly supports the principle that external dispute resolution must be available to all energy customers, including those whose CER services are provided by emerging, non-traditional entities outside the current membership structure.



As CER becomes more mainstream, innovative business models are emerging to harness them, developed by both traditional energy providers and non-traditional third-party providers alike. From virtual power plant operators to home energy management system providers, aggregators, and demand response companies, these third-party entities can significantly influence how and when electricity is stored, consumed or exported, and, in turn, how customers experience and pay for their energy.

That's why EWOSA, alongside our interstate peers, have been pushing for third-party energy service providers to be required to join an ombudsman scheme. This work includes submissions and direct engagement with governments and energy market agencies, such as our response to the consultation paper mentioned above.

Looking Ahead

Welcoming new members and expanding jurisdiction will bring fresh challenges, from more complex complaints to new training needs, potential changes to our Constitution and Charter, and greater engagement with both existing and new stakeholders. We are preparing now so that EWOSA remains responsive, effective, and equipped to deliver its services as the energy sector evolves.

Thank you to my fellow Board Directors, the Ombudsman and EWOSA team, and our members and stakeholders for your continued support and commitment. It is an honour to serve as Chair of an organisation doing such vital work for the South Australian community.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg May".

Greg May
Chair
Energy and Water Ombudsman SA





Message from the Ombudsman

Sandy Canale

This year, many South Australian households continued to feel the effects of rising living costs. At EWOSA, we see this strain firsthand in the complaints and enquiries we receive. While we can't influence energy or water pricing, we remain committed to helping customers resolve the problems they face with their energy and water providers.

The Year in Numbers

In 2024-25, we received 9,289 cases, representing a 3% decrease on the previous year. While complaints decreased by 15%, enquiries rose by 33%.

This shift reflects growing awareness of our scheme, supported by the Better Bills Guideline, which required our contact number on energy bills from September 2023, and an updated retail code for major water retailers, requiring the same on SA Water bills from 1 January 2025. More people now call us for advice or clarification, but don't necessarily have a complaint. Others mistakenly reach us while trying to contact their provider. These calls are recorded as enquiries, and we assist by transferring them if needed.

As in previous years, billing and electricity-related issues dominated our caseload, accounting for 65% and 81% respectively. Ongoing price pressures and market changes continue to generate confusion, stress, and frustration for customers.

Case volumes fluctuated considerably throughout the year, with a high of 1,112 cases in August 2024 and a low of 525 cases in December. While this variability created resourcing challenges, volumes began to stabilise in early 2025, returning to levels more in line with 2022-23.

Improving the Way We Work

We introduced several operational improvements this year. Updates to our dispute resolution workflow and case management system (CMS) have reduced delays and enabled more timely outcomes. Our web complaint form is now fully integrated into our CMS, improving intake efficiency.

One of our Dispute Resolution Officers stepped into a newly created Training and Coaching Officer role, ensuring that staff development keeps pace with changing customer needs. We also welcomed a Digital Media Specialist in late 2024, whose focus is on expanding our reach and informing customers about their rights and how we can help.

Strengthening Customer Protections

This year, we actively contributed to a range of regulatory initiatives aimed at improving customer protections in energy and water. In July 2024, the Essential Services Commission of South Australia (ESCOMSA) updated the 'Water Retail Code - Major Retailers', introducing new protections for customers experiencing family violence, payment difficulties, or tenancy-related vulnerabilities.

The Australian Energy Regulator (AER) continued reviewing its regulatory framework for embedded networks. Proposed reforms include new protections for customers affected by family violence, stronger pricing safeguards and greater regulatory oversight. The AER is also reviewing hardship program and disconnection rules under the National Energy Customer Framework.

Meanwhile, the Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC) considered rule changes to improve the retail market, including:

- Ensuring energy plan benefits last the full contract term
- Capping price increases for a fixed period under market retail contracts
- Prohibiting certain fees and unreasonable conditional discounts
- Improving concession applications processes and the ability to switch to better offers.





The AEMC also finalised its smart meter rollout determination, which includes important protections:

- Informed consent required before switching to time-of-use tariffs (for two years post-installation)
- No upfront costs or exit fees
- Calling on states to mandate a flat rate tariff option – which the South Australian Government is expected to adopt.

We know from customer complaints that being unexpectedly switched to a time-of-use tariff can cause significant “bill shock”. These protections are both timely and necessary.

New Rights for Damaged Property

After years of advocacy, the Small Compensation Claims Scheme (SCCS) was introduced in March 2025. The SCCS compensates small electricity customers whose appliances are damaged by voltage variation due to equipment failure.

We’ve received many such complaints in recent years. We are now reaching out to affected customers with cases dating from 1 July 2022 onward, where compensation had previously not been available.

Jurisdictional Developments

As markets evolve, so must the Ombudsman’s jurisdiction. We monitor emerging gaps in access to our dispute resolution services to ensure that no customer falls through the cracks.

In 2024-25, ESCOSA and the Department for Energy and Mining reviewed the Retailer Energy Productivity Scheme (REPS). We provided submissions supporting a requirement for providers to ensure their contracted third-party activity providers are EWOSA members. The decision, finalised on 30 June 2025, means these providers must join our scheme by 1 January 2026, extending protections to more customers.

We also noted ongoing gaps in embedded networks – particularly smaller ones with fewer than ten customers, which are not currently required to register with the AER. Similarly, embedded networks supplying electricity to small business customers are also not required to be EWOSA members. In March 2025, we recommended that both categories be brought within mandatory membership to ensure fair access to dispute resolution.

As highlighted by our Chair (page 5), third-party energy service providers, including virtual power plant operators and home energy management system businesses, now play a significant role in shaping how electricity is stored, consumed, and exported. We believe it is essential that customers engaging with these providers are protected and can access the services of the Ombudsman.

Looking Ahead

With regulatory reforms underway and new players entering the market, we anticipate another busy and dynamic year in 2025–26. With strong governance and a skilled team, we are well positioned to meet the challenge.

I thank our Board for their leadership and guidance, and our staff for their continued dedication. I also acknowledge our members for their commitment to working constructively with us, and with customers, to make the scheme more effective.

Finally, I want to acknowledge and thank our friends at the Australian and New Zealand Energy and Water Ombudsman Network (ANZEWO) for their ongoing collaboration in pursuing opportunities to improve customer outcomes.

Our most recent customer feedback survey showed an average 94% satisfaction rate for the past year. We are proud of this result, and we will continue working to meet – and exceed – the expectations of the South Australian community.

Sandy Canale
CEO and Ombudsman
Energy and Water Ombudsman SA

Governance

EWOSA's Board provides strategic direction and oversight, as set out in our Constitution. It comprises an independent Chair, four Consumer Directors nominated by the Essential Services Commission of South Australia, and four Industry Directors elected by electricity, gas and water members.

We thank Geoff Barton, who stepped down as Gas Industry Director in December 2024 after nine years of service. Roxanne Smith was appointed in his place from January 2025. David Coombe joined as Water Industry Director in August 2024, following Kylie Johnson's departure in June. Patrick Makinson and Anthony Sinclair were re-elected as Electricity Industry Directors, and Kay Matthias had her term as Consumer Director extended.

We look forward to the year ahead under the guidance of this experienced and committed Board.

Independent Chair



Greg May

Board of Directors

Consumer Directors



Sue Chase, AM



Mark Henley



Kay Matthias



Nadia Moffat, OAM

Industry Directors



David Coombe



Patrick Makinson

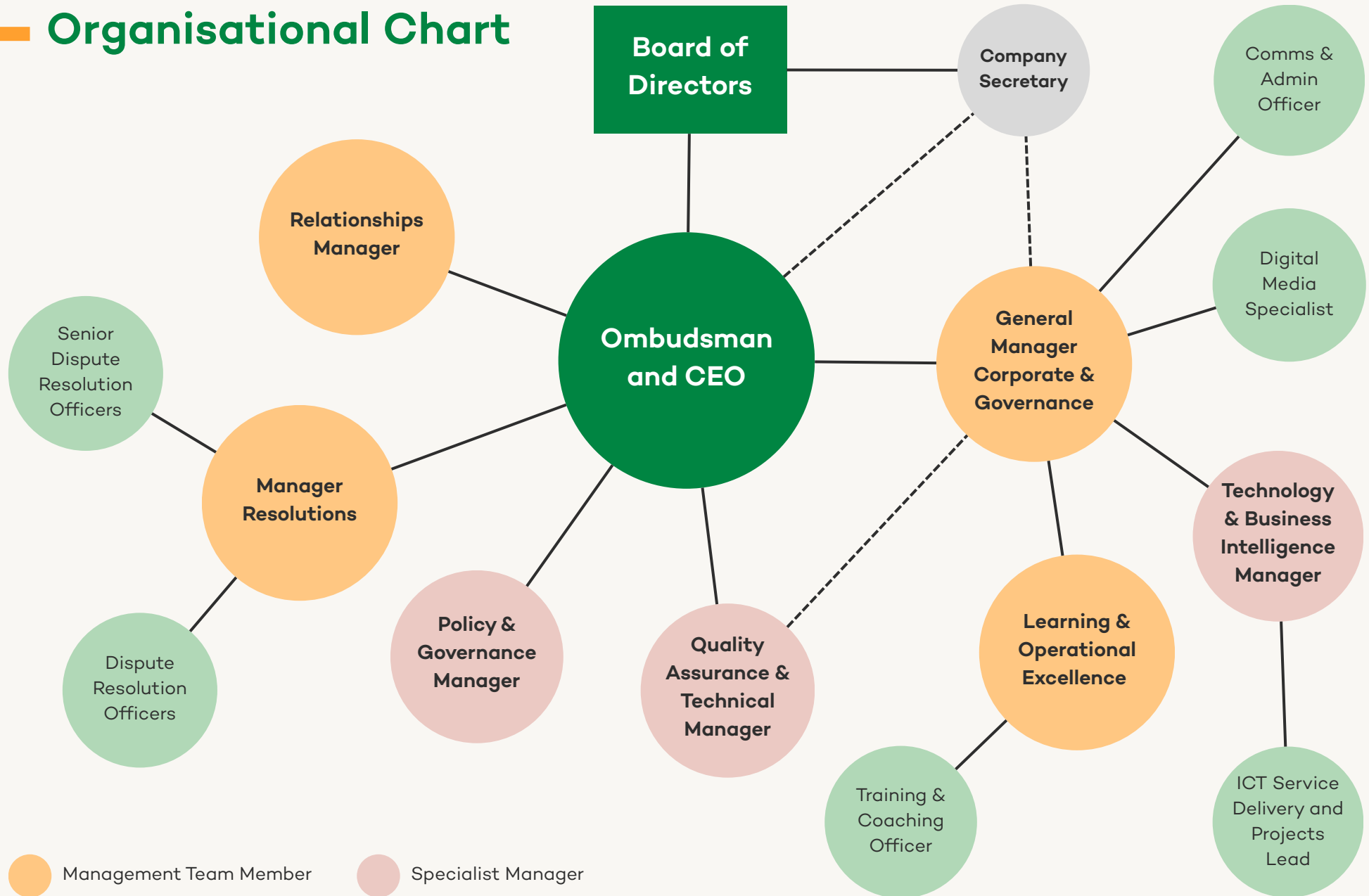


Anthony Sinclair



Roxanne Smith

Organisational Chart



Case Management

We received a total of 9,289 cases this year, including both complaints (6,116) and enquiries (3,173). As in previous years, August was our busiest month, reflecting seasonal spikes in bills during winter. The most common reason for contact was dissatisfaction with a provider's outcome, making up 2,817 cases (30%). Many people reached out to clarify their rights or seek independent advice (13%), while others contacted us by mistake (10%).

These trends, alongside a 33% rise in enquiries (from 2,389 in 2024 to 3,173 in 2025) reflect greater visibility of our services. Our phone number was added to energy bills from authorised retailers from 30 September 2023 and to SA Water bills from 1 January 2025, prompting more people to turn to EWOSA as a trusted source of information – not just for complaints.

Top 5 Reasons for Contact



Unhappy with outcome from company
2,817 cases (30%)



Wanted to clarify rights / seek independent advice
1,178 cases (13%)



Contacted EWOSA in error
957 cases (10%)



Didn't know who else to call
451 cases (5%)



Wanted immediate action
436 cases (5%)

Method of Contact



6,623 71%
by telephone



1,937 21%
by web form



340 4%
by live chat



337 4%
by email



20 <1%
by post



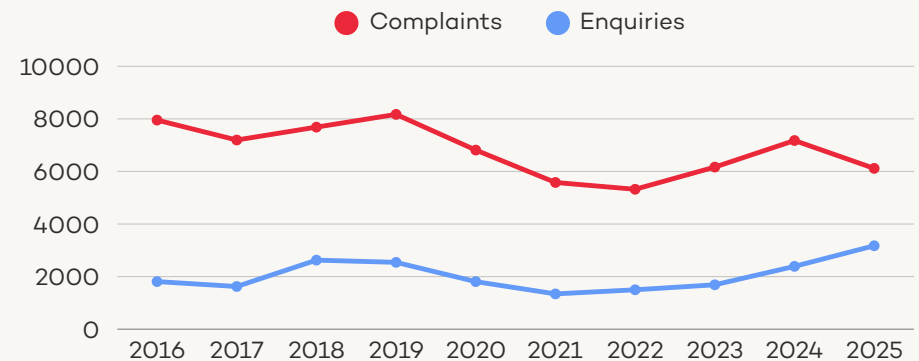
18 <1%
in person



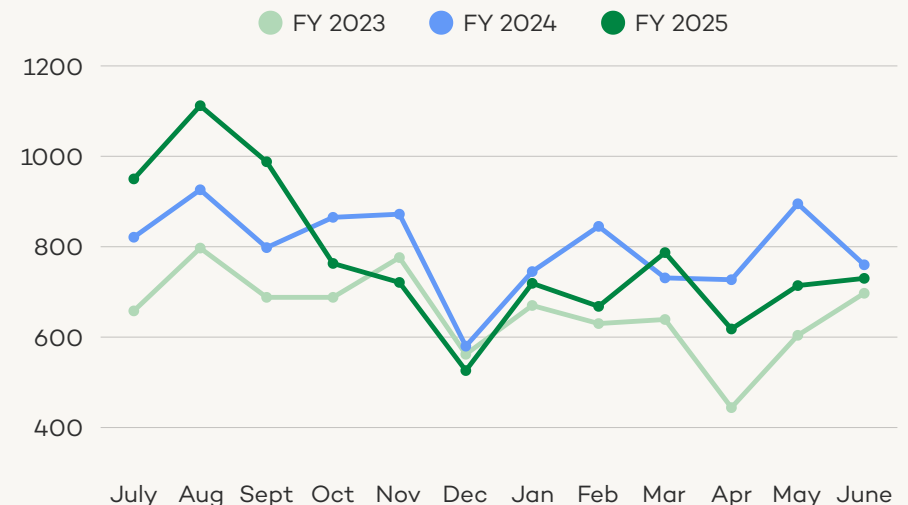
14 <1%
via SMS

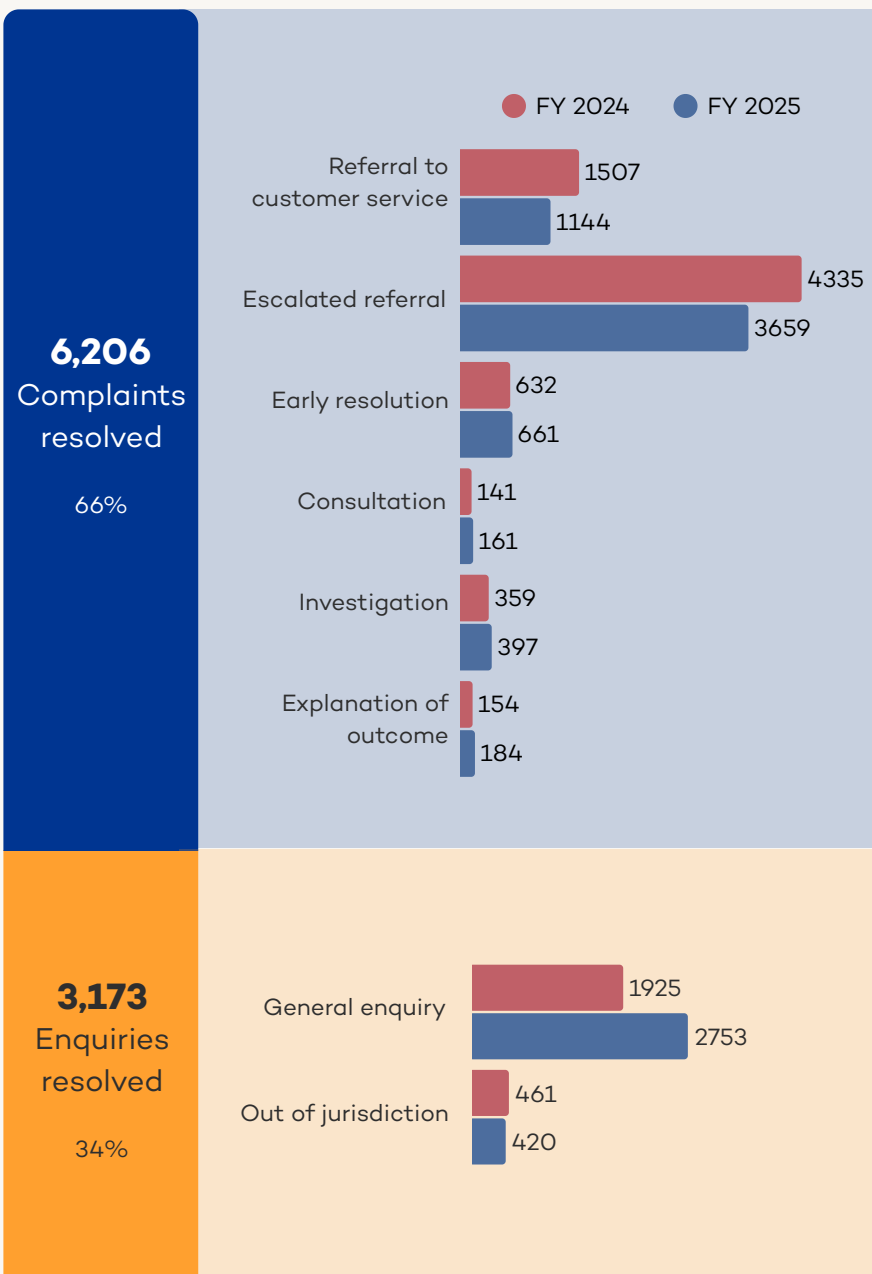
Cases this Year

Complaints and Enquiries Over Time



Case Trends by Month





Cases Resolved

How We Categorise Cases

Every dispute resolution organisation needs a clear case categorisation system to track how the nature and complexity of disputes evolve over time. At EWOSA, we group all cases into two main categories: complaints and enquiries, explained in more detail below.

In 2025, general enquiries rose by 43%, reflecting greater awareness of our service. Our phone number began appearing on energy bills from authorised retailers on 30 September 2023, and on SA Water bills from 1 January 2025, making it easier for customers to contact us for advice.

Although overall complaint numbers declined, the cases we received were more complex. Explanations of outcome rose by 19%, consultations by 14%, and investigations by 11%. In contrast, referrals to customer service fell by 24%, and escalated referrals decreased by 16%.

2,753 General Enquiries ↑43%



If someone contacts us for advice (without lodging a complaint) we can assist immediately by explaining the regulations or guiding the customer through raising the issue with their provider.

420 Out of Jurisdiction Cases ↓9%



Where a matter lies outside EWOSA's jurisdiction, we refer them to the right organisation.

1,144 Referrals to Customer Service ↓24%



If someone contacts us about a problem but hasn't yet raised it with their provider, we encourage them to speak with the provider first and make sure they know their rights and responsibilities going in.

3,659 Escalated Referrals ↓16%



If someone has already contacted their provider and the issue still isn't resolved, we refer the complaint to their senior complaints team for further review.

161 Consultations ↑14%



When a customer faces disconnection or water restriction, we fast-track the case. Once supply is restored or the risk is resolved, we continue handling the broader complaint, usually as an escalated referral.

661 Early Resolutions ↑5%



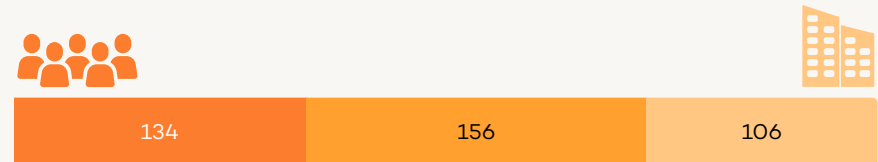
If a complaint isn't resolved through an escalated referral or a consultation, we may pursue early resolution – working with both the customer and provider to reach an agreement.

397 Investigations ↑11%



If a complaint remains unresolved after earlier steps, we begin an investigation – collecting information from the provider and inviting the customer to submit supporting material. Where needed, we may also consult regulators or independent experts.

Investigated Outcomes



34%

In customer's favour

39%

Partly in customer's favour

27%

In provider's favour

184 Explanations of Outcome ↑19%



If a full review shows the provider acted reasonably and no further investigation is warranted, we close the case and explain our decision and reasoning to the customer.

0 Binding Decisions



If an investigation is completed and the complaint cannot be resolved through conciliation, the Ombudsman may issue a determination to resolve the matter.

“ I couldn't be happier with the service and professionalism displayed by the staff member I dealt with. ”

“ I was very happy with the outcome. I am grateful you knew what I was talking about, kept me informed at every step, and got the matter resolved quickly. ”

“ I felt that all the staff were very professional, empathetic, and made me feel comfortable in the knowledge that my problem was going to be fixed. ”

“ I'm glad I contacted the Ombudsman, as the supplier then took my complaint seriously. ”

“ [My case worker] was polite, professional and very understanding. My problem was resolved within 24 hours! ”

“ I found [my case worker] to be very helpful, honest and straight-forward. He assisted with all my queries and went the extra mile. ”

Our Performance



92%

cases closed in <30 days

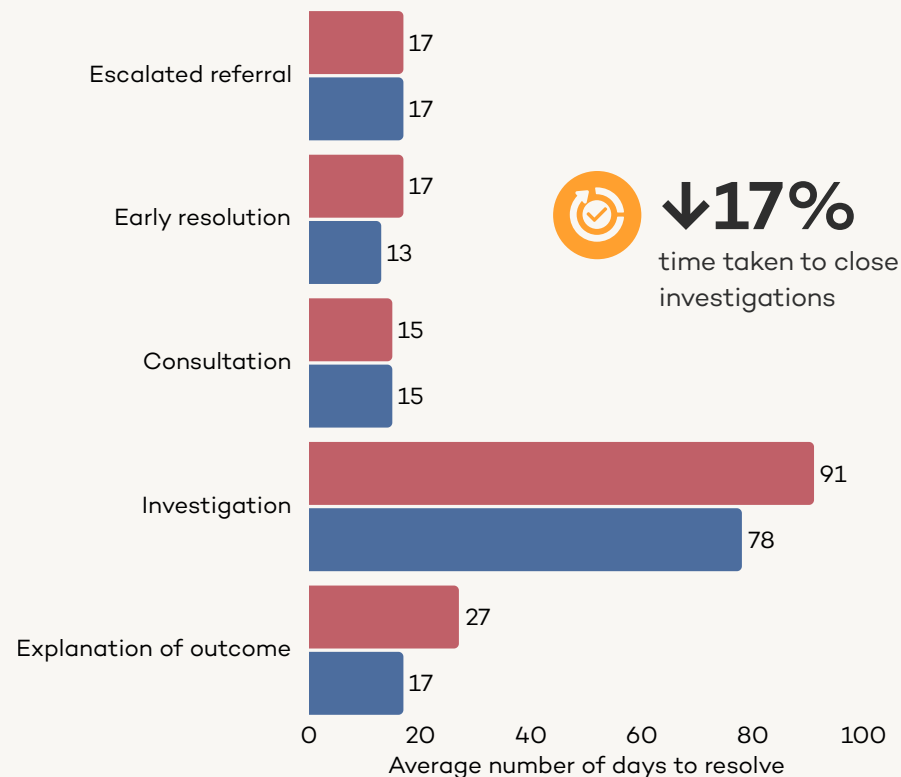


94%

customer satisfaction

Resolution Timeframes

● FY 2024 ● FY 2025



Questions Unanswered

Qiang contacted his electricity provider with a list of questions about his energy use, meter, pricing, and possible debt collection. When no response came, he followed up. A brief reply eventually arrived, but it didn't fully address his concerns – so Qiang reached out to EWOSA.

How Did EWOSA Help?

We reviewed the provider's written response and asked them to reconsider whether it had properly addressed Qiang's concerns. Given the number and complexity of the questions he had raised, we also asked if they could provide a more detailed explanation.

The provider reassessed their response and prepared a revised reply. This time, they worked through each of Qiang's questions, providing clearer information and more context around usage data, pricing structures, meter testing, and their approach to debt recovery.

What Was the Outcome?

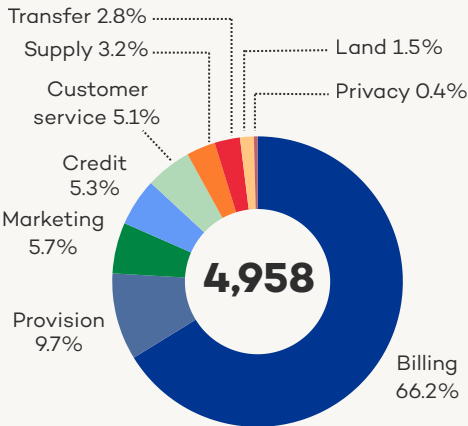
The provider issued a detailed response that directly addressed each of Qiang's concerns. For Qiang, this meant he had a full picture of how his account was being managed – and clear, written explanations he could refer to moving forward.



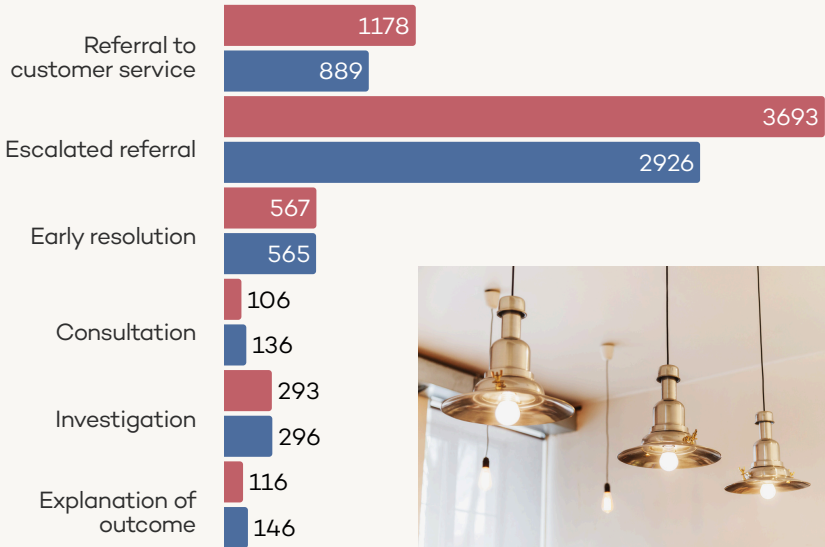
Electricity Complaints

We handled 4,958 electricity-related complaints in 2025 – a 17% drop from 2024. Referrals to customer service and escalated referrals declined by 25% and 21% respectively, while complex dispute cases remained steady, with consultations rising by 22%.

The vast majority of complaints concerned billing (66%). Service provision was the second most complained about issue (10%), followed by marketing and customer service (each with 5%).



FY 2024 FY 2025



The \$13,900 Mix-Up

Valerie moved into a home in 2007 and set up a gas account with her provider. For 19 years, she received and paid gas bills as expected. Then, she discovered something shocking: the gas meter her bills were based on was actually supplying her neighbour's property – not hers. She contacted her provider three times to explain the issue and ask for the bills to be corrected. But the problem remained unresolved. That's when she contacted EWOSA.

How Did EWOSA Help?

We reviewed the provider's records in detail, including all bills issued and payments made. We confirmed that the provider had cancelled all bills issued to Valerie for the incorrect meter and closed that account. A new account was opened, correctly linked to the gas meter at Valerie's property. We also verified that the \$13,900 credit represented the total of Valerie's payments to the incorrect account over the years.

What Was the Outcome?

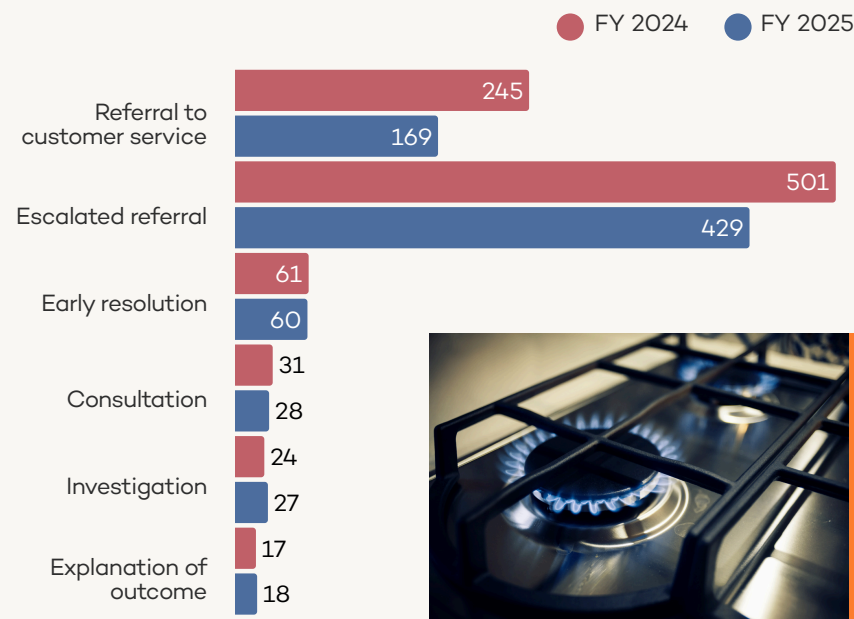
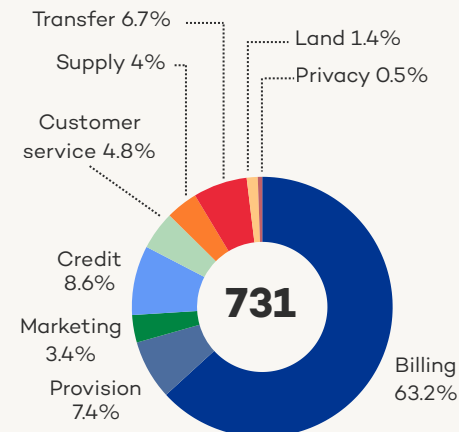
The provider refunded the full \$13,900 to Valerie and confirmed the new account was now correctly linked. Valerie received the refund and the issue was resolved.



Gas Complaints

We handled 731 gas-related complaints in 2025 – a 17% decrease from 2024. Referrals to customer service and escalated referrals dropped by 31% and 14%, while cases requiring more complex dispute management held steady.

Billing was the most common complaint issue (63%), followed by credit (9%), provision (7%), and transfer (7%).



Overgrown and Overdue

For two and a half years, Stavros received estimated water bills – despite believing his meter was accessible. After contacting the provider, he was told a proper meter reading would be taken. Instead, he received an overdue notice for \$800, without a corresponding bill. Confused, Stavros contacted EWOSA.

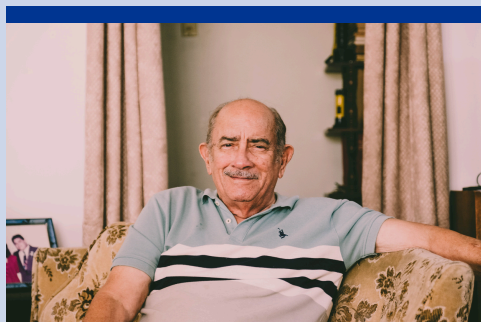
How Did EWOSA Help?

We reviewed the provider's records, which showed quarterly attempts to read the meter, photos of it obscured by vegetation, and access cards left at the property. Each bill had clearly stated it was based on an estimate.

We raised the issue with the provider, who agreed to revisit the site. They completed a proper read, marked the meter's location for future access, and issued amended bills based on actual usage. We confirmed the revised charges were accurate.

What Was the Outcome?

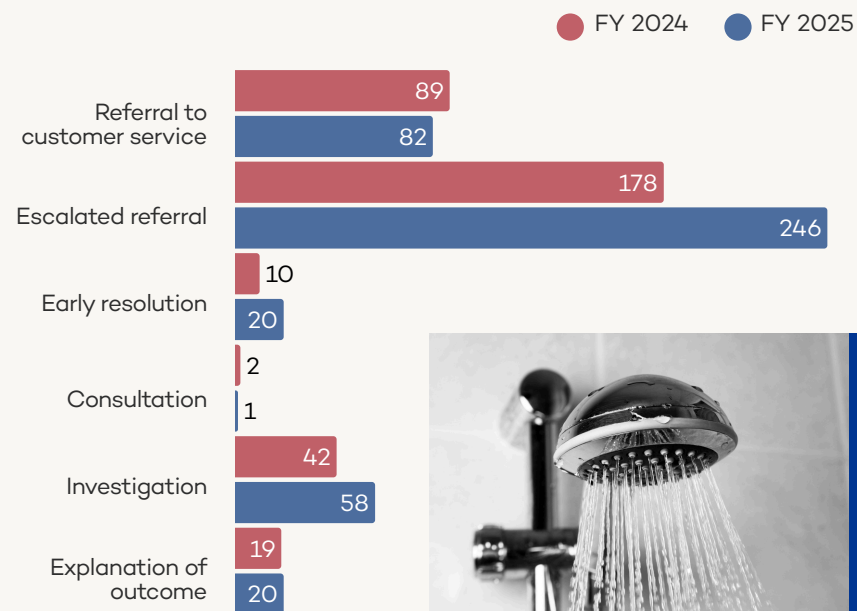
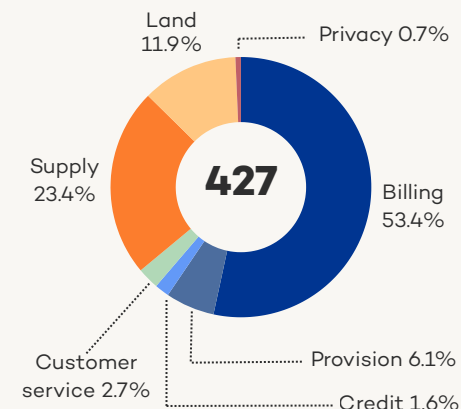
The provider demonstrated it had made regular efforts to read the meter and had communicated clearly. Stavros cleared the vegetation, and with an accurate read in hand, the provider reissued the bills and applied a \$50 goodwill credit.



Water Complaints

We handled 427 water-related complaints in 2025 – a 26% increase compared to 2024. Escalated referrals and investigations each rose by about 38%, while early resolution cases doubled.

The most common issue was billing (53%), followed closely by supply (23%). Land-related issues made up 12% of complaints.



Falling Short on Better Bills

Joel noticed his electricity bills rising despite no change in usage. After receiving a bill for over \$2,100, he called his provider to switch to a cheaper plan advertised on the bill. They said they'd follow up after replacing his meter the next day – but never did. Later bills gave conflicting information about plans, and when Joel followed up again, he was wrongly told no cheaper option was available.

How Did EWOSA Help?

We reviewed Joel's billing and meter data, confirming that usage had not increased overall – just a seasonal winter spike with lower solar exports. We also checked his contract and price change notices, which met regulatory requirements.

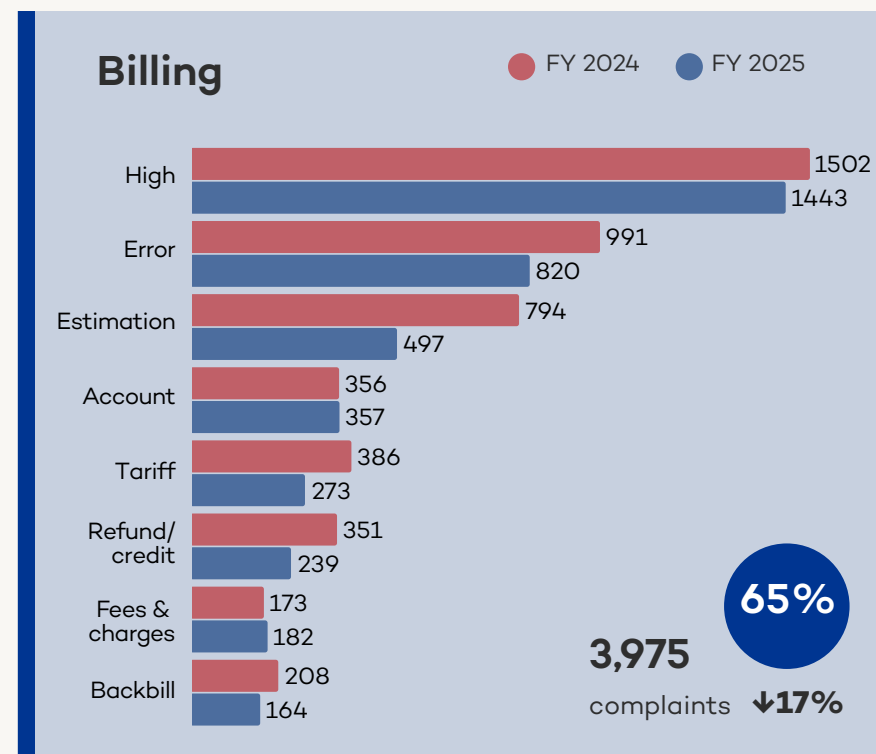
However, the provider hadn't included the required better offer message every 100 days. We also reviewed both call recordings: in the first, the provider didn't follow through; in the second, they wrongly claimed no cheaper plan was available – though one was.

What Was the Outcome?

The provider admitted Joel had been misinformed and their communications fell short of regulatory standards. They applied a \$1,650 credit for the excess charges, a \$150 goodwill credit, and gave him more time to pay the remaining \$250.



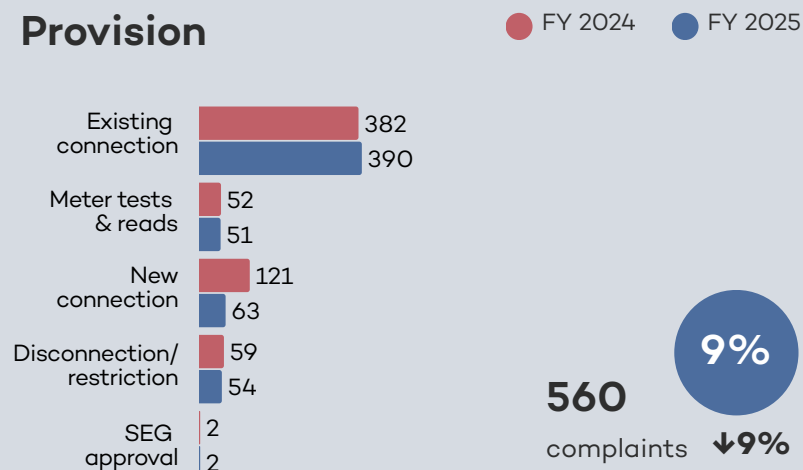
Complaint Issues



Billing complaints grouped by sub-issue

As in previous years, billing remained the most common primary issue raised across our complaints, making up 65% of our total caseload. While the volume of billing complaints declined by 17% in line with the overall downward trend, several sub-issues saw particularly notable drops. Complaints about estimated bills fell by 37%, while those concerning refunds dropped by 32%. Backbilling and tariff-related complaints declined by 21% and 29% respectively. In contrast, complaints about accounts and fees and charges held steady compared to last year.

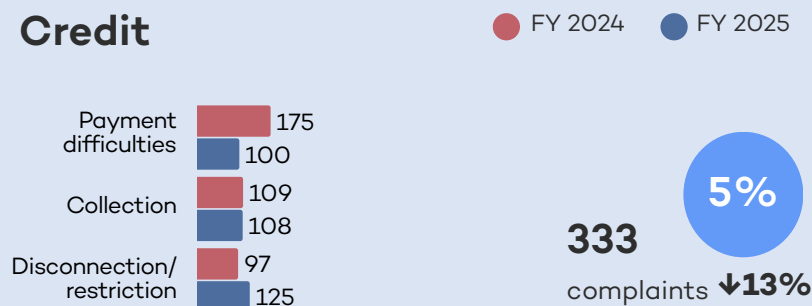
Provision



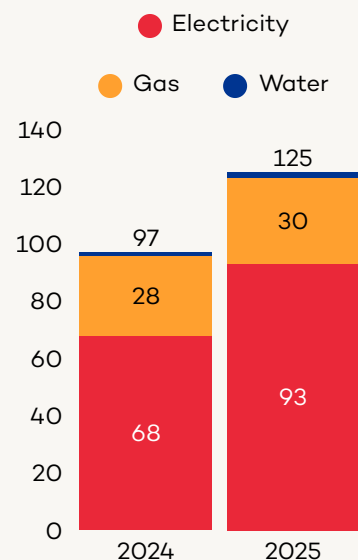
Provision complaints grouped by sub-issue

Service provision was the second most prominent issue, representing 9% of total complaints. The overall volume of provision-related complaints decreased only slightly compared to last year (9%). Notably, complaints about meter reads, existing connections, SEG approvals and disconnections all remained fairly steady. But complaints related to new connections fell by almost half (48%) compared to 2024.

Credit



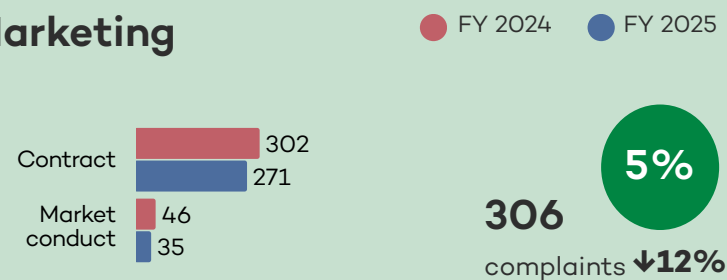
Credit complaints grouped by sub-issue



Disconnections by product type

We received 333 credit-related complaints, comprising 5% of all complaints and marking a 13% drop from 2024. Cases involving payment difficulties declined by 42%, and debt collection-related complaints held steady. However, complaints about disconnections or supply restrictions rose by 28%. These types of cases are often fast-tracked and treated as consultations. Correspondingly, consultations increased by 14% compared to 2024.

Marketing



Marketing complaints grouped by sub-issue

Marketing complaints accounted for 5% of our caseload, with 306 complaints received. This category saw a moderate decline of 12% compared with last year. Complaints related to market conduct fell by 24%, while complaints related to contracts fell by 10%.

A Rather Unsettling Settlement

Jasmin contacted her electricity provider about a \$5,800 bill covering two quarters. During the call, the provider offered to apply a cheaper plan retroactively, reducing the total to \$5,350. When she asked about a further discount, the representative said a \$2,900 payment would settle the full amount. Jasmin accepted and paid immediately.

Her next bill, however, showed a \$2,450 balance. Confused, she called the provider and was told the balance was still owing. When she requested a review of the previous phone call, she was told it couldn't be found. After escalating the issue, the call was located – but the provider maintained she owed the balance and eventually stopped responding. Frustrated, Jasmin contacted EWOSA.

How Did EWOSA Help?

We reviewed the call and confirmed Jasmin was told a \$2,900 payment would settle her account. The representative also appeared uncertain when discussing billing periods and amounts – supporting the provider's later claim of error. However, the provider never clarified this at the time or addressed Jasmin's follow-ups, causing further frustration due to poor communication.

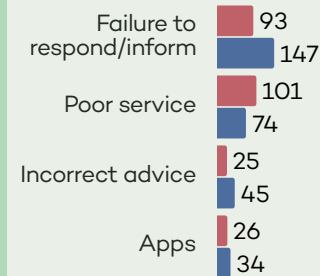
What Was the Outcome?

After our investigation, the provider acknowledged mishandling the issue and, as a goodwill gesture, waived the remaining \$2,450.



Customer Service

FY 2024 FY 2025



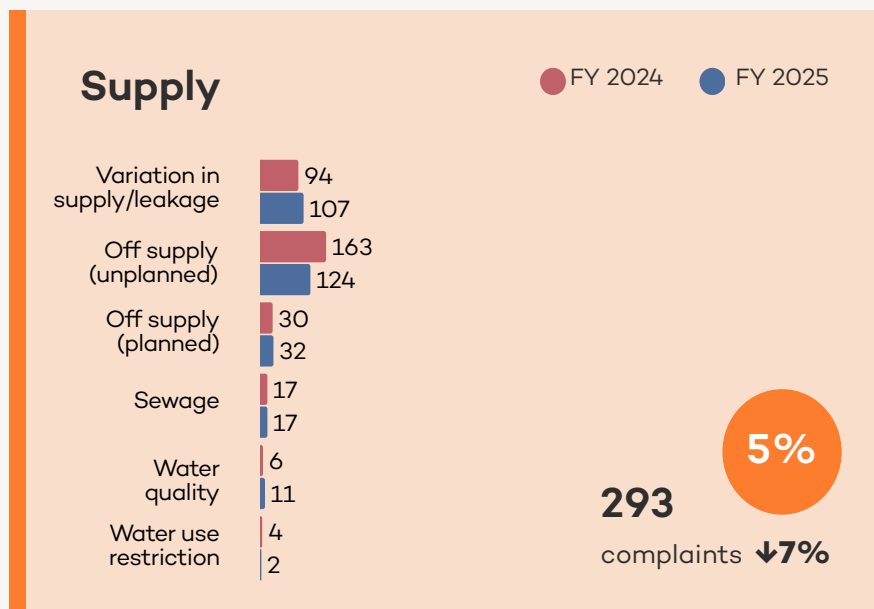
300

complaints ↑22%

5%

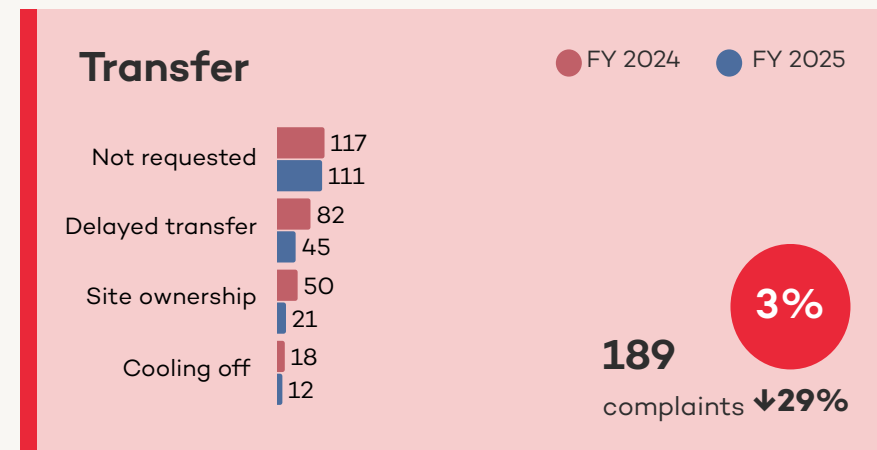
Customer service complaints grouped by sub-issue

We received 300 complaints about customer service, accounting for 5% of all complaints and marking a 22% increase on last year. Within this category, complaints about poor service fell by 26%, but all other issues rose. Complaints about providers failing to respond to or inform customers increased by 58%, issues with online services and apps rose by 30%, and complaints about incorrect advice grew sharply by 80%.



Supply complaints grouped by sub-issue

Supply issues made up 5% of all complaints and remained relatively stable, declining by just 7%. Most of this drop stemmed from a 24% reduction in complaints about unplanned supply interruptions. Other sub-issues either remained steady or rose slightly, with complaints about variation in supply or leakage increasing by 14%, and complaints about water quality, while few in number, almost doubling.

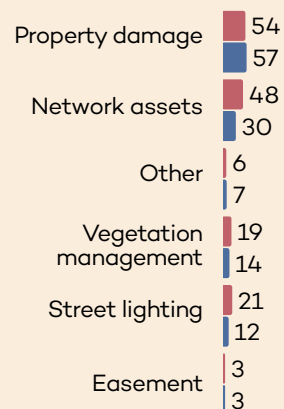


Transfer complaints grouped by sub-issue

Transfer-related complaints accounted for 3% of the total, with 189 cases recorded in 2025 – down 29% from the previous year. This decline was driven by fewer complaints about delayed transfers and site ownership, which fell by 45% and 58% respectively. However, complaints regarding erroneous transfers initiated by providers (i.e. without customer request) remained fairly steady.

Land

FY 2024 FY 2025



123

complaints ↓19%

2%

Land complaints grouped by sub-issue

Land-related issues made up 2% of the caseload, with 123 complaints – a 19% decrease from 2024. Most sub-issues held steady, with the exception of network asset-related complaints, which dropped by 38%. Although we typically receive only a small number of complaints about street lighting each year, this category also saw a marked decline of 43%.

Privacy

FY 2024 FY 2025



25

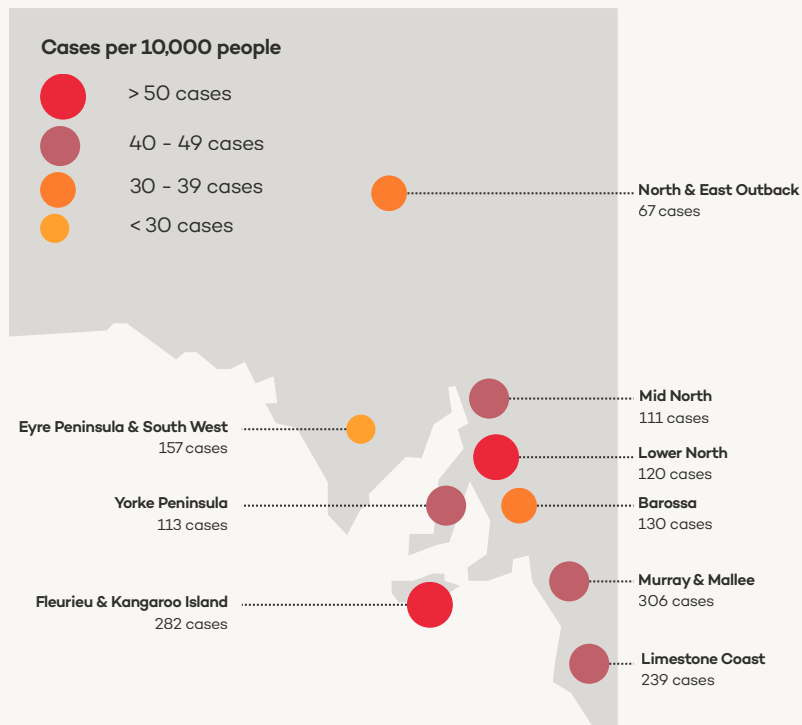
complaints ↓7%

<1%

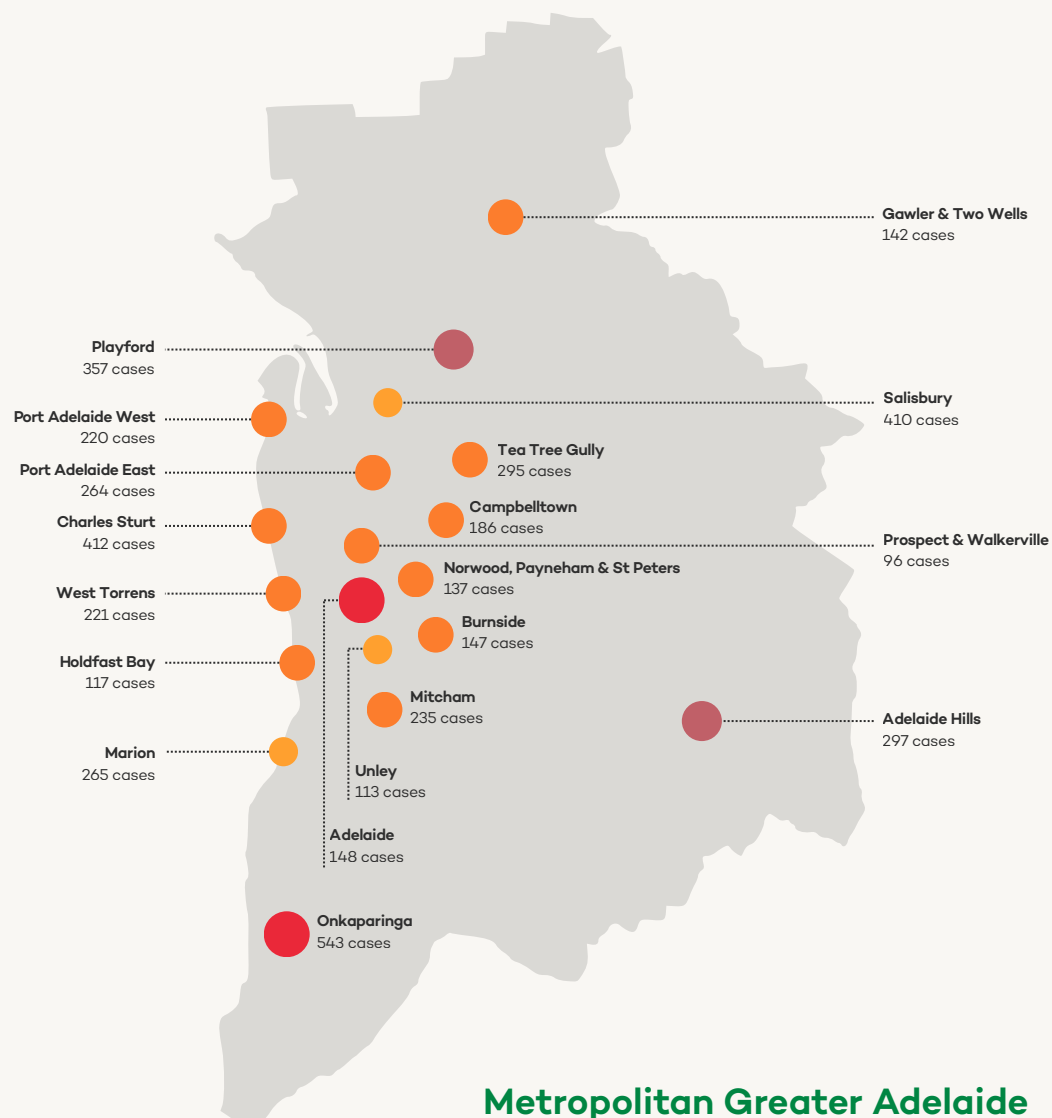
Privacy complaints grouped by sub-issue

Finally, we received 25 privacy-related complaints, comprising less than 1% of total complaints. This figure decreased by 7% compared to the previous year.

Regional South Australia



Complaints by Region



Membership

Our Members

61 Electricity Members

| | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1st Energy Pty Ltd | Kogan Energy |
| AGL | Localvolts |
| Alinta Energy | Lumo Energy |
| Amber | Momentum Energy |
| Andamooka Power House | Mt View Homes |
| Barossa Village Inc | Municipal Council of Roxby Downs |
| Blue NRG | Nectr |
| Circular Energy | Next Business Energy |
| CovaU Pty Ltd | OneSteel Manufacturing Pty Ltd |
| Cowell Electric Supply Pty Ltd | Origin Energy |
| CPE Mascot Pty Ltd | OVO Energy Pty Ltd |
| CPE Tonsley Pty Ltd | People Energy |
| DALFOAM PTY LTD | Port Lincoln Tourist Park |
| Delorean Energy Retail | Powerclub |
| Diamond Energy | PowerHub Pty Ltd |
| Discover Energy | Powershop |
| District Council of Coober Pedy | Powow Power |
| Dodo Power and Gas | Red Energy |
| Edithburgh Progress Association | ReNu Energy |
| ElectraNet | Savant Energy Power Networks |
| Electricity In A Box | Shell Energy Retail |
| Elysian Energy | ENGIE |
| Energy Australia | Sustainable Savings Pty Ltd |
| Energy Locals | SA Power Networks |
| Enerven | Pacific Blue |
| Flinders Power Partnership | Telstra Energy Pty Ltd |
| Flo Energy Australia | WINconnect |
| Flow Power | ZEN Energy |
| Future X Power | Ampol Energy Pty Ltd |
| GloBird Energy | Tango Energy |
| Glow Power | |

58 Water Members

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Adelaide Hills Council | District Council of Tumby Bay |
| Alano Utilities | ERA Water |
| Alexandrina Council | FB Pipeline |
| Barunga West Council | Kangaroo Island Council |
| City of Charles Sturt | Kingston District Council |
| City of Marion | Lighthview ReWater |
| City of Playford | Light Regional Council |
| City of Port Adelaide Enfield | Mid Murray Council |
| City of Port Lincoln | Moana Beach and Christies Beach |
| City of Salisbury | Tourist Park |
| City of Tea Tree Gully | Municipal Council of Roxby Downs |
| Clare & Gilbert Valleys Council | Naracoorte Lucindale Council |
| Compass Springs | Northern Areas Council |
| Copper Coast Council | NWIC Pty Ltd |
| District Council of Ceduna | Port Pirie Regional Council |
| District Council of Coober Pedy | Regional Council of Goyder |
| District Council of Franklin Harbour | Renmark Paringa Council |
| District Council of Grant | Rural City of Murray Bridge |
| District Council of Karoonda East | Southern Mallee District Council |
| Murray | SA Water |
| District Council of Kimba | Tatiara District Council |
| District Council of Lower Eyre | The Barossa Council |
| Peninsula | The Flinders Ranges Council |
| District Council of Loxton Waikerie | Wakefield Regional Council |
| District Council of Mallala | Water Utilities Australia |
| District Council of Mount Barker | Wudinna District Council |
| District Council of Mount Remarkable | Yorke Peninsula Council |
| District Council of Orroroo Carrieton | Monarto Water Network Limited |
| District Council of Peterborough | Wattle Range Council |
| District Council of Robe | Factor UTB |
| District Council of Streaky Bay | |

19 Gas Members

AGL
Alinta Energy
Australian Gas Networks
CovaU
Delorean Energy Retail
Discover Energy
Dodo Power and Gas
Elgas
Energy Australia
Environmental Land Services
Lumo Energy
Origin Energy
Origin LPG
OVO Energy
Red Energy
Savant Energy Power Networks
ENGIE
Telstra Energy
WINconnect

71 Embedded Network Members

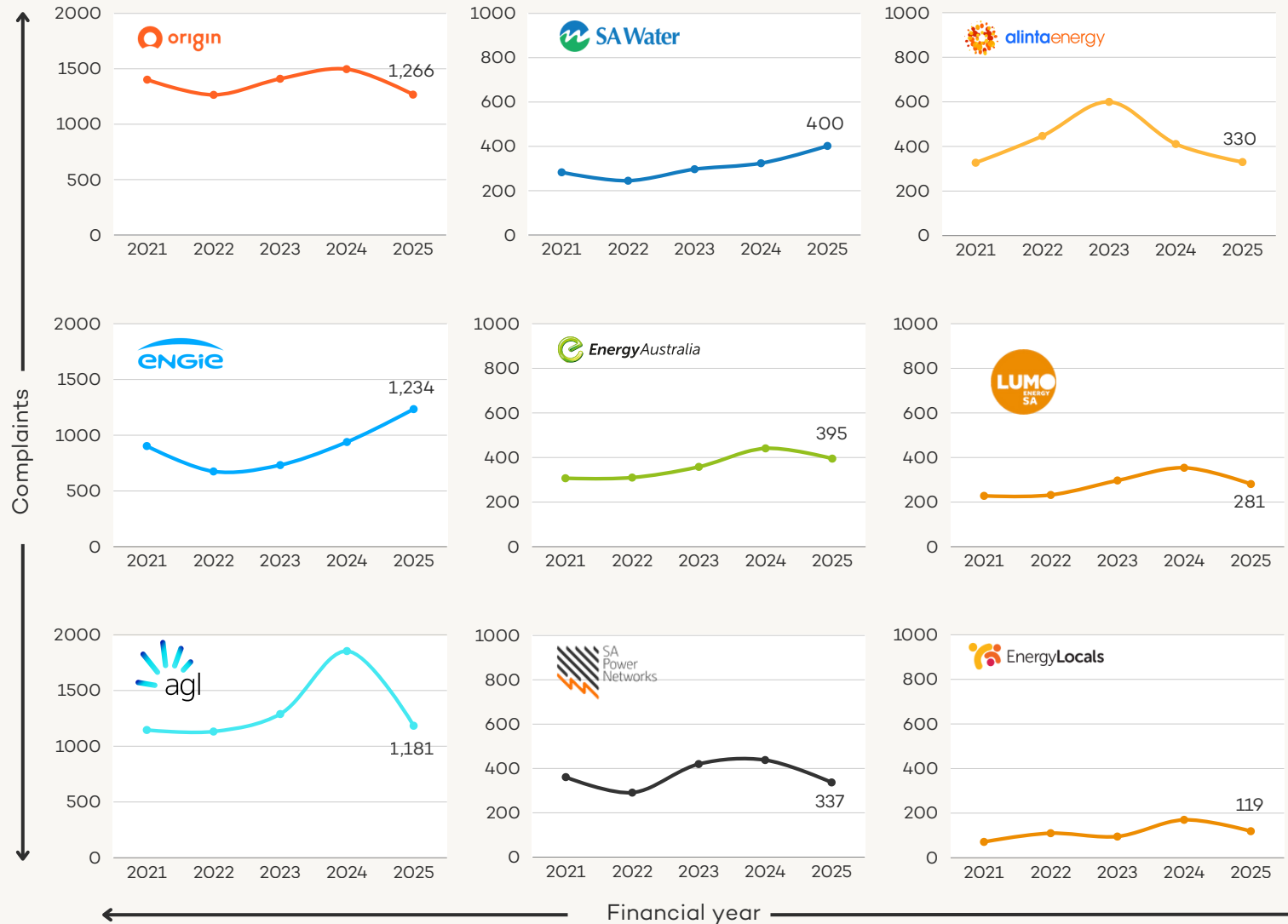
Alabrilife Village
Aldinga Beach Holiday Park
Ardrossan Progress Association
Ashbrook Apartments RV
Balaklava Caravan Park
Beachside Caravan Park
Belair National Park Caravan Park
Benergy
BHP Olympic Dam Corporation
BIG4 Barossa Tourist Park
BIG4 Normanville Jetty Holiday Park
BIG4 Port Willunga Tourist Park
Boandik Lodge Incorporated
Burton Village
Chiton Retirement Living
Clayton Church Homes
Clean Peak Energy
Coastal Parks Port Willunga
Cobdogla Station Caravan Park
Community Corporation 22654
Community Corporation 26052
Community Corporation 27862
Community Corporation 40515
Community Corporation 41210
CPE Tonsley
Discovery Holiday Parks
- Barossa Valley
- Goolwa
- Hahndorf
- Lakeside Drive
- Military Rd

- Roxby Downs
Echo Holiday Parks - Windsor Gardens
Gawler Caravan Park
Gawler Gateway Tourist Park
Glenbrook Apartments
Highview Holiday Village
Highway 1 Caravan & Tourist Park
Hindmarsh Island Caravan Park
Kadina Caravan Park
Kalyra Communities
Kingston On Murray Caravan Park
Leabrook Place
Levi Park Caravan Park
Loxton Riverfront Holiday Park
McLaren Vale Lakeside Caravan Park
Minda
Minlaton Caravan Park
Mount Barker Caravan & Tourist Park
Naracoorte Holiday Park
Oakden Rise Community Energy Co
Pandora Lifestyle Villages - Hillier Park
Pandora Lifestyle Villages - The Palms
Pine Country Caravan Park
Port Clinton Caravan Park
Port Wakefield Caravan Park
Somerton Park Retirement Village
Stansbury Progress Association
Sturt River Park
The Trustee for the Tavern Trust
Tumby Bay Caravan Park
UnitingSA Housing

Unity Retirement Village
V Three Energy
Victor Harbor Beachfront Holiday Park
Victor Harbor Holiday and Cabin Park
Virginia Residential Park
Voysey Holdings
Waikerie Lifestyle Village
Woodcroft Park

Member Performance

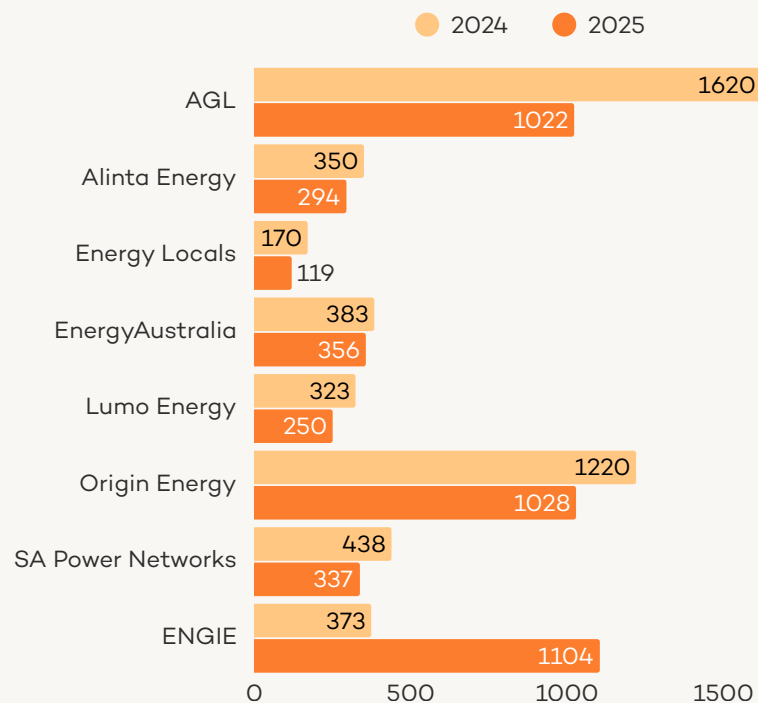
Five Year Trends



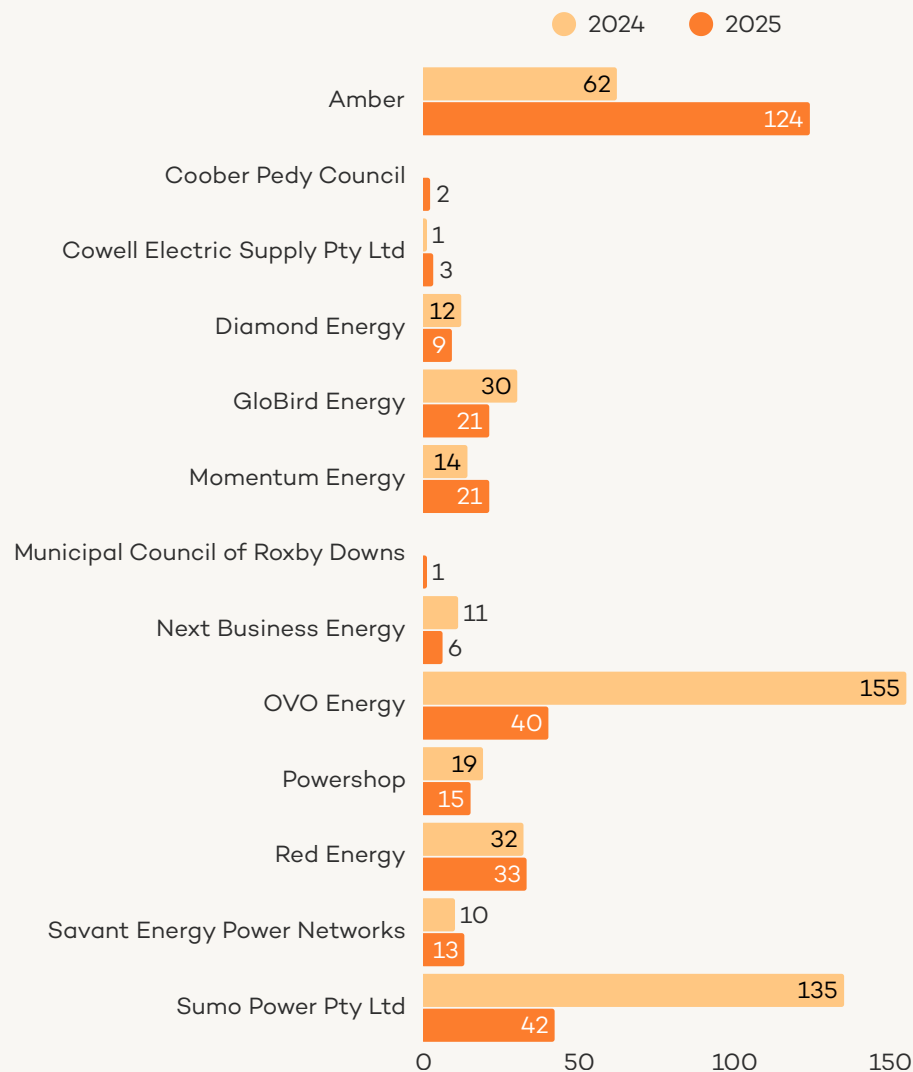
Electricity Complaints



Members with >10K Customers

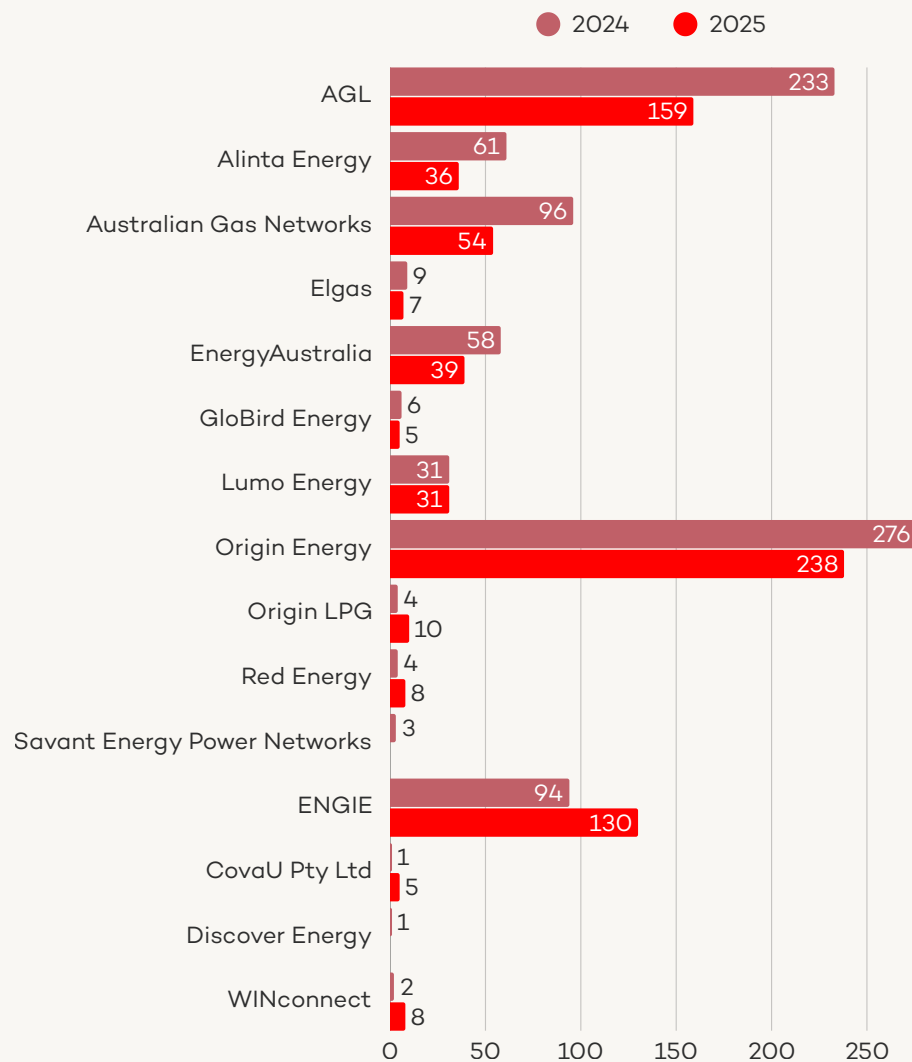


Members with <10K Customers

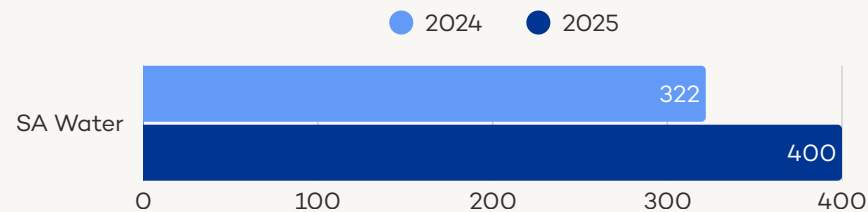


Gas Complaints

Members with >1K Customers



Water Complaints



Policy Influence

At EWOSA, our mandate goes beyond dispute resolution. A key part of our Strategic Plan is working to improve outcomes for customers. We work closely with regulators and government departments to help make that happen.

Listening to Consumers

We believe that effective customer advocacy is grounded in robust evidence. This is why we concentrate our efforts to influence policy and regulation on issues that matter, based on complaints data and analysis of systemic issues.

In April 2025, we launched a new customer feedback initiative. When we close a case, we now invite the customer to complete a short survey to identify the issues that matter most to them. We are now using insights from this survey to help direct the strategic focus of our advocacy work.



Connected in the Sector

Our ability to advocate effectively stems from the relationships we've built across the sector. In 2024–25, we submitted 29 policy submissions, 15 of which were developed in partnership with other members of the Australian and New Zealand Energy and Water Ombudsman Network (ANZEWO).

Beyond formal submissions, we also actively engage with regulators, advisory bodies, and sector networks. This includes regular bilateral meetings with the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) and the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC). We are active members of the Consumer Advisory Committee for the Essential Services Commission of South Australia (ESCOMSA), and also regularly collaborate with the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) on privacy matters.

We regularly join distributor-led customer and stakeholder advisory group meetings to share input on key issues like tariffs, support for vulnerable customers, and future expenditure.

In November 2024, EWOSA became an official supporter of the Energy Charter, an initiative that aims to align industry behaviour to deliver better energy outcomes for customers and communities. We stay actively involved through monthly meetings.

Outcomes in Focus

Looking beyond energy and water, EWOSA also takes part in regular knowledge exchange with other dispute resolution organisations through the Australian and New Zealand Ombudsman Association (ANZO).



**Government
of South Australia**

Department for
Energy and Mining

Key Policy Submissions 2024-25

- A package of seven rule change requests aimed at improving outcomes for customers facing affordability challenges (AEMC)
- *Accelerating Smart Meter Deployment and Real-Time Data for Consumers* rule changes (AEMC)
- *The pricing review: Electricity Pricing for a Consumer-Driven Future* (AEMC)
- *Review of the Exemptions Framework for Embedded Networks* (AER)
- Regulatory determination for SA Power Networks (AER)
- *Review of the Retailer Energy Productivity Scheme* (Department for Energy and Mining and ESCOSA)
- Small Compensation Claims Scheme (Department for Energy and Mining)
- *Review of small-scale network reporting requirements and prescribed customer consumer protections* (ESCOSA)
- *Review of the Australian Gas Networks Regulatory Framework* (ESCOSA)

Better Customer Protections under the National Smart Meter Rollout

As part of the national smart meter rollout, the AEMC has tasked electricity providers with replacing all basic electricity meters with smart meters by 2030. One particularly positive outcome from the past year was the introduction of improved customer protections to apply during the rollout period (December 2023 to November 2025).

After years of sector-wide advocacy (with EWOSA as a key contributor), the AEMC introduced these new protections in their final determination for the Accelerating Smart Meter Deployment rule change project in November 2024.

It includes safeguards requiring a provider to seek a customer's explicit informed consent before switching them to a time-of-use tariff for two years following a smart meter upgrade. In parallel, state governments, including South Australia, are now considering mandating flat-rate tariff options, helping mitigate the risk of "bill shock."



29

policy submissions

Evolving the Language of Support

We've long advocated for more inclusive and empowering language across the energy sector. The term "hardship" is widely used for customers facing affordability challenges, but it carries a stigma that can discourage people from seeking support. Alongside other customer advocates, we recommend alternatives such as "customers experiencing affordability issues" or "vulnerable customers".

In May 2025, this perspective gained recognition in the AER's *Review of payment difficulty protections* under the National Energy Customer Framework. The review called for the adoption of a unified sector-wide definition for customers in payment difficulty, moving away from the term "hardship." EWOSA strongly supports this move as an important step toward improving access to support and fostering greater dignity in the customer experience.



Systemic issues are problems that have the potential to affect multiple customers, often because they are widespread, or are likely to be repeated. They may stem from a provider's policies, how those policies are applied, system or process changes, non-compliance, or the actions of third-party contractors.

At EWOSA, we are responsible for identifying and recording systemic and potential compliance issues. Where appropriate, we notify the relevant provider and regulatory authority, and may seek input from regulators. Confirmed issues are referred to the provider's senior management, and we monitor outcomes to ensure a fair resolution for customers.

While we do not have enforcement powers, we share relevant findings with regulators such as the AER and ESCOSA, who may take further action. We also provide feedback to providers to support better practices and reduce future complaints.



Systemic Issues

Case Study: Working with Members to Reduce Complaints

Changes to a provider's systems, staffing, or internal processes can sometimes trigger a sharp rise in complaints and enquiries across multiple categories. This occurred with one of our members during 2023–24 and into 2024–25.

In the first half of 2023–24, this provider accounted for less than 10% of total cases received by EWOSA. By October 2024, their share had risen to nearly 25%, largely due to customer service-related issues. However, following constructive engagement with EWOSA – including a review of complaint handling practices – case volumes steadily declined, returning to around 10% by the June 2025 quarter.

We commend the member for their proactive and transparent response, and for working closely with EWOSA and their customers to address the root causes and strengthen their complaint resolution processes.



>50% reduction in complaints over nine months

Common Themes in Systemic Issues

In 2024–25, confirmed and potential systemic issues often related to:



- Non-compliance with billing regulations**, including the Better Bills Guideline, such as:
- Missing deemed better offer messages on quarterly bills
 - Omission of credit payments from bill statements



- Metering-related issues**, such as:
- Delays in meter tests or replacements
 - Lags in the provision of metering data



- Application of **time-of-use tariffs**, particularly in cases involving controlled load



- Delays in the applying the **Energy Bill Relief payment**

While metering issues are not always caused by energy or water providers directly, they remain responsible for resolving complaints. These problems often stem from metering service providers.

In our joint submission to the AEMC's *Real-time data for consumers* rule change, EWOSA and our counterparts recommended that metering service providers be required to join ombudsman schemes. This would ensure clearer accountability and faster resolution by placing responsibility with those best equipped to address the issue.

Key Developments

People and Culture

This year, we expanded our approach to learning and development, embedding structured support and targeted capability-building to ensure our team has the confidence and tools to respond to evolving demands.

Performance and Capability Improvements

We refined our performance management framework, introducing clearer behavioural expectations aligned with organisational values and improving how performance is benchmarked and managed across the organisation.

Practical, Targeted Training

All staff took part in a wellbeing and resilience session, alongside specialist training in plain English writing, domestic violence awareness, and managing unreasonable customer conduct. These sessions provided staff with strategies for real-world challenges.

Coaching in Real Time

With a dedicated Training and Coaching Officer now in place, we introduced real-time case reviews and feedback loops for Dispute Resolution Officers (DROs). This has created more opportunities for learning as part of everyday work and improved confidence in handling complex issues.

Strengthened DRO training framework

We refreshed our training processes for DROs at all

levels – from intake to early resolution and investigation – and sharpened competency definitions to support more targeted and evidence-based learning and development. We also launched a new e-learning module on industry knowledge to further support DRO capability uplift.



94%

employee satisfaction

Best Practice Dispute Resolution

We continued to refine how we manage complaints, with improvements in systems, documentation, and communication. These changes aim to deliver a clearer, more consistent experience for both customers and members.

Stronger Case Handling Processes

We reviewed and updated our full suite of case-handling procedures. New resources were created to close knowledge gaps, and refresher training helped embed improved practices.

Enhancements to Our CMS

We've made several improvements to our CMS. These include automated notifications for members reflecting recent changes to investigation fees, and updated templates for both customer and member correspondence. Our web complaint form is now also fully integrated into the system.

Clearer Communication

We revised our correspondence writing guide to support clear, consistent communication across all parties. We also published Our Engagement Principles – a public statement of how we work with complainants, members and other stakeholders throughout the resolution process. We also introduced SMS notifications to let customers know when their case is closed and remind them they can return if the issue remains unresolved.

Strengthened Quality Assurance

We updated our quality assurance checklist and improved the tools we use to review casework. Advances in technology have made it easier to locate and assess call records, helping us maintain quality across a changing complaint landscape.



Technology and Business Intelligence

This year, we welcomed a new Technology and Business Intelligence Manager to lead our IT and analytics work in line with our strategic goals. In parallel, the Board approved EWOSA's first AI Policy, laying the groundwork for responsible AI use. Guided by this policy, we will focus on modernising our tools, enhancing data insights, and applying AI where it adds real value – reducing friction, improve efficiency, and creating better experiences for users.

A Smarter Complaint Form

We replaced our legacy web complaint form with a modern version built on Microsoft Power Pages, now fully integrated with our CMS. The new form collects more complete case information upfront, enabling faster and more accurate resolution. It also uses AI validation for three critical questions, which has improved submission quality and reduced unnecessary back-and-forth. The result has been

clearer case setup for our DROs and fewer delays for our customers.

Member Portal Prototype

We developed a prototype for our future member portal. Built on Power Pages and integrated with our CMS, this prototype lays the groundwork for future development of a fully functional member portal. Once up and running, the portal will deliver a more seamless and intuitive experience for our members, while also making our complaint handling processes more efficient.

Building AI Knowledge Support

We began developing a digital knowledge assistant trained on case procedures, industry rules and legislation. This virtual coach will offer real-time support to DROs, speeding up casework while supporting quality and consistency – in line with our secure, responsible AI Policy.

Stakeholder and Community Engagement

Connecting with the Community

The Ombudsman participated in key outreach activities, including a Bring Your Bills day in Salisbury, financial counsellor training sessions, University of the Third Age seminars, and national events like the Financial Counselling Australia conference. These engagements allow us to connect with community service providers and customers where they are.

Expanding Our Digital Reach

We hired a part-time Digital Media Specialist in late 2024 and launched EWOSA's official Facebook page, using organic and paid marketing strategies to reach new audiences. We have been collaborating with external partners to produce accessible educational content for customers.

Deepening Stakeholder Relationships

EWOSA was represented at the South Australian Council of Social Service (SACOSS) end-of-year event and also joined the SACOSS Essential Services Group. These forums help us stay close to emerging customer issues and ensure our voice contributes to shaping system-wide responses.

Improving Visibility

Following the September 2023 requirement for our phone number to appear on energy bills, the same now applies to SA Water bills from January 2025. We continue to advocate for similar visibility measures across embedded networks and other small-scale providers.



Financial Statements

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 June 2025

| | 2025 \$ | 2024 \$ |
|---|------------|------------|
| Revenue from ordinary activities | 4,817,268 | 4,434,362 |
| Expenses from ordinary activities: | | |
| Accounting and audit fee | 43,807 | 41,660 |
| Depreciation | 367,800 | 326,443 |
| Employee benefit | 2,827,063 | 2,519,644 |
| Total other expenses | 1,141,342 | 1,235,463 |
| Income tax expense | - | - |
| Surplus for the year | 437,256 | 311,152 |
| Total comprehensive income for the year | 437,256 | 311,152 |

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 June 2025

| | 2025 \$ | 2024 \$ |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| CURRENT ASSETS | | |
| Cash and cash equivalents | 935,191 | 1,056,140 |
| Trade and other receivables | 129,254 | 97,096 |
| Other current assets | 148,517 | 218,079 |
| Other financial assets | 2,530,465 | 2,083,804 |
| TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS | 3,743,427 | 3,455,117 |
| NON CURRENT ASSETS | | |
| Property, plant and equipment | 815,798 | 855,340 |
| TOTAL NON CURRENT ASSETS | 815,798 | 855,340 |
| TOTAL ASSETS | 4,559,225 | 4,310,457 |
| CURRENT LIABILITIES | | |
| Trade and other payables | 71,814 | 104,723 |
| Financial liability payable | 182,453 | 170,962 |
| Employee benefits | 426,401 | 407,990 |
| Other current liabilities | 42,536 | 37,207 |
| TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES | 723,204 | 720,883 |
| NON CURRENT LIABILITIES | | |
| Financial liability payable | 46,616 | 221,632 |
| Employee benefits | 1,034 | 17,097 |
| TOTAL NON CURRENT LIABILITIES | 47,920 | 238,729 |
| TOTAL LIABILITIES | 771,124 | 959,612 |
| NET ASSETS | 3,788,101 | 3,350,845 |
| EQUITY | | |
| Accumulated surplus | 3,788,101 | 3,350,845 |
| TOTAL EQUITY | 3,788,101 | 3,350,845 |

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 June 2025

| | 2025 \$ | 2024 \$ |
|---|------------------|------------------|
| CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES | | |
| Receipts from members | 5,162,884 | 4,739,174 |
| (inclusive of goods and services tax) | | |
| Payments to suppliers and employees | (4,512,935) | (4,137,426) |
| (inclusive of goods and services tax) | | |
| Net cash inflow from operating activities | 649,949 | 601,748 |
| CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES | | |
| Proceeds from sale of property, plant and equipment | - | 1,471 |
| Purchase of property, plant and equipment | (317,038) | (303,126) |
| Proceeds from other financial assets | 2,083,804 | 3,668,656 |
| Payments for other financial assets | (2,530,465) | (3,933,803) |
| Interest received | 178,882 | 133,127 |
| Net cash (outflow) from investing activities | (584,817) | (433,675) |
| CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES | | |
| Financing lease principal and interest payments | (186,081) | (179,145) |
| Net cash outflow from financing activities | (186,081) | (179,145) |
| Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents | (120,949) | (11,072) |
| Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of year | 1,056,140 | 1,067,212 |
| CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT END OF YEAR | 935,191 | 1,056,140 |



Energy and Water Ombudsman (SA) Limited
ABN 11 089 791 604

GPO Box 2947
Adelaide SA 5001

1800 665 565
www.ewosa.com.au

Contact us

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Freecall | 1800 665 565 |
| SMS | 0488 854 555 |
| Live Chat | ewosa.com.au |

