

Energy and Water Ombudsman (SA) Engagement Principles



ENERGY & WATER
OMBUDSMAN SA

We are independent. Our complaint resolution service is free, fair and easy to use. If we can't help you, we will tell you about someone who can.

The Energy and Water Ombudsman (SA) (EWOSA) is an independent body established to investigate and resolve disputes that arise between customers and their energy and water service suppliers in South Australia.

This Engagement Principles document outlines our commitment to users of our service, setting out the expectations and obligations that apply. We do not advocate for any party and make fair and reasonable decisions based on the facts, laws and good industry practice.

About EWOSA

Our Vision:

To be effective, efficient and fair in our approach to resolving energy and water services disputes.

Our Mission:

To facilitate the prompt resolution of complaints and disputes between customers of energy and water services and members of the Scheme by providing a free, independent, accessible, fair and informal service to consumers.

Our Engagement Principles

To ensure fair outcomes through the EWOSA complaints process, all parties must engage in a fair process, cooperating reasonably and genuinely while treating everyone with respect and dignity.

Our engagement principles are designed to ensure every interaction is:

- **Authentic:** Interactions are sincere, meaningful, clear and honest.
- **Respectful:** Engagement is respectful, inclusive, and accessible to all.
- **Accountable:** Interactions are of high quality and responsive, with accountability for our actions.
- **Valuable:** Engagement brings value to the customers, stakeholders and the community.

What you can expect from us

Our Commitment:	Our Actions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Free: Our service is free for consumers.• Independent: We are impartial and do not act on behalf of any party.• Accessible: We aim to be accessible to everyone in South Australia, including through the use of interpreters.• Fair: We ensure fair processes and outcomes.• Valuable: We strive for resolutions that are prompt, practical and beneficial.• Accountable: We are transparent and accountable in our actions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We treat you with courtesy and respect.• We explain our processes clearly.• We listen to both sides of the complaint.• We follow through on our commitments.• We update you on the progress of your complaint.• We provide reasons for our decisions.• We equip our office with capable staff.

We respect you and the information that you provide. We have a [Privacy Policy](#) that outlines our commitment to handling your information in a way that complies with the Australian Privacy Principles and is industry best practice.

Expectations of consumers and their representatives

What we expect from you:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat our staff with courtesy and respect. • Listen to or read the information we provide. • Provide information promptly and accurately. • Cooperate with us and your service provider. • Inform us of any changes in contact details. • Notify us of any changes affecting your case. You can request a case review at the end of an investigation if you have new or additional information not previously considered.
If you are representing someone, also ensure you:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act in the best interests of the party you represent. • Provide relevant documentation and authorisation.

Challenging and unreasonable behaviour

We acknowledge that dealing with complaints can be stressful. However, we do not tolerate behaviour that is offensive, abusive, threatening, or unreasonably consumes disproportionate resources.

Unreasonable behaviour:	Consequences of unreasonable behaviour:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threatening and bullying: Acts of intimidation or aggression. • Abusive: Use of derogatory or offensive language. • Discriminatory: Remarks based on race, gender, or other personal traits. • Unreasonable arguments and demands: Refusal to accept fair explanations or decisions, insisting on specific outcomes, a different case officer or priority treatment and arguments without evidence or based on conspiracy theories. • Lack of cooperation: Providing excessive, irrelevant, or disorganised information. 	<p>If you fail to meet our behaviour standards, we may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrict how and when you can communicate with us. • Require you to appoint a representative. • Continue investigating your complaint with specific conditions. • Close your complaint if the behaviour persists. • Once we explain the outcome and close the case, we may not correspond further if the issue was clearly addressed in our investigation.

What we expect from Members of EWOSA

EWOSA expects its members to adhere to the following principles to ensure fair and efficient dispute resolution:

- Respond promptly to referrals and provide all relevant information within set timeframes.
- Proactively participate in the complaint resolution process and consider a broad range of remedies, including explanations and apologies.
- Follow our case management procedures and comply with any decision of the Ombudsman.
- Facilitate the training and orientation of staff about EWOSA's role and activities.
- Cooperate reasonably throughout the resolution process.

- Deal with complaints fairly and promptly and pay legitimate claims without needing external dispute resolution.
- Inform customers about internal complaint handling services and EWOSA's role as a free, independent resolution service.

Implications for non-compliance:

Non-compliance with our case management procedures or this Engagement Principles may lead to referrals to regulatory authorities or other actions by EWOSA. By following these guidelines, members help maintain the integrity and effectiveness of EWOSA's dispute resolution services.

We value your feedback

We welcome your feedback to improve our services. You can provide feedback through our online form or contact us directly. We ensure that your feedback is considered and used to enhance our practices.

For more information or to provide feedback, please visit our website (www.ewosa.com.au) or contact our office directly on 1800 665 565.