EWOSA Summary Report

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Methodology

The data and information for the Review was collected using the following methodologies:

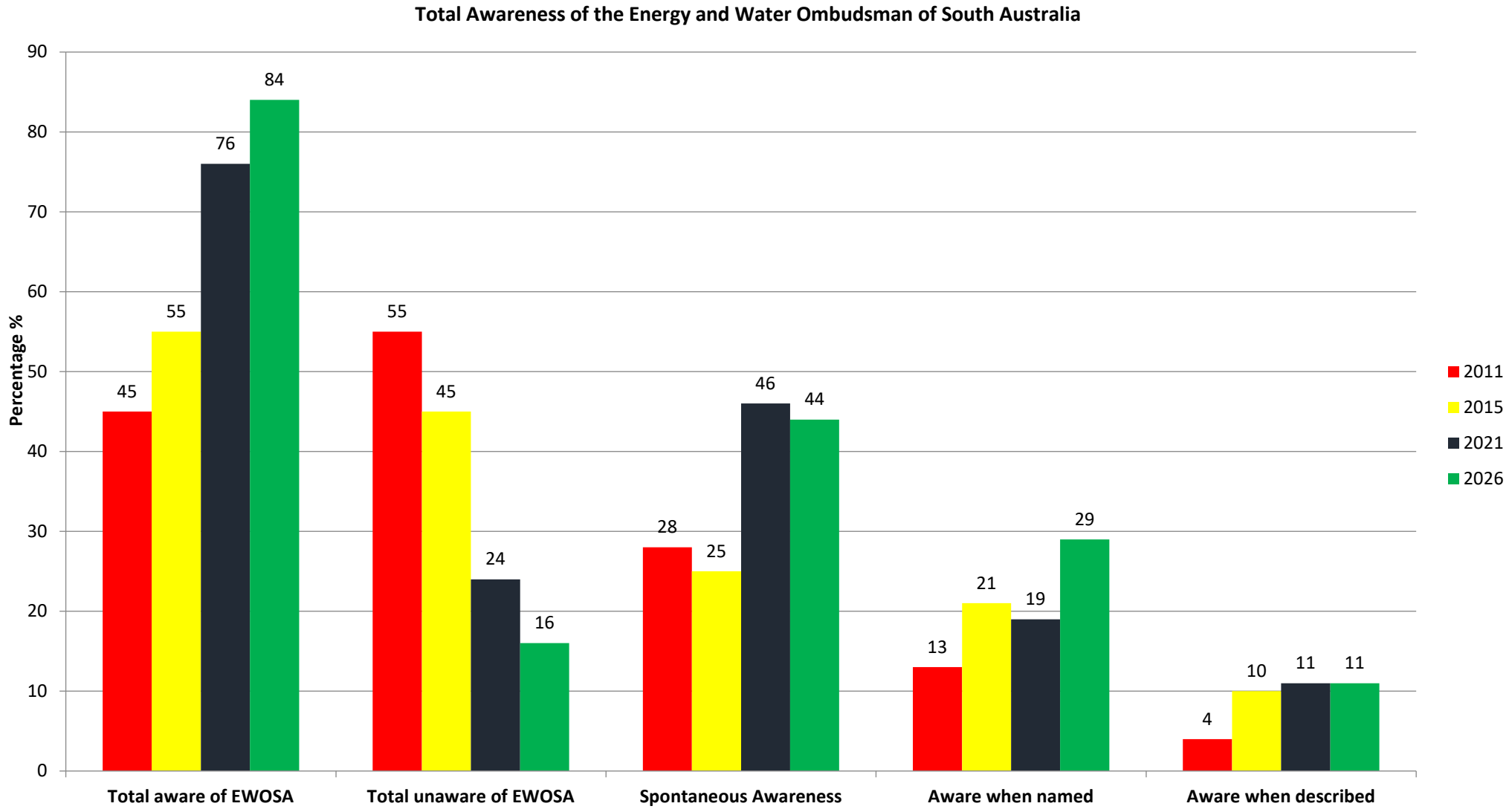
- **Executive Depth Interviews with 25 Internal and External Stakeholders conducted in person and via telephone**
- **An Online Survey of South Australian 500 residents**
- **An Online Survey of 250 EWOSA customers**
- **An Online Survey of all EWOSA staff**

General Public Survey

Key Findings

- **Awareness of the Energy and Water Ombudsman of South Australia has continued to increase and stood at 84% of the total sample, up from 76% in 2021, 55% in 2015 and 45% in 2011**
- **This was comprised of 44% spontaneous awareness, 29% when the Ombudsman was named and 11% when described, as outlined in the following chart**

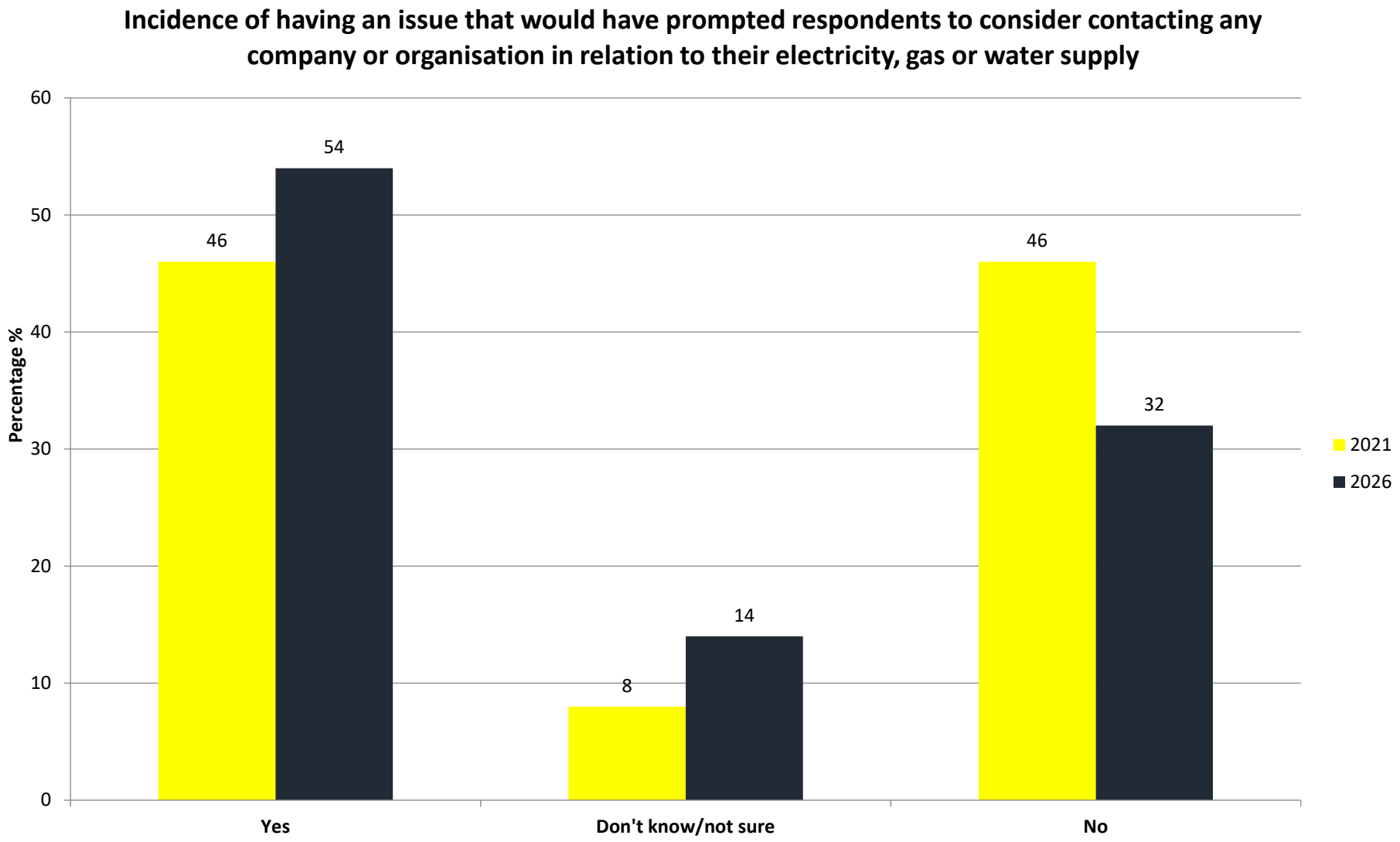
Total Awareness of the Energy and Water Ombudsman of South Australia



Key Findings

- **There has been a considerable increase in the proportion of the general public who have indicated that they have had an issue that would have prompted them to consider contacting any company or organisation in relation to their electricity, gas or water supply (54%, up from 46% in 2021)**

Key Findings



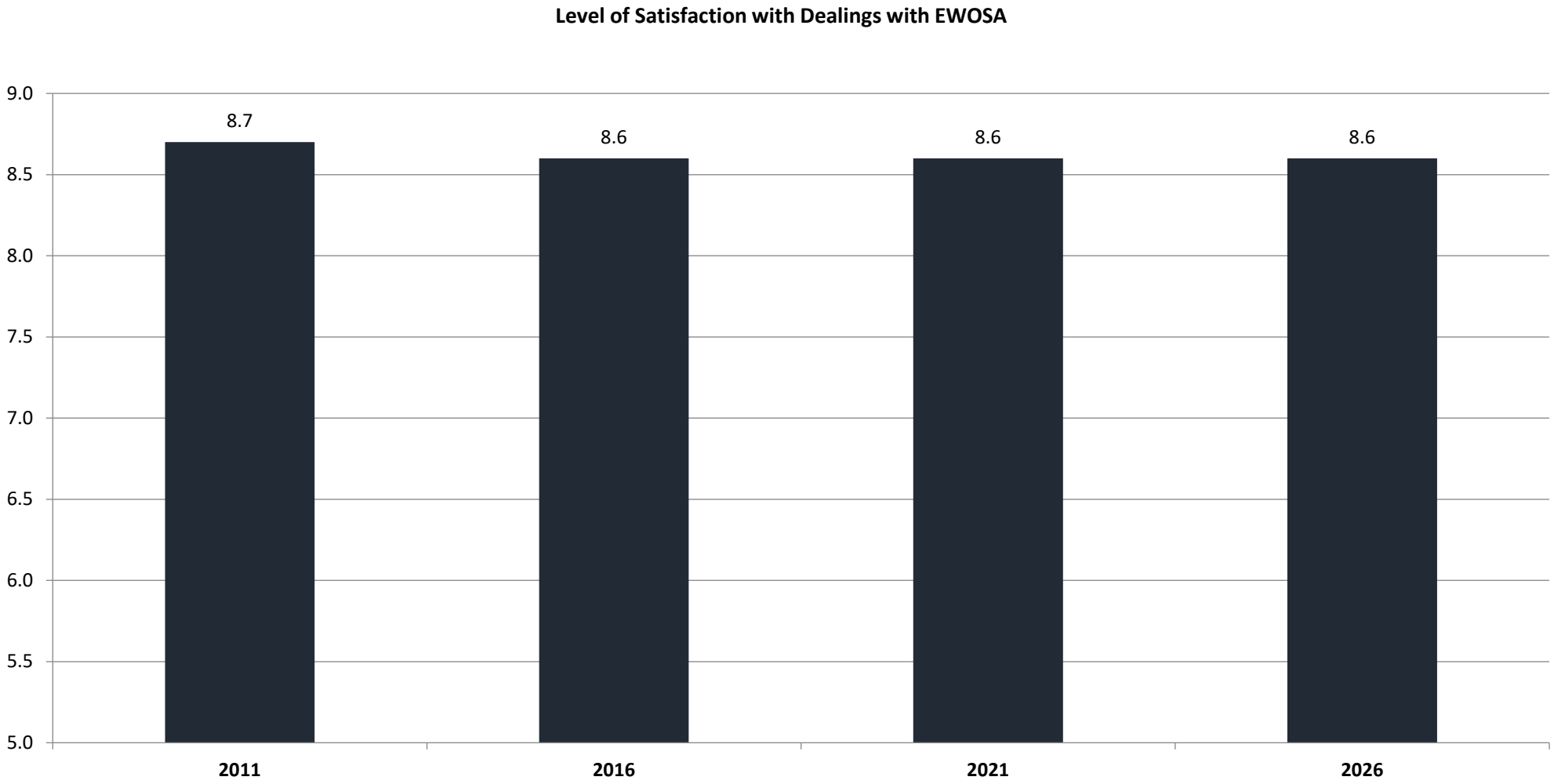
Customer Survey

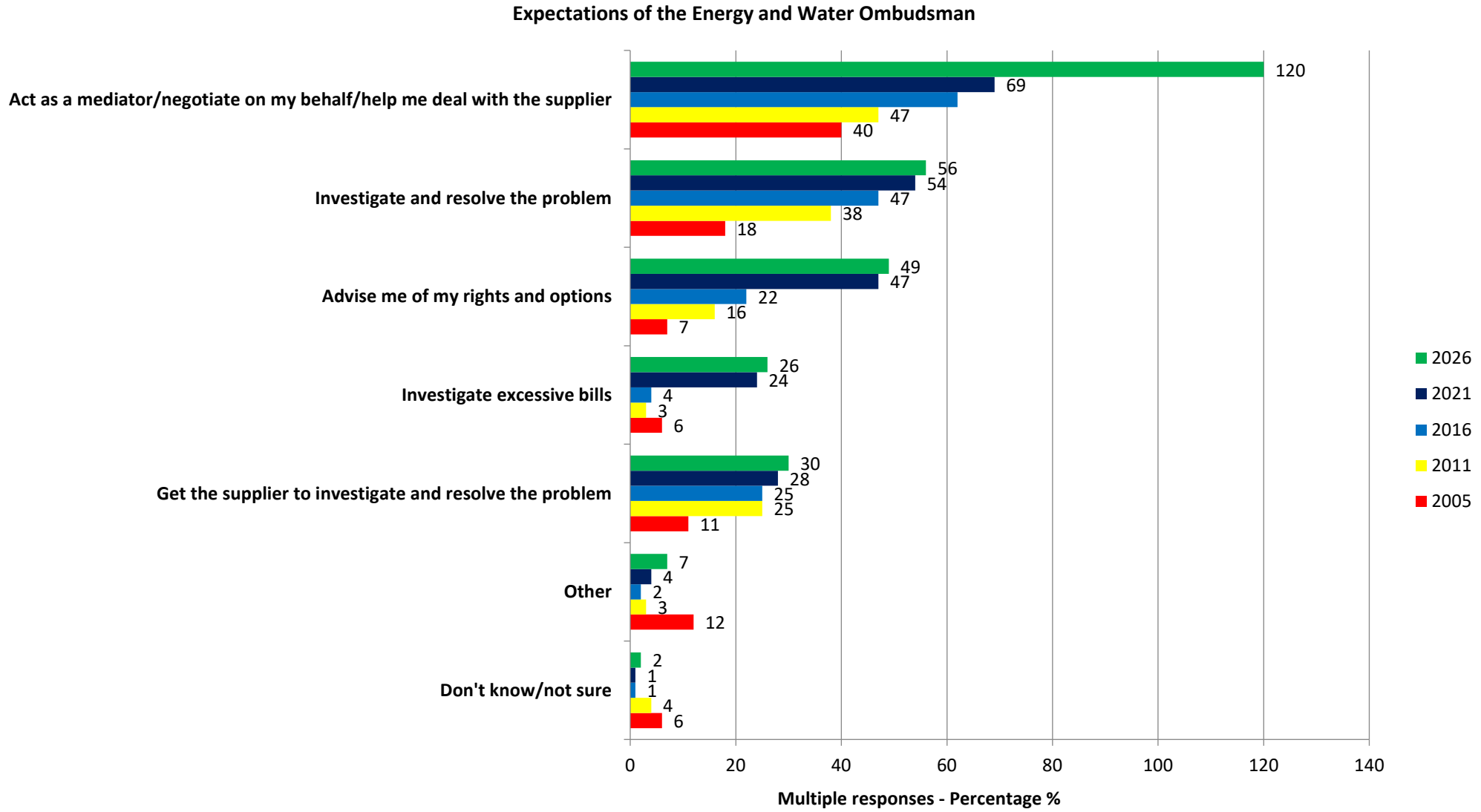
Key Findings

- **General awareness of Ombudsman's Schemes (35%), Internet searches (28%) and word of mouth (10%) are the main sources of awareness of EWOSA**
- **The overwhelming majority (82%) of respondents indicated their problem related to electricity, while 10% named gas and 8% named water**
- **The main problems related to billing disputes (49%), the conduct of providers' employees or agents (23%) and meter issues (19%)**
- **Telephone (61%) remains the main method of contacting EWOSA, with almost half naming email (46%) and one quarter the EWOSA website/chat (25%)**
- **The overwhelming majority (85%) of those surveyed indicated that the role of the Energy and Water Ombudsman had been adequately explained to them**

Key Findings

- **Eight in ten indicated that their issue had been resolved (80%) and that the Energy and Water Ombudsman was effective in handling the process (83%)**
- **Almost nine in ten (85%) indicated that they would recommend the Energy and Water Ombudsman to a friend or relative who had a complaint with their electricity, gas or water company they couldn't resolve**
- **Respondents satisfaction with their dealings with the Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman was exceptionally high and stood at 86% of the total sample**
- **It is worth noting that this is in the context of more than one quarter (28%) not being satisfied with the outcome of their complaint**
- **More than three quarters (77%) of respondents were in favour of expanding the Ombudsman's powers to include new technologies such as solar, batteries and EV's**


Level of Satisfaction with Dealings with EWOSA
9.0
8.5
8.0
7.5
7.0
6.5
6.0
5.5
5.0
8.7
8.6
8.6
8.6
2011
2016
2021
2026


Expectations of the Energy and Water Ombudsman
Act as a mediator/negotiate on my behalf/help me deal with the supplier
120
69
47
40
Investigate and resolve the problem
56
54
47
38
18
Advise me of my rights and options
49
47
22
16
7
Investigate excessive bills
26
24
4
3
6
Get the supplier to investigate and resolve the problem
30
28
25
25
11
Other
7
4
2
3
12
Don't know/not sure
2
1
1
4
6
0
20
40
60
80
100
120
140
Multiple responses - Percentage %
2026
2021
2016
2011
2005

Staff Survey

Key Findings

- **Almost all (90%) of the staff surveyed indicated that the Energy and Water Ombudsman's Scheme delivers on its Constitution and Charter**
- **All staff (100%) are of the opinion that customers can access the Scheme with ease**
- **There were generally high levels of agreement with the following statements:**
  - **The Scheme operates in an independent manner and customers are made aware of this by staff (90% agreed)**
  - **Customers and staff are treated with politeness and respect (100% agreed)**
  - **The staff have the tools and resources to do their jobs so as they deliver on the charter of the Scheme (90% agreed)**

Key Findings

- **There were generally high levels of agreement with the following statements:**
  - **Case outcomes are based on the Scheme's guiding principles ensuring equity and fairness to all parties (100% agreed)**
  - **The Scheme provides quality customer service to members and customers in an equal manner (100% agreed)**
  - **The jurisdiction of the Scheme is adequate to address the key concerns of consumers of energy and water services in today's markets (80% agreed)**
  - **Members co-operate with the Scheme to resolve complaints in a prompt and fair manner (70% agreed)**

Stakeholder Interviews

Key Findings

- **In a nutshell, there is a general consensus that the core role of EWOSA is to investigate, facilitate and resolve disputes between customers, energy and water retailers and suppliers**
- **Almost all of the stakeholders interviewed rated EWOSA as nine out ten for achieving these objectives**
- **In terms of any aspects of EWOSA's areas of operations that are not meeting these objectives, only one stakeholder was able to name any**
- **EWOSA's main achievements over the last five years were identified as successfully delivering on its core role, maintaining extremely high levels of satisfaction and its agility in dealing with issues when they arise**
- **Navigating EWOSA's way through COVID were also mentioned**

Key Findings

- **The main strengths of EWOSA's structure were identified as its ability to operate independently and balance the needs of both members and customers. It is also regarded as stable, with an ideal mix of people both within the organisation and at Board level**
- **Adapting to new technologies such as AI and ensuring cyber security were identified as limitations which may arise, with some stakeholders suggesting greater expertise in these areas will be required in the future**

Key Findings

- **In relation to governance, almost all stakeholders agreed that:**
  - **The number of Board members and its composition with an independent Chairman and four Board members representing each of the consumer and industry groups is appropriate**
  - **Stakeholders almost unanimously agreed that all Board members should have fixed terms, preferably three, three year terms**
- **In relation to voting entitlements for non-Board members, there was a general consensus that there should be some mechanism through which these members can be better represented on the Board**

Key Findings

- **There was overwhelming agreement that the Scheme should expand so as it is fit for purpose to include solar, battery and EV complaints in the ever changing energy and water markets**
- **There was, however, unanimous agreement that renewable land access complaints are not core to the Scheme and should not be part of the Ombudsman's jurisdiction**
- **The main challenges EWOSA will face in the next five years were identified as the ever changing energy markets, replacing the CEO, higher customer expectations, greater demand on its resources as a result of increasing hardship and technology issues such as AI and cyber security**

Conclusions

- **Governance of the Scheme would be improved by having fixed terms for all Board members (three, three years terms) in line with good governance practices**
- **Consideration should be given as to how other Member organisations can be represented on the Board either through a change to voting entitlements or some other mechanism to ensure the views of other Members are adequately heard through the Industry Directors**
- **EWOSA needs to ensure the Scheme needs to meet the changing energy and water markets and managing any complaints arising from these changes**
- **Complaints relating to renewable land access are not core to the Scheme and should be managed by the appropriate authorities**

Key Findings

- **There was a general consensus that consumer's understanding of the energy and water markets is limited, however, most considered improving this as being primarily the responsibility of suppliers and retailers**
- **There was unanimous agreement that EWOSA is extremely accessible to its customer bases and the Scheme has been well promoted to the community. CALD communities, the elderly and people in remote areas were identified as cohorts where this could be improved**
- **All of the satisfaction categories tested rated extremely highly, with all average ratings being between 8.8 and 9.2**

Conclusions

Conclusions

- **EWOSA has again exceeded industry benchmarks for the efficiency, fairness accessibility and customer satisfaction that is required of a dispute resolution organisation**
- **General public awareness (prompted and unprompted) continues to rise – from 45% in 2011, 55% in 2015 and 76% in 2021 to 84% in 2026**
- **Customer satisfaction with the Scheme remains exceptionally high, and stood at 86% of the total sample**
- **There is very strong support amongst members and customers for the Scheme in the way in which it balances the interests of consumers and members in a fair and reasonable manner**

Conclusions

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Conclusions

- **Stakeholders have identified that there is a need to investigate developing EWOSA's capabilities in response to AI and future cyber security threats**
- **Communications strategies need to ensure that providers, suppliers and other intermediaries are utilised to communicate with the community, particularly those who are less likely to have been reached, such as CALD communities, the elderly and those in remote locations**
- **Finally, the Review clearly indicates that the demands that will be placed on EWOSA as a result of changing technologies, issues relating to AI and cyber security, higher customer expectations of EWOSA and the expected increase in customer hardship will need additional resourcing in the future**

“The consumer survey results are in the high eighties which is testament to EWOSA’s staff under the leadership of the CEO.”