

Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland
Annual Report 2018-19



**Energy & Water
Ombudsman
Queensland**

Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland 2018-19 Annual Report

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Communication objective

Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland (EWOQ) provides a free, fair and independent dispute resolution service for residential and small businesses throughout Queensland who have an unresolved issue with their electricity or gas provider. We also provide this service for residential and small business water customers in South East Queensland.

This annual report presents information about the performance of the Ombudsman scheme for the period 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019. It includes our activities and achievements for the financial year against our strategic plan and summarises our future priorities and challenges.

This report is produced under the prescribed requirements of the *Financial Accountability Act 2009* and the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009*. It has been written for the benefit of our stakeholders, including energy and water consumers, retailers and distributors; and members of Queensland Parliament.

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Attribution

Content from this annual report should be attributed to the *Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland Annual Report 2018-19*.

Accessibility

We are committed to providing accessible services to Queenslanders from all culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. If you have difficulty understanding the annual report, please contact us on 1800 662 837 and we will arrange an interpreter to effectively communicate it to you, free of charge.



This publication is available online from www.ewoq.com.au/annual-reports/ or by contacting the Communications and Marketing team by emailing info@ewoq.com.au or phoning us on 1800 662 837.

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We acknowledge and pay our respects to the past, present and emerging Traditional Custodians and Elders of this nation and the continuation of cultural, spiritual and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



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⬇ Letter of compliance

The Honourable Dr Anthony Lynham MP
Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy
GPO Box 15216
Brisbane Qld 4001

13 September 2019

Dear Minister

I am pleased to submit for presentation to the Parliament the Annual Report 2018-2019 and financial statements for the Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland.

I certify that this annual report complies with:

- the prescribed requirements of the *Financial Accountability Act 2009 and the Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009*, and
- the detailed requirements set out in the *Annual report requirements for Queensland Government agencies*.

A checklist outlining the annual reporting requirements can be found on page 96 of the annual report.

Yours sincerely



Jane Pires

Energy and Water Ombudsman

Our Priorities

We are committed to providing a high-quality, effective and confidential service for residential and small business customers who are unable to resolve issues with their electricity, gas or water supplier.

With offices in Brisbane, Cairns and Rockhampton, we work directly with Queensland customers and suppliers to investigate and resolve disputes.

Vision

Providing Queenslanders an independent and effective way of resolving disputes with their energy and water suppliers.

Values



Respect

We act and interact with honesty and integrity – manners, respect and courtesy are a given.



Integrity

Our actions are consistent with our words and we demonstrate our values through our actions.



Competency

We encourage each other and seek opportunities to learn as well as share our knowledge and ideas to continuously improve ourselves and our service.



Accountability

We are each accountable and responsible for our own work, attitude and behaviours.



Excellence

We strive to be the best we can be and work hard to deliver excellent service and quality results.

History

The Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland (EWOQ) was first established as the Energy Ombudsman Queensland (EOQ) on 1 July 2007, to provide a free, fair and independent dispute resolution service for small electricity and reticulated gas customers in Queensland.

On 1 January 2011, our jurisdiction expanded to also investigate disputes about water suppliers in South East Queensland, and EOQ became EWOQ.

Highlights 2018-19



EWOQ closed cases

8,584
cases received



84% — 7,231
8% — 699
5% — 467

Top three issues

1. BILLING
2. CREDIT
3. PROVISION



\$993,086
worth of outcomes for customers

See Appendix 4 for more about these terms.

Our organisation

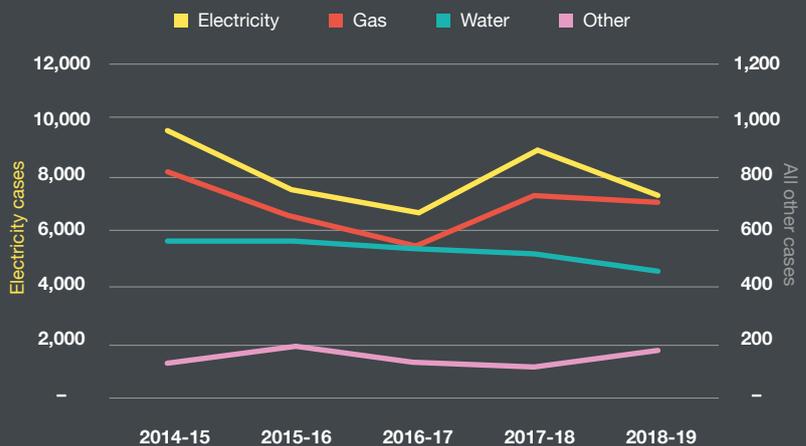


39.31
full-time equivalent employees

income
\$6.507 million

expenses
\$6.5 million

Five-year closed cases



See Appendix 1 for figures.



EWOQ CLOSED CASES = 8,559



7,231



699



467

Time taken to close cases

	Target	2018-19	
Less than 28 days	80%	7,340	86%
Less than 60 days	90%	8,350	98%
Less than 90 days	95%	8,514	99%
More than 90 days	<5%	45	1%



86%



86% cases closed in less than 28 days

See Appendix 1 for five-year figures.

Top five monetary outcomes

		number	amount
1.	Billing adjustments	389	\$296,103
2.	Goodwill gestures	830	\$280,816
3.	Debt waivers	194	\$158,095
4.	Refund cheque/EFT issued	93	\$146,574
5.	Payment plans or extensions offered	254	\$40,207



1,953

outcomes negotiated

worth

\$993,086



We negotiated



\$296,103

billing adjustments

for



389

Queenslanders



830

goodwill gestures to the value of **\$280,816**

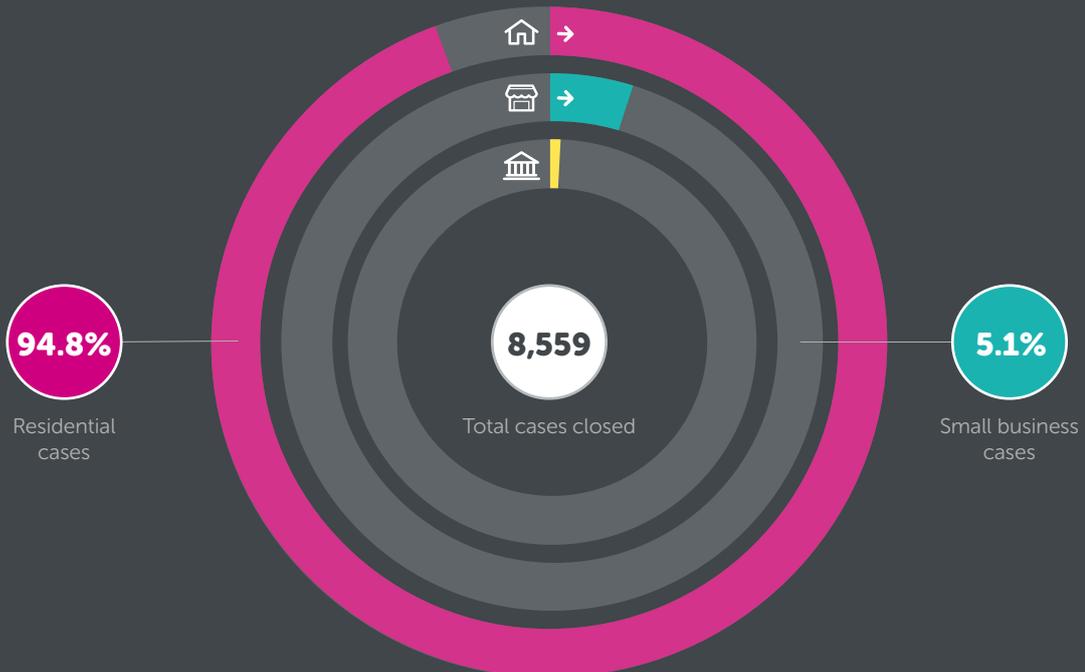
Highlights 2018-19

Who contacted us?

Residential customers made up 95 per cent of all cases during 2018-19, with small business customers accounting for five per cent of cases, which is consistent with previous years.

Customer profile

	 Residential	 Small business	 Government	Total
2018-19	8,113	438	8	8,559
2017-18	9,735	469	7	10,211
2016-17	7,401	455	5	7,861
2015-16	8,470	424	1	8,895
2014-15	10,496	545	8	11,049



Our role, structure and strategic direction

OUR ROLE

Our primary functions are to:

- receive, investigate and facilitate the resolution of disputes between Queensland's small energy customers and small water customers in South East Queensland, and their energy and water retailers and distributors
- promote our services throughout Queensland to those who may need our assistance
- identify systemic issues arising from complaints received from our customers.

We achieve this through a process that is free, fair, independent, accessible, accountable, effective and efficient. We take into account the rights and responsibilities of customers and scheme participants under relevant legislation, codes and standards to achieve a fair and reasonable outcome.

OUR STRUCTURE

EWOQ was established under the *Energy and Water Ombudsman Act 2006* (the Act) to provide for investigation and resolution of particular disputes involving energy and water suppliers.

The Energy and Water Ombudsman (the Ombudsman) is not subject to direction from anyone, however, must consider the advice of the Advisory Council to the Energy and Water Ombudsman (Advisory Council) in performing certain functions under the Act.

The Executive Management Group assists the Ombudsman in the stewardship of EWOQ.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Each year, we develop a strategic plan that guides our work and confirms our vision for the office.

During 2018-19, our key priorities included:

- reviewing our scheme in terms of proposed legislative changes
- proactively promoting our services to small energy and water customers
- identifying systemic issues
- using our data to plan for future projects and provide stakeholders with valuable insights
- continuously improving our reports to present our data in a user-friendly and meaningful way
- launching our new brand identity, which included refreshing our office signage, marketing collateral and brochures
- launching our first Reconciliation Action Plan, the Reflect RAP.

A review of our performance against the strategic plan is on page 24.

LOOKING FORWARD

We continually review our business processes and customer service delivery to ensure we continue to deliver a timely, effective, independent and fair dispute resolution service to the people of Queensland.

In 2019-20 our key projects include:

- upgrading our case management system, website and intranet
- reviewing our dispute resolution process to continuously improve operational effectiveness
- improving our stakeholder engagement and community outreach programs
- contributing to public policy through insights and submissions
- continuing preparations to expand our services in the energy market
- launching our second Reconciliation Action Plan, the Innovate RAP, and refreshing our Indigenous artwork and collateral.



Message from the Energy and Water Ombudsman

As Energy and Water Ombudsman, I am delighted to present the 2018-19 annual report, a year where we have continued to see a great deal of public interest in the energy sector as pricing pressures and new technologies continued to capture the attention of consumers and government.



service delivery standards and closed 86 per cent of cases in less than 28 days.

Billing disputes and credit-related matters, like credit collection, payment difficulties, hardship and disconnection, continue to make up the majority of complaints we receive. Complaints about provision, which are problems with new or existing connections, are the third most common issue customers contact us about.

Our contribution

As a dispute resolution service for energy and water consumers, we are at the frontline in terms of how Queenslanders are coping with rising power bills, complex energy contracts and discounting arrangements, and how well energy and water companies are progressing with the implementation of legislative changes.

With dialogue at the heart of our business, the conversations we have with consumers, industry, government departments and regulators provide us with a unique perspective of industry trends. We have contributed our insights to a number of policy submissions over the past 12 months, including standardised statements in customer hardship policies, draft hardship guidelines, a consumer code for new energy technology, and proposed regulatory and policy amendments for estimated meter reads, meter installation for advanced meter communications, and stand-alone power systems.

We have also been involved with the Queensland Government's review of the *Energy and Water Ombudsman Act 2006*.

One of our greatest achievements in 2018-19 was launching our inaugural Reconciliation Action Plan – our Reflect RAP – which formalised our commitment towards reconciliation. As the Ombudsman, I am excited about being able to contribute to a better Australia and helping to close the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and others in our nation. The opportunities the Reflect RAP has created to date have fostered greater cultural awareness within our organisation, even over this short period. This 12-month initiative will be surpassed by our

The service we provide has continued to play a pivotal role for Queensland's consumers of electricity, gas and water as pressures mount on our customers to understand the complex nature of the energy sector and what they are entitled to receive as well as their options in the market. This, coupled with the pressure of low wages growth and a spotlight on affordability across the sector, has meant that our team has been busy assisting consumers with a greater number of complex issues than we've previously encountered.

Our cases

During 2018-19, electricity continued to make up the bulk of our caseload and accounted for 84 per cent of the 8584 cases received. The significant increase in electricity cases we experienced during the previous financial year stabilised as the industry worked to reduce problems consumers faced with the introduction of the Power of Choice and digital metering.

Despite a fall in the overall number of cases closed this year compared with last year, we closed nine per cent more cases in 2018-19 than in 2016-17. There has been an increase in the complexity of the cases received, which has resulted in a greater number of cases escalating to investigation. While these matters take longer to resolve, our Assessment, Investigation and Resolution team continued to exceed their

Launched our new brand identity



Launched our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan



Innovate RAP, which is a two-year plan set to be launched in late 2019.

During 2018-19, we also launched our new brand which we believe reflects our core business of dialogue. Last year's 2017-18 annual report was the first official document to feature our new logo, a dialogue symbol inside the letter Q in the vibrant colours of Queensland. The rebrand is part of our commitment to ensuring Queensland consumers know we are here to help with their energy or water issues when they need it. We have since published a new range of brochures to introduce our services to consumers and financial counsellors.

Our people

Our people are the strength of our organisation and have been a strong focus over the past 12 months. During 2018-19, we introduced a number of tools to assist our team members with their learning and development. We have temporarily appointed a dedicated human resource manager to focus on our people, capability and culture and we have further progressed our flexible working arrangements, including options to work from home and increased mobility across our teams.

We continue to look at ways to develop the skills of our team and to encourage career growth and development. Team members have had opportunities over the past 12 months to develop in different roles and this has strengthened our succession planning.

Our connections

Community outreach and stakeholder engagement are an important part of our service and we continue to foster relationships and strengthen our networks across the state. A focus of our outreach program during 2018-19 has been working closely with Indigenous communities, including visiting Woorabinda in Central Queensland, and Yarrabah and Kuranda in North Queensland.

Our priorities this year have also included energy consumers in regional areas, older Queenslanders and customers in financial difficulty, who we reach through our relationships with financial counsellors and community services that help those in financial hardship.

Over the next 12 months, we plan to increase our connections with multicultural communities, and visit the regional centres of Gympie, Mackay, Mt Isa and Townsville. As always, our team are available to attend community events like Bring Your Bills days to talk to consumers about their issues with energy and water.

Engaging with our key stakeholders is integral to our service. We strive to improve our performance reporting and strengthen connections with our scheme participants, peers and government departments and industry regulators. These

conversations enable customer stories and ideas to be shared and developed, which we believe helps improve customer experience and internal dispute resolution processes for the good of the sector.

As our website is redeveloped over the next 12 months, we are working towards using technology more effectively to broaden our engagement and impact across the state, for greater awareness of our scheme and improved communication with our customers.

Our future

Over the past two years, we have focused on the future of our organisation, both in terms of how we can meet proposed legislative changes and an expanded jurisdiction, and the evolving needs and expectations of customers. We have been working on a number of strategic projects to ensure both our service delivery and our team are ready for these challenges, including changes in jurisdiction and technological advances in the sector.

This year, we finalised planning for a number of projects that will be implemented and delivered in the months ahead. The next 12 months will see significant change to our service delivery and our customers' experience as we move towards a more digital environment. We hope that this will better meet the expectations of Queenslanders and how they interact with us, while also ensuring the current environment remains stable as we work to make our service the best it can be.

My thanks

The challenges and changes we've experienced over the past 12 months serve to remind us of the dynamic nature of the sector. I am grateful for the support and counsel of the Advisory Council, in particular, its Chair Anna Moynihan; my peers in the Ombudsman community; and my team for their business and industry knowledge and strong performance over the past 12 months.

While we have further challenges to overcome in the next 12 months, the future of EWOQ is strong and I am confident we will continue to achieve great results for Queensland's energy and water consumers.



Jane Pires
Energy and Water Ombudsman

2018-19 HIGHLIGHTS

8,559

cases closed



84%

electricity

8%

gas

5%

water

\$993,086
worth of
monetary outcomes
negotiated
for Queenslanders.

Message from the Advisory Council Chair

At our last meeting for 2018-19, I posed the question to Advisory Council members, "How would you describe the year?" A number of themes were canvassed and the standout word was 'complexity.' Whilst this is less applicable to water, it has certainly characterised the energy environment over the past 12 months.



Energy consumers face a complex array of retail choices, and new technologies and products are on their way. For electricity retailers, there have been legislative changes aimed at protecting and empowering consumers. For both industry and consumers, the uncertainty in national energy directions remains an issue.

Advisory Council members remarked how busy they had been during the year. Consumer representatives noted it took a lot of effort to keep the impact on consumers front and centre as changes to the energy market are made. This is an increasing workload that is taking up a lot of their resources.

For the Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland, there have been national and state-based policy reviews to respond to, as well as preparing for new entrants to the energy market in the form of embedded networks. More complex matters are also being referred to the Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman: a positive sign for consumers.

Over the past 12 months, the Advisory Council has continued its key roles of monitoring the Ombudsman's independence and providing advice on policy and procedural issues relevant to the *Energy and Water Ombudsman Act 2006*.

Perusal of the year's minutes also highlighted that the Advisory Council talked about customer vulnerability and hardship at most meetings. This was in terms of the impact of Queensland's hot weather, drought and floods and concerns about high bills; on matters such as concealed leaks for water consumers and the protections available; on tenants' rights; and on improved Australian Energy Regulator Customer Hardship Policy Guidelines aimed at improving protections for customers experiencing hardship.

In February, I joined the Ombudsman, Jane Pires, at the third annual meeting of Ombudsman schemes from New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and New Zealand (Utility Disputes New Zealand). Our interesting agenda included the implications and timing associated with applying Consumer Data Rights in the energy sector; jurisdictions' progress in the incorporation of exempt sellers or embedded networks into their schemes; and the disruption of emerging technologies to Ombudsman schemes' current business models and footprint. On the latter issue, it was agreed that there were significant implications for consumer protections in a far more diversified and uncertain energy landscape.

The Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman is planning for a changing operating environment and adjustments to its traditional business model. Nonetheless, day to day the team continues to provide a free, fair and independent dispute resolution service for unresolved complaints with electricity, gas or water suppliers. In 2018-19, a total of 8584 cases were received, a drop of 17 per cent from the previous year, yet eight per cent higher than cases received in 2016-17. Of the top five cases closed in the reporting year, billing issues represented 38 per cent, credit complaints 13 per cent, problems with provision nine per cent, customer service seven per cent and issues with transfers four per cent.

The percentage of cases managed as an investigation remained high, indicating that those matters being referred to the Office are becoming more complex and routine matters are being dealt

“This is a positive trend for consumers, and in part demonstrates the Office’s influence in promoting good dispute resolution practice.

with more effectively by scheme participants. This is a positive trend for consumers, and in part demonstrates the Office’s influence in promoting good dispute resolution practice.

Advisory Council members perform an important service. They provide valuable insights to the Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland and are committed to the role they perform.

I would like to thank our Council members for their contribution and support this year: Andrew Bills (Origin Energy), Ian Jarratt (Queensland Consumers Association), Laura Barnes (Queensland Council of Social Service), Robyn Robinson (Council on the Ageing), Mary McLean (Financial Counselling Australia), Jennifer Gates, (Energy Queensland), Simone Bridge (Unitywater), Iain Graham (Red Energy and Lumo Energy), and Rosemarie Price (Ergon Energy).

Whilst Advisory Council membership has been quite stable during the past 12 months, there have been some changes. Industry representative Andrew Bills resigned from the Council in September following his resignation from Origin Energy and appointment to the position of Chief Executive Officer of CS Energy.

Since 2014, Andrew has been a significant contributor to the Advisory Council, always engaged, supportive and knowledgeable.

Also in September 2018, Laura Barnes, Senior Manager for Policy, Advocacy and Capacity at Queensland Council of Social Service (QCOSS) was officially appointed to the Council as a consumer representative. Laura has brought a Queensland-wide and authoritative viewpoint, reflecting QCOSS’s long-standing involvement in consumer energy issues.

In April this year David Ackland, Executive Manager of Customer Relationship at EnergyAustralia, was appointed to the Advisory Council. He has significant customer experience credentials in a company with a large customer base.

It has been a pleasure to work with the Energy and Water Ombudsman Jane Pires and her team again over the past 12 months. Council members have observed efforts to improve the Office’s reporting capability, to contribute to policy submissions and reviews, and to best position the organisation in a dynamic energy environment. The Ombudsman and her team are very willing to have open discussions with the Advisory Council and this makes for a productive working partnership.



Anna Moynihan
Chair

Advisory Council to the Energy and Water Ombudsman

The Advisory Council provides expert advice to the Energy and Water Ombudsman and the Minister responsible for energy and water about the effective and efficient conduct and operation of the EWOQ scheme. This helps to ensure the scheme is fair and effective for consumers and suppliers.

The Advisory Council:

- monitors the Energy and Water Ombudsman's independence
- advises the Ombudsman on policy, procedural and operational issues relating to the *Energy and Water Ombudsman Act 2006*
- advises the Minister responsible for energy and water on the funding of the Ombudsman's functions
- at the end of the financial year, advises the Minister on the Ombudsman's independence and functions of the office during the financial year.

The Advisory Council meets every quarter and includes an independent chair and at least six other members appointed by the Minister. There must be an equal number of other members representing industry and consumer interests. Under the Act, at least two of the industry members must represent the interests of energy retailers, at least one must represent the interests of energy distributors, and at least one must represent the interests of the water entities. Members are appointed on the Chair's recommendation, after consultation with scheme participants, consumer groups and community welfare organisations. See Appendix 5 for more information.

2018-19 MEMBERS

Independent Chair

Anna Moynihan (from February 2016 to February 2021)

Industry representatives (distributors and retailers)

David Ackland – EnergyAustralia (from April 2019 – October 2020)

Simone Bridge – Unitywater (from October 2017 to October 2019)

Jennifer Gates – Energy Queensland (from May 2018 to October 2019)

Iain Graham – Red Energy and Lumo Energy (from October 2017 to October 2019)

Rosemarie Price – Ergon Energy (from August 2016 to October 2019)

Consumer representatives

Laura Barnes – Queensland Council of Social Service (from July 2018 to October 2019)

Ian Jarratt – Queensland Consumers Association (from September 2007 to October 2019)

Mary McLean – Financial Counselling Australia (from October 2017 to October 2019)

Robyn Robinson – Council on the Ageing Queensland (from August 2016 to October 2019)

Member appointments completed

Andrew Bills – Origin Energy (from September 2014 to April 2019)



⌵ **Our Service**



We believe dialogue is at the heart of our business and we have refreshed our identity to focus on the conversations we have every day...

Let's talk

⬇️ Dispute resolution process

OUR JURISDICTION
we can assist
customers who use:

Less than



megawatt hours
of electricity per year

Less than



terajoule
of gas per year



Less than



kilolitres
of water per year
and are in SEQ

Our approach is informal and based on the principles of alternative dispute resolution. We seek to establish the facts and issues to help our customers and their supplier better understand the problem at hand, and each other's point of view. The outcome may be achieved by agreement between the customer and the supplier, or through conciliation based on what we deem a fair and reasonable outcome.

Our jurisdiction

Our office was established to assist customers who use less than 160 megawatt hours of electricity per year or one terajoule of gas per year. In South East Queensland, we also help residential water customers and small business with water consumption under 100 kilolitres a year.

We can investigate unresolved disputes about:

- problems with payment
- account errors and disputes
- disconnections and restrictions
- damages and loss
- energy marketing
- energy contract issues
- vegetation management
- supply quality and reliability
- extensions to supply
- connection of supply
- customer service issues
- guaranteed service levels
- equipment issues
- burst pipes, leaks, blockages and spills.

For disputes outside our jurisdiction, we have Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with the following agencies to ensure timely exchange of information and referral of cases, where relevant:

- Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
- Australian Energy Regulator
- Australian Energy Market Commission
- Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy
- Office of Fair Trading
- Queensland Competition Authority
- Queensland Ombudsman.

How we handle disputes

All contacts with EWOQ are called cases and managed in one of the following ways:

- as a **general enquiry** about electricity, water, gas or other issue that is not a complaint which relates to a scheme participant
- **referred back** to the energy or water supplier because the customer has not attempted to resolve the issue with them before coming to us
- **referred to another organisation** with whom we have a MoU because the complaint is outside our jurisdiction
- registered as a **complaint** and assigned to a dedicated Investigation and Conciliation Officer.

⬇ Dispute resolution complaint stages

STEP 1

Referral to higher level or investigation

Once a case has been assigned to an Investigation and Conciliation Officer, the officer discusses the resolution options with the customer. The customer may choose to have us refer their complaint to a higher level within the energy or water supplier, or begin an investigation.

Referral to higher level (RHL)

This process gives the customer an option to escalate their complaint to a higher level within the energy or water supplier. When this option is chosen, we prepare an RHL notice that provides a summary of the customer's issue and requires the supplier to contact the customer within five business days. If contact is not made, or the problem remains unresolved, customers can request us to investigate.

STEP 2

Investigation

Once an investigation commences, we prepare a notice of investigation which details the customer's issue. The supplier is required to respond back to us within 10 business days. The investigation officer will liaise between the customer and supplier to achieve a fair and reasonable resolution.

Where our investigations determine the supplier's actions were appropriate, the complaint will be closed and the parties advised of the decision and our reasons.

Where an error is found, we will try to negotiate a suitable outcome, for example:

- a payment plan for an overdue account
- reconnection of energy supply
- compensation for damage to equipment or property.

STEP 3

Final order

If we cannot achieve informal resolution of the complaint, the matter may be finalised in a number of ways.

Firstly, a decision can be made under section 22 of the Act to not investigate or to discontinue the investigation. There were 10 cases finalised this way in 2018-19.

Secondly, if a matter cannot be resolved by negotiation or conciliation, the Energy and Water Ombudsman may decide to make a final order requiring an energy or water supplier to take certain action.

Among other things, the Ombudsman can order energy and water suppliers to:

- pay compensation
- provide a non-monetary solution to remedy the dispute
- amend a stated charge under the Act
- cancel a negotiated contract
- perform corrective work.

No final orders were issued in 2018-19.

Notice of withdrawal

A customer can withdraw a case during its investigation. There were 24 notice of withdrawals during 2018-19.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION complaint stages



Referral



Investigation



Final order

④ Quality assurance



OUR QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS

We conducted six quality assurance assessment cycles in 2018-19, with more than 500 cases assessed to ensure our practices are accurate, efficient, consistent and of a high standard.

Each cycle is undertaken over a six-week period and includes a self-assessment followed by selective assessment reviews by team leaders and regional managers. Feedback and improvements identified from the assessments are provided and implemented in the final week of each cycle.

At the completion of each cycle, a report on the findings and proposed improvements are provided to the Energy and Water Ombudsman and General Manager of Assessment, Investigation and Resolution.

Customer locations

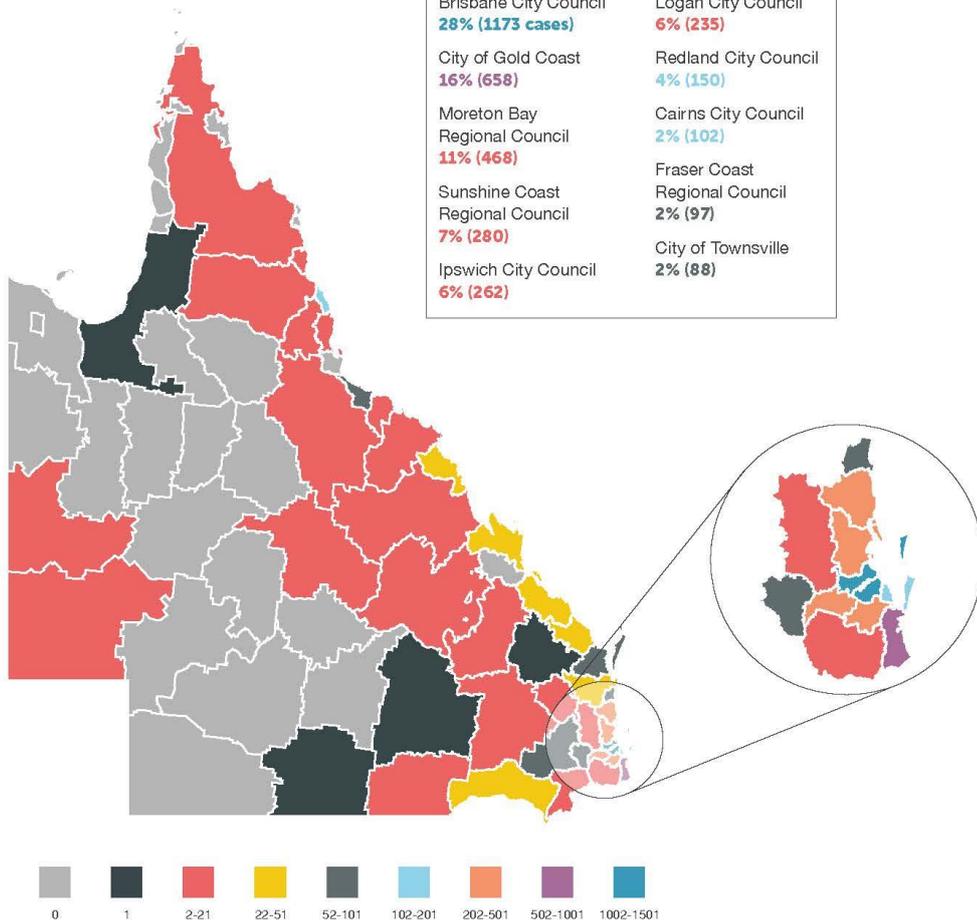
TOP 10
locations of our customers



For cases where an incident address was provided, 80 per cent were from South East Queensland.¹

Approximately 85 per cent of our cases came from the following local government areas:²

Brisbane City Council 28% (1173 cases)	Logan City Council 6% (235)
City of Gold Coast 16% (658)	Redland City Council 4% (150)
Moreton Bay Regional Council 11% (468)	Cairns City Council 2% (102)
Sunshine Coast Regional Council 7% (280)	Fraser Coast Regional Council 2% (97)
Ipswich City Council 6% (262)	City of Townsville 2% (88)



¹ For this report, South East Queensland includes the following local government areas – Brisbane, Logan, Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast, Ipswich, the Redlands, Moreton Bay, Somerset, Lockyer Valley and Scenic Rim.

² Figures are based on the incident address and exclude non-residential cases, and residential cases where the customer did not disclose a Queensland suburb or postcode or was from interstate or overseas.

Systemic Issues

The number of potential systemic issues decreased this year, from 120 in 2017-18 to 76 during 2018-19. Billing remains the most common type of systemic issue registered, accounting for 36 per cent of systemic issues.

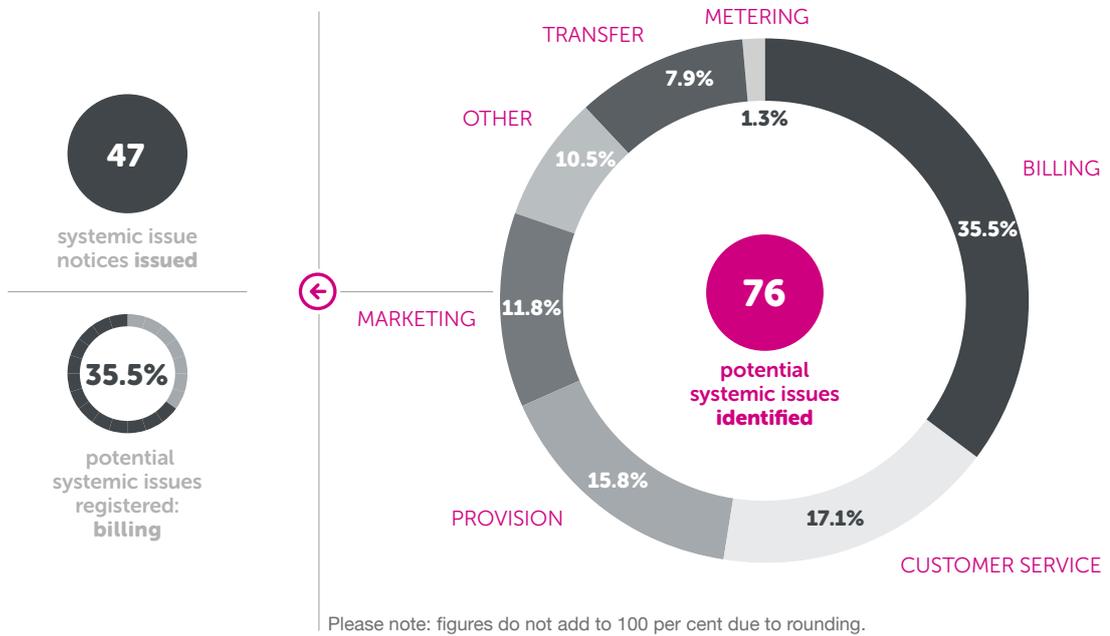


Table 1: Systemic issues

ISSUE	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Billing	43	34	35	41	27
Customer Service	17	14	13	35	13
Provision	1	2	2	17	12
Marketing	6	2	2	12	9
Transfer	5	1	1	11	6
Metering	0	0	2	3	1
Credit	0	1	1	0	0
Supply	0	1	1	0	0
Water	0	1	0	0	0
Other	2	3	5	1	8*
Total	74	59	62	120	76

*includes disconnection, hardship and network assets in 2018-19

Systemic issues case studies

Failure to cancel a contract under cooling off provisions

A customer advised they contacted their new retailer within 10 business days of agreeing to transfer their account and the retailer failed to action the cancellation request under the cooling off provisions. When we investigated, the retailer advised they had recently implemented new procedures and their team were to run daily reports for cancellation requests to check that they had been recorded and actioned. This had not occurred on this occasion. The retailer provided training on the correct process to all its customer service representatives.

No power bills for six months

A customer contacted us after they had not received electricity bills for six months. When we investigated, the retailer advised that the cause of the delay was because of an error in the tariffs in their billing system caused by a consultant. The meter data in the retailer's system has to reflect the same tariff as the Market Settlement and Transfer Solutions (MSATS). As the tariffs did not match, the bill had not been processed.



Case Study

WHAT IS A SYSTEMIC ISSUE?

A systemic issue is a problem that a person has with an energy or water supplier which affects, or may affect, more than one customer.

The issue may arise from a supplier's policy, processes or their application. It may be caused by a range of factors in isolation or together. For example, a system change, an alteration in performance levels, a procedural change, a lack of policy or procedure, or the conduct of a supplier's employees or contractors.

There is often not one specific cause of a systemic issue. It may be a combination of factors – human error, failure to have robust audit or verification processes, lack of adherence to procedures or policies, inadequate billing or IT systems, poor training, or unclear regulatory guidelines can all contribute to unsatisfactory performance that may be systemic in nature.

Identifying and measuring systemic issues

Potential systemic issues are identified through a number of means:

- Our team monitor customer complaints for potential systemic issues and flag it in our case management system.
- A senior advisor reviews these flagged cases and takes any necessary action. The advisor monitors trends in complaints and reports to management regularly.
- Current and emerging systemic issues are reviewed during regional management group meetings.

We remain abreast of current and emerging systemic issues through advice from the Advisory Council, our collaborative relationships with energy and water suppliers, government agencies, and Ombudsman peers in other jurisdictions.

Resolving systemic issues

In 2018-19, 47 systemic issue notices were issued to scheme participants. When systemic issues are identified, we immediately advise the scheme participant concerned and work with them to resolve the issue by providing detailed information about the concern, including advice about how we would like to see the issue resolved and steps to avoid it reoccurring.

We also advise the appropriate regulatory agency of any systemic issues that could, for example, constitute a breach of legislation, code or licence conditions.

Depending on the concern, our identification of systemic issues may lead a scheme participant to:

- redesign products and services
- change organisational practices and procedures
- retrain staff on product and service delivery
- reassess consumer information (e.g. labelling)
- reassess the performance of after-sales service
- receive an early warning about potential product and service defects.



Our performance

86%

cases closed in
less than 28 days
against

80%

TARGET

TIME TAKEN TO RESOLVE COMPLAINTS

This year, we exceeded our service standard targets of closing 80 per cent of cases in 28 days, 90 per cent within 60 days and 95 per cent within 90 days. We closed 86 per cent (7340 cases) in less than 28 days, 98 per cent cases in less than 60 days (8350 cases) and 99 per cent of cases in less than 90 days (8514 cases).

During 2018-19, we continued to keep our Referral to Higher Level (RHL) cases open longer to ensure actions were completed by the energy or water provider to the satisfaction of the customer. While the overall percentage of cases closed within 28 days was 86 per cent, this was an improvement from the previous year where we closed 83 per cent of cases within 28 days. The practice of keeping RHL cases open longer explains why we are still down from the 92 per cent we achieved in the preceding three years.

The increase in the percentage of cases closed within 28 days this year demonstrated that we

continue to strive towards maintaining our service delivery standards while also improving our service for customers.

Another factor affecting our overall service standard results over the past 12 months was the number of Investigations we closed. While there was a 16 per cent decrease in the total number of cases closed from the previous year, our investigations only fell by six per cent during 2018-19.

This is an indication that complaints are becoming more complex in nature requiring more investigations and more routine matters are being dealt with by the energy and water providers.

PERFORMANCE AGAINST SERVICE STANDARDS

Table 2: EWOQ performance targets – time taken to close cases

	Target	2014-15		2015-16		2016-17		2017-18		2018-19	
Less than 28 days	80%	10,148	92%	8,201	92%	7,209	92%	8,469	83%	7,340	86%
Less than 60 days	90%	10,694	97%	8,681	98%	7,722	98%	9,897	97%	8,350	98%
Less than 90 days	95%	10,818	98%	8,808	99%	7,811	99%	10,117	99%	8,514	99%
More than 90 days	< 5%	231	2%	87	1%	50	1%	94	1%	45	1%

REFERRAL TO OTHER ORGANISATIONS

During 2018-19, 12 per cent of the cases we closed fell within the jurisdiction of other government authorities. We have Memoranda of Understanding with six organisations to facilitate the timely exchange of information and referral of such cases, including:

- the fixing of prices or tariffs
- a customer contribution to the cost of capital works
- products such as air conditioners, hot water systems, solar panels and home electrician services offered by electricity retailers
- on-selling of energy or water to tenants in caravan parks, retirement villages and other multi-tenanted dwellings (embedded networks)
- bottled LPG (liquefied petroleum gas)
- electricity consumption of more than 160 megawatt hours a year
- gas consumption of more than one terajoule a year
- water consumption of more than 100 kilolitres a year for small business
- metered standpipes, raw water supplies, tradewaste, storm-water harvesting or stand-alone recycled water.

More than half (58 per cent) of the cases we referred to other government authorities in 2018-19 were to the Office of Fair Trading, including complaints about bulk hot water, bottled gas and solar installation.

Referrals to the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) increased slightly (from 15 to 23 per cent) while referrals to the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy continued to decline. Regulation for energy retailers moved from the state-based regulator (Queensland Energy and Water Regulator, which was part of the Department) to the national regulator in 2015 (Australian Energy Regulator).

Table 3: Cases referred to other organisations

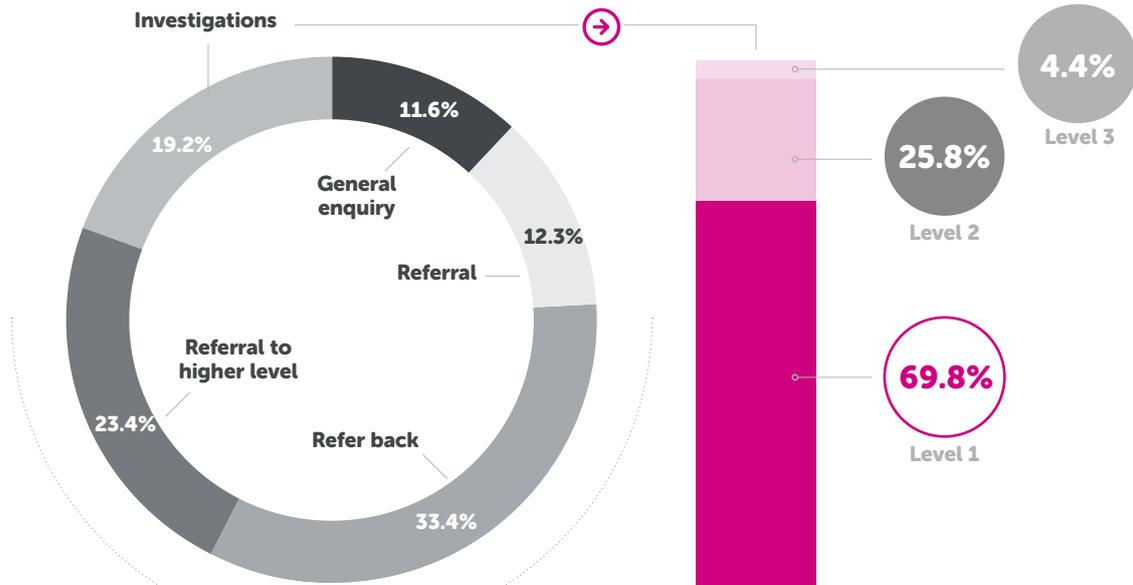
Agency	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Office of Fair Trading	791	594	606	757	617
Australian Energy Regulator*	9	188	54	181	241
Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy*	848	603	235	203	115
Queensland Ombudsman	75	60	67	78	65
Australian Competition and Consumer Commission	2	6	13	4	15
Queensland Competition Authority	27	17	9	5	4
Total	1,752	1,468	984	1,228	1,057

*From 1 July 2015, regulation for energy retailers moved from the Queensland Energy and Water Regulator to the Australian Energy Regulator.

CASE TYPES

When a customer contacts us, we listen to their issue and classify it as a general enquiry, refer them to another organisation or back to their energy or water provider, refer the case to a higher level with their provider, or investigate the matter.

In 2018-19, 33 per cent of the cases we closed were referred back to the energy or water provider (because the customer had not contacted them about the issue before contacting us) or referred to another government authority with the jurisdiction to resolve the issue.



GENERAL ENQUIRY	11.6%
REFERRAL (to another organisation)	12.3%
REFER BACK	33.4%
REFERRAL TO HIGHER LEVEL	23.4%
INVESTIGATION	19.2%

No final orders were issued this year. Final orders may be issued by the Ombudsman if a matter cannot be resolved via negotiation or conciliation.

Please note: figures do not add to 100 per cent due to rounding. See Appendix 1 for figures.

CASES RECEIVED AND CLOSED BY YEAR

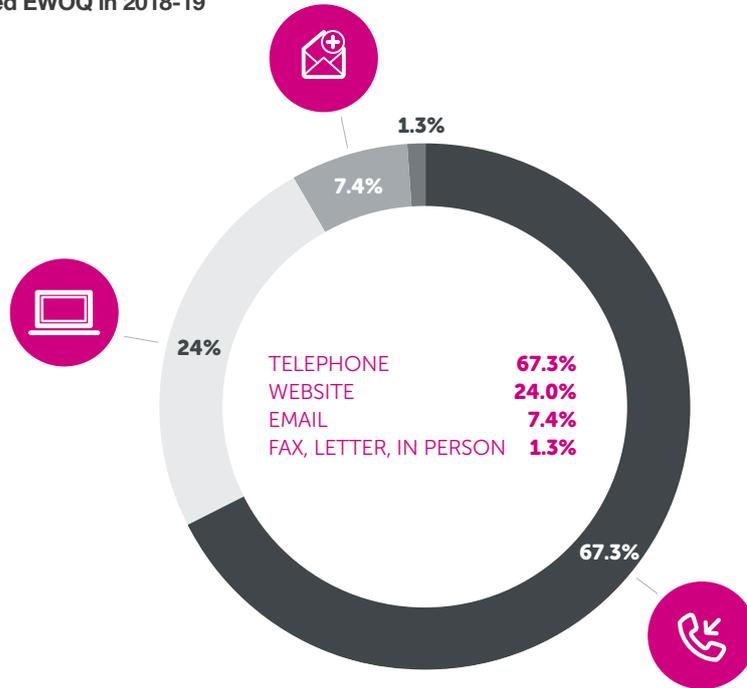
	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Cases received	11,133	8,749	7,913	10,328
Cases closed	11,049	8,895	7,861	10,211



CONTACT METHOD

How customers contacted EWOQ in 2018-19

See Appendix 1 for figures.



CASES RECEIVED AND CLOSED 2018-19 BY MONTH

	Received	Closed
Jul-18	815	835
Aug-18	813	802
Sep-18	740	756
Oct-18	772	775
Nov-18	729	722
Dec-18	489	535
Jan-19	714	681
Feb-19	700	659
Mar-19	728	697
Apr-19	647	628
May-19	766	732
Jun-19	671	737
	8,584	8,559

2018-19

8,584

cases received



8,559

cases closed



86%

in less than

28
days



Our performance against strategic plan

A four-year strategic plan is prepared annually and describes our vision, objectives, strategies and performance indicators. The strategic plan informs our business plan, which details the activities we need to undertake to achieve our strategic objectives. Our 2018-2022 strategic plan focused on our service, our customers, our connections and our people.

Table 4 provides an overview of our achievements in 2018-19 for our focus areas.

Table 4: Performance measures and achievements

Our service

Commitment: Our service

We provide a free, fair and independent dispute resolution service, which is evolving with the changing landscape of our sector.

- We strive to be agile and evolve with the changing landscape of our sector.
- We embrace change and adapt to the emerging technologies and needs of our sector.
- Our business is robust, accountable, efficient and effective.

Measure of success	Achievements 2018-19
Increase the number of consumers and businesses who engage with us online.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 31% complaints received electronically • 88,858 pageviews on website, with 79.9% new visitors • fostered online engagement on social media: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facebook: 305 posts, reach of 16,589, 18% increase in followers - Twitter: 342 tweets, 153,269 impressions, 15% increase in followers - LinkedIn: 12 updates, 8.4% engagement rate, 49% increase in followers
Talk to our stakeholders about our funding and membership arrangements to ensure they remain fair, fit for purpose and adaptable to change in the future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engaged with scheme participants to ensure our funding and membership arrangements are robust, fair and sustainable, including at the energy and water industry forums, meetings with scheme participants and newsletters. • issues identified for policy or regulatory submissions
Monitor the number and nature of complaints we receive to ensure our service evolves with changing technologies and consumer needs while also looking out for issues that may impact our business or our customers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discharged statutory responsibility, with operational delegations under the EWO Act maintained • 8,559 cases closed, with 86% closed within 28 days (exceeding service standards)
Ensure we continue to be financially and environmentally sustainable by improving our systems and processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provided financial reports to general managers every month • donated older computing equipment to a school in Sri Lanka • monitored our compliance with dispute resolution framework, policies and procedures • maintained an Audit and Risk Management Committee, with four meetings held in 2018-19 • risk register maintained and monitored by the Executive Management Group and reviewed by the Audit and Risk Management Committee. • unqualified audit report received from Queensland Audit Office
Develop solutions to enable connecting with communities, teams and others through a variety of digital means.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • planning is underway to develop new digital channels to better align with customer requirements, including website redevelopment and portal capability
IT, financial and business support actions are completed efficiently and of high quality. Target is 98% delivered on time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • website available 99.8% of the time • 13 Resolve change requests received and implemented in 2018-19 • accounts payable and accounts receivable processes completed on time
Focus on Future Project completed on time and within agreed budget.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • full program of works developed for the digital transformation over the next two years • new brand launched within agreed timeframes and budget ahead of digital transformation



Commitment: Our customers

We resolve complaints efficiently and effectively, communicating meaningfully and building trust with our customers. If we can't help, we explain why and suggest who can.

- We deliver fair outcomes for consumers and businesses, providing answers and solutions which are fair for all parties.
- We listen and respect our customers to build and maintain their trust.
- We will ensure our teams have the skills and capacity to resolve a wide range of problems for our customers.

 **Our customers**

Measure of success	Achievements 2018-19
Resolve complaints quickly and efficiently – closing 80% within 28 days and 90% within 60 days.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 86% cases closed in less than 28 days • 98% cases closed in less than 60 days
Engage with retailers and consumer groups to improve our understanding of what they (and their customers and clients) need and expect from our service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • regularly met with scheme participants to discuss service delivery and provide reports on case data within agreed timeframes • hosted forums with the energy industry and water industry members • 5 briefings provided to Advisory Council
Continue to focus on quality and customer service to ensure a sense of confidence in our service so our customers and members feel our answers are fair and reasonable irrespective of the outcome for them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 cycles of our quality assurance program Aspire completed (page 16) • regular reviews of performance related case data considered and discussed within each region and team meetings • feedback from customers and scheme participants considered and responded to, as required, including online form security enhancement • section 22 reviews conducted as required, with 10 section 22 letters sent to customers advising that no further investigation will be undertaken • appeal reviews conducted as required, with 6 appeal reviews undertaken to section 22 decisions (all appeal reviews confirmed)
Engage with our customers to understand their problems and deliver solutions, and use these interactions to improve our service to ensure we are meeting the needs for our customers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • responded to 6 complaints from customers about EWOQ service and/or process • referred 1057 cases to other organisations with whom we have memoranda of understanding, where matters fell within the jurisdiction of other government authorities • \$993,086 in outcomes for customers, including 389 billing adjustments (\$296,103) and 830 goodwill gestures obtained (\$280,816)
Deliver a high standard of service to all our customers irrespective of their location or how they chose to engage with us.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • received 27 compliments from customers about the service provided by our team members • feedback from scheme participants considered and service improvements implemented, as required • no allegations of failure to afford procedural fairness were made by scheme participants



Our performance against strategic plan

Our connections

Commitment: Our connections

We create impact through our connections, raising awareness of our service among communities who may need us and providing value to our members and industry.

- We want everyone who needs our help to know we are here and how to contact us.
- We educate consumers about how we can help with energy and water issues.
- We collaborate with community groups who support our current and future customers.
- We connect and influence our stakeholders to improve outcomes for the sector.

Measure of success	Achievements 2018-19
Share our insights and experiences with industry, community groups and government, to collaboratively improve the sector for all.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engaged with government and regulators on policy issues and proposed legislation, with 16 submissions written and regular meetings with jurisdictional regulators. • participated in national and international Ombudsman networks, including attendance by the Ombudsman at 2 ANZEWON meetings and 1 ANZOA members' meetings (page 32) • team members attended ANZOA interest group meetings every quarter • launched our new brand, which focuses on dialogue at the heart of our business, and updated our suite of marketing collateral and brochures • published the annual report • published four electronic newsletters • published complaints statistics on our website and the Queensland Government open data portal • published case studies on our website
Regularly provide information to help our stakeholders and members understand the nature of issues customers are experiencing and help them address these issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintained networks with scheme participants to proactively identify potential systemic issues • 47 systemic issue notices issued (page 18) • systemic issues monitored monthly and reported to regulators • systemic issues reports produced • trend analysis of data and current and emerging issues conducted as required to identify potential systemic issues • provided case data and trend analysis to scheme participants
Provide 95% of reporting and data requests to industry, government and regulators within agreed timeframes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provided scheme participants regular reporting on scheme outcomes and performance within agreed timeframes • annual report delivered within three months of the end of financial year • 5 briefings prepared for Advisory Council • complaint statistics updated monthly on website and open data • billing reports provided to scheme participants with reconciliations • reports delivered to regulators as required • responded to media inquiries within 24 hours of receipt • environmental scanning completed weekly and provided to team members to ensure their awareness of sector updates
Meet with communities across the state, connecting with them through a variety of in-person and digital means.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • team members attended 125 stakeholder events and 33 community outreach events • positive feedback received from stakeholders following meetings and presentations • maintained a social media presence on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn
Explore ways to increase the awareness of our scheme and eliminate perceived barriers of entry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • published a Reconciliation Action Plan and monitored progress towards its deliverables



Commitment: Our people

We are committed problem solvers, working together to improve our service and ourselves. Our values guide our motivations and our outcomes.

- We attract, develop and retain committed professional people who are motivated by our values.
- We will foster an empowered, agile, high performing and resilient team.



Measure of success	Achievements 2018-19
Encourage and support our people to grow and develop by providing a safe, collaborative and challenging environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • performance development and achievement plans for all team members developed and reviewed annually • monthly one-on-one meetings implemented focussing on performance and development requirements for each team member • delivered employee recognition and achievement program
Embrace equality, diversity and inclusion; we understand different perspectives are essential for a fair and balanced work environment and scheme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recruitment practices supported equal employment opportunities • published a Reconciliation Action Plan and monitored progress towards its deliverables • raised awareness of multicultural celebrations, particularly those of team members • fostered an environment that supports and encourages a learning and developing organisation • supported awareness-raising campaigns for equality, diversity and inclusion through internal communication channels • feedback provided through internal meetings and forums, and directly to the Ombudsman via a confidential email account
Invest in learning and development of our team while balancing output.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.5% of our salaries budget used for training and development • budget reviewed to ensure covering training requirements • continue to develop and deliver training to meet identified needs as per performance and development plans • conducted succession planning activity for all key roles
Focus on our agreed values and behaviours knowing each team member has committed to these.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • values and behaviours agreed in annual performance development and achievement plans • updated and reaffirmed leadership commitments • provided training for all on how best to deliver feedback to other team members



Our Reconciliation Action Plan



One of our greatest achievements in 2018-19 was launching our first Reconciliation Action Plan—our Reflect RAP—which outlines our commitments towards reconciliation between October 2018 and September 2019.

2014

Indigenous officer appointed

2018

Reflect RAP launched

2019

Innovate RAP to be launched

Our vision for reconciliation

Our Reflect RAP aims to help create equal opportunity and promote a culture of respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island peoples at EWOQ and in the communities we assist across the state.

We strive for our reconciliation journey to have a positive influence across our sector, and for industry to join us in contributing to a better Australia.

Our RAP formalises our continued commitment to engage, strengthen and maintain our relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Our continued aim is to assist Indigenous people to become confident and informed consumers, and to ensure they are aware of their right to assistance with issues relating to their energy services, and in South East Queensland their water services. We want all Queenslanders to know that it is okay to use our services.

Our reconciliation journey

Our journey towards reconciliation started in January 2014 with the appointment of a dedicated Indigenous officer. Over the past five years, our journey has continued through our community outreach program, which has touched communities from Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island) in the southeast to the Torres Strait Islands in the far north.

With the endorsement of our Reflect RAP by Reconciliation Australia, we joined more than 1000 organisations from across Australia who have formally committed to reconciliation through the RAP program since its inception in 2006.

We are proud to be turning our good intentions into positive actions, helping to build higher trust, lower prejudice, and increase pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

The RAP program provides us with a framework to advance reconciliation within our spheres of influence. It is a roadmap for our reconciliation journey and lays the foundations for future reconciliation initiatives.

In late 2019, we will launch our Innovate RAP, which is a two-year plan that we will use to advance reconciliation, to help to create equal opportunity and continue to promote a culture of respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples both within our organisation and the communities we help across Queensland.

Our connections

Through our reconciliation journey, we are fostering professional and community partnerships to strengthen our connections with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and stakeholders across Queensland.

Our professional alliances include:

Australian and New Zealand Ombudsman Association (ANZOA) – actively involved in the Indigenous engagement interest group.

Financial Counselling Australia – our Ombudsman Jane Pires joined the Yarning Circle at the national conference in Melbourne in May 2019, and our General Manager of Assessment, Intake and Resolution, John Jones, was a guest speaker on the energy affordability panel at the 2019 Queensland conference.

Thriving Communities Partnership – we are a member of the Queensland chapter of this cross-sector collaboration that supports an initiative supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment programs.

North Queensland Indigenous Consumer Taskforce – since 2013, we have been part of this coordinated approach to tackling Indigenous consumer disadvantage in the region.

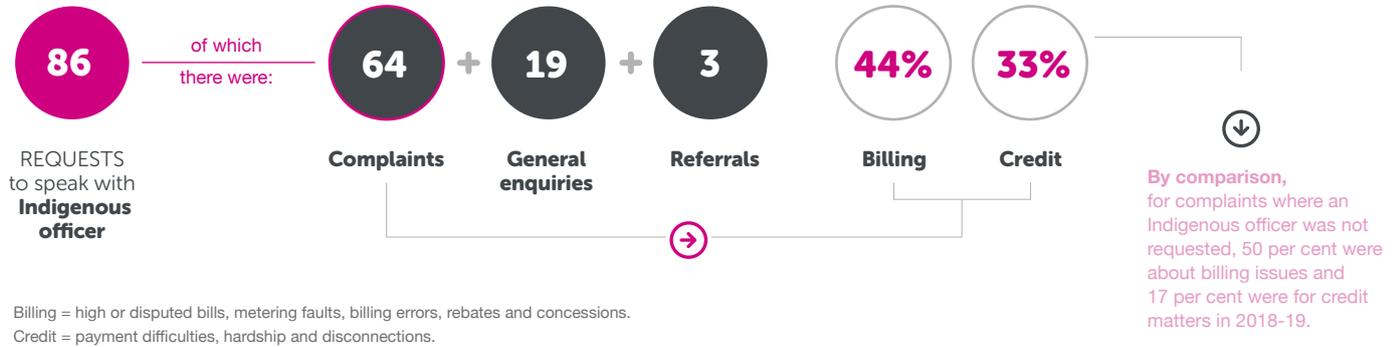




HOW MANY INDIGENOUS CONSUMERS COMPLAIN?



While we haven't historically collected information about the cultural background of our customers, we do record the number of callers who ask to speak to an Indigenous officer. During 2018-19, there were 86 occasions where a customer asked to speak with an Indigenous officer.



Our Indigenous Outreach Officer

Francine O'Rourke is our Indigenous Investigation Conciliation and Outreach Officer. Based in our Cairns office, she is a dedicated liaison officer for Indigenous consumers throughout Queensland and can assist with complaints and provide help.

Francine is part of the Yidinji Aboriginal group, whose land and sea country covers the southern corridor from Cairns to Babinda, encompassing Innisfail, Trinity Inlet, Yarrabah, Russell River, and parts of the Atherton Tablelands. Fran's maternal grandmother has South Sea Island and Italian heritage. Fran also has Torres Strait Islander kinship and networks through this side of the family.

From 1 July 2019, we will ask our customers whether they identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, to provide a more accurate insight into the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customers who use our service. This will allow us to monitor, determine and report if there are industry trends affecting Indigenous consumers and engage with industry about the challenges facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers.



"Reconciliation is no one single issue or agenda. Based on international research and benchmarking, Reconciliation Australia defines and measures reconciliation through five critical dimensions: race relations; equality and equity; institutional integrity; unity; and historical acceptance. All sections of the community; governments, civil society, the private sector, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities—have a role to play to progress the dimensions."

– **Karen Mundine**
Chief Executive Officer
Reconciliation Australia

Visit www.ewoq.com.au/rap to learn more.



Our connections

One of our functions is to promote the Energy and Water Ombudsman scheme to those who may need our assistance. Our priorities this year have included Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customers, older Queenslanders and customers in financial difficulty, who we reach through our relationships with financial counsellors and community services that help those in financial hardship.

In 2018-19, we assisted customers across Queensland and used a range of community outreach activities and information channels to build awareness of our services.

Community outreach

Over the year, we attended community finance workshops and spoke to members of the public about their financial affairs. We promoted our services through presentations at community events and attended 'bring your bills' sessions throughout the state including locations across Brisbane, Cairns, Rockhampton and Toowoomba.

Supporting regional Queensland

We have three Regional Managers who are based in Cairns, Rockhampton and Brisbane and oversee our connections in North Queensland, Central Queensland and South Queensland. During 2018-19, they travelled to areas including Toowoomba, Woorabinda, Gladstone and Capricorn Coast, connecting with community leaders and providing information to help customers understand their rights and responsibilities when making a complaint about an issue within our jurisdiction.

Indigenous outreach

Our Indigenous Investigation Conciliation and Outreach Officer delivers our outreach program to communities across Queensland. Our aim is to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to become confident and informed consumers, and ensure they are aware of their right to assistance with issues relating to their energy services, and water services for customers in South East Queensland.

During 2018-19, we yarned with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander support networks and consumers in Caboolture, Inala, Logan Central, Kuranda, White Rock, Woorabinda, Woree and Yarrabah. Our Ombudsman took part in the Yarning Circle and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Forum at the 2019 Financial Counselling Australia (FCA) Conference in Melbourne in May.

We supported the annual National Aborigines and Islander Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) week festivities in Cairns, Rockhampton and Brisbane in July. These events provided a great opportunity to showcase our services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customers. We also supported National Reconciliation Week events.

Connecting online

We continue to promote our services online through our website, the Energy and Water Complaints Wizard (a self-assessment tool enabling customers with a dispute to quickly and easily contact the appropriate authority to lodge their complaint) and social media.

We use social media to interact with stakeholders and the community, informing Queenslanders about how we can help with their energy and water problems.



 #EWOQId

 www.ewoq.com.au

 www.energywatercomplaints.com.au

Visit
[www.ewoq.com.au/
 community](http://www.ewoq.com.au/community)
 to learn more.





Our connections

We maintain strong links with the Ombudsman community with the Energy and Water Ombudsman a member of the Australian and New Zealand Ombudsman Association (ANZOA) and the Australia and New Zealand Energy and Water Ombudsman Network (ANZEWON).

ANZOA

Committed to high standards of independence, impartiality and effectiveness, ANZOA members observe the six benchmarks for industry-based customer dispute resolution:

- accessibility
- independence
- fairness
- accountability
- efficiency
- effectiveness.

In addition to regular informal contact with other Ombudsman offices, the Ombudsman attended the ANZOA AGM in November 2018.

Our team members are actively involved in ANZOA's eight interest groups, including:

- complaints management
- customer financial hardship
- indigenous engagement
- information technology for business
- people and development
- policy and research
- public relations and communications
- systemic issues and investigations.

ANZEWON

ANZEWON is a network of energy and water Ombudsman and utilities complaints Commissioners from across Australia and New Zealand, who work together to explore and address industry and policy developments that affect Australian and New Zealand consumers.

The network supports collaboration and learning to avoid duplication of effort which ensures members can progress projects with greater efficiency and effectiveness.

During 2018-19, we continued to collaborate with ANZEWON members in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia as part of our planning for the proposed expansion of our jurisdiction to include exempt entities (embedded networks).

In November 2018, the Ombudsman attended the ANZEWON meeting in Hobart, including a visit to Bruny Island to inspect a solar and battery storage trial. In March 2019, the Ombudsman attended the ANZEWON meeting in Sydney followed by the Senate Hearing on the Treasury Law change in relation to Consumer Data Rights and the concerns that Energy and Water Ombudsman schemes have with the proposals.

Next financial year, we will support an ANZEWON research activity into the impact of emerging technologies on ombudsman schemes in the sector.



Our contribution to public policy

WORKING WITH GOVERNMENT AND REGULATORS

We regularly contribute to policy and legislative reviews undertaken by government, regulators, not-for-profit organisations and other bodies. We draw on our experiences and insights with customers and suppliers to inform energy and water policy decisions.

In 2018-19, we contributed to public policy in the following ways:

Government

We met regularly with the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy to update them on industry trends and issues identified through our complaint handling. We discussed upcoming legislative reviews, potential jurisdictional changes and our role in reporting systemic issues.

We contributed a submission for the Department's discussion paper about a review of National Energy Retail Law in Queensland.

We also provided a submission in response to an issues paper about a review of financial counselling for the Australian Government's Department of Social Services.

Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC)

We made a submission to the ACCC's guide to the Electricity Retail Code and contributed to their consultation of the New Energy Tech Consumer Code.

Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC)

We made submissions to the AEMC about:

- estimated meter reads
- meter installation for advanced meter communications
- a review of the regulatory frameworks for stand-alone power systems
- updating the regulatory frameworks for embedded networks
- a rule change for National Energy Retail Amendment (Bill Contents - Customers with Interval Meters) Rule 2019.

Australian Energy Regulator (AER)

We made submissions to the AER supporting standardised statements in customer hardship policies, an issues paper about hardship guidelines, and the draft customer hardship policy guideline version 1.

We attended the AER Stakeholder Forum, took part in the AER Ombudsman Teleconference and a videoconference on the Competition and Consumer (Industry Code—Electricity Retail) Regulations 2019.

⬇ Our Organisation

CHARTER OF SERVICE

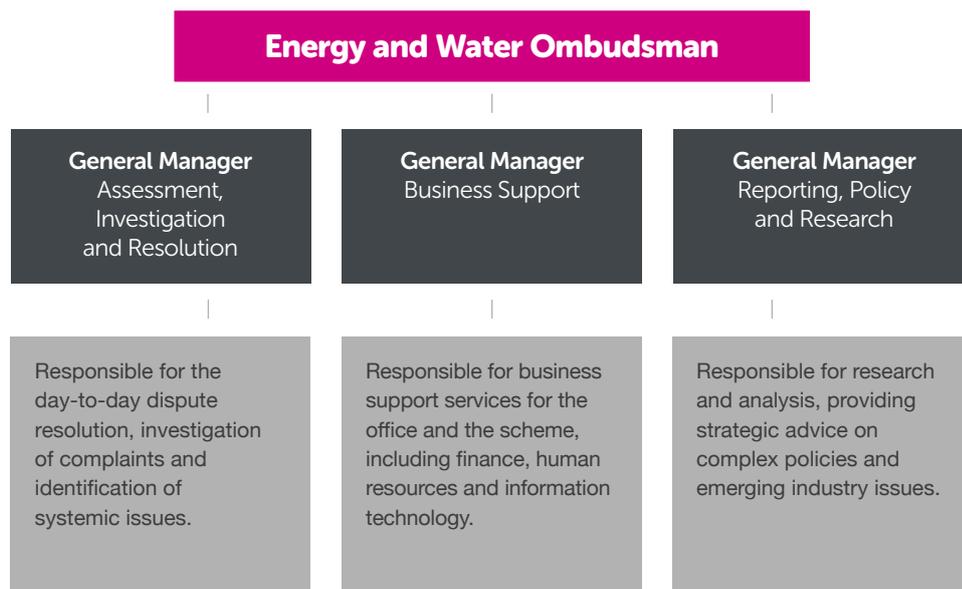
Our Charter of Service sets out the standard of service residential and small business energy and water customers, and energy and water entities, can expect if their dispute is referred to us for investigation and resolution.

The charter outlines:

- what customers and scheme participants can expect from us
- how we deal with disputes
- how we ensure easy access to the scheme
- how we assist customers from different cultures and backgrounds
- what we require when acting on behalf of a customer
- how customers can help us
- how scheme participants can help us
- how complaints and feedback about our services is handled.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

We have three teams who work under the leadership of the Energy and Water Ombudsman.





Corporate governance

Our corporate governance framework guides how we manage our business, minimise our risks, and meet our legislative obligations. Our systems are based on strong ethical foundations and our commitment to fairness, accountability and transparency.

A number of committees oversee our corporate governance, including:

- Executive Management Group
- Advisory Council (see page 12 and 36)
- Audit and Risk Management Committee (see page 37)
- Information Steering Committee

Executive Management Group

The Executive Management Group (EMG) assists the Ombudsman in the stewardship of EWOQ and plays an important role in:

- setting and monitoring the strategic direction
- monitoring financial and non-financial performance
- promoting innovation, research, continuous improvement and quality client service
- ensuring the optimum use of human, financial and information resources and infrastructure.

In 2018-19, our Executive Management Group members were:

Jane Pires Energy and Water Ombudsman

Jane Pires was appointed as the Energy and Water Ombudsman in December 2016. With more than 25 years' experience in customer service and complaint management, Jane has extensive senior executive experience and a Master of Business Administration majoring in dispute resolution.

As Energy and Water Ombudsman, Jane leads the scheme in Queensland, providing a timely, effective and independent way of resolving disputes and ensuring complaints are handled in an expeditious manner. She is committed to providing all Queenslanders with equal access to the service, contributing to improved service delivery in the energy and water sectors, and fostering a culture of excellence within the team.

In September 2018, Jane was also appointed to the role of Land Access Ombudsman for Queensland.

John Jones General Manager – Assessment, Investigation and Resolution

John Jones leads the complaint investigation and dispute resolution functions of the office and represents EWOQ at forums with state and national jurisdictional regulators, and industry and consumer representatives. He first joined the organisation in July 2007 as General Manager Operations for Energy Ombudsman Queensland.

Lyn Stevens General Manager – Business Support

Lyn Stevens manages the business support function of EWOQ, which she established in 2007 while in the role of Manager Corporate Services for Energy Ombudsman Queensland. Lyn has extensive experience managing a comprehensive range of business support activities, organisational change processes, and developing and implementing effective and efficient systems and processes.

Ilona Cenefels General Manager – Reporting, Policy and Research

Ilona Cenefels is responsible for leading advice on complex policies and emerging issues and overseeing the reporting and research activities within EWOQ. She joined the organisation in June 2010 as Manager Policy and Research.

Visit
www.ewoq.com.au/corporate-governance
 to view the framework.





Testimonial

“ We wish to thank the Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland and your amazing Investigation and Conciliation Officers for listening to us and providing us with support and advice to fight for our rights as consumers.

We had the opportunity for our voice to be heard and clarification given on what we believed an unfair situation we had found ourselves in.

We are so thankful for the help provided by the Ombudsman in being so approachable and representing our interests by first of all hearing us, investigating our query and addressing our complaint so quickly. This matter has now been resolved and we thank you for advocating for us.

We honestly believe that without your intervention this matter would still be causing us stress and anxiety and it is only because of your assistance that we can now breathe easy and move on with our lives.

Advisory Council

The Advisory Council monitors the independence of the Energy and Water Ombudsman scheme and provides advice to the Ombudsman on the operation of the Act (see page 10 for the Chair's message and members).

Council members represent the interests of the sector and must act in the best interests of the scheme when exercising their council responsibilities.

The Chair may hold office for up to five years, however, there is no restriction on the length of terms of ordinary members. On appointment to the Advisory Council, members receive an induction to help them understand the scheme and how the office operates.

The *EWOQ Advisory Council Handbook* details the roles and responsibilities of council members, while the *Advisory Council Code of Conduct* helps council members discharge their responsibilities under the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*. While not a prescriptive code, it contains the ethics, principles and values which council members have agreed to put into practice. Both documents are available from our website.

Council members are entitled to meeting fees approved by the Governor-in-Council, and reimbursement of reasonable costs incurred for attending council meetings, based on the *Remuneration Procedures for Part-time Chairs and Members of Queensland Government Boards*.

See Appendix 5 for details of fees paid to council members.

Visit
[www.ewoq.com.au/
advisory-council](http://www.ewoq.com.au/advisory-council)
to learn more.



Risk management and accountability

RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk management is an integral part of strategic and business planning, and the everyday activities of EWOQ.

In accordance with section 15 of the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009*, EWOQ is committed to implementing risk management strategies that ensure efficiency and effectiveness in meeting our objectives, while also providing a safe and healthy workplace for staff.

ARMC observes the terms of the Audit and Risk Management Committee Charter and has due regard to Queensland Treasury's Audit Committee Guidelines.

During 2018-19, the committee met on four occasions and invited both external and internal audit representatives to regularly attend meetings.

AUDIT AND RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Members of the Audit and Risk Management Committee (ARMC) are appointed by the Energy and Water Ombudsman. The committee provides independent comment, advice and counsel to assist the Ombudsman's oversight of:

- the integrity of EWOQ's financial statements and internal controls
- compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements
- the process relating to internal risk management and control systems
- the performance of the internal audit function

Key achievements for 2018-19

- Endorsed the financial statements 2017-18 and considered all audit recommendations by external audit.
- Endorsed the strategic and annual internal audit plan for approval by the Energy and Water Ombudsman.
- Monitored ongoing risk management activities within the organisation.
- Monitored progress of the annual internal audit plan and outcomes from audits undertaken.
- Reviewed the Risk Management Framework and Policy.

The two external members of the committee are Queensland public sector employees and consistent with the *Remuneration Procedures for Part-time Chairs and Members of Queensland Government Boards* do not receive additional remuneration in relation to this committee.

In 2018-19, the committee members were:

- Irene Sitton, Chairperson
- Fiona Trenear, external member
- Ilona Genefels, internal member
- Karen Hendry, internal member

INTERNAL AUDIT

Our internal audit function is undertaken by the Corporate Administration Agency (CAA) and managed through a service level agreement. The internal audit workplan is directed through a strategic and annual plan developed in consultation with the Audit and Risk Management Committee and approved by the Ombudsman, which has due regard to professional standards and the *Audit Committee guidelines: Improving accountability and performance* issued by Queensland Treasury.

Internal audit activities can include financial, compliance and operational reviews; information system and data integrity reviews; and special review assignments as requested by management.

This team reports to the Audit and Risk Committee and operates independently of our management and our external audit function.

Key achievements for 2018-19

Provided reports to the Audit and Risk Committee and the Energy and Water Ombudsman on the results of internal audits undertaken, as well as monitored and reported on the implementation of recommendations:

- compliance with AS/NZ 10002 2014 Industry Benchmarks
- systemic issues
- email and internet usage

BUSINESS CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT

Our external service provider CAA maintains a business continuity plan which provides for the recovery and/or continuity of our information technology, human resources and finance functions. We continue to develop our risk registers and have started developing a comprehensive business continuity plan.

INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND RECORDKEEPING

As a public service office, we are required by legislation and government standards to keep and maintain proper records of our activities. We are committed to meeting our governance responsibilities under the relevant Acts, applicable legislation, state government Information Standards, Queensland State Archives Standards and best practice methods outlined in applicable International Standards.

RIGHT TO INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

We are committed to providing the community with open and transparent access to information about our services and activities. Consistent with the *Right to Information Act 2009* and *Information Privacy Act 2009*, we proactively release information held by our office unless, on balance, it is contrary to the public interest to provide the information.

All requests for information received during 2018-19 have been released under Administrative Access Scheme. We also participated in the Office of the Information Commissioner Queensland (OIC) Privacy Awareness Week and contributed to the s185 annual report.

EXTERNAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION SCHEME

Since 2015-16, we have been recognised as an external dispute resolution scheme by the Office of the Australian Information Commission (OAIC) under the *Privacy Act 1988*.

We are required to report on serious or repeated interference with privacy or systemic privacy issues relating to these bodies to the OAIC every quarter. We are also required to provide OAIC with an annual report including a range of data relating to complaints investigated under this jurisdiction.

MANDATORY ONLINE REPORTING

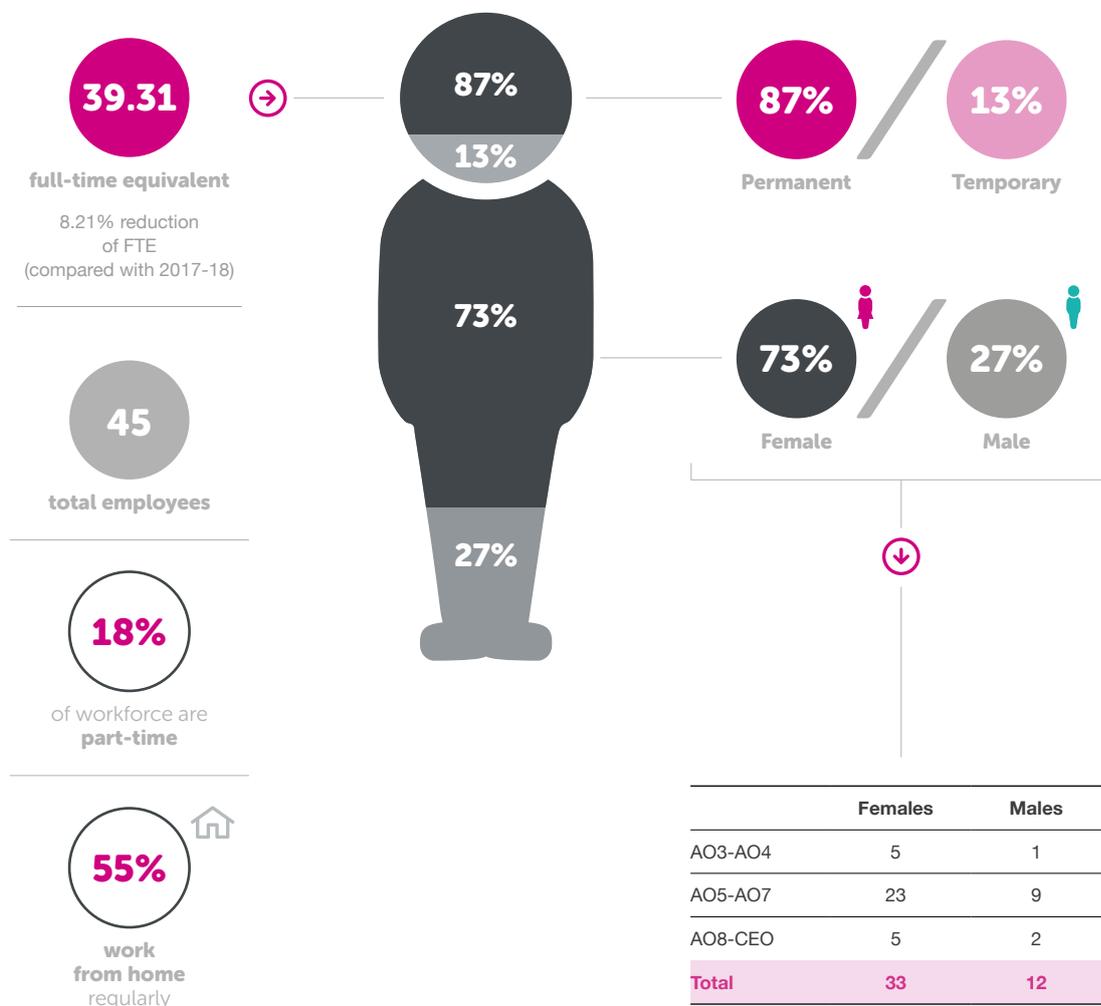
The following datasets are published on the Queensland Government open data website (www.data.qld.gov.au):

- consultancies
- language services
- overseas travel



Workforce profile

At 30 June 2019, 45 officers were employed on a full or part-time basis equating to a full-time equivalent of 39.31 FTE.



A priority for 2018-19 was to establish succession plans for positions we identified as higher risk to ensure ongoing business continuity and knowledge transfer wherever possible if these key personnel were to leave. We also started developing role-specific inductions through the collection of data on specific capabilities and competencies required of certain roles and began an evaluation of our onboarding process. We created a new team from existing resources called People, Capability and Culture to focus on strategic workforce planning, performance and culture, along with ensuring contemporary people management practices and future-proofing capabilities.

Corporate inductions were delivered to nine new team members. We maintained a permanent retention rate of 100 per cent in 2018-19, with no permanent separations during this period. No redundancy, early retirement or retraining packages were paid during the period.

Flexible working arrangements

We continue to develop and implement flexible working arrangements. In addition to accrued time, condensed hours, purchased leave, paid maternity leave, and part-time work arrangements, our executive management group and 47 per cent of the broader team work from home on a regular basis. Our dispute resolution team now have the opportunity to work offline, which can be from home, on a fortnightly basis to review casework and undertake professional development.

Two phased retirement arrangements were successfully trialled during 2018-19, with both arrangements extended for a further period and review.

The continued trialling and implementation of these arrangements demonstrates our commitment to championing flexible work and innovation to ensure the needs of our customers and team members are met.

Leadership and management development

The Leadership Team met monthly during 2018-19, ensuring a consistent and cohesive approach to management and leadership across EWOQ. Our leadership values were reviewed during 2018-19 to ensure ongoing support and commitment.

Leadership challenges were set weekly to encourage positive leadership behaviours and ongoing communication within teams. Leadership development has included formal training in performance planning, people management and reasonable management action. Opportunities to relieve in higher positions has led some team members to take on leadership roles and for EWOQ to ensure succession plans are actioned.

Learning and development

EWOQ is committed to developing its people to ensure services are delivered efficiently and effectively.

During 2018-19, our team continued to identify learning and development needs to meet performance objectives identified through the performance management framework. The Principal Learning and Development Officer worked with managers to identify any learning and development needed to meet changes in the energy and water sectors, and work commenced on a learning and development framework, addressing capabilities and role-specific requirements.

All team members are encouraged to learn and develop skills and knowledge through on-the-job training and self-directed learning. EWOQ offered technical, compliance and role specific training and professional development activities on a range of topics during training sessions, workshops, seminars, conferences, online programs and short courses.

Performance management framework

Our integrated performance management framework includes employee induction, probation, performance planning, and performance management. Managers work with team members to develop employee performance plans that are relevant to their work unit and drive performance.

Performance plans were reviewed during 2018-19 to highlight achievements and expected behaviours, along with strengthening links to learning and development needs. The performance development policy was reviewed to reflect these changes.

Employee relations

The State Government Entities Certified Agreement (the Core Agreement) is currently under arbitration and we await news on the progression of this action. The previous Core Agreement expired on 31 August 2018.

Workforce diversity

We respect and support diversity and equity in the workplace and the need to reflect the community we serve. We continue to work with staff to ensure they interact respectfully and competently with people from all cultural backgrounds.

We are an Equal Employment Opportunity employer and aim to employ a workforce more representative of the wider community.

Code of conduct and ethics

At EWOQ, we are required to make ethical decisions, be accountable for our actions and demonstrate integrity. We are committed to fostering a positive organisational culture that values and promotes ethical leadership and decision making.

All employees are required to observe the Queensland Public Service Code of Conduct. The ethics principles and values in the code of conduct are incorporated into our policies and procedures as well as each employee's performance plan. All new team members undertake ethics and code of conduct training as part of their mandatory induction. Current team members undertake code of conduct refresher training annually. We also offer ethical decision-making training to employees.

Workplace health and safety

We strive to create a work environment that is free from injury, illness and incident. We endeavour to drive health initiatives to improve the physical and mental wellbeing and resilience of our teams.

In 2018-19, our Workplace Health and Safety Committee met every three months to progress our health and safety agenda. Health and wellbeing resources were expanded and a variety of online tools introduced to support our team's mental and physical health and wellbeing, as well as the continuation of our annual flu vaccination program.

Our leaders play a vital role in driving a culture of safety, through visible leadership, support, risk management and wellbeing initiatives.

We continue to have a small number of workplace accidents and incidents that are followed up where necessary by our trained safety advisor.

No WorkCover claims were received in 2018-19.

We engage workplace rehabilitation services where required to assist employees achieve a safe and timely return to work.

Our team has free access to the employee assistance program, a confidential counselling service for them and their families provided by qualified, experienced professionals through Benestar.



EMPLOYEE ACHIEVEMENT AND RECOGNITION PROGRAM

During 2018-19, we recognised and celebrated the achievements of our team members with our employee achievement and recognition program called the EWOQ All Stars.

An initiative of the Celebration of Success working group, the awards cover a number of categories and timeframes:

- **All Star Award** – a bi-annual award recognising a team member for their overall contribution, ongoing commitment and demonstration of the EWOQ values
- **Bright Star Award** – a quarterly award for innovation, leadership, enthusiasm and problem solving
- **Rising Star Award** – a quarterly award for improvement and development of ideas and actions
- **Shining Star Award** – a monthly award in each office location for going above and beyond
- **Rock Star Award** – a fun award to celebrate someone in each team who is making a difference, paying it forward or simply making the team laugh



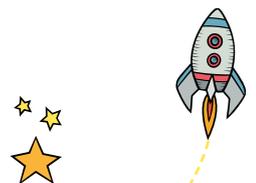
Two team members received
All Star Awards



Six team members received
Bright Star Awards



Five team members received
Rising Star Awards



Shining Star Awards were presented a total of 34 times across the Brisbane, Rockhampton and Cairns offices

21 Rock Star Awards were presented

The figures and the issues

During 2018-19, the top three primary issues customers contacted us about were billing, credit and provision, which was the same as in 2017-18.

Billing remains the most common issue that customers contact us about, accounting for 51 per cent of the complaints we closed in 2018-19.

Credit-related issues such as payment difficulties or disconnection accounted for 18 per cent and provision 11 per cent of the complaints we closed.

Table 5: Closed complaints by primary issue

PRIMARY ISSUE	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Billing	4,137	3,388	3,326	4,071	3,232
Credit	2,118	1,467	1,265	1,311	1,130
Provision	365	340	380	882	732
Customer service	1,047	768	502	735	639
Transfer	357	192	173	466	344
Supply	106	168	161	183	151
Land	59	39	46	59	86
Marketing	50	31	20	58	52
Other	112	149	147	166	142

Top three issues



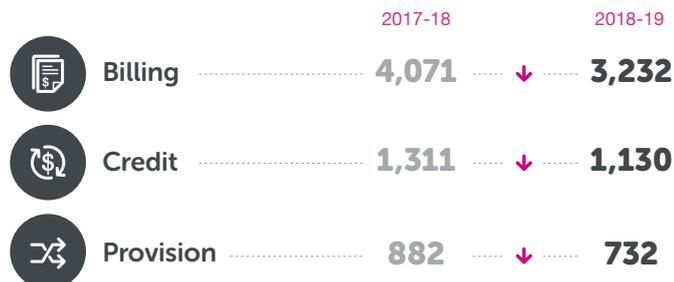
1. BILLING
2. CREDIT
3. PROVISION



Top five closed complaints for 2018-19



Top three issues

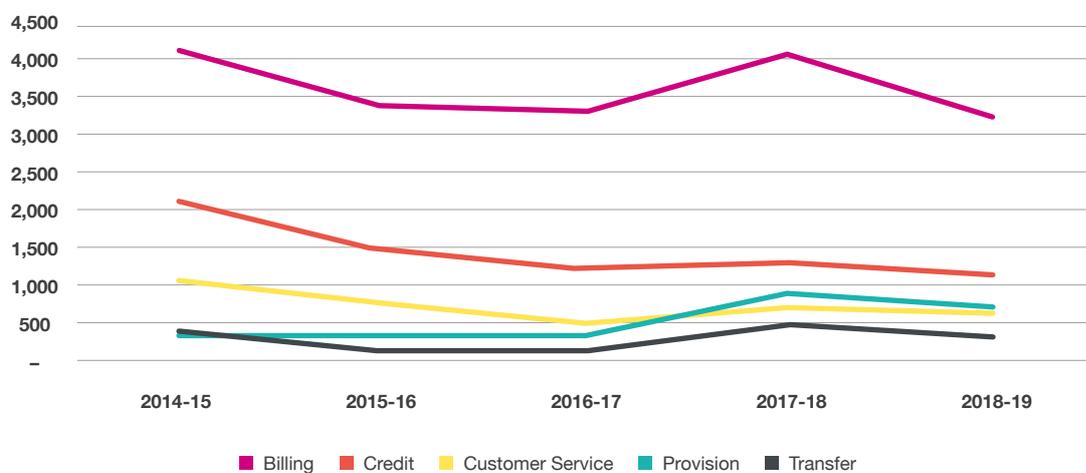


Case any contact a customer has with EWOQ i.e. general enquiry, refer back to supplier, referral to higher level, investigation, or referral to another organisation.

Complaints all cases that are billed to a scheme participant i.e. refer back to supplier, referral to higher level and investigation.

⬇ The figures and the issues

Top five primary issues of complaints closed



“ While the overall number of cases we received in 2018-19 declined, the complaints we close are increasingly complex.



While the total number of complaints closed in 2018-19 decreased by 18 per cent from 2017-18, the complexity of cases closed by our office is increasing. During this period, the total number of investigations we handled fell by six per cent in comparison to 2017-18. However, the number of investigations closed was up by 34 per cent from 2016-17. Complaints were up by eight per cent from 2016-17.

While the overall number of cases we received in 2018-19 declined, the complaints we close are increasingly complex. This is evidenced by the increasing number of investigations progressing from level 1 investigations to level 2 and level 3, which reflects the increased time spent by

investigation and conciliation officers to resolve these issues.

In 2018-19, we closed a total of 1640 investigations with 423 closed as level 2 investigations and 72 closed as level 3 investigations.

This is significantly higher than 2016-17 when we closed 1226 investigations with 270 closed as level 2 investigations and 41 closed as level 3 investigations. By comparison, we closed 1748 investigations in 2017-18 (the year we received a 30 per cent spike in cases), with 405 closed as level 2 investigations and 68 closed as level 3 investigations.



ELECTRICITY

Case any contact a customer has with EWOQ i.e. general enquiry, refer back to supplier, referral to higher level, investigation, or referral to another organisation.

Complaints all cases that are billed to a scheme participant i.e. refer back to supplier, referral to higher level and investigation.



Electricity case study

Solar meter delay

A customer had 24 solar panels installed at their investment property in November 2018. After the panels were installed, the customer was told that a new meter would be installed within a few days, however, this did not happen. The customer followed up with the retailer about when the new meter would be installed then sought compensation for missed solar generation due to the delay.



Outcome:

We contacted the retailer to determine what service orders were raised and whether a current service order was pending. We also suggested that the retailer pay compensation for the loss of solar generation caused by the delay. The retailer confirmed that a service order for metering service works (exchange meter) was raised in November 2018 although it wasn't completed until 16 January 2019. The retailer agreed to compensate for the missed solar generation for the first two weeks of January, since this had been the meter installation timeframe provided to the customer. In total, the retailer offered a \$500 credit as customer service gesture, \$150 for lost solar generation and \$350 for customer service. The customer was very happy with the outcome she received.



⬇ The figures and the issues

Electricity complaints

There were 5774 electricity complaints closed in 2018-19 which was 1399 fewer than last year. Refer backs were the most common electricity case type (43 per cent of complaints) for complaints in 2018-19, while billing was the most common primary issue (49 per cent of complaints). Refer backs relating to billing issues comprised 21 per cent of complaints closed in 2018-19.

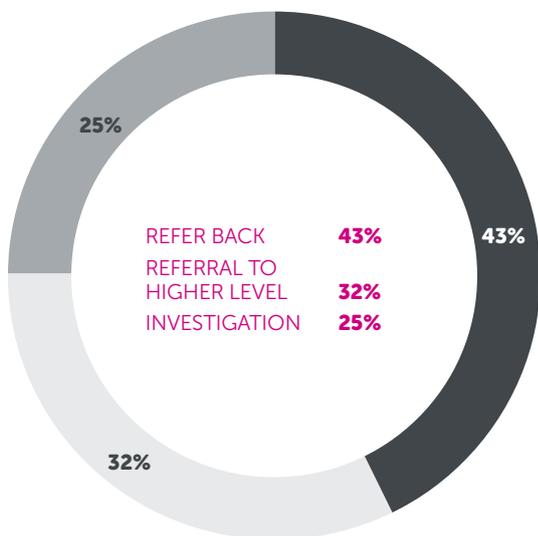
Table 6: Closed electricity complaints by primary issue and case type

PRIMARY ISSUE	Refer back	Referral to higher level	Investigation	TOTAL
Billing	1,241	842	734	2,817
Credit	404	288	373	1,065
Provision	242	271	144	657
Customer Service	236	239	93	568
Transfer	106	140	78	324
Supply	73	26	22	121
Land	33	12	13	58
Marketing	24	19	9	52
Other	112	0	0	112
Total	2,471	1,837	1,466	5,774

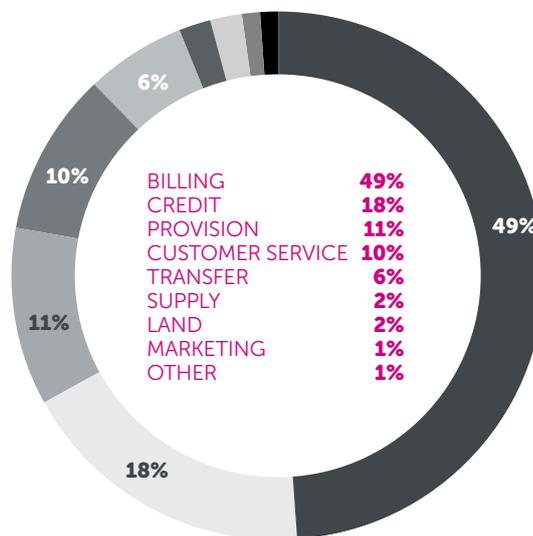
5,774
electricity complaints closed

= 1,399
↓
fewer than last year

DURING 2018-19



Closed electricity complaints by case type 2018-19



Electricity complaints by case type 2018-19

Most common case type:
REFER BACKS

43%

Most common primary issue:
BILLING

49%

Table 7: Electricity investigations by primary and secondary issues

PRIMARY ISSUE	SECONDARY ISSUE	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
BILLING	High	141	147	179	368	280
	Estimation	60	41	57	75	104
	Error	137	111	112	122	81
	Meter	45	35	32	39	47
	Opening/closing account	-	-	-	50	43
	Back bill	72	80	47	34	34
	Tariff	32	34	27	21	31
	Rebate/concession	18	11	16	53	30
	Delay	55	29	18	24	30
	Fees and charges	12	15	37	31	17
	Period	-	-	-	2	12
	Incorrect account details	-	-	-	13	8
	Refund	18	13	6	13	3
	Re-bill	9	9	8	5	3
Format	-	-	-	2	1	
Other	76	78	77	22	10	
Total		675	603	616	874	734
CREDIT	Collection	189	179	166	234	190
	Disconnection/restriction	176	81	88	80	130
	Payment difficulties	85	64	64	57	37
	Hardship	-	-	-	-	11
	Privacy	0	0	1	2	5
Total		450	324	319	373	373
PROVISION	Existing connection	22	30	39	107	109
	Disconnection/restriction	12	13	8	11	18
	New connection	4	6	7	27	17
Total		38	49	54	145	144
CUSTOMER SERVICE	Poor service	8	16	13	25	33
	Incorrect advice or information	12	8	14	20	22
	Failure to consult or inform	5	6	5	12	12
	Failure to respond	5	5	8	8	12
	Refund	198	87	11	4	9
	Poor/unprofessional attitude	4	2	3	2	3
	Privacy	0	0	1	0	2
Total		232	124	55	71	93

50%

Half of investigations closed in 2018-19 were related to billing compared with 55% in 2017-18

1 in 5

About one in five investigations were about high billing in 2018-19

CREDIT
INVESTIGATIONS

25%

Table 7: Electricity investigations by primary and secondary issues continued

PRIMARY ISSUE	SECONDARY ISSUE	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
TRANSFER	Without consent	24	13	17	39	37
	Delay	13	6	5	11	12
	In error	11	5	9	9	8
	Cooling off rights	3	2	0	9	8
	Site ownership	4	5	1	2	5
	Billing	3	1	1	2	5
	Objection/rejected by retailer	4	2	2	8	3
	Error	4	0	1	6	0
	Contract terms	3	0	0	0	0
Total		69	34	36	86	78
SUPPLY	Off supply (unplanned)	5	4	9	9	8
	Off supply (planned)	2	1	3	2	8
	Variation	6	13	7	6	5
	Quality	0	2	1	6	1
Total		13	20	20	23	22
LAND	Property damage/restoration	-	-	-	4	5
	Network assets	1	2	4	2	5
	Vegetation management	0	1	0	1	2
	Easement	0	0	0	1	0
	Wayleave agreement	1	0	0	0	0
	Other	3	2	0	1	1
Total		5	5	4	9	13
MARKETING	Misleading	4	1	1	15	2
	Information	1	0	0	0	2
	Contract	2	1	2	2	1
	Pressure/coercion	0	0	0	2	1
	Non account holder	0	0	0	0	1
	Door to door	0	0	0	2	0
	Other	1	0	0	0	2
Total		8	2	3	21	9
Grand total		1,490	1,161	1,107	1,602	1,466

Most common
credit investigation
= **collection**

13%

of all
investigations

Electricity case study



Reconnected after 24 hours without power

A customer's electricity was disconnected because she had an outstanding debt of \$1800. She contacted her retailer who requested she pay it back in full, but the customer was not in a financial position to do so and went without electricity for 24 hours before seeking our help.

We learned that while she receives a pension payment and makes regular contributions toward her electricity account, the amount she was paying had been insufficient for her level of consumption. We also learned the customer uses a wheelchair and takes medication that requires refrigeration.

→ Outcome:

The customer was reconnected within hours of contacting us. We spoke with her retailer, who contacted the network operator and arranged to reconnect her electricity as a priority. Given the customer's circumstances, the network operator carried out an afterhours reconnection. The retailer's hardship team contacted the customer to discuss an ongoing payment plan that met her consumption levels and also helped to pay off her debt.

They also committed to assessing her eligibility for the Home Energy Emergency Assistance Scheme (HEEAS). The customer was very appreciative of the assistance we provided.

Electricity case study



→ Estimated billing dispute

A customer had been receiving estimated bills from his retailer because of a faulty meter. He had been in contact with his retailer about the faulty meter and had accepted the estimated billing as it was based on their historical consumption, which had been consistent. He was advised the meter was scheduled to be replaced in January 2019.

The customer advised us that he disputed his estimated bill for the November – February 2019 quarter as his family were overseas for a month over the Christmas period, and the historical consumption was not an accurate reflection of his family's consumption. The customer requested his retailer amend his bill, which they declined to do.

Outcome:

We raised the customer's concerns with the retailer and advised that the faulty meter disadvantaged the customer by not accurately recording his usage for the disputed period.

We requested a review of the customer's usage and the meter data recorded at the premises, which confirmed that the customer's usage had been estimated on his past three invoices and his bill for the period in dispute was estimated. The customer's circumstances were considered by his retailer who agreed to adjust the daily average usage for the period in question from 28 kWh per day to 3.5 kWh per day.

This resulted in an amendment of \$288.56 to the customer's invoice. The customer was pleased with the result achieved by EWOQ and that the matter was resolved.



Electricity retailers



Table 8: Closed electricity retailer complaints by primary issue 2018-19

PRIMARY ISSUE	SCHEME PARTICIPANT	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
BILLING	Origin Energy Electricity Ltd	1365	1057	890	932	747
	AGL Sales (Queensland Electricity) Pty Ltd	781	636	553	590	488
	Ergon Energy Qld Pty Ltd	356	401	559	538	435
	Alinta Energy Retail Sales Pty Ltd ¹	-	-	-	181	331
	EnergyAustralia Pty Ltd	447	284	281	332	280
	Click Energy Pty Ltd ²	261	99	142	620	204
	Powerdirect Pty Ltd	163	189	167	92	92
	Red Energy Pty Ltd	0	0	38	122	81
	1st Energy Pty Ltd ³	-	-	-	16	37
	Simply Energy	12	11	24	64	33
	QEnergy Pty Ltd	68	35	44	23	22
	Dodo Power & Gas Pty Ltd	47	27	43	27	19
	Locality Planning Energy Pty Ltd ⁴	-	0	11	19	15
	Mojo Power Pty Ltd ⁵	-	-	7	20	8
	Lumo Energy	147	162	116	30	7
	PowerShop Australia Pty Ltd ⁶	-	-	1	20	6
	Diamond Energy Pty Ltd	2	1	6	8	5
	Momentum Energy Pty Ltd	0	1	1	0	3
	ERM Power Retail Pty Ltd ⁷	-	0	2	0	2
	Sanctuary Energy Pty Ltd	36	35	9	13	1
People Energy Pty Ltd ⁸	-	-	3	6	1	
Energy Locals Pty Ltd ⁹	-	-	-	6	0	
Australian Power and Gas Pty Ltd ¹⁰	6	-	-	-	-	
Urth Energy ¹¹	-	0	4	-	-	
Total		3,691	2,938	2,901	3,659	2,817
CREDIT	Origin Energy Electricity Ltd	1019	701	537	538	426
	Ergon Energy Qld Pty Ltd	254	140	191	199	194
	AGL Sales (Queensland Electricity) Pty Ltd	377	252	202	195	165
	EnergyAustralia Pty Ltd	154	121	102	106	63
	Alinta Energy Retail Sales Pty Ltd ¹	-	-	-	20	59
	Click Energy Pty Ltd ²	82	46	39	71	41
Powerdirect Pty Ltd	30	46	47	18	33	

Did you know there are

26

electricity retailers in Queensland?

This means 26 businesses are actively retailing electricity in Queensland.

Not all electricity retailers service all of the state and it's a commercial decision for that organisation which location they service.

See Appendix 2 for the full list of authorised electricity retailers who are our scheme participants, and page 55 for the volume of complaints received for each retailer and distributor compared with their customer numbers.

Table 8: Closed electricity retailer complaints by primary issue 2018-19 continued

PRIMARY ISSUE	SCHEME PARTICIPANT	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
CREDIT	Red Energy Pty Ltd	0	0	1	30	23
continued	Lumo Energy	53	66	69	18	15
	1st Energy Pty Ltd ³	-	-	-	5	11
	Simply Energy	2	4	0	11	8
	Mojo Power Pty Ltd ⁵	-	-	0	8	6
	Dodo Power & Gas Pty Ltd	3	4	4	7	6
	Locality Planning Energy Pty Ltd ⁴	-	1	0	3	5
	PowerShop Australia Pty Ltd ⁶	-	-	0	4	4
	QEnergy Pty Ltd	6	1	3	1	2
	Diamond Energy Pty Ltd	0	0	0	0	1
	Energy Locals Pty Ltd ⁹	-	-	-	0	1
	Momentum Energy Pty Ltd	1	3	0	0	1
	Next Business Energy Pty Ltd ¹²	-	0	1	0	0
	Sanctuary Energy Pty Ltd	2	0	0	0	0
	Australian Power and Gas Pty Ltd ¹⁰	13	-	-	-	-
Total		1,996	1,385	1,196	1,234	1,064
PROVISION	Origin Energy Electricity Ltd	77	74	63	203	179
	AGL Sales (Queensland Electricity) Pty Ltd	40	46	57	226	157
	Ergon Energy Qld Pty Ltd	18	18	31	43	65
	Alinta Energy Retail Sales Pty Ltd ¹	-	-	-	47	44
	EnergyAustralia Pty Ltd	25	19	17	24	40
	Red Energy Pty Ltd	0	0	3	20	18
	Click Energy Pty Ltd ²	6	5	8	80	14
	Powerdirect Pty Ltd	3	7	8	17	13
	Simply Energy	0	1	4	10	8
	Lumo Energy	10	9	4	1	5
	PowerShop Australia Pty Ltd ⁶	-	-	0	0	2
	Dodo Power & Gas Pty Ltd	1	1	3	6	1
	People Energy Pty Ltd ⁸	-	-	1	1	1
	Locality Planning Energy Pty Ltd ⁴	-	0	0	0	1
	QEnergy Pty Ltd	1	0	3	3	0
	Sanctuary Energy Pty Ltd	1	1	1	3	0
	Mojo Power Pty Ltd ⁵	-	-	1	1	0
	Diamond Energy Pty Ltd	0	1	0	1	0
	1st Energy Pty Ltd ³	-	-	-	1	0
	Momentum Energy Pty Ltd	1	2	0	0	0
Total		183	184	204	687	548
CUSTOMER SERVICE	Origin Energy Electricity Ltd	258	146	113	146	128
	AGL Sales (Queensland Electricity) Pty Ltd	152	111	90	132	109
	Alinta Energy Retail Sales Pty Ltd ¹	-	-	-	57	80
	Ergon Energy Qld Pty Ltd	39	53	49	61	47

Table 8: Closed electricity retailer complaints by primary issue 2018-19 continued

PRIMARY ISSUE	SCHEME PARTICIPANT	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
CUSTOMER SERVICE	Click Energy Pty Ltd ²	36	11	19	93	24
	continued EnergyAustralia Pty Ltd	103	38	28	41	23
	Simply Energy	1	1	8	15	11
	Red Energy Pty Ltd	0	0	12	11	11
	Powerdirect Pty Ltd	10	25	12	5	11
	1st Energy Pty Ltd ³	-	-	-	8	9
	QEnergy Pty Ltd	10	9	11	2	6
	Lumo Energy	34	25	15	5	5
	Dodo Power & Gas Pty Ltd	6	12	4	7	3
	PowerShop Australia Pty Ltd ⁶	-	-	1	1	3
	Sanctuary Energy Pty Ltd	226	153	10	2	2
	Mojo Power Pty Ltd ⁵	-	-	2	1	1
	Locality Planning Energy Pty Ltd ⁴	-	0	2	1	1
	Energy Locals Pty Ltd ⁹	-	-	-	1	1
	People Energy Pty Ltd ⁸	-	-	0	0	1
	Momentum Energy Pty Ltd	0	0	0	1	0
	Diamond Energy Pty Ltd	0	1	0	1	0
	Urth Energy ¹¹	-	1	1	-	-
	Australian Power and Gas Pty Ltd ¹⁰	1	-	-	-	-
	Total		876	586	377	591
TRANSFER	Alinta Energy Retail Sales Pty Ltd ¹	-	-	-	151	123
	AGL Sales (Queensland Electricity) Pty Ltd	57	45	50	70	67
	Origin Energy Electricity Ltd	78	51	23	60	39
	1st Energy Pty Ltd ³	-	-	-	20	35
	EnergyAustralia Pty Ltd	91	21	21	33	19
	Click Energy Pty Ltd ²	38	17	35	73	15
	Simply Energy	2	0	3	13	9
	Powerdirect Pty Ltd	34	15	6	4	7
	Red Energy Pty Ltd	0	0	3	7	2
	Ergon Energy Qld Pty Ltd	2	3	4	4	2
	PowerShop Australia Pty Ltd ⁶	-	-	0	2	2
	QEnergy Pty Ltd	4	3	2	5	1
	Dodo Power & Gas Pty Ltd	8	10	4	3	1
	Diamond Energy Pty Ltd	0	2	1	1	1
	Locality Planning Energy Pty Ltd ⁴	-	0	0	0	1
	Lumo Energy	16	13	10	2	0
	Mojo Power Pty Ltd ⁵	-	-	1	2	0
	Energy Locals Pty Ltd ⁹	-	-	-	2	0
	Sanctuary Energy Pty Ltd	6	0	1	0	0
	Australian Power and Gas Pty Ltd ¹⁰	1	-	-	-	-
Total		337	180	164	452	324

Table 8: Closed electricity retailer complaints by primary issue 2018-19 continued

PRIMARY ISSUE	SCHEME PARTICIPANT	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
MARKETING	AGL Sales (Queensland Electricity) Pty Ltd	14	10	3	4	11
	Alinta Energy Retail Sales Pty Ltd ¹	-	-	-	12	10
	1st Energy Pty Ltd ³	-	-	-	4	10
	Origin Energy Electricity Ltd	9	10	5	10	6
	EnergyAustralia Pty Ltd	11	2	4	1	6
	Click Energy Pty Ltd ²	7	1	1	8	3
	Simply Energy	0	0	3	11	2
	Red Energy Pty Ltd	0	1	0	0	2
	QEnergy Pty Ltd	0	1	2	1	1
	Powerdirect Pty Ltd	3	0	1	1	1
	Ergon Energy Qld Pty Ltd	0	0	0	3	0
	Dodo Power & Gas Pty Ltd	2	3	0	1	0
	Diamond Energy Pty Ltd	0	0	0	1	0
	PowerShop Australia Pty Ltd ⁶	-	-	0	1	0
	Lumo Energy	3	2	0	0	0
Total		49	30	19	58	52
OTHER	Ergon Energy Qld Pty Ltd	10	25	13	16	20
	Origin Energy Electricity Ltd	22	19	17	25	18
	AGL Sales (Queensland Electricity) Pty Ltd	7	9	13	18	12
	Powerdirect Pty Ltd	0	3	3	2	10
	Alinta Energy Retail Sales Pty Ltd ¹	-	-	-	1	7
	EnergyAustralia Pty Ltd	6	3	5	6	6
	Locality Planning Energy Pty Ltd ⁴	-	0	1	2	2
	Red Energy Pty Ltd	0	0	0	1	2
	Click Energy Pty Ltd ²	1	1	2	3	1
	Dodo Power & Gas Pty Ltd	2	7	1	1	1
	1st Energy Pty Ltd ³	-	-	-	0	1
	Lumo Energy	2	2	2	1	0
	PowerShop Australia Pty Ltd ⁶	-	-	1	1	0
	Simply Energy	0	0	1	0	0
	QEnergy Pty Ltd	2	1	2	0	0
	Diamond Energy Pty Ltd	0	0	2	0	0
	Sanctuary Energy Pty Ltd	0	1	0	1	0
Urth Energy ¹¹	-	0	1	-	-	
Total		52	71	64	78	80
Grand total		7,184	5,374	4,925	6,759	5,361

¹ Alinta Energy Retail Sales Pty Ltd joined the scheme from 13 August 2017.

² Click Energy Pty Ltd includes amaysim Energy Pty Ltd and Click Energy data.

³ 1st Energy Pty Ltd joined the Scheme from 9 August 2017.

⁴ Locality Planning Energy Pty Ltd joined the scheme from 1 July 2015.

⁵ Mojo Power joined the scheme on 14 September 2016.

⁶ PowerShop Australia joined the scheme on 1 November 2016.

⁷ ERM Power Retail joined the scheme on 1 July 2015 and did not have any issues until 2016-17.

⁸ People Energy joined the scheme on 1 July 2016.

⁹ Energy Locals joined the scheme on 15 January 2017.

¹⁰ From May 2014, Australian Power and Gas customers were migrated to AGL.

¹¹ Urth Energy entered into administration 1 February 2017.

¹² Next Business Energy joined the scheme on 25 November 2015 and did not have any issues until 2016-17.

Electricity distributors



Table 9: Closed electricity distributor complaints by primary issue

PRIMARY ISSUE	SCHEME PARTICIPANT	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
SUPPLY	Energex Ltd	42	63	76	87	64
	Ergon Energy Corporation Ltd	43	67	60	49	55
	Essential Energy	1	3	1	2	2
Total		86	133	137	138	121
PROVISION	Energex Ltd	60	44	54	63	71
	Ergon Energy Corporation Ltd	54	43	49	48	36
	Essential Energy	5	6	4	5	2
Total		119	93	107	116	109
CUSTOMER SERVICE	Energex Ltd	52	63	49	54	70
	Ergon Energy Corporation Ltd	29	22	32	23	21
	Essential Energy	3	2	0	0	1
Total		84	87	81	77	92
LAND	Energex Ltd	17	16	16	30	36
	Ergon Energy Corporation Ltd	13	10	10	9	22
Total		30	26	26	39	58
BILLING	Energex Ltd	0	0	5	0	0
	Ergon Energy Corporation Ltd	6	2	0	3	0
Total		6	2	5	3	0
CREDIT	Energex Ltd	0	0	0	0	1
Total		0	0	0	0	1
OTHER	Energex Ltd	26	37	46	31	25
	Ergon Energy Corporation Ltd	14	9	7	10	6
	Essential Energy	1	4	2	0	1
Total		41	50	55	41	32
Grand total		366	391	411	414	413

413

electricity distributor complaints closed

Most common primary issue:

SUPPLY

29%

2nd most common primary issue:

PROVISION

26%

Electricity case study



Case Study

Distributor denies refund

A customer paid \$12,000 to their electricity distributor as a capital contribution toward a 500KVa pad mount transformer as part of a commercial development. It was then decided that the pad mount transformer was not required, so the distributor agreed to refund the customer almost \$8000, with the remaining \$4000 retained by the distributor as a design fee. The customer later enquired with the distributor why the \$8000 hadn't been returned. The distributor denied their claim on the basis that the fees were non-refundable because the customer changed their mind about the pad mount transformer. An investigation was launched to seek a refund for the customer of \$7292.96.



Outcome:

During our investigation, we learned that the contract between the customer and distributor did not contain a clause about the recovery of planning and design fees for projects that did not proceed. As such, the distributor agreed to refund \$4800 to the customer. Regarding the remaining \$7200, we discovered that the customer was required to pay a connection application fee of \$1500, and so the distributor agreed to refund an additional \$5700 to the customer. In total, the customer received a refund of more than \$10,000, which far exceeded their expectations. The customer was very satisfied with the outcome and expressed their thanks for our efforts to reach such a great resolution.

Electricity case study



Case Study

Reduction for drought-affected farmer

A customer sought an amendment of the estimated consumption charges over a 12-month period for a bore pump. During the disputed period, the customer was operating a small business in drought declared conditions and his use of the bore pump was approximately half of what it had been in the previous year. The drought prevented planting so there had been no need to irrigate. The meter in question had also been replaced without a final read being taken to verify the accuracy of the estimated read.



Outcome:

An initial investigation showed that the retailer billed the customer in accordance with the estimated read provided by the meter data provider. We approached the meter data provider and presented them with the drought declarations for the customer's location. As a result, they agreed to amend the estimated reads.

The electricity retailer received the amended reads and issued the customer with a reduced bill, saving the customer more than \$12,000. The electricity retailer agreed to apply a six-month payment extension to the account to allow the customer time to clear the debt. The customer was satisfied with the resolution as it was in line with their initial expectations.

Electricity retailer and distributor performance



Table 10: Electricity retailer and distributor performance

PROVIDER ¹	Electricity customer numbers ²	Complaints closed per 10,000 customers	Cases closed 2018-19	Cases closed 2017-18	% Variance
First tier retailer					
Origin Energy Electricity Ltd	500,001 - 1,000,000	23	1,543	1,914	-19%
Ergon Energy Qld Pty Ltd	500,001 - 1,000,000	11	763	864	-12%
AGL Sales (Queensland Electricity) Pty Ltd	100,001 - 500,000	29	1,009	1,235	-18%
Second tier retailer					
Alinta Energy Retail Sales Pty Ltd	100,001 - 500,000	39	654	469	39%
EnergyAustralia Pty Ltd	100,001 - 500,000	39	437	543	-20%
Powerdirect Pty Ltd	10,001 - 100,000	117	167	139	20%
Click Energy Pty Ltd ³	10,001 - 100,000	72	302	948	-68%
Simply Energy	10,001 - 100,000	46	71	125	-43%
Red Energy Pty Ltd	10,001 - 100,000	30	139	191	-27%
Dodo Power & Gas Pty Ltd	10,001 - 100,000	28	31	52	-40%
Locality Planning Energy Pty Ltd	10,001 - 100,000	14	25	25	0%
1st Energy PTY LTD	3,001 - 10,000	200	103	54	91%
QEnergy Limited	3,001 - 10,000	57	32	35	-9%
Lumo Energy	< 3000	165	32	57	-44%
Distributor					
ENERGEX Ltd	> 1,000,000	2	267	265	1%
Ergon Energy Corporation Ltd	500,001 - 1,000,000	2	140	142	-1%

Electricity providers with fewer than 20 complaints

Diamond Energy Pty Ltd	Momentum Energy Pty Ltd
Energy Locals Pty Ltd	People Energy Pty Ltd
ERM Power Retail Pty Ltd	Powershop Australia Pty Ltd
Essential Energy	Sanctuary Energy Pty Ltd
Mojo Power Pty Ltd	



Complaints <20

¹ Only providers with more than 20 complaints have been included in this table

² Customer number data provided by the AER for retailers as at 31 December 2018 and for distributors as at 30 June 2017

³ Click Energy Pty Ltd includes amaysim Energy Pty Ltd and Click Energy data



GAS





⬇ The figures and the issues

Gas complaints

This year, we closed 393 gas complaints, including 82 investigations. This was an increase of 21 per cent from the 68 investigations completed in 2017-18.

Table 11: Closed gas complaints by primary issue and case type

PRIMARY ISSUE	Refer Back	Referral to Higher Level	Investigation	Total
Billing	94	49	39	182
Provision	36	10	9	55
Credit	19	12	21	52
Customer service	20	12	6	38
Transfer	8	7	5	20
Supply	16	0	2	18
Land	2	2	0	4
Other	24	0	0	24
Total	219	92	82	393

393

gas complaints closed

↑ **21%**

increase in investigations from 2017-18

Most common primary issue:
BILLING

46%



Gas case study

Erratic gas supply

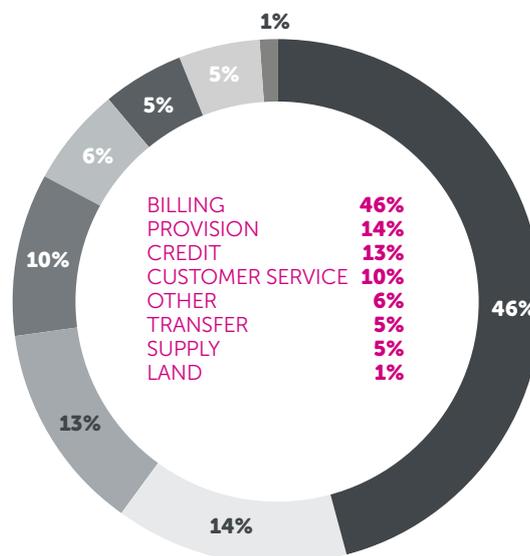
After a new gas meter was installed, the customer experienced interruptions to gas supply which caused loss of business. The customer contacted his gas retailer several times to try to resolve the issue then contacted us when it was not resolved in a timely manner.



Outcome:

We investigated the complaint and found that the gas retailer had raised several service orders for the distributor to attend the site. We then investigated the issue with the distributor, who arranged for two crews to monitor the meter and determined that when the sun hit the meter, it caused the pressure to rise which resulted in interruptions to supply. To resolve the issue, the distributor made a fitted cover for the meter and piping resulting in no further interruptions. The customer was satisfied that the issue of gas supply interruptions was resolved.

2018-19 Closed gas complaints by primary issue



Case any contact a customer has with EWOQ i.e. general enquiry, refer back to supplier, referral to higher level, investigation, or referral to another organisation.

Complaints all cases that are billed to a scheme participant i.e. refer back to supplier, referral to higher level and investigation.

Gas retailers

Table 12: Closed gas retailer complaints by primary issue

PRIMARY ISSUE	Scheme participant	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Billing	Origin Energy Retail Ltd	116	97	67	71	98
	AGL Sales (Queensland) Pty Ltd	107	109	93	106	81
	Red Energy (Gas) Pty Ltd ¹	-	-	-	-	2
	Maranoa Regional Council	1	0	0	0	0
	Western Downs Regional Council	1	0	0	0	0
Total		225	206	160	177	181
Credit	Origin Energy Retail Ltd	50	34	29	27	29
	AGL Sales (Queensland) Pty Ltd	39	19	12	22	23
	Western Downs Regional Council	1	1	0	0	0
Total		90	54	41	49	52
Provision	Origin Energy Retail Ltd	22	19	9	28	21
	AGL Sales (Queensland) Pty Ltd	15	20	18	16	13
	Red Energy (Gas) Pty Ltd ¹	-	-	-	-	2
	Western Downs Regional Council	1	0	0	0	0
Total		38	39	27	44	36
Customer service	AGL Sales (Queensland) Pty Ltd	20	17	5	17	14
	Origin Energy Retail Ltd	18	23	10	14	12
	Australian Power and Gas Pty Ltd ²	1	-	-	-	-
	Red Energy (Gas) Pty Ltd ¹	-	-	-	-	1
Total		39	40	15	31	27
Transfer	AGL Sales (Queensland) Pty Ltd	8	5	3	7	11
	Origin Energy Retail Ltd	12	7	6	7	6
	Red Energy (Gas) Pty Ltd ¹	-	-	-	-	3
Total		20	12	9	14	20
Marketing	AGL Sales (Queensland) Pty Ltd	1	1	1	0	0
Total		1	1	1	0	0
Other	Origin Energy Retail Ltd	0	6	1	1	4
	AGL Sales (Queensland) Pty Ltd	1	0	2	2	1
Total		1	6	3	3	5
Grand total		414	358	256	318	321

¹Red Energy (Gas) joined the scheme on 1 July 2018

²From May 2014, Australian Power and Gas customers migrated to AGL

Gas distributors

Table 13: Closed gas distributor complaints by primary issue

PRIMARY ISSUE	Scheme participant	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Provision	Australian Gas Networks Limited ¹	3	1	11	13	14
	Western Downs Regional Council	0	0	0	1	4
	Allgas Energy Pty Ltd	0	0	2	3	1
Total		3	1	13	17	19
Supply	Australian Gas Networks Limited ¹	1	2	3	11	12
	Allgas Energy Pty Ltd	1	0	4	10	6
	Envestra Limited ¹	3	-	-	-	-
Total		5	2	7	21	18
Customer service	Australian Gas Networks Limited ¹	2	5	1	7	11
	Allgas Energy Pty Ltd	1	1	2	3	0
	Envestra Limited ¹	1	-	-	-	-
Total		4	6	3	10	11
Land	Australian Gas Networks Limited ¹	0	3	0	1	4
	Allgas Energy Pty Ltd	0	0	2	0	0
	Envestra Limited ¹	2	-	-	-	-
Total		2	3	2	1	4
Billing	Allgas Energy Pty Ltd	0	0	0	0	1
Total		0	0	0	0	1
Other	Australian Gas Networks Limited ¹	1	1	1	18	12
	Allgas Energy Pty Ltd	0	0	5	10	7
	Western Downs Regional Council	0	1	0	0	0
	Envestra Limited ¹	2	-	-	-	-
Total		3	2	6	28	19
Grand total		17	14	31	77	72

¹From October 2014, Envestra Limited became known as Australian Gas Networks Limited



Case Study

Water case study

Billing error since 2015

A customer, who was based interstate, bought an investment property in Queensland in 2015 and their property manager contacted the water retailer and requested the customer's postal address be updated. The customer then received a statement from the property manager for \$1950. This statement had initially come from the retailer and had already been paid by the real estate agency managing the property. The customer contacted the retailer for clarification and was advised that there was also an outstanding balance of \$1800. The customer advised the retailer that they had not received any bills since 2015.

During their discussion with the retailer, the customer advised that their postal address included the wrong postcode. The retailer offered the customer a payment plan and advised that they would waive the interest of \$200. The customer did not think the retailer acted in the best interest of the customer and sought our assistance.

→ Outcome:

We investigated how the incorrect address was recorded and why the retailer made no alternative efforts to contact the customer concerning their outstanding balance. We suggested the retailer consider a financial adjustment due to the data entry error. The retailer acknowledged a data entry error was made during a change of property ownership in 2015. They also acknowledged that no attempt had been made to contact the customer when they received return mail from the customer's address.

In consideration of the error made, and as a customer service gesture, the retailer provided an ex-gratia credit of \$1916.95 and waived the \$200 interest charges. The customer thanked EWOQ for the assistance and was satisfied with the outcome.



Case Study

Water case study

Disputed water pressure supply

A family had ongoing issues with low water pressure at their home and sought to remedy the situation with their water distributor. They were concerned the distributor had failed to deliver on their minimum standards of 210kPa, as the water pressure at their property tested below the minimum standard. They contacted us because the issue had not been adequately addressed despite multiple attempts to do so.

→ Outcome:

We investigated to determine what action the distributor had taken to resolve the customer's complaint and the results of any previous investigations conducted by the distributor. We also sought to understand if the water loss and reduced water pressure was because of issues beyond the point of connection. The distributor's investigation determined that water pressure at the site fluctuated between 190kPa and 220kPa, and increased it to 280kPa. Following our intervention, the family confirmed their water pressure had noticeably increased since the distributor addressed the complaint.

WATER





The figures and the issues

Water complaints

341

water complaints closed

↓ 6%

decrease from 2017-18

18%

increase in investigations from 2017-18

Most common primary issue:

BILLING

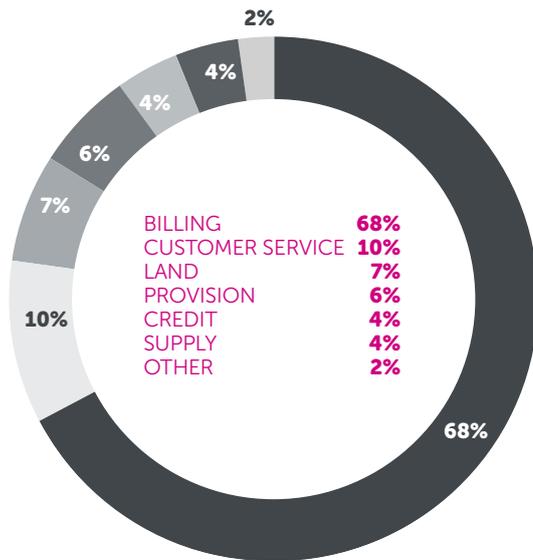
68%

While there was a six per cent decrease in water complaints overall in 2018-19, there was an 18 per cent increase in investigations during this period.

Table 14: Closed water complaints by primary issue and case type

PRIMARY ISSUE	Refer back	Referral to higher level	Investigation	Total
Billing	125	45	63	233
Customer service	17	11	5	33
Land	6	9	9	24
Provision	7	5	8	20
Credit	5	6	2	13
Supply	5	2	5	12
Other	6	0	0	6
Total	171	78	92	341

Closed water complaints by primary issue



Please note: percentages do not add to 100 per cent due to rounding.

Water case study

Delayed bills

A customer had not received a water bill since purchasing a property 18 months prior and contacted us to investigate.

Outcome:

We investigated the matter with the water retailer. A billing account was established, with retrospective bills issued to the customer. Because of the time taken to set up the account, the water retailer did not attempt to recover water and sewerage access and consumption charges dating back to the start of the account.

The customer saved about six months' worth of charges and was offered a long-term payment plan for the balance of the account. The customer accepted this outcome and was grateful for our assistance.

Water retailers

Table 15: Closed water retailer complaints by primary issue

PRIMARY ISSUE	Scheme participant	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Billing	Queensland Urban Utilities	100	136	129	106	117
	Unitywater	60	69	94	66	66
	Gold Coast City Council	44	28	29	40	38
	Logan City Council	8	5	4	13	6
	Redland City Council	3	4	4	7	6
Total		215	242	260	232	233
Customer service	Queensland Urban Utilities	11	13	8	11	14
	Unitywater	12	9	6	4	5
	Gold Coast City Council	2	2	3	4	2
	Redland City Council	1	0	0	0	1
	Logan City Council	2	0	0	1	0
Total		28	24	17	20	22
Credit	Queensland Urban Utilities	8	14	12	4	6
	Unitywater	19	8	10	13	4
	Gold Coast City Council	4	6	5	10	2
	Logan City Council	1	0	1	0	1
	Redland City Council	0	0	0	1	0
Total		32	28	28	28	13
Provision	Queensland Urban Utilities	4	4	4	3	3
	Unitywater	4	4	6	2	1
	Gold Coast City Council	0	0	1	0	1
	Logan City Council	0	1	0	0	0
Total		8	9	11	5	5
Other	Gold Coast City Council	2	5	4	2	2
	Queensland Urban Utilities	2	4	4	1	2
	Unitywater	5	2	4	3	0
	Logan City Council	0	0	0	1	0
	Redland City Council	0	0	0	1	0
Total		9	11	12	8	4
Grand total		292	314	328	293	277

Case any contact a customer has with EWOQ i.e. general enquiry, refer back to supplier, referral to higher level, investigation, or referral to another organisation.

Complaints all cases that are billed to a scheme participant i.e. refer back to supplier, referral to higher level and investigation.

Water distributors

Table 16: Closed water distributor complaints by primary issue

PRIMARY ISSUE	Scheme participant	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Land	Queensland Urban Utilities	13	4	8	10	20
	Unitywater	10	4	7	9	4
	Gold Coast City Council	4	1	3	0	0
	Redland City Council	0	1	0	0	0
	Total	27	10	18	19	24
Provision	Queensland Urban Utilities	3	7	14	7	8
	Unitywater	8	5	3	5	6
	Gold Coast City Council	2	2	0	1	1
	Logan City Council	1	0	1	0	0
	Total	14	14	18	13	15
Supply	Queensland Urban Utilities	8	21	13	13	11
	Logan City Council	0	0	0	0	1
	Unitywater	6	7	3	10	0
	Redland City Council	1	1	0	1	0
	Gold Coast City Council	0	4	1	0	0
	Total	15	33	17	24	12
Customer service	Queensland Urban Utilities	11	20	1	5	8
	Unitywater	5	4	8	1	3
	Gold Coast City Council	0	1	0	0	0
	Total	16	25	9	6	11
Other	Unitywater	4	1	3	4	1
	Queensland Urban Utilities	1	5	4	2	1
	Gold Coast City Council	1	3	0	2	0
	Total	6	9	7	8	2
Grand total		78	91	69	70	64



⌵ **Our finances**



Financial summary

The financial records of the Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman have been properly maintained throughout the year ending 30 June 2019 in compliance with prescribed requirements. The risk management and control systems relating to financial management have been operating efficiently, effectively and economically throughout the financial year.

FUNDING OUR SCHEME

While the Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman was established by Queensland legislation as a public service office, it is not funded from consolidated revenue. Instead, it is funded by participation fees and user pays fees levied on energy and water retailers and distributors who participate in the Ombudsman scheme. The majority of energy and water Ombudsman offices in Australia are funded similarly.

Our user pays model reflects the level of time and resources needed to resolve individual disputes. In addition, scheme participants are liable to increased fees should they fail to adequately respond to our investigations in a timely manner. This process is designed to encourage the early closure of complaint investigations. Under section 65(1) of the *Energy and Water Ombudsman Act 2006*, an annual participation fee is also imposed on each scheme participant.

Table 17: Annual participant fees for 2018-19

Entity type	Annual fee
Energy entity is a holder of a distribution authority under only one energy Act	\$5,000
Energy entity is the holder of a distribution authority under two energy Acts	\$10,000
Energy entity is a holder of a retail authority under only one energy Act	\$5,000
Energy entity is the holder of a retail authority under two energy Acts	\$10,000
Energy entity is the holder of a special approval and provides customer connection services	\$5,000
Energy entity is an exempt seller	Amount prescribed under regulation
All water entities	\$10,000

* Under s.4 of the Energy and Water Ombudsman Regulation 2007, Western Downs Regional Council and Maranoa Regional Council receive a variation to their scheme participant fees.

User pays fees are invoiced prior to the start of each quarter (advance user pays fees) and are then reconciled at the end of December and end of June (actual user pays fees).

The advance user pays fees are based on each scheme participant's previous usage of the scheme in relation to case types of refer back to supplier, referral to higher level, investigations level 1 and investigations level 2.

Actual user pays fees are calculated using actual expenditure and usage of the scheme by each participant. Investigations level 3 and final orders are not included in the advance user pays fees and are captured in the calculation of actual user pays fees.

Under legislation, scheme participants have 14 days to pay invoices relating to EWOQ fees.

We use Resolve as our case management system to register each case and record all details, activities and documents relating to each case. Each case is uniquely identified within Resolve, and we record the amount of time (in minutes) spent dealing with each case.

Both the advance user pays fees and the actual user pays fees for each case type are calculated using number of cases closed and average time (in minutes) taken to close cases. We use a single fee per case for refer back to supplier, referral to higher level, investigation level 1 and investigation level 2 cases. Investigation level 3 cases are charged at the cost of an investigation level 2 plus cost per

minute for actual minutes at investigation level 3. Final orders are charged at the fee for the investigation level of the case when the investigation ceased, plus a fixed fee of \$4000 per final order.

Should we find the approved budget is insufficient to meet our operating costs, supplementary funding may be required from scheme participants.

At the end of each financial year, any surplus funds are returned to scheme participants. The reconciliations at the end of December and end of June each year ensure we meet our legislative requirement to only charge scheme participants the actual costs to operate the scheme for that period.

OUR FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

Our budget for 2018-19 was developed from a zero base without any surplus funds from the previous financial year, and has considered known changes in expenditure from the previous year and likely future expenses.

Our Statement of Comprehensive Income shows our operating result (income minus expenses) for 2018-19 was \$7000, which is interest charged to scheme participants under the Act for late payment of scheme fees.

Our income

Income for 2018-19 was \$6.507 million (up from \$6.282 million in 2017-18) and included:

- **\$6.243 million user pays fees**
(see Table 18 for user pays fees by case type)
- **\$215,724 participation fees**
- **\$48,392 other revenue**

Table 18: User pays fee breakdown 2018-19.

	Revenue (\$)	% of revenue
Refer back	1,008,488	16.1%
Referral to higher level	1,602,441	25.7%
Investigation level 1	1,890,058	30.3%
Investigation level 2	1,384,663	22.2%
Investigation level 3	357,769	5.7%

Our expenditure

Expenses for 2018-19 amounted to \$6.5 million (up from \$6.278 million in 2017-18). Employee expenses accounted for 69.5 per cent of this, with supplies and services accounting for a further 30 per cent. Depreciation, audit fees, and costs associated with our Advisory Council made up the balance of our total expenditure.

OUR FINANCIAL POSITION

As shown in the Balance Sheet (page 72), the office ended the year with total equity of \$274,000.

Assets

Our assets amounted to \$3.208 million. See Table 19 for the breakdown by asset type.

Table 19: Assets as at 30 June 2019

	Value (\$)	% of total
Cash & cash equivalents	2,851,000	88.9%
Receivables	309,000	9.6%
Prepayments	46,000	1.4%
Plant & Equipment	2,000	0.1%

Liabilities

As at 30 June 2019, our liabilities were \$2.934 million.

Table 20: Liabilities as at 30 June 2019

	Value (\$)	% of total
Unearned revenue*	1,619,000	55.2%
Payables	854,000	29.1%
Accrued employee entitlements	461,000	15.7%

*Unearned revenue relates to advance user pays fees received from scheme participants for the first quarter of 2019-20.



Financial statements

Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman
(trading as Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland)
for the financial year ended 30 June 2019

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Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman Financial Statements
As at 30 June 2019

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Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman
Statement of Comprehensive Income
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019

	Notes	2019 \$'000	2018 \$'000
Income from Continuing Operations			
Scheme fees	2.	6,459	6,240
Other revenue	3.	48	42
Total Income from Continuing Operations		6,507	6,282
Expenses from Continuing Operations			
Employee expenses	4.	4,519	4,472
Supplies and services	5.	1,921	1,774
Depreciation	9.	1	1
Other expenses	6.	59	31
Total Expenses from Continuing Operations		6,500	6,278
Operating Result from Continuing Operations		7	4
Total Comprehensive Income		7	4

The accompanying notes form part of these statements

Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman
Balance Sheet
As at 30 June 2019

	Notes	2019 \$'000	2018 \$'000
Current Assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	7.	2,851	1,576
Receivables	8.	309	914
Prepayments		46	30
Total Current Assets		3,206	2,520
Non-Current Assets			
Plant and equipment	9.	2	3
Total Non-Current Assets		2	3
Total Assets		3,208	2,523
Current Liabilities			
Payables	10.	854	1,367
Accrued employee benefits	11.	461	450
Unearned revenue	12.	1,619	439
Total Current Liabilities		2,934	2,256
Total Liabilities		2,934	2,256
Net Assets		274	267
Equity			
Accumulated surplus		195	188
Contributed equity		79	79
Total Equity		274	267

The accompanying notes form part of these statements

Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman
Statement of Changes in Equity
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019

	Accumulated Surplus \$'000	Contributed Equity \$'000	TOTAL \$'000
Balance as at 1 July 2017	184	79	263
Operating Result from Continuing Operations	4	-	4
Balance as at 30 June 2018	188	79	267
Operating Result from Continuing Operations	7	-	7
Balance as at 30 June 2019	195	79	274

The accompanying notes form part of these statements

**Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman
Statement of Cash Flows
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019**

	Note	2019 \$'000	2018 \$'000
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
<i>Inflows:</i>			
Scheme fees		8,236	5,424
Interest receipts		46	41
GST input tax credits from ATO		224	173
GST collected from members/customers		3	4
Other		2	-
<i>Outflows:</i>			
Employee expenses		(4,509)	(4,436)
Supplies and services		(2,480)	(1,242)
GST remitted to ATO		(3)	(4)
GST paid to suppliers		(215)	(186)
Other		(29)	(31)
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities		1,275	(257)
Net increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		1,275	(257)
Cash and cash equivalents – beginning of financial year	7.	1,576	1,833
Cash and cash equivalents – end of financial year	7.	2,851	1,576

The accompanying notes form part of these statements

**Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman
Notes to the Financial Statements
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019**

Note 1 – Basis of Financial Statement Preparation

General Information

These financial statements cover the Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman trading as Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland (EWOQ). EWOQ has no controlled entities.

EWOQ is a free and independent dispute resolution service for Queensland's energy consumers and water customers in South East Queensland. The Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman was established under the *Energy and Water Ombudsman Act 2006*.

The Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman is controlled by the State of Queensland which is the ultimate parent.

Authorisation of Financial Statements for Issue

The financial statements are authorised for issue by the Energy and Water Ombudsman (EWO) and General Manager Business Support of the Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman at the date of signing the Management Certificate.

Compliance with Prescribed Requirements

The financial statements have been prepared in compliance with the *Financial Accountability Act 2009* and the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009*.

EWOQ is a not-for-profit entity and these general purpose financial statements are prepared in compliance with the requirements of Australian Accounting Standards – Reduced Disclosure Requirements and Interpretations applicable to not-for-profit entities.

The financial statements are prepared on an accrual basis (with the exception of the statement of cash flows which is prepared on a cash basis).

Underlying Measurement Basis

The historical cost convention is used as the measurement basis unless otherwise stated.

Presentation matters

Currency and Rounding - Amounts included in the financial statements are in Australian dollars and rounded to the nearest \$1,000 or, where that amount is \$500 or less, to zero, unless disclosure of the full amount is specifically required.

Comparatives - Comparative information reflects the audited 2017-18 financial statements.

Current/Non-Current Classification - Assets are classified as 'current' where their carrying amount is expected to be realised within 12 months after the reporting date. Liabilities are classified as 'current' when they are due to be settled within 12 months after the reporting date, or EWOQ does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement to beyond 12 months after the reporting date. All other assets and liabilities are classified as non-current.

**Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman
Notes to the Financial Statements
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019**

Note 1 – Basis of Financial Statement Preparation (continued)

Taxation

The Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman is exempt from income tax under the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1936* and is exempted from the other forms of Commonwealth taxation with the exception of Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) and Goods and Services Tax (GST).

Receivables and payables in the Balance Sheet are shown inclusive of GST. GST credits receivable from, and GST payable to, the ATO at reporting date are separately recognised in receivable with Note 8.

New and Revised Accounting Standards

First Time Mandatory Application of Accounting Standards and Interpretations

AASB 9 Financial Instruments was applied for the first time in 2018-19. This standard introduces new categories for the classification of financial assets and new impairment rules that focuses on expected credit losses rather than included losses. The new standard does not impact on the classification of EWOQ's financial assets (cash and receivables), which will continue to be measured at amortised cost. Adoption of AASB 9's new impairment model resulted in no change to the receivables loss allowance on 1 July 2018 refer to Note 13.

Comparative figures for 2017-18 have not been restated for AASB 9.

Early Adoption of Accounting Standards and Interpretations

No Accounting Pronouncements were early adopted in the 2018-19 financial year.

Voluntary Changes in Accounting Policy

No voluntary changes in accounting policies occurred during the 2018-19 financial year.

Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman
Notes to the Financial Statements
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019

Note 2 – Scheme fees

	2019	2018
	\$'000	\$'000
User-pays fees	6,243	6,041
Annual Participation fees	216	199
Total	6,459	6,240

Accounting Policy

EWOQ is fully funded through a combination of annual participation and quarterly user-pays fees.

EWOQ invoices in advance for annual participation fees to industry scheme participants. In relation to quarterly user pays fees, EWOQ invoices in advance based on estimated usage and then reconciled back to actuals twice a year. User-pays and annual participation fees are recognised as revenue over time as prescribed services are performed.

Note 3 – Other Revenue

	2019	2018
	\$'000	\$'000
Interest	46	42
Other revenue	2	-
Total	48	42

Accounting Policy

EWOQ receives bank interest and is legislated to charge scheme participants interest on unpaid fees. Both are recognised when due.

Note 4 – Employee Expenses

	2019	2018
	\$'000	\$'000
Employee Benefits		
Wages and salaries	3,371	3,323
Employer superannuation contributions	470	459
Long service leave levy	64	73
Annual leave expense	338	341
Employee Related Benefits		
Payroll tax	197	197
Workers' compensation premium	19	13
Other	60	66
Total	4,519	4,472

**Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman
Notes to the Financial Statements
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019**

Note 4 – Employee Expenses (continued)

	2019	2018
Number of employees	40	42

The number of employees as at 30 June, including both full-time employees and part-time employees, is measured on a full-time equivalent basis.

Accounting Policy

Employee Benefits

Short-term employee benefits - wages, salaries and sick leave

Wages and salaries due but unpaid at the reporting date are recognised in the Balance Sheet at the current salary rates. As EWOQ expects such liabilities to be wholly settled within 12 months of reporting date, the liabilities are recognised at undiscounted amounts.

Sick leave is non-vesting. An expense is recognised for this leave as it is taken.

Other long - term employee benefits - annual and long service leave

Annual leave and long service leave liabilities are classified and measured as other long-term employee benefits as EWOQ does not expect to wholly settle all such liabilities within the 12 months following reporting date.

Other long-term employee benefits are presented as current liabilities where the office does not have an unconditional right to defer payment for at least 12 months after the end of the reporting period.

All directly associated on-costs (e.g. employer superannuation contributions, payroll tax and workers' compensation insurance) are also recognised as liabilities, where these on-costs are material.

Superannuation

Superannuation benefits are provided through either defined contribution (accumulation) plans or the QSuper defined benefit plan, in accordance with employees' conditions of employment and employee instructions as to superannuation plan (where applicable).

Defined contribution plans - Employer contributions are based on rates specified under conditions of employment. EWOQ's contributions are expenses when they become payable at each fortnightly pay period.

QSuper defined benefit plan - The liability for QSuper defined benefits is held on a whole-of-government basis and reported in those financial statements. Employer contributions to QSuper are based on rates determined on the advice of the State Actuary. EWOQ contributions are expensed when they become payable at each fortnightly pay period. EWOQ's obligations to the QSuper plan are limited those contributions paid.

Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman
Notes to the Financial Statements
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019

Note 5 – Supplies and Services

	2019	2018
	\$'000	\$'000
Consultants and contractors	396	360
Travel	45	38
Property lease and rental	548	528
Promotion and entertainment	51	47
Printing, stationery and office supplies	48	40
Information technology	209	214
Communications	52	54
Corporate service charges	510	458
Sundries	62	35
Total	1,921	1,774

Accounting Policy

Supplies and Services items are recorded in the period in which the expense is incurred. EWOQ outsources corporate support services. For property lease and rental policy refer to Note 16.

Note 6 – Other Expenses

	2019	2018
	\$'000	\$'000
Advisory Council fees	7	6
External audit fees*	20	20
Other assurance services**	30	-
Other	2	5
Total	59	31

Disclosure

*Total audit fees paid to the Queensland Audit Office relating to the 2018-19 financial statements are estimated to be \$20,400 (2018: \$19,900). There are no non-audit services included in this amount.

** the assurance services paid to PKF Brisbane were in relation to the independent review of proposed digital strategy and its alignment with business needs.

Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman
Notes to the Financial Statements
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019

Note 7 – Cash and Cash Equivalents

	2019	2018
	\$'000	\$'000
Cash at bank	2,851	1,576
Total	2,851	1,576

Accounting Policy

Cash and cash equivalents include all cash and cheques received at 30 June as well as deposits held at call with financial institutions.

Note 8 – Receivables

	2019	2018
	\$'000	\$'000
Trade debtors	267	863
	267	863
GST receivable	20	29
Long service leave reimbursements	20	19
Interest receivable	3	3
Total	310	914

Accounting Policy

Trade debtors are recognised at the amounts due at the time of invoicing on a quarterly basis to scheme participants or when invoices are issued based on scheme participant's additional use of EWOQ's services above amounts paid in advance. Settlement terms are within 14 days from receipt date for scheme participants, within 30 days from invoice date for others.

The collectability of receivables is assessed periodically with provision being made for expected credit losses. All known bad debts were written off as at 30 June. The loss allowance is estimated based on the probability and timing of potential defaults and takes into account forecasts of future economic conditions as well as past events. No provision for impairment was necessary at year end.

**Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman
Notes to the Financial Statements
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019**

Note 9 – Plant and equipment and depreciation expense

	2019 \$'000	2018 \$'000
Plant and Equipment		
Gross	50	50
Less Accumulated depreciation	<u>(48)</u>	<u>(47)</u>
Total	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
Plant and Equipment Reconciliation		
Carrying amount as at 1 July 2018	3	4
Acquisitions	-	-
Depreciation	<u>(1)</u>	<u>(1)</u>
Carrying amount as at 30 June 2019	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>

Accounting Policy

Asset Acquisition

Actual cost is used for the initial recording of all non-current physical asset acquisitions. Cost is determined as the value given as consideration plus costs incidental to the acquisition, including all other costs incurred in getting the assets ready for use, including architects' fees and engineering design fees. However, any training costs are expensed as incurred.

Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman
Notes to the Financial Statements
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019

Note 9 – Plant and Equipment and Depreciation Expense (continued)

Where assets are received free of charge from another Queensland public sector entity (usually via an involuntary transfer), the acquisition cost is recognised as the gross carrying amount in the books of the transferor immediately prior to the transfer together with any accumulated depreciated.

Assets acquired at no cost or for nominal consideration, other than from an involuntary transfer from another Queensland government agency, recognised at their fair value at date of acquisition in accordance with AASB 116 *Property, Plant and Equipment*.

Recognition of Plant and Equipment

Items of plant and equipment with a cost or other value equal to or in excess of the following thresholds are recognised for financial reporting purposes in the year of acquisition:

Plant and equipment	\$5,000
---------------------	---------

Items of lesser value are expensed in the year of acquisition. Expenditure is only capitalised if it increases the service potential or useful life of existing asset. Maintenance expenditure that merely restores original service potential (arising from ordinary wear and tear etc.) is expensed.

Measurement of Non-Current Physical Assets using Cost

Plant and equipment is measured at cost. The carrying amounts for plant and equipment at cost approximate their fair value.

Impairment

All non-current physical assets are assessed for indicators of impairment on an annual basis. If an indicator of possible impairment exists, EWOQ determines the asset's recoverable amount. Any amount by which the asset's carrying amount exceeds the recoverable amount is recorded as an impairment loss.

The asset's recoverable amount is determined as the higher of the asset's fair value less costs to sell and current replacement cost.

Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman
Notes to the Financial Statements
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019

Note 9 – Plant and Equipment and Depreciation Expense (continued)

Depreciation

Plant and equipment are depreciated on a straight-line basis so as to allocate the revalued amount or net cost of each asset (respectively), less its estimated residual value, progressively over its estimated useful life to EWOQ.

The estimation of the useful lives of assets is based on historical experiences with similar assets as well as consideration such as manufacturers' warranties, asset turnover practices and EWOQ's strategic asset plan. Reassessments of useful lives are undertaken annually by EWOQ. Any consequential adjustments to remaining useful life estimates are implemented prospectively.

Any expenditure that increases the original assessed capacity or service potential of an asset is capitalised and the new depreciable amount is depreciated over the remaining useful life of the asset to EWOQ.

Depreciation Disclosures

The following depreciation rates were used:

Plant and equipment 12.5 - 20%

Note 10 – Payables

	2019	2018
	\$'000	\$'000
User-pays fees - refunds	717	1,206
Accrued expense	137	161
Total	854	1,367

Accounting Policy

User-pays fees - refunds are where revenue received in advance from a scheme participant exceeds the actual service provided in respect of that scheme participant, the difference is recognised as a payable to the scheme participant at year end.

Accrued expenses represents goods and services received prior to balance date whether invoiced or not. Accrued expenses are settled in accordance with supplier payment terms.

The carrying value of payables are considered to be a reasonable approximation of fair value.

**Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman
Notes to the Financial Statements
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019**

Note 11 – Accrued Employee Benefits

	2019 \$'000	2018 \$'000
Current		
Wages payable	65	66
Annual leave	376	363
Long service leave levy payable	20	21
Total	461	450

Accounting Policy – refer to Note 4

Note 12 – Unearned revenue

	2019 \$'000	2018 \$'000
Current		
Unearned revenue – user-pays fees	1,619	439
Total	1,619	439

Accounting Policy – refer to Note 2

Cash received from scheme participants in respect of services to be provided in 2019-20 financial year are recognised as unearned revenue.

Disclosure

Our legislation requires invoices for user-pays fees are to be raised in advance and payment of these invoices is due 14 days from receipt. Timing of actual payment of these invoices by scheme participants varies.

Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman
Notes to the Financial Statements
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019

Note 13 – Financial Instruments

Financial Instruments - Accounting Policy on Recognition

Financial assets and financial liabilities are recognised in the Balance Sheet when EWOQ becomes party to the contractual provisions of the financial instrument.

Financial Instruments – Classification and Presentation

Financial instruments are classified under Accounting Standard AASB 9 as follows:

	Notes	2019 \$'000	2018 \$'000
<i><u>Financial Assets</u></i>			
Cash and cash equivalents	7.	2,851	1,576
Receivables at amortised cost	8.	309	914
Total		3,160	2,490
<i><u>Financial Liabilities</u></i>			
Payables at amortised cost	10.	854	1,367
Total		854	1,367

Note 14 – Key Management Personnel (KMP) Disclosures

Details of Key Management Personnel

The following details for key management personnel include those positions that had authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of EWOQ during 2018-19 and 2017-18. Further information about these positions can be found in the body of the Annual Report under the section relating to Executive Management.

Position	Position Responsibility
Energy and Water Ombudsman	The strategic leadership, efficient and effective management of EWOQ, including its operational and financial performance.
General Manager, Assessment, Investigation and Resolution	Responsible for leading the complaint investigation and dispute resolution functions of EWOQ.
General Manager, Business Support	Responsible for efficient and effective corporate services to EWOQ and to ensure all statutory reporting obligations are met.
General Manager, Reporting, Policy and Research	Responsible for leading advice on complex policies and emerging issues, marketing and communication functions, and overseeing the reporting, research and root cause analysis process.

**Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman
Notes to the Financial Statements
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019**

Note 14 – Key Management Personnel (KMP) Disclosures (continued)

KMP Remuneration Policies

With the exception of the Energy and Water Ombudsman, remuneration policy for EWOQ's KMP is set by the Queensland Public Service Commission as provided for under the *Public Service Act 2008*.

The remuneration and other terms of employment of the Energy and Water Ombudsman are specified in the Governor in Council Appointment.

Remuneration expenses for those key management personnel comprise the following components:

Short term employee expenses which include:

- salaries and allowances earned and expensed for the entire year, or for that part of the year during which the employee occupied the specified position; and
- non-monetary benefits – consisting of provision of car parking together with fringe benefits tax applicable to the benefit.

Long term employee expenses - mainly annual leave and long service leave entitlements earned and expensed for the year, or for that part of the year during which the employee occupied the specified position.

Post-employment expenses – mainly superannuation obligations.

Termination benefits – include payments in lieu of notice on termination and other lump sum separation entitlements (excluding annual and long service leave entitlements) payable on termination of employment or acceptance of an offer of termination of employment.

Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman
Notes to the Financial Statements
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019

Note 14 – Key Management Personnel (KMP) Disclosures (continued)

The following disclosures focus on the expense incurred by EWOQ during the respective reporting periods that is attributable to key management positions. Therefore, the amounts disclosed reflect expenses recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Income.

Remuneration Expenses

2018-19

Position	Short term Employee Expenses		Long Term Employee Expenses	Post-Employment Expenses	Termination Benefits	Total Expenses
	Monetary Expenses \$'000	Non-Monetary Expenses \$'000				
Energy and Water Ombudsman	227	8	5	27	-	267
General Manager, Assessment, Investigation and Resolution	149	8	3	19	-	179
General Manager, Business Support	122	8	3	16	-	149
General Manager, Reporting, Policy and Research	93	-	2	17	-	112
Total Remuneration	591	24	13	79	-	707

2017-18

Position	Short term Employee Expenses		Long Term Employee Expenses	Post-Employment Expenses	Termination Benefits	Total Expenses
	Monetary Expenses \$'000	Non-Monetary Expenses \$'000				
Energy and Water Ombudsman	226	8	5	27	-	266
General Manager, Assessment, Investigation and Resolution	139	6	3	17	-	165
General Manager, Business Support	136	6	3	18	-	163
General Manager, Reporting, Policy and Research	140	5	3	17	-	165
Total Remuneration	641	25	14	79	-	759

**Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman
Notes to the Financial Statements
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019**

Note 14 – Key Management Personnel (KMP) Disclosures (continued)

Performance Payments

No KMP remuneration packages provide for performance or bonus payments.

Note 15 – Related Parties Transactions

Transactions with people/entities related to KMP

EWOQ has no related party transactions to disclose this financial year.

Note 16 – Commitments for Expenditure

Non-Cancellable Operating Lease

Commitments under operating leases at reporting date (inclusive of non-coverable GST input tax credits) are payable.

	2019	2018
	\$'000	\$'000
Not later than one year	535	518
Later than one year and not later than five years	<u>770</u>	<u>1,485</u>
Total	<u>1,305</u>	<u>2,003</u>

Accounting Policy

Operating lease payments are representative of the pattern of benefits derived from the leased assets and are expensed in the periods in which they are incurred.

Incentives received on entering into operating leases are recognised as liabilities. Lease payments are allocated between rental expense and reduction of the liability.

Operating leases are entered into as a means of acquiring access to office accommodation. Lease terms extend over a period of 3 to 5 years. EWOQ has no option to purchase the leased item at the conclusion of the lease although the lease provides for a right of renewal at which time the lease terms are renegotiated.

Operating lease rental expenses comprises the minimum lease payment payable under operating lease contracts. Lease payments are generally fixed, but with annual inflation escalation clauses upon which future year rentals are determined.

Note 17 – Contingencies

There were no other known contingent assets or liabilities at 30 June 2019.

Note 18 – Events Occurring After Balance Date

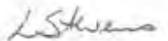
No event has occurred after balance date that has a material effect on these financial statements.

**MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATE OF
THE OFFICE OF THE ENERGY AND WATER OMBUDSMAN**

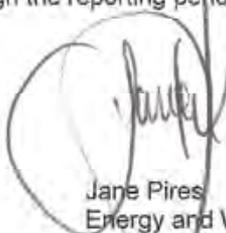
These general purpose financial statements have been prepared pursuant to s.62(1)(a) of the *Financial Accountability Act 2009* (the Act), s.43 of the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009* and other prescribed requirements. In accordance with s.62(1)(b) of the Act we certify that in our opinion:

- a) the prescribed requirements for establishing and keeping the accounts have been complied with in all material respects; and
- b) the financial statements have been drawn up to present a true and fair view, in accordance with prescribed accounting standards, of the transactions of the Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman for the financial year ended 30 June 2019 and of the financial position of the office as at the end of that year; and

We acknowledge responsibility under s.8 and s. 15 of the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009* for the establishment and maintenance, in all material respects, of an appropriate and effective system of internal controls and risk management processes with respect to financial reporting through the reporting period.



Lyn Stevens
General Manager, Business Support
Office of the Energy and Water
Ombudsman
Date 7/8/19



Jane Pires
Energy and Water Ombudsman
Office of the Energy and Water
Ombudsman
Date 7/8/19



INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman

Report on the audit of the financial report

Opinion

I have audited the accompanying financial report of the Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman.

In my opinion, the financial report:

- a) gives a true and fair view of the entity's financial position as at 30 June 2019, and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended
- b) complies with the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*, the Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009 and Australian Accounting Standards – Reduced Disclosure Requirements.

The financial report comprises the balance sheet as at 30 June 2019, the statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, notes to the financial statements including summaries of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, and the management certificate.

Basis for opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with the *Auditor-General of Queensland Auditing Standards*, which incorporate the Australian Auditing Standards. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of my report.

I am independent of the entity in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the financial report in Australia. I have also fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code and the *Auditor-General of Queensland Auditing Standards*.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Responsibilities of the entity for the financial report

The Office is responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*, the Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009 and Australian Accounting Standards – Reduced Disclosure Requirements, and for such internal control as the Office determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

The Office is also responsible for assessing the entity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters relating to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless it is intended to abolish the entity or to otherwise cease operations.



Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial report

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the entity.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the entity's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the entity's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. I base my conclusions on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the entity to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with the Office regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.



Report on other legal and regulatory requirements

In accordance with s.40 of the *Auditor-General Act 2009*, for the year ended 30 June 2019:

- a) I received all the information and explanations I required.
- b) In my opinion, the prescribed requirements in relation to the establishment and keeping of accounts were complied with in all material respects.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Damon Olive", is positioned above the printed name.

Damon Olive
as delegate of the Auditor-General

19 August 2019
Queensland Audit Office
Brisbane

⌵ Appendices



Appendix One: Data

APPENDIX 1: DATA

Table 21: Five-year closed cases

CLOSED CASES	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Electricity	9,539	7,504	6,636	8,838	7,231
Gas	803	644	552	732	699
Water	569	560	540	519	467
Not any of the above	138	187	133	122	162

Table 22: Customer profile

SECTOR	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Residential	10,496	8,470	7,401	9,735	8,113
Small business	545	424	455	469	438
Government	8	1	5	7	8
TOTAL	11,049	8,895	7,861	10,211	8,559

Table 23: Closed case types

CASE TYPE	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
General enquiry	946	885	857	1,052	994
Referral	1,752	1,468	984	1,228	1,057
Refer back	3,868	3,340	3,003	3,702	2,861
Referral to higher level	2,879	1,919	1,791	2,481	2,007
Level 1 investigation	1,037	847	915	1,275	1,145
Level 2 investigation	322	333	270	405	423
Level 3 investigation	234	103	41	68	72
Final order	11	0	0	0	0

Table 24: Five-year contact method

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Phone	8,024	6,433	5,619	7,089	5,760
Website	2,001	1,684	1,620	2,316	2,057
Email	820	616	511	682	630
Other*	204	162	111	124	112

*Includes fax, letter and in person

Table 25: Five-year received and closed by year

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Received	11,133	8,749	7,913	10,328	8,584
Closed	11,049	8,895	7,861	10,211	8,559

Table 26: Received and closed cases by month 2018-19

	Received	Closed
Jul-18	815	835
Aug-18	813	802
Sep-18	740	756
Oct-18	772	775
Nov-18	729	722
Dec-18	489	535
Jan-19	714	681
Feb-19	700	659
Mar-19	728	697
Apr-19	647	628
May-19	766	732
Jun-19	671	737
TOTAL	8,584	8,559

Appendix Two: Scheme participants

All licensed retailers and distributors who supply energy to small customers in Queensland (and water in South East Queensland) must become members of our scheme (scheme participants). EWOQ is fully funded by an industry levy imposed on the scheme participants.

SCHEME PARTICIPANT	Product type	Service type	SCHEME PARTICIPANT	Product type	Service type
1st Energy Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer	Logan City Council	Water	Distributor and Retailer
AGL Sales (Queensland Electricity) Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer	Lumo Energy (Queensland) Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer
AGL Sales (Queensland) Pty Ltd	Gas	Retailer	Maranoa Regional Council	Gas	Distributor and Retailer
Alinta Energy Retail Sales Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer	Mojo Power Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer
Allgas Energy Pty Ltd	Gas	Distributor	Momentum Energy Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer
Australian Gas Networks Limited	Gas	Distributor	Next Business Energy Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer
Click Energy Pty Ltd <i>also trading as Amaysim Energy Pty Ltd</i>	Electricity	Retailer	Origin Energy Electricity Ltd	Electricity	Retailer
Diamond Energy Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer	Origin Energy Retail Ltd	Gas	Retailer
Discover Energy Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer	People Energy Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer
Dodo Power & Gas Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer	Powerdirect Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer
Energex Ltd	Electricity	Distributor	Powershop Australia Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer
EnergyAustralia Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer	QEnergy Limited	Electricity	Retailer
Energy Locals Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer	Queensland Urban Utilities	Water	Distributor and Retailer
Ergon Energy Corporation Ltd	Electricity	Distributor	ReAmped Energy Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer
Ergon Energy Queensland Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer	Redland City Council	Water	Distributor and Retailer
ERM Power Retail Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer	Red Energy Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer
Essential Energy	Electricity	Distributor	Red Energy Pty Ltd	Gas	Retailer
Future X Power	Electricity	Retailer	Sanctuary Energy Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer
Gold Coast City Council	Water	Distributor and Retailer	Simply Energy	Electricity	Retailer
Locality Planning Energy Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer	Unitywater	Water	Distributor and Retailer
			Western Downs Regional Council	Gas	Distributor and Retailer

Appendix Three: Compliance Checklist

The compliance checklist outlines the governance, performance, reporting and other specific requirements for our annual reports.

	Summary of requirement	Basis for requirement	Annual report reference
Letter of compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A letter of compliance from the accountable officer or statutory body to the relevant Minister/s 	ARRs – section 7	Page 2
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Table of contents Glossary 	ARRs – section 9.1	Contents Appendix 4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public availability 	ARRs – section 9.2	Page i
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpreter service statement 	Queensland Government Language Services Policy ARRs – section 9.3	Page i
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copyright notice 	Copyright Act 1968 ARRs – section 9.4	Page i
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information Licensing 	QGEA – Information Licensing ARRs – section 9.5	Page i
General information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introductory Information 	ARRs – section 10.1	Our Priorities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Machinery of Government changes 	ARR's – section 10.2, 31 and 32	n/a
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency role and main functions 	ARRs – section 10.2	Our Role
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operating environment 	ARRs – section 10.3	Page 7
Non-financial performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government's objectives for the community 	ARRs – section 11.1	n/a
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other whole-of-government plans / specific initiatives 	ARRs – section 11.2	n/a
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency objectives and performance indicators 	ARRs – section 11.3	Our Performance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency service areas and service standards 	ARRs – section 11.4	Our Performance
Financial performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summary of financial performance 	ARRs – section 12.1	Financial Summary
Governance – management and structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisational structure 	ARRs – section 13.1	Our Organisation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive management 	ARRs – section 13.2	Our Organisation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government bodies (statutory bodies and other entities) 	ARRs – section 13.3	Advisory Council
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Sector Ethics Act 1994 	Public Sector Ethics Act 1994 ARRs – section 13.4	Our People
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Queensland public service values 	ARRs – section 13.5	Our Priorities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk management 	ARRs – section 14.1	Our Organisation
Governance – risk management and accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit committee 	ARRs – section 14.2	Our Organisation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal audit 	ARRs – section 14.3	Our Organisation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External scrutiny 	ARRs – section 14.4	n/a
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information systems and recordkeeping 	ARRs – section 14.5	Our Organisation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic workforce planning and performance 	ARRs – section 15.1	Our People
Governance – human resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early retirement, redundancy and retrenchment 	Directive No.11/12 Early Retirement, Redundancy and Retrenchment Directive No.16/16 Early Retirement, Redundancy and Retrenchment (from 20 May 2016) ARRs – section 15.2	Our People

Appendix Three: Compliance Checklist continued

Summary of requirement		Basis for requirement	Annual report reference
Open Data	• Statement advising publication of information	ARRs – section 16	Mandatory online reporting
	• Consultancies	ARRs – section 33.1	https://data.qld.gov.au
	• Overseas travel	ARRs – section 33.2	https://data.qld.gov.au
	• Queensland Language Services Policy	ARRs – section 33.3	https://data.qld.gov.au
Financial statements	• Certification of financial statements	FAA – section 62 FPMS – sections 42, 43 and 50 ARRs – section 17.1	Financial Statements
	• Independent Auditor's Report	FAA – section 62 FPMS – section 50 ARRs – section 17.2	Independent Auditor's Report

FAA *Financial Accountability Act 2009*

FPMS *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009*

ARRs *Annual report requirements for Queensland Government agencies*

Appendix Four: Glossary

Billing a case issue relating to high/disputed bills, delays, errors, estimated accounts, fees and charges, rebates/concessions, tariff, meters, refunds, etc.

Case any contact a customer has with EWOQ i.e. general enquiry, refer back to supplier, referral to higher level, investigation, or referral to another organisation.

Complaints all cases that are billed to a scheme participant i.e. refer back to supplier, referral to higher level and investigation.

Credit a case issue relating to payment difficulties, disconnection, bad debt etc.

Customer service a case issue relating to a scheme participant's failure to inform/respond, incorrect advice, poor attitude, privacy issues etc.

EWOQ Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland

General enquiry a customer has a query about electricity, gas or water that is not a complaint.

Investigation EWOQ investigates a complaint and facilitates an outcome that is fair. Investigations can be level 1, 2 or 3 depending on the time taken to resolve the issue.

Land a case issue relating to the impact of network assets, network maintenance, vegetation management etc.

Marketing a case issue relating to conduct by energy marketers, misleading information, pressure, non-account holder signed up etc.

Provision a case issue relating to problems with new or existing connections etc.

Refer back to supplier customer has not contacted their supplier first to try and resolve the issue and EWOQ refers the complaint back to the supplier. EWOQ cannot investigate a complaint unless the supplier has had an opportunity to resolve the issue.

Referral to higher level (RHL) EWOQ can refer a customer's complaint to a higher level of authority at their supplier before starting an investigation.

Referral to other organisations we have Memoranda of Understanding with six other government authorities who have jurisdiction over aspects of the energy or water sector outside our jurisdiction, including Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy; Office of Fair Trading; and Australian Energy Regulator.

Scheme participant energy distributors and retailers operating in Queensland and water distributors/retailers in South East Queensland which must join the EWOQ scheme.

Small customer is a residential or small business customer who uses less than 100 megawatt hours of electricity per year, less than one terajoule of gas per year, and all residential water customers in South East Queensland or small businesses who use less than 100 kilolitres of water per year.

Supply a case issue relating to the quality of energy supply, damage/loss, outages, sewerage overflow etc.

Transfer a case issue relating to errors in billing/transfer of account due to switching energy retailers, contract terms, delay in transfer, site ownership etc.

Appendix Five: Advisory Council

Queensland Energy and Water Ombudsman Advisory Council

Act or instrument	<i>Energy and Water Ombudsman Act 2006</i>
Functions	<p>The Advisory Council monitors the independence of the Energy and Water Ombudsman and advises the Ombudsman on policy, procedural and operational issues relating to the <i>Energy and Water Ombudsman Act 2006</i>.</p> <p>The Advisory Council also advises the Minister responsible for energy and water on the funding of the Ombudsman's functions. At the end of each financial year, the Council also advises the Minister on the Ombudsman's independence and functions of the office during the financial year.</p>
Achievements	<p>The Advisory Council met six times in 2018-19 and provided advice on emerging issues in the energy and water sectors, including customer vulnerability and hardship.</p> <p>In addition to monitoring the Ombudsman's independence and providing advice on policy and procedural issues relevant to the <i>Energy and Water Ombudsman Act 2006</i>, the Advisory Council contributed to national conversations on the disruption of emerging technologies to current business models and footprints of Ombudsman schemes. They also contributed to discussions about proposed jurisdictional changes for the scheme in Queensland.</p> <p>The Advisory Council also contributed to the development of the 2019-20 budget, then endorsed the 2019-20 budget, as well as reported to the Minister on relevant issues.</p>
Financial reporting	Transactions of the entity are accounted for in the financial statements of Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman.

Remuneration

Position	Name	Meetings/sessions attendance	Approved annual, sessional or daily fee ¹	Approved sub-committee fees if applicable	Actual fees received
Chairperson	Anna Moynihan	6	Daily fee: \$390	N/A	\$5,005
Member	Laura Barnes	4	Daily fee: \$300	N/A	N/A
Member	Andrew Bills ²	2	Daily fee: \$300	N/A	N/A
Member	Simone Bridge	6	Daily fee: \$300	N/A	N/A
Member	Jennifer Gates	6	Daily fee: \$300	N/A	N/A
Member	Iain Graham	4	Daily fee: \$300	N/A	N/A
Member	Ian Jarratt	5	Daily fee: \$300	N/A	\$600
Member	Mary McLean	5	Daily fee: \$300	N/A	N/A
Member	Rosemarie Price	5	Daily fee: \$300	N/A	N/A
Member	Robyn Robinson	4	Daily fee: \$300	N/A	\$600
No. scheduled meetings/sessions		6			
Total out of pocket expenses			\$578.36		

¹Daily fees – 50 per cent paid if work time is four hours or less. Rates are applicable for regular meetings, sub-committee meetings and additional work time.

²Resigned from the Advisory Council on 23 September 2018.



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Thank you for reading the Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland 2018-19 Annual Report.
We welcome your feedback on the presentation of content, ease of navigation, value of information,
style of language, level of detail required, overall rating and suggestions for improvement.

Please visit www.qld.gov.au/annualreportfeedback to let us know your thoughts.





**Energy and Water
Ombudsman Queensland**

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