



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

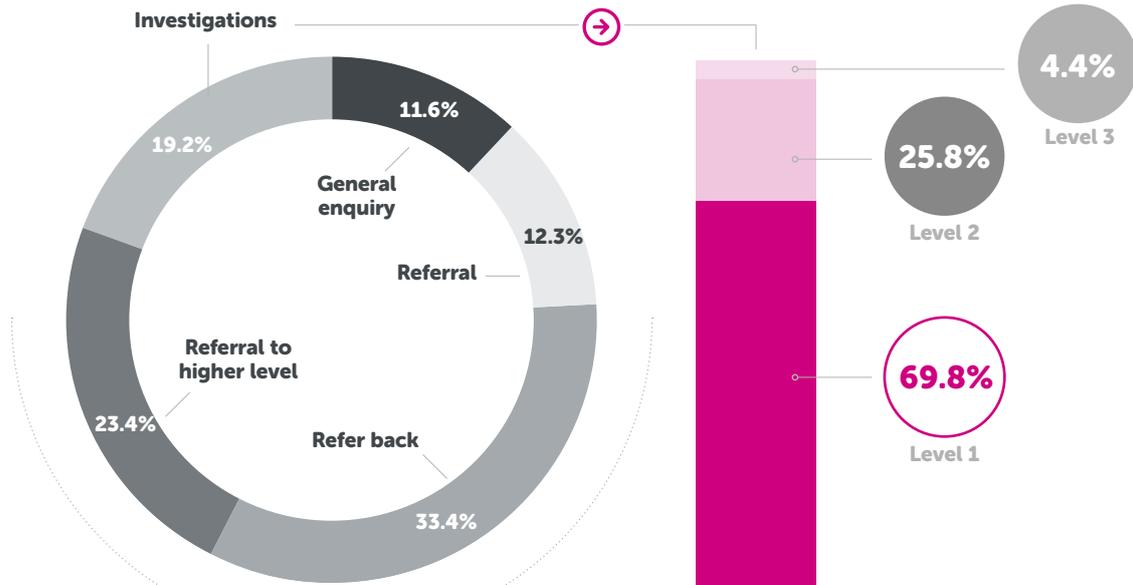
Agency	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Office of Fair Trading	791	594	606	757	617
Australian Energy Regulator*	9	188	54	181	241
Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy*	848	603	235	203	115
Queensland Ombudsman	75	60	67	78	65
Australian Competition and Consumer Commission	2	6	13	4	15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

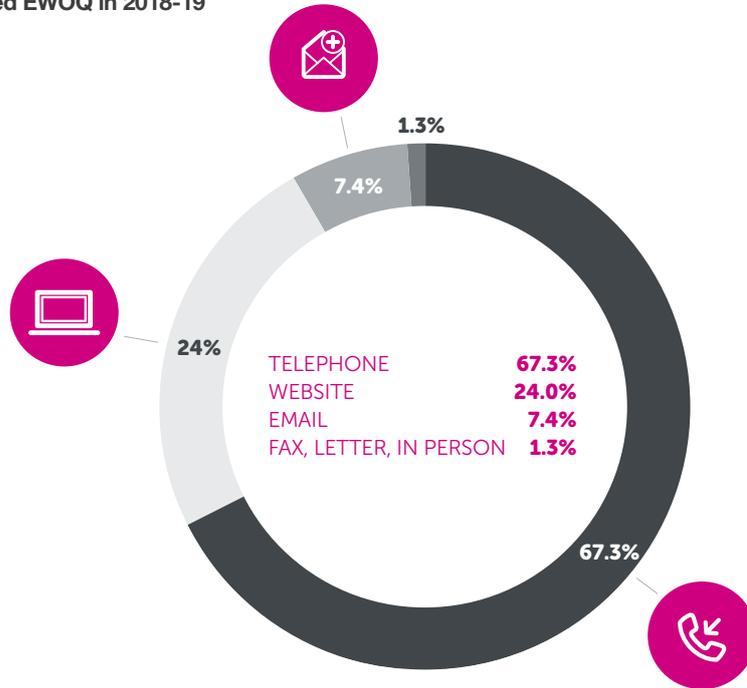
	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Cases received	11,133	8,749	7,913	10,328
Cases closed	11,049	8,895	7,861	10,211



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