

EWOV

Annual Report

2024



ENERGY AND WATER
OMBUDSMAN

Victoria **Listen Assist Resolve**

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Our reporting responsibilities

This *Annual Report* is prepared and distributed in accordance with the Ombudsman’s responsibilities under the *EWOV Charter and the Benchmarks for Industry-Based Consumer Dispute Resolution (CDR Benchmarks)*.

Data and consumer story notes

The data in this report covers the year 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024.

Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number, so may not always add to 100%.

All names in the consumer stories in this report have been changed to anonymise consumers.

More on our website

See ewov.com.au for information on the cases we received in 2023/2024 for individual energy and water providers, together with data visualisations and detailed graphical representations.



EWOV acknowledges the Traditional Owners of country on which we operate throughout Victoria and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.



EWOV embraces the diversity of our Victorian communities. Every person, regardless of their race, religion, age, physical attributes or sexual orientation is entitled to be treated with dignity and respect. We oppose all forms of discrimination.

Who we are, what we do

We’re an industry-based ombudsman scheme, providing fair, independent dispute resolution to Victorian energy and water consumers and providers.

We use alternative dispute resolution (ADR) to reach fair and reasonable outcomes to complaints. We can deal with a complaint if the energy or water provider is a participant of EWOV Limited and the property is in Victoria.

Our service is free to consumers, and our scheme is independent in its structure and in its complaints handling and dispute resolution processes. We look at the evidence and circumstances of each complaint, taking account of relevant laws and regulations and good industry practice to reach fair and reasonable outcomes.

We have an important role in contributing to industry and market improvements, participating in policy and regulatory consultations, and sharing our data and insights from case handling to support continuous improvement in energy and water markets.

Set up in late 1995 as Australia’s first electricity ombudsman scheme, we have since expanded to include natural gas (1999), water (2001), liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) (2005) and embedded networks (2018). To 30 June 2024, we have dealt with 786,536 cases.

EWOV is the designated consumer dispute resolution body under the *Electricity Industry Act, Gas Industry Act and Water Act 1989* and the General Exemption Order 2017 for embedded networks, among others. EWOV’s operations are underpinned by the *EWOV Charter, the EWOV Limited Constitution, licence conditions for the electricity and gas industries, relevant energy and water legislation, industry codes and the Benchmarks for Industry-Based Consumer Dispute Resolution (CDR Benchmarks)*.

EWOV is also the recognised external dispute resolution scheme in Victoria for privacy and credit reporting complaints about EWOV members who are subject to the *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)* and complaints in the energy sector relating to the operation of the *Consumer Data Rules*.



Our purpose

Help Victorian energy and water markets work better for people.



Our vision

Fair, accessible and sustainable markets that meet people’s energy and water needs.



Our principles

Accessible, fair, independent, efficient, effective, accountable.

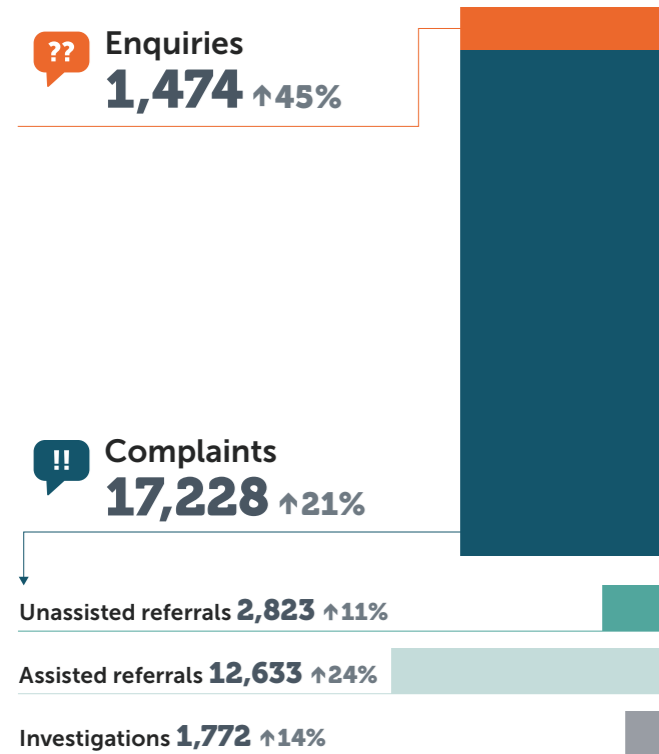


Our values

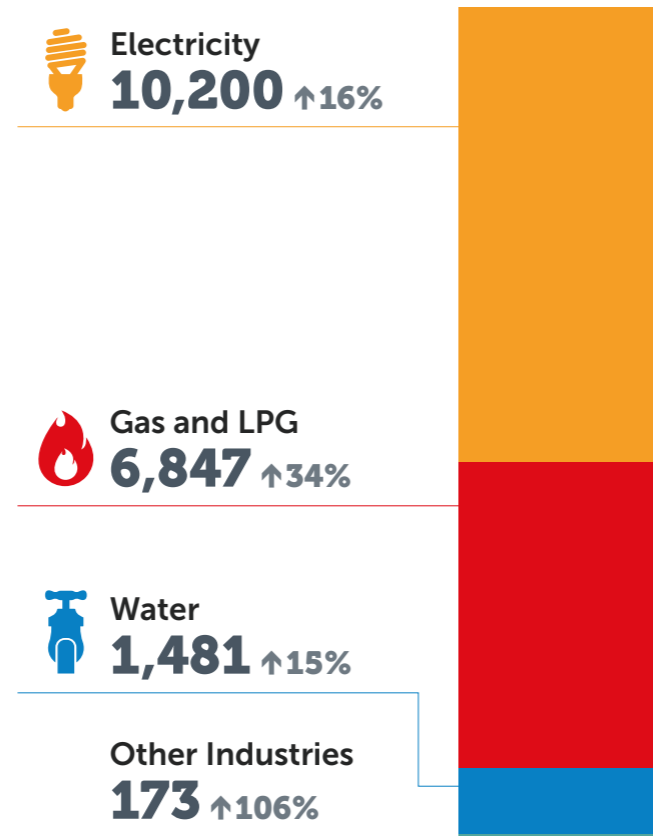
We have the courage to do the right thing. We aim high. We are creative. Together, we are different.

18,702 cases* $\uparrow 23\%$ from FY2023

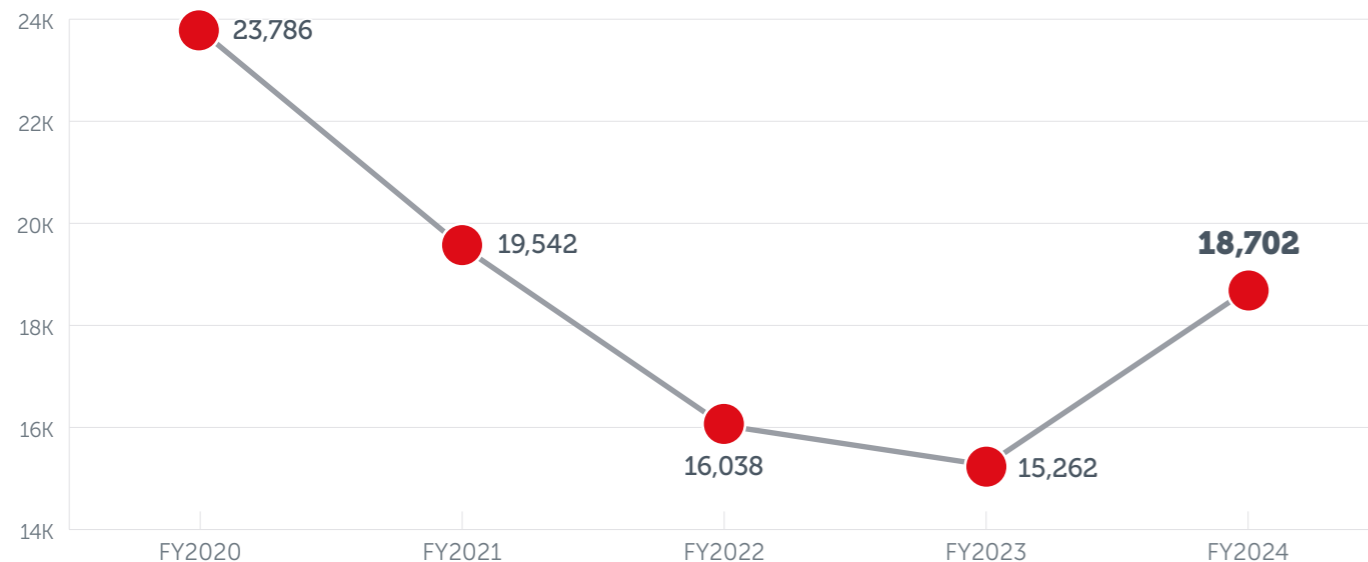
Case Type



Case Industry



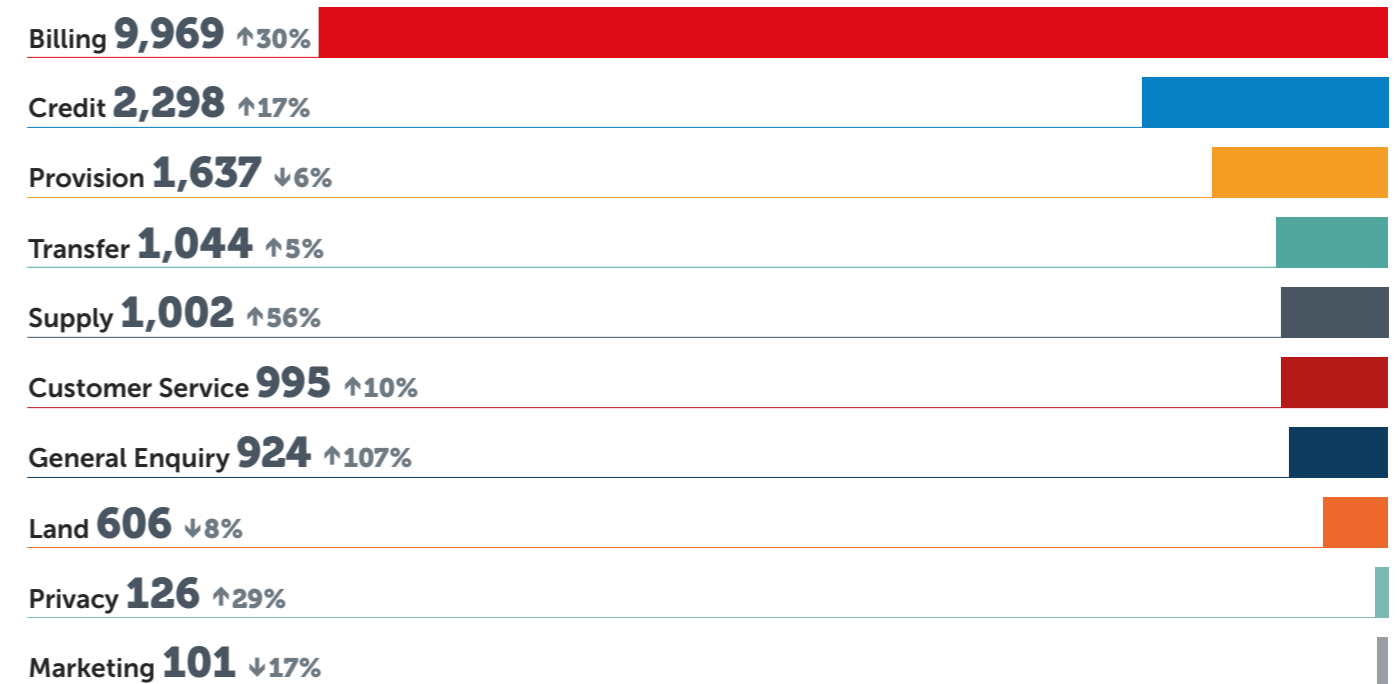
Case History



* "Cases" includes enquiries, unassisted referrals, assisted referrals and investigations. A consumer may have multiple cases as their issue progresses through our process.

16,536 unique consumer enquiries and complaints $\uparrow 23\%$ from FY2023

Case Issue

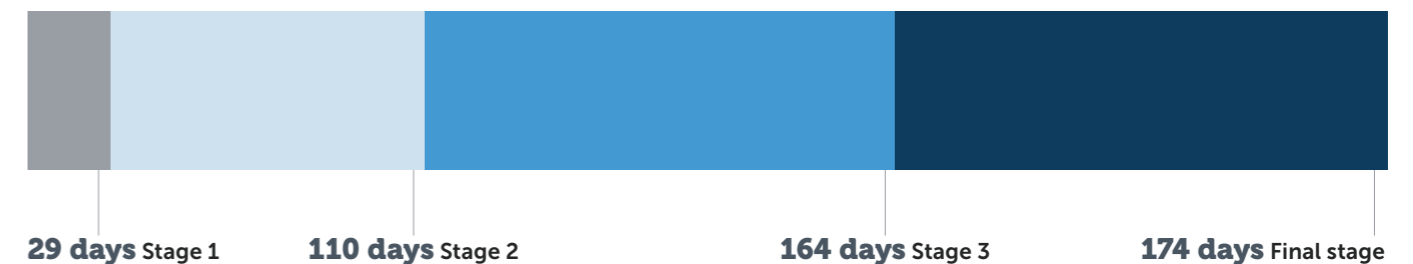


\$1,545,452

in **billing adjustments, service payments** and **debt waivers** for customers through EWOV investigations.

Case Time frames

Average time to close* – investigations



* from opening of the investigation to closure.

Note: Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number, so may not always add to 100%.

About the Board

Chairman's message

It is my pleasure to introduce the 2023/2024 Annual Report and share my reflections on the remarkable effort and dedication exhibited by both the EWOV team and my Board colleagues as we work together to ensure Victorian energy and water markets work better for people.



Paul Sheahan AM
Chairman,
appointed November 2014

The 2023/2024 financial year was a momentous period in EWOV's evolution, as we made substantial strides in preparing the scheme for the future, a future that will look considerably different from the past.

One of the year's highlights was the successful completion of a three-month pilot for our new complaint-handling model, which is now being implemented across all complaints. We undertook this project largely in-house, leveraging the extensive experience our people have accumulated at EWOV and elsewhere to design and deliver a new model which draws on leading-edge dispute resolution from Australia and overseas. I was most impressed by the energy and commitment that EWOV people brought to the project. I also acknowledge and appreciate the active involvement of scheme participants across the energy and water sectors, and the engagement of consumers and community representatives.

This year also saw EWOV confirmed as the external dispute resolution body for complaints under the *Land Access Code of Practice* – an area of increasing activity as Victoria strives to meet its renewable energy targets.

While there were considerable steps forward in 2023/2024, affordability issues in the community remain a concern that we need to monitor closely. In addition to our triage, support and referral activities, EWOV has a unique and important role in sharing insights from our cases, particularly about billing and credit issues, to inform policy, regulatory and industry responses – and we are doing that!

In August 2023, Mark Wakeman joined the Board as a consumer director, to fill the vacancy left after the departure of longtime director Gerard Brody at the end of the 2023 financial year. The Board also welcomed industry director Scott Russell in April 2024, replacing Joanne Pafumi, whose term came to an end in January 2024. Long-standing Company Secretary, Christopher See, stepped down from that part of his role and senior leader, Nicole McCutcheon, replaced Chris in the position. I thank Gerard, Joanne and Chris for their invaluable contributions during their tenures, and look forward to working closely with Mark, Scott and Nicole.

I'd also like to sincerely thank all EWOV Limited directors for their stewardship during the year, and I express my sincere appreciation and admiration for the leadership of Catherine and her team in setting EWOV up for the future and ensuring the scheme is positioned to fulfil its very important purpose in Victoria.

Paul Sheahan AM
Chairman, EWOV Limited

"...we made substantial strides in preparing the scheme for the future, a future that will look considerably different from the past."

Directors



Jonathan Briskin
Industry Director,
appointed August 2014



Kay Dilger
Consumer Director,
appointed August 2022



Eugenio (Gino) Fragapane
Industry Director,
appointed August 2015



Joanne Pafumi
Industry Director,
appointed April 2021,
term completed January 2024



Lauren Solomon
Consumer Director,
appointed July 2021



Dona Tantirimudalige
Industry Director,
appointed August 2022



Stephanie Tonkin
Consumer Director,
appointed August 2022



Mark Wakeham
Consumer Director,
appointed August 2023



Scott Russell
Industry Director,
appointed April 2024

Company Secretary

Nicole McCutcheon, EWOV, appointed December 2023

Governance statement

Energy and Water Ombudsman (Victoria) Limited is a company limited by guarantee and not having share capital. The objective of the company is to independently and efficiently resolve disputes between consumers and energy and water service providers in Victoria, with the further aim of reducing the occurrence of disputes.

To fulfil this objective, EWOV Limited has set up a dispute resolution scheme called Energy and Water Ombudsman (Victoria) (EWOV) and appointed an

Ombudsman who has authority under the *EWOV Charter* to receive, investigate and facilitate the resolution of complaints. The 'members' and 'contracting participants' of EWOV Limited, some of which trade under multiple business names, are the 'scheme participants' of the EWOV dispute resolution scheme.

The EWOV Limited Board is responsible for the business affairs and property of the company, including corporate governance, budget setting, risk management,

strategic planning, appointing the Ombudsman and ensuring the Ombudsman's independence. The Board is made up of an independent Chair and directors appointed in equal number to represent industry and consumers.

The day-to-day operation of the EWOV dispute resolution scheme is the responsibility of the Ombudsman. The roles of the Board and the Ombudsman are complementary, with the Ombudsman attending Board meetings.

Ombudsman's message

The 2023/2024 financial year marked considerable change in Victorian energy and water markets. As I reflect on the year, I feel confident that EWOV is well-placed to help the community navigate that change through our commitment to purpose, fair and reasonable dispute resolution, continuous improvement and willingness to share our unique insights.

We have seen a reversal of downward complaint trends observed during the COVID years. Due to inflation and increases in wholesale gas and electricity prices, EWOV experienced a significant increase in demand for our services. In 2023/2024, we received 18,702 cases, an increase of 23% compared to the previous financial year.

While some of these pressures have eased, others have intensified, meaning we expect case volumes to remain high, and even increase, as a reflection of ongoing demand from our existing and future jurisdiction. We are also working hard to raise awareness within the Victorian community to ensure those consumers who need our help most are able to reach us. This would be supported by including EWOV's contact details on the front of all energy bills, consistent with peer Energy and Water Ombudsman Schemes.

Numbers aside, we remain committed to fair, independent and efficient dispute resolution, and the initiatives discussed in this report help position us to do just that.

"Our insights have helped lead to increased consumer protections. The *Land Access Code of Practice* came into effect on 1 March 2024."

Adapting with purpose

Our strategic review in the 2022/2023 financial year set an important foundation to guide our work and chart our direction as we set out to respond effectively to evolving needs in Victoria. The purpose statement we set, to *help Victorian energy and water markets work better for people*, has proven to be a north star at EWOV. At all levels of the organisation, we have continually asked ourselves if the work we do — and how we work with consumers, industry and each other — is aligned with that purpose in the best way.

In response to that question, we undertook several projects in 2023/2024 to enhance our effectiveness. One of the most notable projects was the piloting of a new complaint handling model. The pilot was designed to answer some key questions: Can we manage the complexity and volume of cases in a better way? Can we set up a system that drives more fair and reasonable outcomes to disputes? Can we build a process that helps us provide clarity to consumers and industry about our position on key issues? Can we ensure that EWOV meets its benchmarks and continues to provide a valued service in Victoria?

We worked closely with eight scheme participants during the pilot and drew on the experiences of all involved to refine the model. We also monitored for benefits and I'm happy to say that qualitative and quantitative results speak to faster resolution times, improved issue identification and enhanced clarity of communication. It worked so well and aligned so closely with our purpose that we've rolled out the model across our entire operations.

Offering insights and thought leadership

As the energy market transitions at pace to greater reliance on renewable generation, we continued to share our unique case insights with key stakeholders to inform policy and industry practices. Our submissions to regulators, government and other parties — for example to the Essential Services Commission (ESC) on land access and the Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC) on consumer energy resources and flexible trading — have provided timely and valuable insight and data into consumer experiences and outcomes and helped broaden the issues considered in legislative and regulatory change.

Our insights have also helped shape new protections. The *Land Access Code of Practice* came into effect on 1 March 2024, providing clarity to the rules and processes that transmission companies must follow when accessing, or seeking to access, private land. We welcomed the ESC's decision to name EWOV as the independent dispute resolution organisation responsible for receiving complaints related to the Code. As Victoria transitions to renewable energy generation and seeks to build new transmission infrastructure, EWOV is well-placed to provide free and independent resolution for impacted landholders.

At the same time, we are continuing to see increased volumes of complaints from new energy technology, and new causes of complaints. While we can often deal with complaints concerning existing scheme participants, this still leaves many complaints unresolved. This may raise risks of consumer harm and reputational



Catherine Wolthuizen
Energy and Water Ombudsman (Victoria) and Chief Executive Officer

damage to the emerging Consumer Energy Resources sector, as well as regulatory asymmetry which may inhibit safe innovation and competition. We see opportunity for an expanded jurisdiction as a way of providing a straightforward path to independent, fair and free dispute resolution for those consumers. In this way, we can enhance consumer protection, trust and confidence through the transition to renewables and support an even playing field for all players in this emerging market.

We also consider that it would be beneficial to incorporate a new overarching obligation to ensure provider actions drive fair consumer outcomes. In dynamic markets, such an obligation, supported by clear rules and guidance, may help ensure that consumer protection keeps pace with challenges presented by new products, services and business models. Such an obligation has been applied and tested in other markets to guide behaviour of large and small providers. This can also help support safe innovation and reduce reliance on rules.

Our systemic impact work remains an important part of our effort to support continuous improvement in provider practices. Towards the end of the financial year, we published a flagship report on family violence. *Empowering change: Supporting victim-survivors of family violence* featured insights from our case

work and engagement with providers, as well as stories about the experiences of victim-survivors. We identified areas of improvement for policy and regulatory protections, and produced a good practice guide for energy and water providers. I also had the privilege of co-hosting a forum with the ESC and a provider engaged in leading work in this space, focusing on identifying good practices for the industry. EWOV will also be a key contributor to the ESC's Safety by Design project. All of this work demonstrates our ongoing commitment to working with all our stakeholders to improve outcomes for family violence victim-survivors.

Working together and working on systems

In 2023/2024, with the successful completion of the trial of our new complaint handling model, we made some adjustments to the way we work together, to ensure we take full advantage of the improvements offered by the model and to embed efficiencies. In light of the significant changes in our external policy and regulatory environment, we also brought together our insights and engagement, and legal and risk teams to strengthen our organisational capability. This integration allows for closer working across teams to identify and share relevant insights, respond to potential systemic issues and enhance our ability to support policy and regulatory work by our external stakeholders.

We also deepened our commitment to supporting consumers in vulnerable circumstances. Our new Care Connect team brings together specialist investigation and outreach staff in working to help consumers in financial hardship or who need more holistic support from EWOV and partner agencies than we may be able to provide through investigation and resolution of their complaint. In this way, we also seek to address the underlying causes of complaints where these stem from vulnerability.

Addressing key issues and expanding our reach

Significant affordability issues, brought on by factors such as rising living costs, continue to challenge the Victorian community, leading to serious and often complex billing and credit disputes. Add to that the period of rapid and significant market changes we're experiencing in the State and we recognise the need to set ourselves up to continue to serve an evolving sector.

The energy transition in Victoria will see electrification of homes, business and transport, as well as increased reliance on consumer energy resources, and creation of large-scale renewables generation, transmission and storage of energy. As with any change at this scale, disputes are likely to occur. EWOV is well-placed to help grow and sustain consumer trust and confidence by providing a clear and accessible pathway to redress and identifying any emerging systemic issues which may arise in these areas.

We are also reviewing and refreshing key policies and procedures, consulting with scheme participants and wider stakeholders as we do. This collaborative approach helps us to remain responsive to the needs of the community and industry stakeholders. This year, I also worked closely with my interstate Energy and Water Ombudsman counterparts to coordinate and harmonise our approach to jurisdiction changes to support alignment between our schemes.

I am immensely proud of the EWOV team for their resilience through a period of change and their commitment to designing, building, testing and implementing a new complaint handling model. This new model will help us meet growing demand for our assistance, to consistently apply the law, set clear expectations and incorporate new jurisdictions as the market shifts. Our commitment to our purpose will guide us as we navigate these changes.

A new model

From 1 February 2024 to 30 April 2024, we completed a pilot project for our new complaint handling model. The pilot featured the active participation of eight scheme participants across the energy and water sectors.

During the pilot, we embraced an agile project approach, completing bi-weekly meetings with pilot participants to draw out feedback and suggestions. This feedback helped us adapt the model in real-time, leading to continuous improvement. The pilot was a success, with notable benefits to:

- resolution times once allocated to an investigator
- timely identification of issues, leading to clearer understanding of disputes
- clarity and accessibility of our written communications.

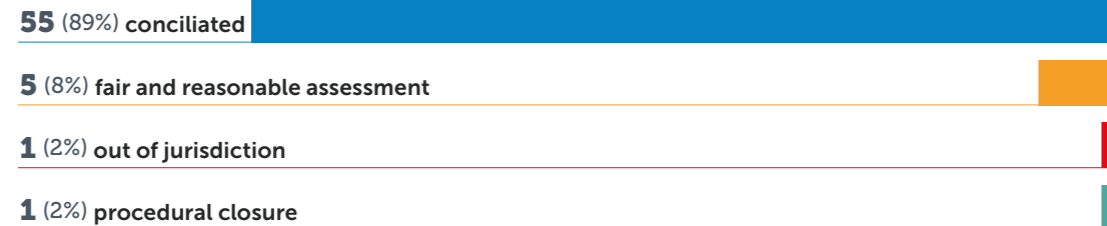
From 1 July 2024, the model has been rolled out to all cases.

Key pilot results

 **1,492** Referrals

 **244** Investigations

 **62**
Investigations closed



Data in this report

For 2023/2024 data presented in the rest of this report, we have blended the pilot data with non-pilot data for simplicity and mapped the pilot model classifications to existing stages in this report.

Data in future reports

For our 2024/2025 Annual Report, we intend to present the data from the new model, along with trend comparisons against historical data.

Objectives

The EWOV strategy for 2023/2024 featured the following components, designed to reflect the multiple roles performed by a modern ombudsman.

Purpose	Help Victorian energy and water markets work better for people.		
Vision	Fair, accessible and sustainable markets that meet people's energy and water needs.		
Promise	We will find you, we will explain it for you, and we will work with you.		
Strategy statement	We reach and help as many people as we can. We build trust and confidence by providing fair, efficient, free dispute resolution and growing and sharing our knowledge and insights to benefit energy and water consumers, including those who do not use our service.		
Objectives	Deliver a dispute resolution service that is effective, accessible, efficient, fair, independent and leverages our expertise to provide clarity to complainants and the wider market.	Grow and share our unique insights to influence broader positive changes in the energy and water markets that benefit consumers and the market.	Develop our responsive and adaptive workforce, systems and governance to meet current and future challenges.



Objective one

Deliver a dispute resolution service that is effective, accessible, efficient, fair, independent and leverages our expertise to provide clarity to complainants and the wider market.

Consumers reached us in a variety of ways. The majority of new enquiries and complaints came via phone, followed by our web complaint form. Email and web chat also led to a significant number of cases and we continued to remain accessible via mail and fax. For more information about how consumers reached us, see page 16.

We also engaged with consumers via community outreach – connecting online and in-person – and continued to build relationships with organisations working with Victorians in vulnerable circumstances. We attended 98 community events and distributed messages on social media about rights and entitlements, affordability issues and help during incidents such as power outages.

During the pandemic years, we saw sustained declines in case volumes and adjusted our resourcing accordingly. This demand trend reversed in the 2023/2024 financial year. Our people worked hard to provide support to the many consumers who sought our help but the 23% increase in cases affected our service performance. Our results against key performance measures for case handling were as follows:

- Percentage of calls answered within 30 seconds: target 80%, result 56%
- Percentage of emails and webforms answered within one working day: target 90%, result 82%
- Percentage of cases closed within 90 days: target 95%, result 92%
- Percentage of cases not re-opened: target 98%, result 98%.

We achieved an overall customer satisfaction rating (excellent or good) of 75% (up from 73% in 2022/2023) and a Net Promoter Score of 50% (up from 46% in 2022/2023). We also surveyed scheme participants to gauge our performance against measures of accessibility, independence, fairness, accountability, efficiency and effectiveness. Of the respondents, 78% said that EWOV was independent in its decision-making (a decrease of 1% compared with 2023) and 51% said that EWOV was timely and efficient (a decrease of less than 1% compared with 2023).

Our total expenditure was \$12 million, 2.2% under budget.

From 1 March 2024, the ESC's *Land Access Code of Practice* recognised EWOV as the external dispute resolution scheme for complaints under the Code. In response, we developed bespoke complaint handling processes, and policies and procedures for transmission land access complaints, as well as upskilling staff and preparing our systems for the new jurisdiction. To inform development of the bespoke complaint-handling process for land access complaints, we engaged with industry as well as attended Community Reference Groups in towns in regional Victoria that are likely to be impacted by infrastructure built to support Victoria's renewable energy transition.

Our commitment to effective, accessible, efficient, fair and independent dispute resolution, as well as our recognition of the importance of providing clarity to complainants and the wider market, saw us adopt a more active approach to case resolution at the start of 2023/2024. This led to an increase in the number of cases resolved through fair and reasonable assessments (where the parties don't agree to a resolution via conciliation, so we identify the fair and reasonable outcome) – from 57 in 2022/2023 to 437 in 2023/2024.

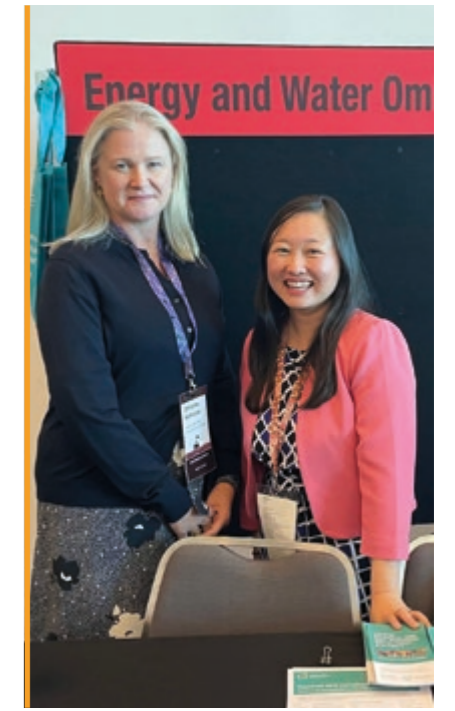
We took further steps to enhance this by developing and piloting our new complaint handling model in the financial year. The model represents a shift from a sole reliance on conciliation to more active assessment of cases based on relevant law, regulation and good industry practice.

The shift to a new complaint handling model has also been a catalyst for several internal reviews and enhancements, which began in 2023/2024, including reviewing and updating policies, expanding existing dispute resolution procedures, and developing new training and support materials for scheme participants, consumers and staff. We also prepared for the shift to the new model by reviewing our resourcing, support and structure, to ensure we can deliver the opportunities and benefits promised by the enhanced model.

Community outreach



World Elder Abuse Prevention Day – In mid-June, we participated in the “Your Money, Your Choice” themed event that was aimed at elders in Melbourne’s northern suburbs. We shared practical advice with the attendees and even enjoyed some scones and tea together. Pictured: (L) Outreach Officer, Melanie Shirley and (R) Investigator, Mia Dinn.



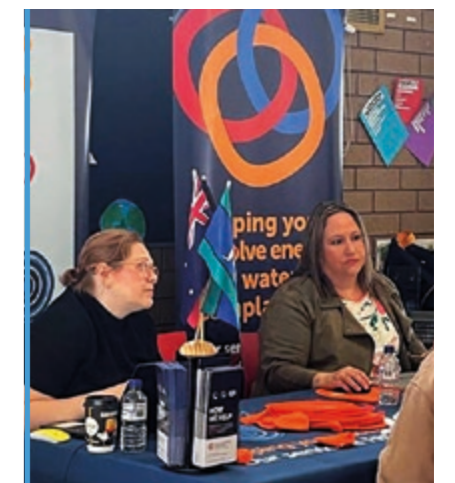
Financial Counselling Australia – In May, we attended the annual Financial Counselling Australia conference in Perth. The Ombudsman participated in the External Dispute Resolution forum along with peers. This event brought together financial counselling professionals from across Australia, providing a platform for discussing emerging trends and challenges in the sector. Pictured: (L) Ombudsman, Catherine Wolthuizen and (R) Assistant Ombudsman – Dispute Resolution, Wendy Guy.



Djirra KWP craft items – Throughout the year, we support Djirra’s Koori Women’s Place (KWP) program. Based in Abbotsford, KWP provides a diverse range of supports where Aboriginal women can visit and join in cultural, wellbeing and social activities. KWP also provides an opportunity for organisations like EWOV to share practical support such as information about consumer entitlements relating to concessions and grants. Pictured: (Top) Emu egg carving – Wax Treasures Feathers. (Bottom) Feather Flowers – Healing with Flowers with Aunty Kathy.



Refugee Week Broadmeadows – In late June, we attended Hume City Council’s Refugee Week at the Broadmeadows Town Hall. In addition to providing attendees with useful information about their entitlements, we were treated to lively music and dancing displays from different international community groups and some delicious multi-cultural cuisines. Pictured: Outreach Officer, Melanie Shirley.



Bring in Your Issues Day Wyndham – Together with Wyndham Humanitarian Network and other local service providers in the Wyndham area, EWOV invited local service providers and ombudsman schemes to attend a “Bring in your issue” Community Services Day for residents. Those who attended received useful information about how to interpret utility bills and which organisations to go to for support. Pictured: (L) Investigation Team Manager – Care Connect, Naomi Ploeger and (R) Investigator, Tulin Jabbar.

Objective two

Grow and share our unique insights to influence broader positive changes in the energy and water markets that benefit consumers and the market.

We continued to engage with key stakeholders and provide strategic contributions to inform policy decisions and consultations with government and regulators.

We released a flagship report on family violence. *Empowering change: Supporting victim-survivors of family violence* provided crucial insights into the experiences of victim-survivors and highlighted potential areas for improvement. Our unique insights, drawn from real cases and our investigations into systemic issues, helped us develop a good practice guide for providers, which we included in the report. This report demonstrates our commitment to using our insights to drive improved outcomes for vulnerable consumers and influence positive change in energy and water markets.

We also made numerous submissions to key enquiries and processes. With our unique perspective on energy and water markets, we are able to capture, analyse and share our data and insights into consumer experiences and outcomes to identify gaps and opportunities for improvement. In light of the considerable changes in the energy market, a number of our submissions focused on the growing complexity consumers face when engaging with new products, services and business models and how consumer protection frameworks might evolve to address these. In 2023/2024, our submissions included:

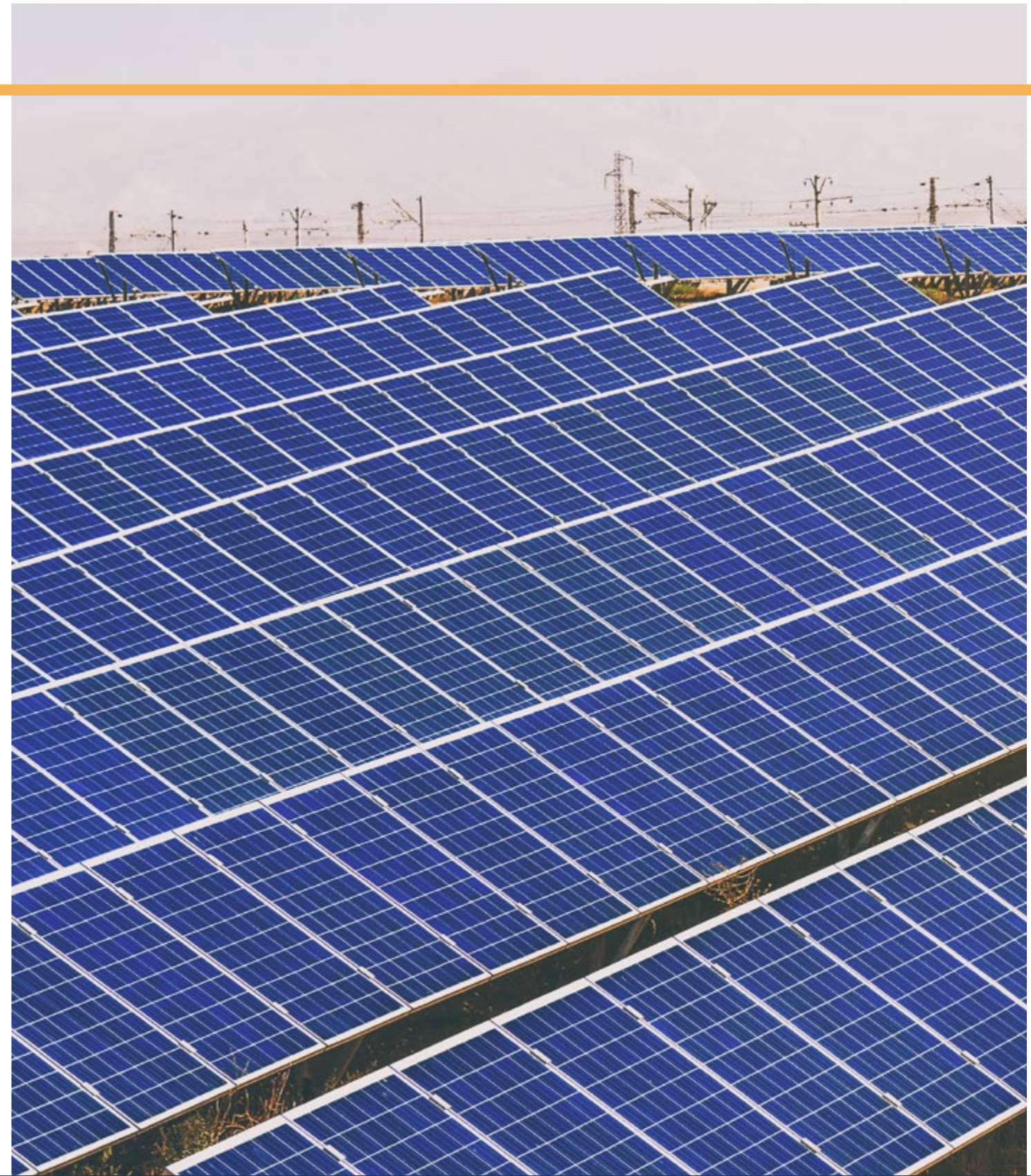
- The ESC's draft *Land Access Code of Practice*, emphasising the need for clear external dispute pathways. The ESC finalised the *Land Access Code of Practice* in November 2023 and EWOV was named as the external dispute resolution scheme for land access complaints arising under section 93 of the *Electricity Industry Act*.
- A joint Energy and Water Ombudsman submission to the Australian Energy Infrastructure Commission (AEIC) as part of its Community Engagement Review – emphasising the importance of external dispute resolution for community engagement and building social licence to facilitate new transmission and generation infrastructure, and the need to create a fit-for-purpose jurisdiction. One of the options recommended by the AEIC was to expand the jurisdiction of existing Energy and Water Ombudsman schemes to include community complaints about renewable energy generation, large scale storage and new transmission projects as a potential jurisdiction option for dispute resolution.
- An EWOV submission to the Senate Inquiry into Residential Electrification – highlighting the range of difficulties consumers experience in

the energy transition and barriers to accessing Ombudsman support.

- The Victorian Government established the Network Outage Review Panel to investigate business responses to the storm event on 13 February 2024 which left more than 530,000 consumers without power. EWOV presented to the panel and provided a written submission that highlighted the most common and impactful issues consumers reported to EWOV. These included difficulties accessing related compensation and being provided with up-to-date information about the storm event and its impact on their power supply.
- Submissions to the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action relating to the telemarketing and doorknocking ban under the Victorian Energy Upgrades (VEU) program. EWOV called for telemarketing and doorknocking bans for VEU providers, noting the evidence of harm in our case studies. A telemarketing ban was introduced on 1 May and a doorknocking ban was introduced on 1 August.
- Feedback on the Victorian Government's draft Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) Community Benefits Plan, highlighting the role of external dispute resolution in building trust and acceptance for new renewable infrastructure.

In February 2024, a catastrophic storm event caused widespread power outages in Victoria, impacting numerous consumers (see Network Outage Review Panel commentary above). We worked closely with relevant distribution networks to address the immediate aftermath and the broader implications, including highlighting process improvements and capturing the lived experiences of affected consumers. The distributor established the Energy Resilience Community Fund, a \$10 million initiative to support affected communities, alongside an additional \$2 million for local emergency relief charities, and our engagement informed the operation of the fund. These actions by the distributor were part of an enforceable undertaking to the ESC informed by our insights.

Ombudsman Catherine Wolthuizen has been a prominent voice in public forums, such as Energy Consumer Australia's Watts Next? podcast and the Financial Counselling Victoria Summit. These engagements provided platforms to discuss our modern Ombudsman approach, the importance of building social licence for the energy transition, and how EWOV can help support consumers in vulnerable circumstances deal with energy affordability challenges.



Our unique insights, drawn from real cases... helped us develop a good practice guide for providers.



Objective three

Develop our responsive and adaptive workforce, systems and governance to meet current and future challenges.

At EWOV, we know that our people are what makes the difference and are our greatest asset. Ensuring that we can continue to attract, engage and retain our outstanding people is vital to us delivering on our promise.

In 2023/2024, we focused on several significant initiatives to support our goals. We developed an Employee Value Proposition that clearly articulates what makes working for EWOV unique and brings together some of our market leading offerings, including six weeks' annual leave per annum and non-gender specific paid parental leave. Other initiatives include:

- We continued to develop our wellbeing offering by launching 'Your Path'. This unique wellbeing program offers a holistic approach to wellbeing, considering the role of employee, team and organisation to create an environment where all our people can thrive. Our employees can access diverse resources including wellbeing coaching and onsite employee assistance program (EAP) support, webinars and a valuable wellbeing hub, as well as training several of our people in mental health first aid. Our unique program was recognised by the Australian Human Resources Institute as winner of the Wellbeing Initiative category and EWOV came third in the 2024 AFR BOSS Best Places to Work rankings, competing in the Government, Education, Not For Profit and Utilities category.
- We introduced several internal communications initiatives to ensure that we continue to build connection and improve communication across EWOV, particularly in our new hybrid world. Connecting in-person each month in our all-EWOV Let's Talk Tuesday events, our daily Breakfast Club, and morning teas have been a great opportunity to connect and engage with our people.
- We delivered a comprehensive suite of e-learning modules, in-person sessions and other training opportunities to ensure that our people felt supported through the change, have the capability to adapt to our new complaint-handling model, and understand the law and legal framework EWOV operates in, as well as to better manage our risks around cybersecurity, psychosocial hazards and wellbeing.
- Our leaders were equipped to lead and manage their teams through our LEDA mentoring program, as well as a continued focus on building our team engagement.

- Our employee-led, Inclusion, Diversity and Equality Committee continued to celebrate what makes us all unique with a number of diversity events, and this year they have focused their efforts in contributing to our first ever Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan, which we hope to launch in 2024/2025.

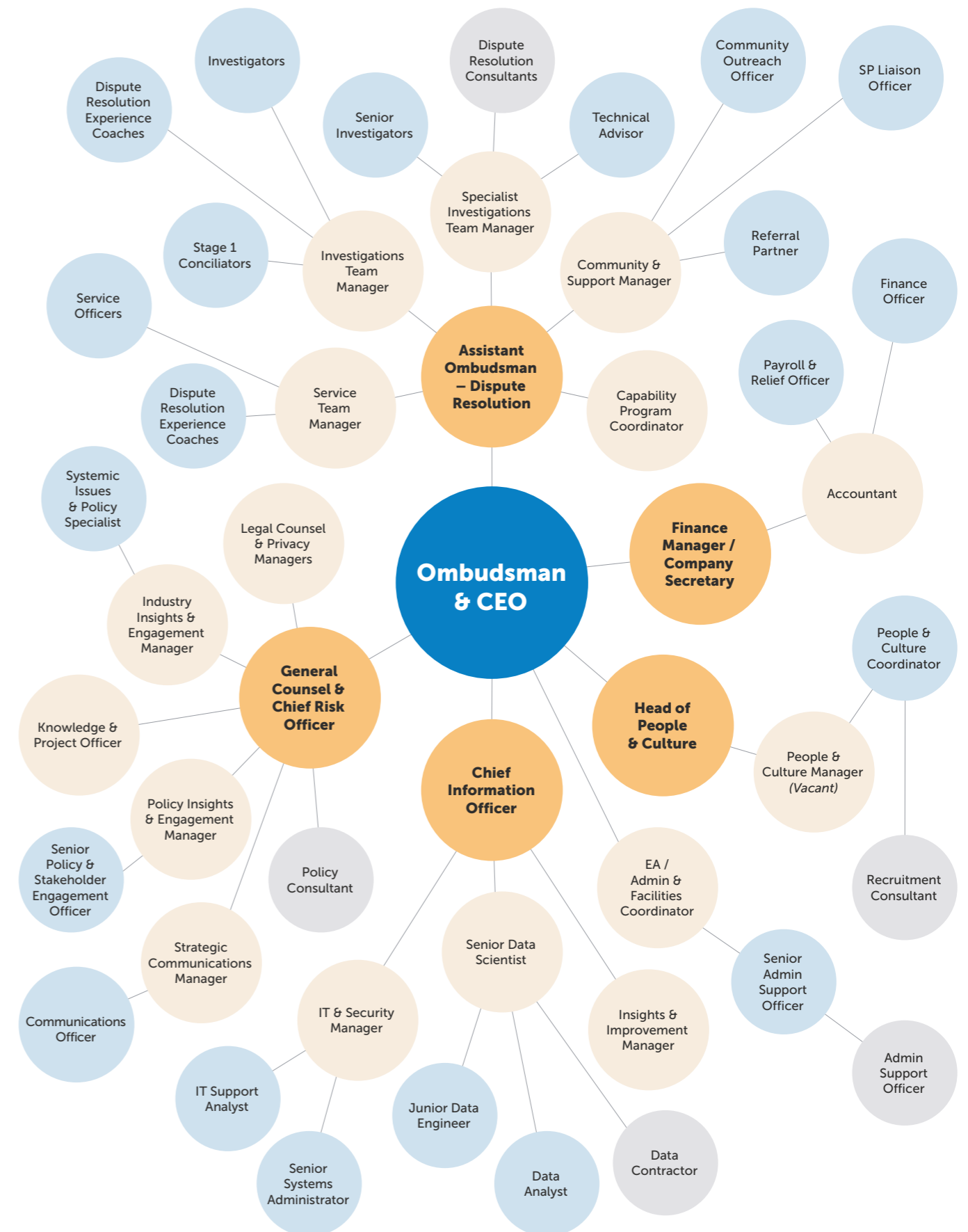
Measuring the impact of our initiatives and our employee experience overall remains an important part of our people calendar, with regular engagement pulse checks. Our overall engagement score was 81% in May 2024, a decrease of 5% compared with the previous year. The decrease was anticipated, given the amount of change EWOV is undertaking. Even through the change, our staff reported high levels of wellbeing and pride in working for EWOV. We will continue to focus on enablement and communication as priority areas for the year ahead, to ensure our staff understand how their work contributes to EWOV's purpose and feel supported to deliver.

We made progress on our IT infrastructure strategy, to transition from on-premises server hosting to the cloud. Following a thorough audit of our security posture, we identified several areas for improvement to enhance our cybersecurity maturity. Our targeted efforts increased our maturity rating, achieved through the implementation of proactive cybersecurity systems and processes, which will bolster our defences against cyber threats.

As part of our move to the new complaint-handling model, we began a comprehensive review of our policies and procedures. This work is leading to a recalibration of our roles and processes, aiming to deliver faster and more effective complaint resolution. We are developing new training programs and support information to ensure our workforce is well-equipped to handle the refined processes.

To ensure our continued compliance with the *Privacy Act*, we developed new internal processes and procedures for handling personal information requests from consumers. We leveraged our internal legal expertise to streamline the process and delivered targeted training to frontline staff, covering topics such as the External Dispute Resolution Benchmarks and legal professional privilege. The Legal and Risk Team also provided support to the broader organisation on requests for legal advice, especially in the context of investigations and how industry laws, codes and regulations apply to our members.

Organisational structure at 30 June 2024



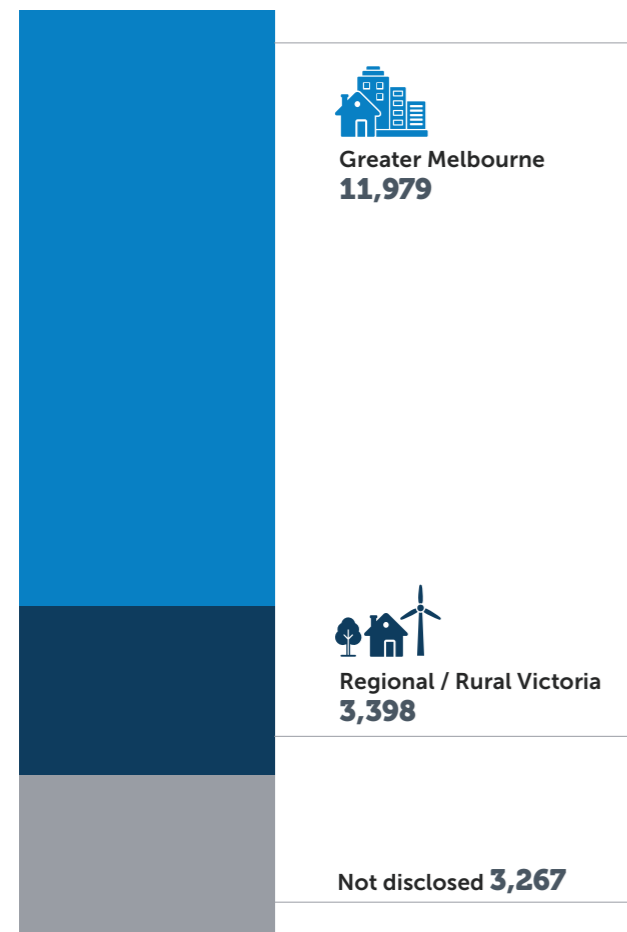
Cases received

18,702 total cases **↑23%** from FY2023

Contact method

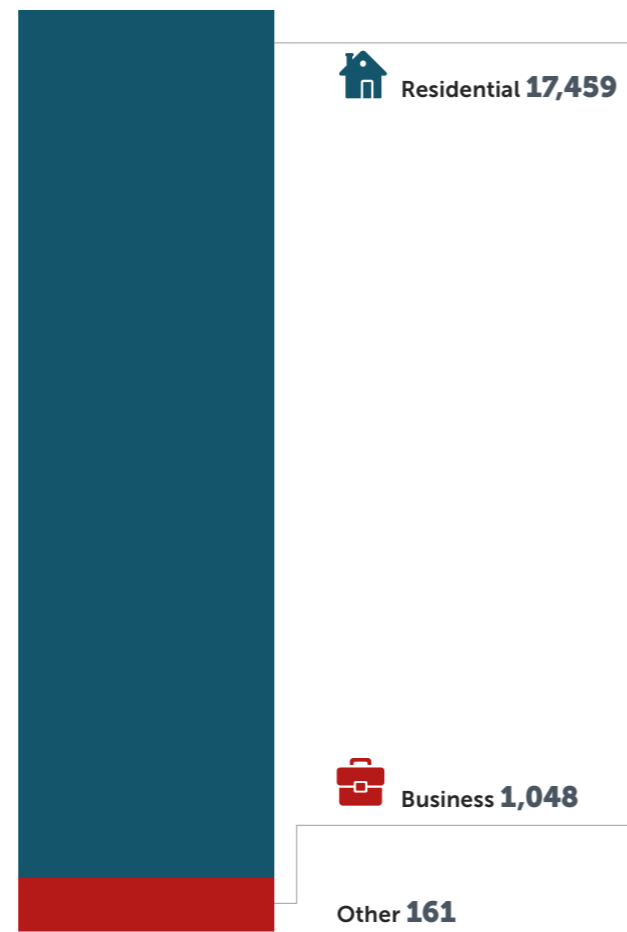


Location



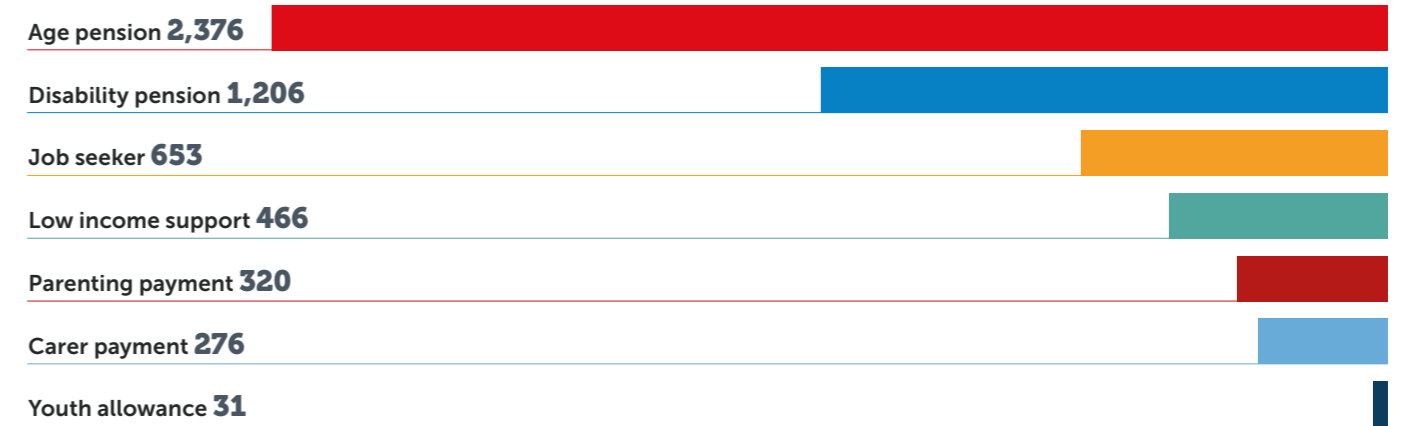
Note: 58 from outside Victoria

Type



Note: 34 Not-for-profit/Government

Concessions



Note: 10,410 cases where there was no concession card and 2,964 unknown or didn't disclose

5,328 cases

related to consumers identified as concession card holders

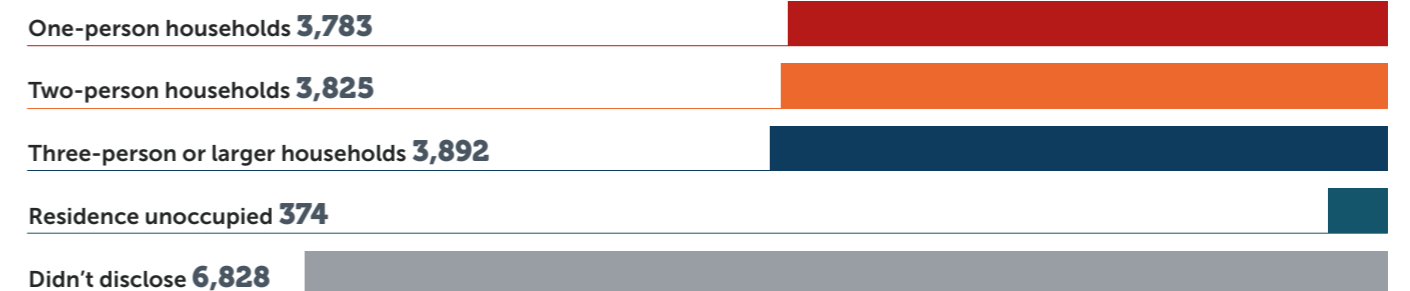
351 cases

related to consumers who self-identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

Owning vs Renting



Household size



Note: Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number, so may not always add to 100%.

Cases and our approach to dispute resolution

In the 2023/2024 financial year, we approached cases and dispute resolution according to the following model, except for cases that entered the pilot of our new model (see page 8 for details on the pilot). From 1 July 2024, a new case handling model has been implemented.

We made sure each party to the complaint had a fair opportunity to explain their perspective and understand the issues and each other's point of view.

What is a case in 2023/2024?

Case covers all consumer contacts with EWOV – registered as either an 'enquiry' or a 'complaint'.

- An **enquiry** is a request for information. Where we can, we provide the information ourselves. Where we can't, we provide the consumer with contact information for the most appropriate other body.
- A **complaint** is an expression of dissatisfaction about a policy, a practice, or the consumer service performance of an energy or water provider or an embedded network entity that's an EWOV scheme participant – where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

Complaints may move through any of the below processes, depending on the circumstances of the complaint.

- We recorded an **Unassisted Referral** where a customer had not yet spoken with their company about their complaint and we referred them back to the company's contact centre.
- In an **Assisted Referral**, we arranged for the provider to contact the consumer. The provider had three business days to contact the consumer and 15 business days to investigate the complaint. The consumer could return to us if the Assisted Referral didn't resolve the complaint.
- If a consumer returned to us because an Assisted Referral hadn't resolved their complaint, we reviewed the complaint again for jurisdiction before we opened an **Investigation**. Sometimes we bypassed Assisted Referral and moved directly to Investigation where we assessed there were special consumer circumstances, or where an energy or water provider requested an Investigation rather than an Assisted Referral.
- An Investigation moved through **Stage 1, Stage 2, Stage 3** or **Final Stage** depending on its complexity and whether the complaint had been upgraded under EWOV's Complaint Upgrade Policy. We also upgraded a complaint if we assessed that a provider's suggestion for resolution was inappropriate or inadequate, or if the provider disconnected or restricted supply, pursued debt collection activity, or contacted the consumer about the issue during EWOV's Investigation.
- A **Stage 1 Investigation** was one that we thought could be resolved within 28 business days and two responses, because it didn't require detailed information, action or analysis by us, the provider or the consumer. If the complaint wasn't resolved promptly, or if the complaint needed to be tested against our fair and reasonable framework, we upgraded it. Unlike the Stage 2 process, the Stage 1 process didn't formally test the merits of the customer's complaint against EWOV's fair and reasonable framework.
- A **Stage 2 Investigation** required more detailed information, action or analysis by us, the provider, or the consumer. It allowed us to apply EWOV's fair and reasonable framework and test the merits of the resolution being sought or being proposed. The provider had 10 business days to provide

us with an initial response, which we reviewed and discussed with the consumer. We then worked with the consumer and the provider to reach a fair and reasonable outcome.

- A **Stage 3 Investigation** was reached if a Stage 2 Investigation was upgraded according to our Complaint Upgrade Policy.
- A **Final Stage Investigation** was reached if a Stage 3 Investigation was upgraded according to our Complaint Upgrade Policy.
- If the provider did not agree with EWOV's view, the complaint may result in a **Binding Decision**. A Binding Decision was binding on the provider if the consumer accepted it. It was not binding on the consumer, who could choose to pursue the complaint in another forum, such as a court.

Our approach to dispute resolution in 2023/2024

We made sure each party to the complaint had a fair opportunity to explain their perspective and understand the issues and each other's point of view. The provider was given an opportunity to offer a resolution that took account of the consumer's situation. We then worked towards agreement on a resolution and what needed to be done to achieve the resolution. The agreement may be achieved directly between the consumer and the provider, or it may have been conciliated by us.

When a consumer first contacted EWOV, we assessed:

1. whether we had jurisdiction under the EWOV Charter to deal with their issue
2. whether the contact was an enquiry or a complaint
3. how many contacts the consumer had with the provider, how they did that, and who they spoke with.

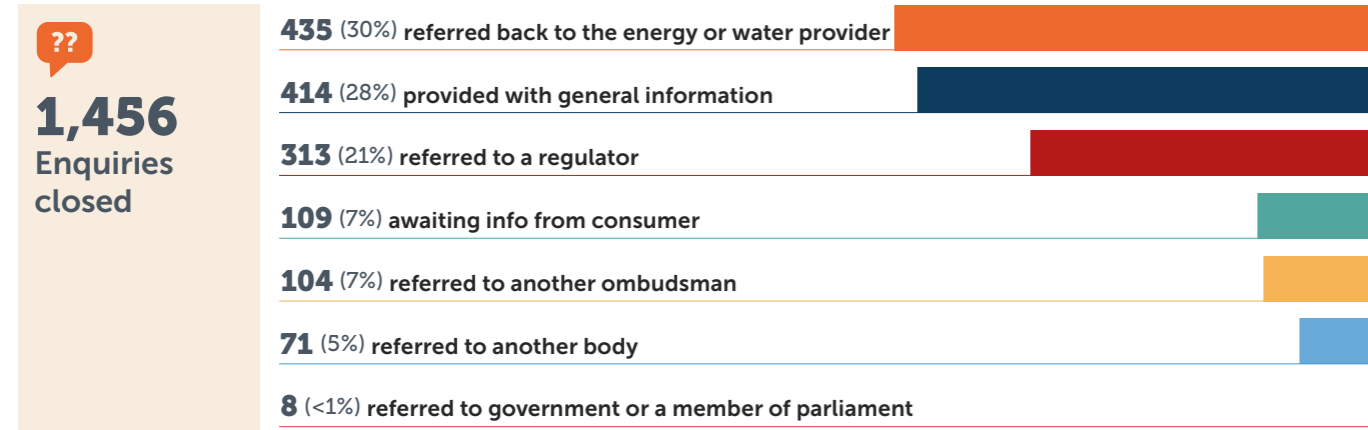
From this assessment, we decided whether to register the case as an Enquiry, an Unassisted Referral, an Assisted Referral or an Investigation.



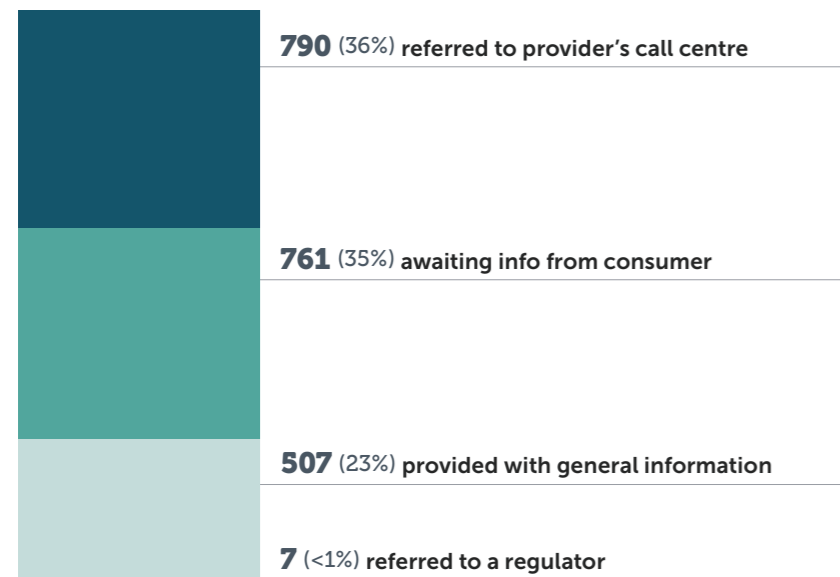
Case closures

17,283 cases closed **↑18%** from FY2023

Enquiries



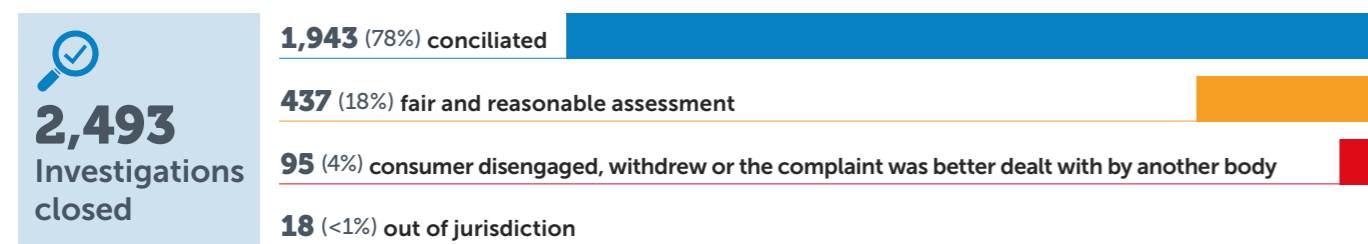
Unassisted Referrals



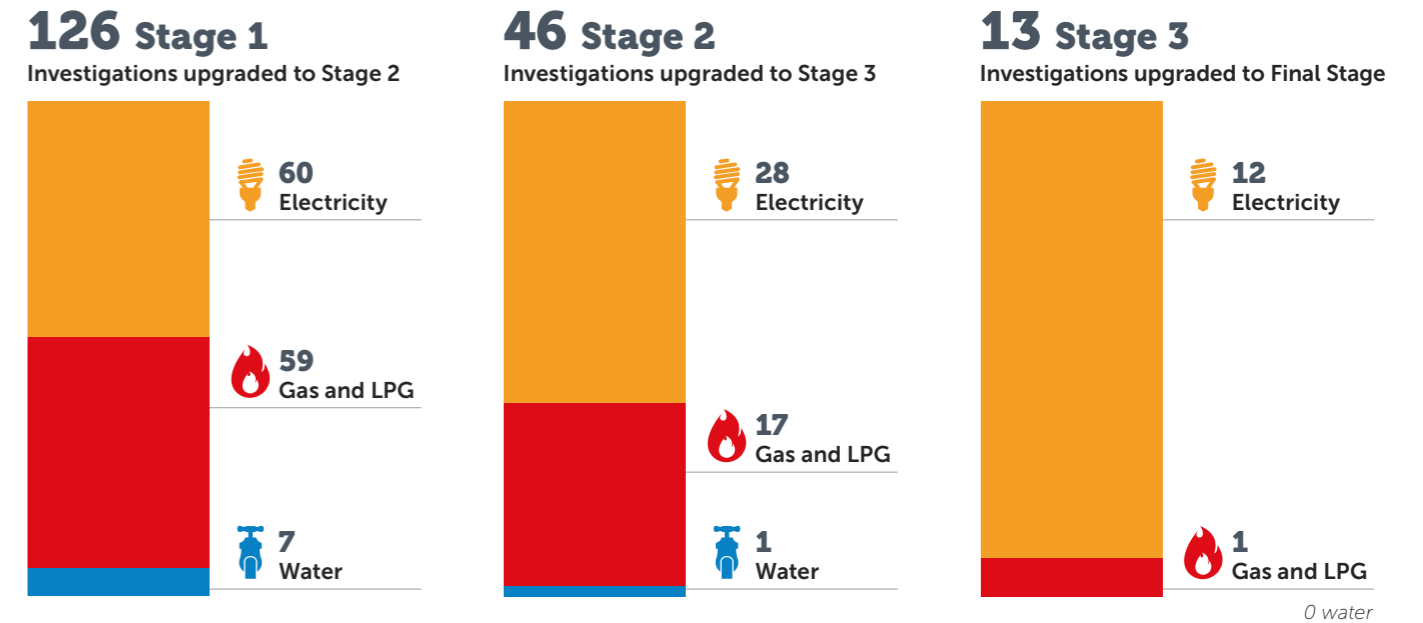
Assisted Referrals



Investigations



Investigation Upgrades



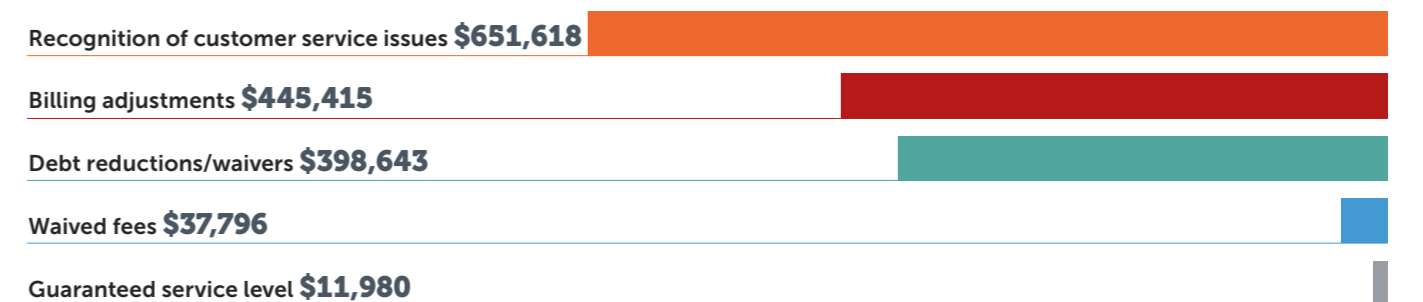
Investigation Average time to close



\$1,545,452

was provided by companies to customers as a result of EWOV investigations

Investigation Outcomes



Note: Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number, so may not always add to 100%.

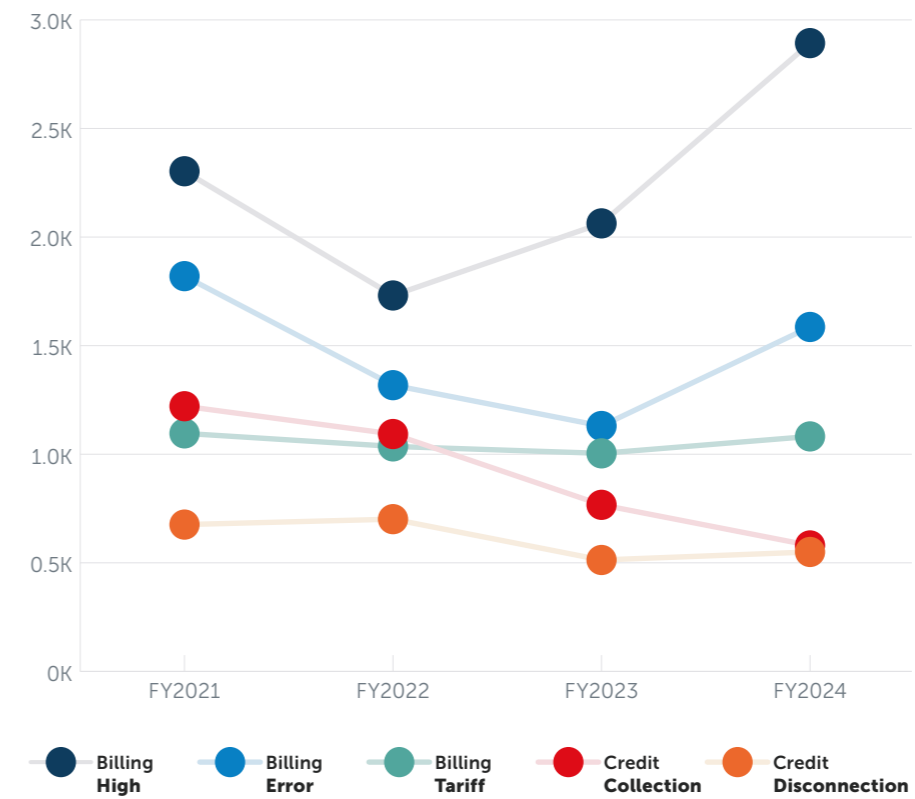
Issues and trends

EWOV uses 10 high-level issues categories

Our public reporting is based on the main issue related to the case. It doesn't take into account secondary case issues.

- **Billing** = Generating bills, sending bills, payment processes.
- **Credit** = Unpaid bills and the action taken by energy and water providers to collect arrears.
- **Customer service** = The level of service received or not received.
- **Land** = How provider activities or network assets affect a consumer's property.
- **Marketing** = How electricity and gas retailers go about gaining new consumers.
- **Privacy** = How a consumer's personal information is handled.
- **Provision** = Connection of a property to an energy or water network.
- **Supply** = Physical delivery of the electricity, gas or water service.
- **Transfer** = Switching an electricity or gas account to another energy retailer.
- **General enquiry** = Cases that don't fit under another category.

Tracking common sub-issues



Top 5 sub-issues for 2023/2024

Overall

1. Billing: High
2. Billing: Error
3. Credit: Payment difficulties
4. Billing: Tariff
5. Provision: Existing connection

Electricity

1. Billing: Tariff
2. Billing: High
3. Billing: Error
4. Credit: Payment difficulties
5. Provision: Existing connection

Gas and LPG

1. Billing: High
2. Billing: Error
3. Billing: Estimation
4. Credit: Payment difficulties
5. Provision: Existing connection

Water

1. Billing: High
2. Billing: Fees and charges
3. Land: Network assets
4. Billing: Error
5. Land: Property damage

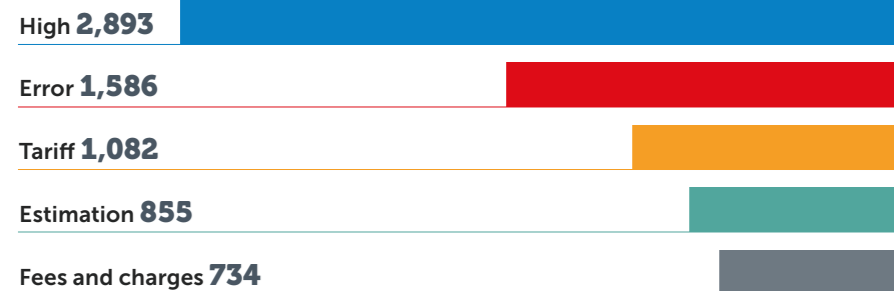


Billing

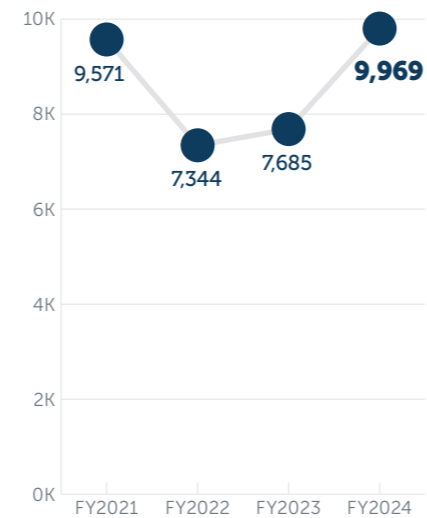
9,969 Billing cases **↑30%** compared to FY2023

48% Electricity
44% Gas and LPG
7% Water

Top sub-issues



Recent history



Assessing whether an electricity or gas disconnection was 'wrongful'

Before disconnecting a consumer's electricity or gas supply, an energy retailer must comply with the terms and conditions of its contract with the consumer, and with the requirements of the *Energy Retail Code of Practice* and the *Electricity Industry Act* or the *Gas Industry Act*. If the retailer doesn't comply, a Wrongful Disconnection Payment (WDP) is payable to a consumer.

The payment is \$500 a day (or part thereof), capped at \$3,500 if the consumer doesn't notify the retailer of the disconnection within 14 days. When we investigate an energy disconnection complaint, we make a separate assessment of whether a WDP is payable.

If the retailer and EWOV can't agree on an outcome, we report details of the potential breach or request a formal decision from the Essential Services Commission.

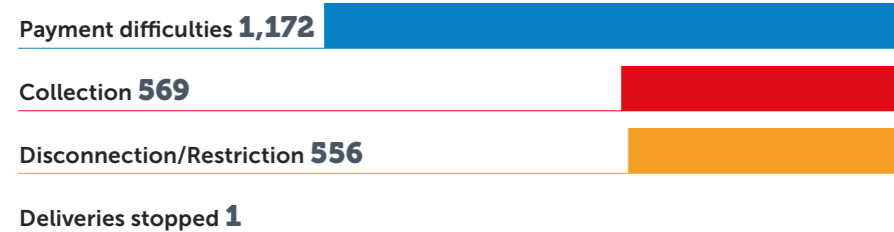
The total paid to consumers was \$54,582, with an average of \$1,559 per consumer.

Credit

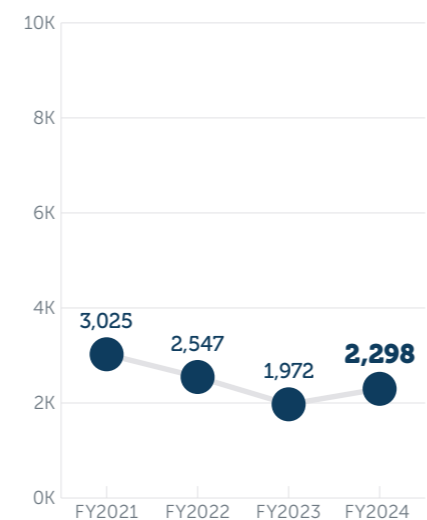
2,298 Credit cases **↑17%** compared to FY2023

58% Electricity
38% Gas and LPG
5% Water

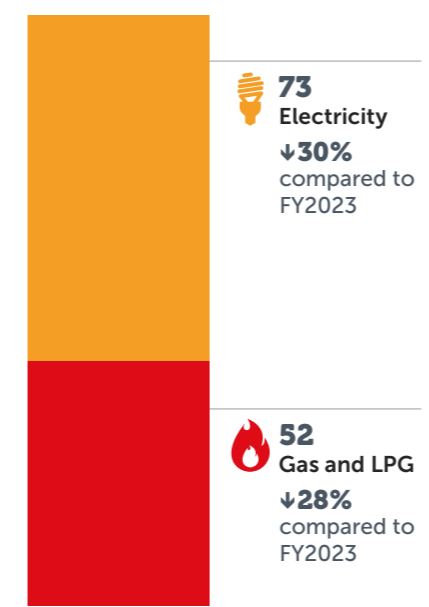
Top sub-issues



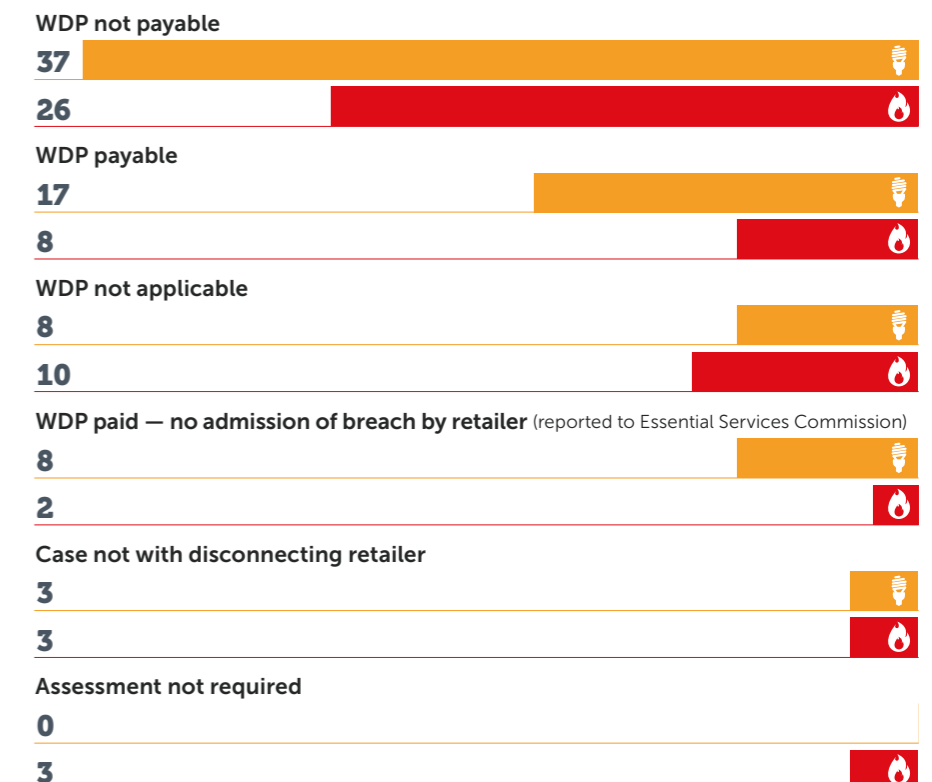
Recent history



125 WDP assessments
↓29% compared to FY2023



Outcomes of WDP assessments closed

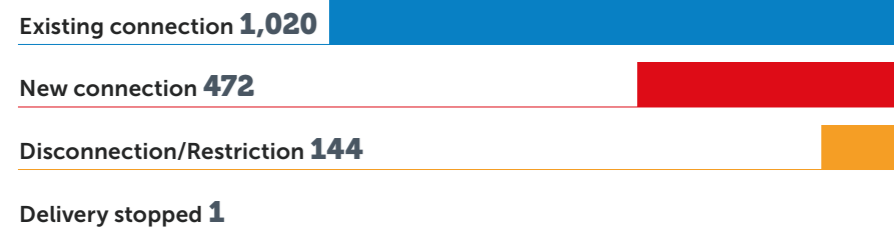


Provision

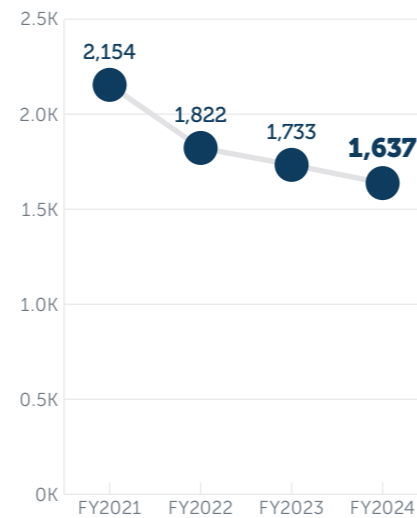
1,637 Provision cases ↓ 6% compared to FY2023

61% Electricity
33% Gas and LPG
6% Water

Top sub-issues



Recent history

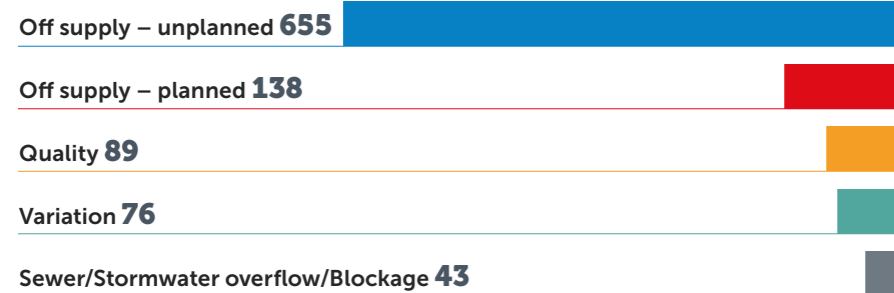


Supply

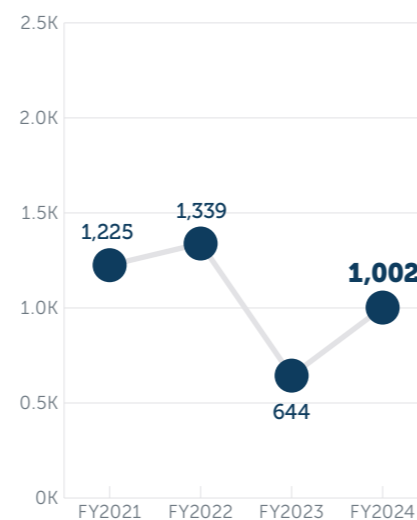
1,002 Supply cases ↑ 56% compared to FY2023

82% Electricity
6% Gas and LPG
12% Water

Top sub-issues



Recent history



Consumer story

Energy debt grew during COVID-19

Residential consumer | Unemployment | Accumulated debt

Timothy* owed several thousand dollars for electricity and gas. His representative said the debts had built up when Timothy was unemployed. The representative queried why the debts had become so high, and why there was no supply disconnection.

Given Timothy's assessed financial vulnerability, we moved straight to an Investigation. We found that, until mid-2017, Timothy had been paying his energy bills in full. After he became unemployed and stopped paying his bills, arrears built up on his account and we found that the retailer had made many attempts to contact Timothy about the growing arrears – by phone, email, letter and unsuccessful visits to the property. Around 150 pieces of correspondence had been sent to him – bills, offers of assistance and disconnection warnings. We also found that Timothy's billing was correct and based on accurate meter readings.

Timothy's supply wasn't disconnected, in part due to measures introduced in Victoria during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, pausing disconnections in the state. His accounts had been flagged by the retailer as 'experiencing financial hardship' and it was assessed that the regulatory requirements for disconnection hadn't been met. In addition, in early 2023, the retailer received a letter stating that Timothy was in ill-health, and a life support flag was placed on his accounts, assuring his supply. We assessed that the energy retailer had made significant attempts to contact Timothy about his arrears and the assistance it could offer, but due to health and financial issues Timothy hadn't engaged with those contacts.

After requests from Timothy's representative for further assistance, the energy retailer offered a debt reduction of \$2,000 on both of Timothy's accounts (electricity and gas). It also provided \$200 in customer service payments. The retailer also undertook to contact the representative to help set up an affordable payment arrangement for the balance of the debts, to help Timothy benefit from government concessions and a Utility Relief Grant, and to help with advice on how to manage his usage.

We provided Timothy's representative with the details of our Investigation and advised that we considered the retailer's offer to be fair. The representative accepted our view, and the complaint was closed.

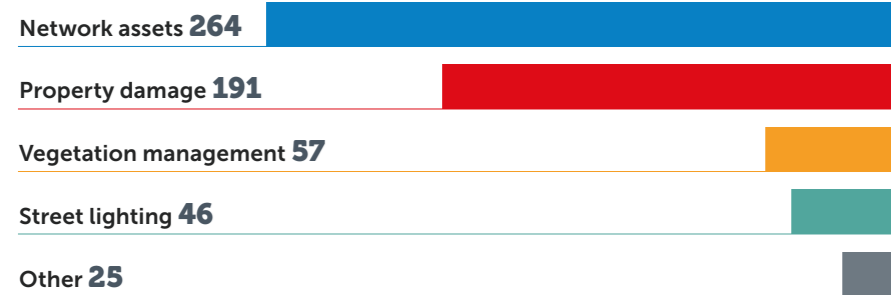
* Names have been changed

Land

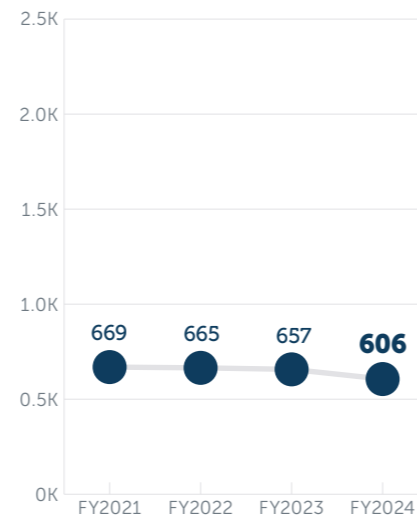
606 Land cases ↓ 8% compared to FY2023



Top sub-issues

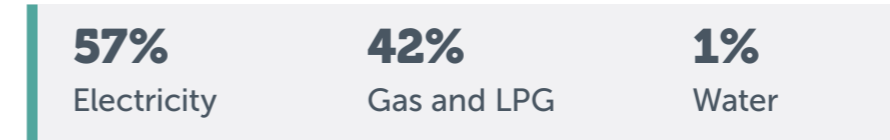


Recent history

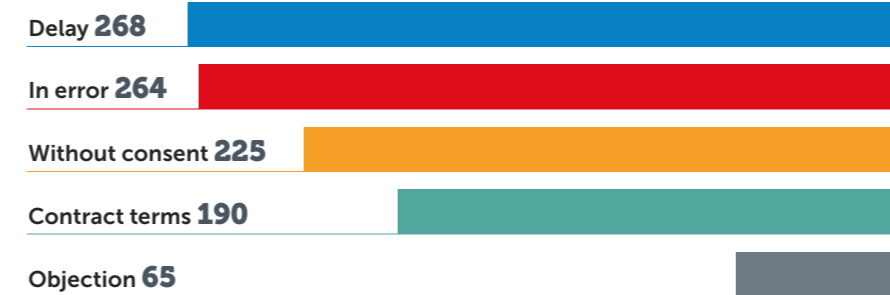


Transfer

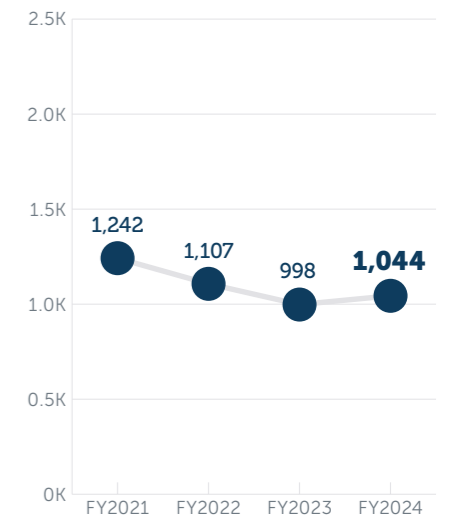
1,044 Transfer cases ↑ 5% compared to FY2023



Top sub-issues

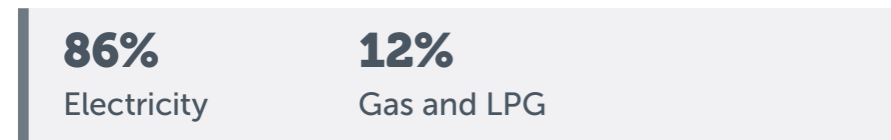


Recent history



Marketing

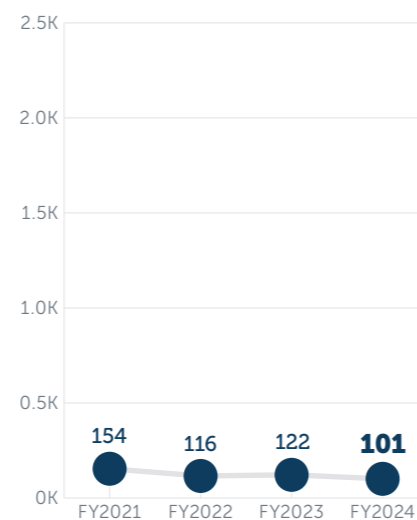
101 Marketing cases ↓ 17% compared to FY2023



Top sub-issues

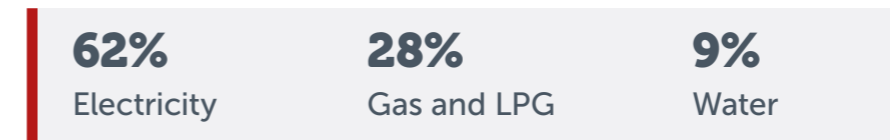


Recent history

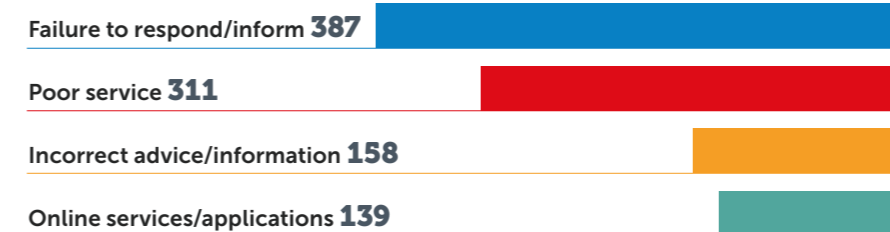


Customer service

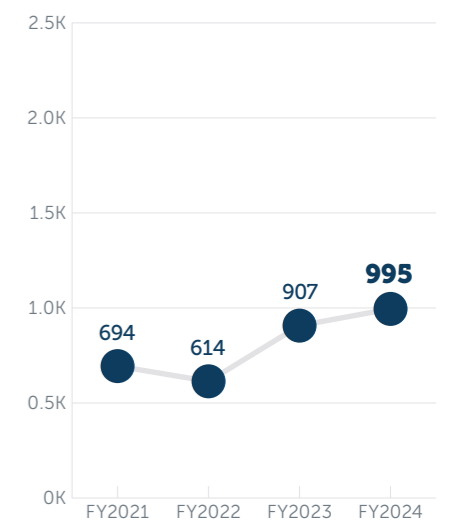
995 Customer service cases ↑ 10% compared to FY2023



Top sub-issues



Recent history

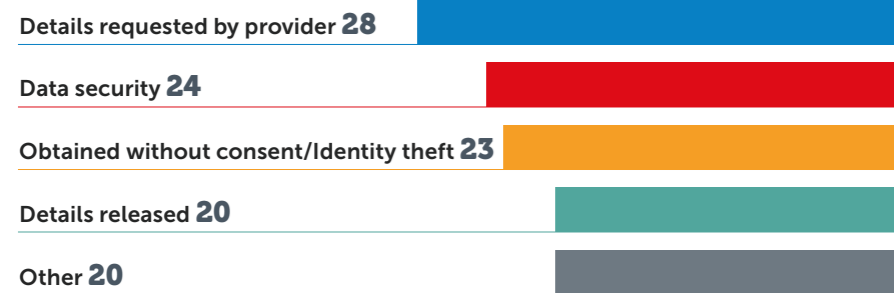


Privacy

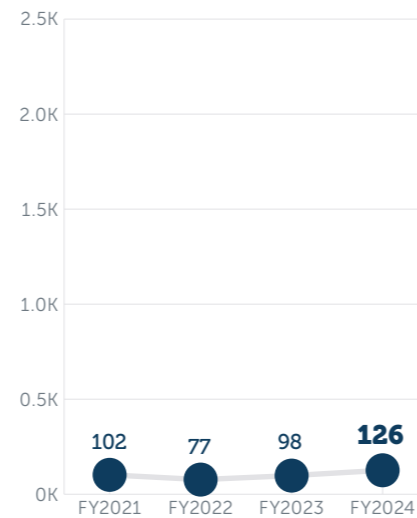
126 Privacy cases ↑ **29%** compared to FY2023

66% Electricity
23% Gas and LPG
10% Water

Top sub-issues



Recent history



Consumer story

Disputed responsibility for outstanding fee

New water connection after subdivision | Contribution to capital works

Beth* subdivided a large property she'd owned for 15 years and sold off half of it. She said she knew she'd need to contribute to capital works costs as part of the sub-division process. Her surveyor discovered the estimated costs, which seemed reasonable. However, when her surveyor rang the water company to double-check the costs, they were told about an outstanding fee of more than \$15,000 associated with the original property. Beth believed this fee wasn't her responsibility and should have been paid by the previous owner and developer of the acreage. She said the water company wouldn't issue a certificate of compliance until payment was made. Unhappy about having to pay the fee, Beth contacted EWOV.

In response to our Investigation, the water company told us its property record comprises a works strategy for an area. This record includes a pricing arrangement that allows the water company to require developers to contribute to the cost of water company works in connection with a development. It said it keeps a database of properties and contributions received are recorded. At the time Beth split her property into two lots, no contributions had been received.

After discussions, the water company agreed to reimburse Beth almost \$7,000 — the equivalent of contributions she'd paid for the land she'd kept — as long as she acknowledged that contributions must be paid on further subdivision of the land, or for any additional habitable structures requiring a building or planning permit to be constructed on the land. Beth agreed to this.

We conciliated a resolution and the water company agreed to pay half of the cost of an agreement with Beth and we closed the complaint.

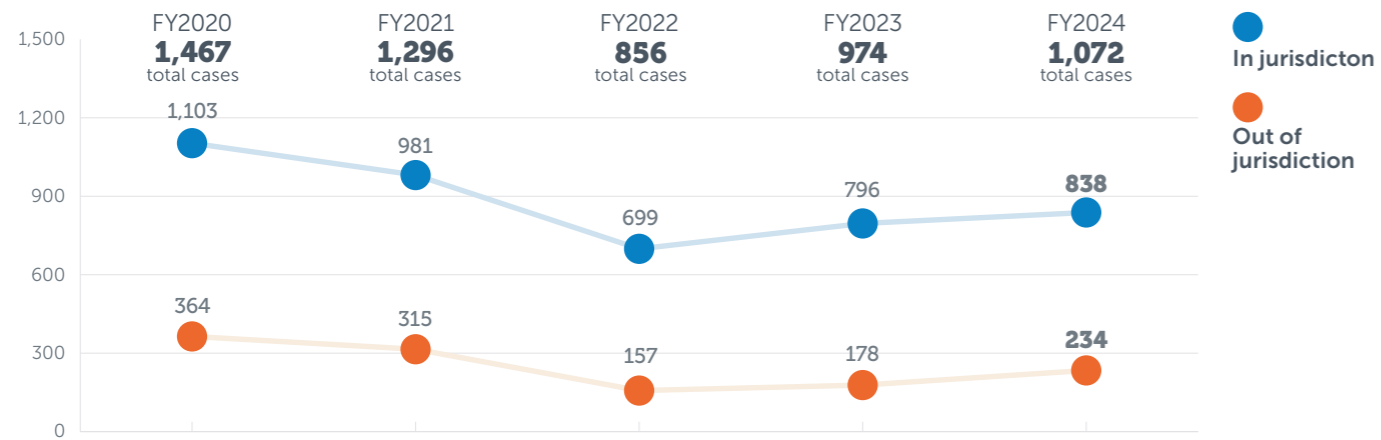
* Names have been changed

Solar

1,072 Solar cases ↑ 10% compared to FY2023

We were able to assist with 838 cases that fell within EWOV's jurisdiction where the complaint was about a provider that is an EWOV scheme participant. Our current jurisdiction for solar incorporates issues relating to electricity accounts, missing solar credits, connection issues and metering. Billing: Tariff and Provision: Existing connection were the most common issues.

Recent history

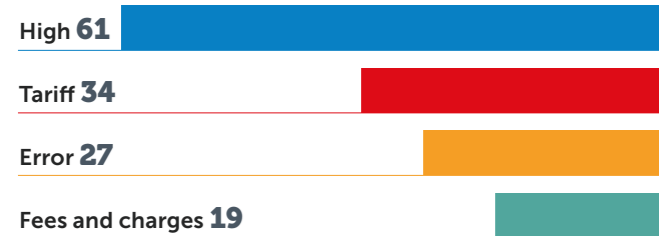


Embedded network

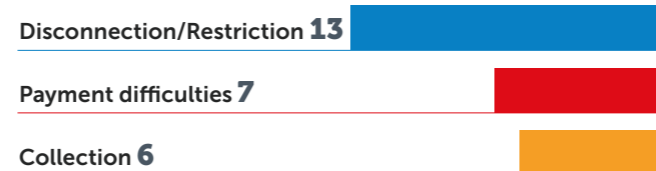
254 Embedded network cases ↑ 58% compared to FY2023

Caravan parks, retirement villages, apartment blocks and shopping centres may have private electricity networks supplying homes or businesses within specific self-contained sites. These are called embedded networks. There are 557 embedded network entities registered with EWOV as at 30 June 2024. Some embedded network enquiries are about gas embedded networks, which are not within EWOV's jurisdiction.

Top Billing sub-issues



Top Credit sub-issues



Consumer story

Multiple solar metering issues affect billing

Residential consumer | Solar metering | Estimated billing

Mitchell* had a solar system with battery installed at his property in January 2023. The system was switched on in February 2023. In May 2023, Mitchell received an electricity bill for more than \$1,000. The bill was estimated and covered more than 12 months. Mitchell said he'd been unable to find out why he received such a high estimated bill when he had a solar system and a battery.

When an Assisted Referral didn't resolve Mitchell's concerns, he returned to EWOV, and we opened an Investigation. We found that Mitchell's solar system was switched on while his property was still on basic metering, and before a bi-directional meter (smart meter) was installed. As a result, the general consumption meter at the property operated in reverse, leading to estimated bills. Corrected meter reads were subsequently provided to Mitchell's retailer by the local distributor.

Mitchell's property was also on a controlled load due to a high-energy appliance. Because his local distributor didn't allow solar customers to have a controlled load on a solar tariff, the controlled load meter for the high-energy appliance had to be disconnected and wired into the general consumption meter, and the controlled load meter abolished.

Mitchell's issue was further complicated by confusion between Mitchell's electrician and the local distributor's contractors around the address of Mitchell's property. As a result of incorrect solar paperwork, a meter upgrade and reconfiguration had been cancelled.

Mitchell accepted his retailer's offer of a customer service payment of \$200 towards his bill, in recognition of its delay in informing Mitchell about the incorrect solar paperwork. He also accepted the local distributor's offer to call Mitchell's electrician directly to speed up the meter upgrade process.

More than two weeks after the closure of his complaint, Mitchell let us know that there were further delays and that his smart meter installation had not taken place. We were concerned about the delay and how it would affect Mitchell's complaint. We sought clarification from Mitchell's distributor and asked for a time frame for the meter upgrade. The distributor informed us that it had tried to contact Mitchell's electrician multiple times about the service order and that, without a service order raised by the electrician, it could not raise the meter upgrade. The distributor contacted Mitchell and Mitchell informed the distributor that he was searching for another electrician to resolve the issue.

We were unable to assist with Mitchell's electrician or the solar installer because they are not participants of EWOV's scheme. While we can consider complaints about electricity services, including metering and billing for solar tariffs, the installation and operation of a solar system does not fall within the type of complaints that EWOV can handle. This is because it is a commercial activity that falls outside the scope of a scheme participant's licence to sell, supply, or distribute electricity. There is also no current requirement for electricians, solar installers, or solar retailers to be a participant of EWOV's scheme, as there is for anyone who sells, supplies, or distributes electricity.

* Names have been changed

Systemic issues

Our focus on systemic issues has informed policy and process reviews, and contributed to broad change. By identifying systemic issues that appear in our case handling, we're able to share valuable insights that can foster improvements that benefit a wide range of consumers, including those who may never come to EWOV with their complaint.

We highlight our key focus areas in this section.

In 2023/2024, we updated our systemic issue policy and targeted our investigations to practices that we considered were causing the most consumer and/or market harm.

Consumer access to payment difficulty and hardship support

A key focus of our systemic issues investigations was provider practices that impeded or had the potential to impede consumers' ability to access payment and hardship support. These practices have the potential to trigger significant harm in the current environment, where consumers are facing increasing affordability pressures. One issue we identified related to the content of an energy provider's reminder and disconnection notices which framed payment assistance as something that a consumer may be entitled to rather than something they are entitled to. In response to our investigation, the energy provider updated its approach to provide clear and unambiguous direction that consumers facing payment difficulties are entitled to payment assistance. This was an important outcome to help improve consumer understanding and likelihood of accessing relevant support.

Family violence

Helping to improve provider practices impacting victim-survivors of family violence remains an enduring priority for EWOV. An important part of our approach is sharing insights from our systemic issues investigations to:

- improve stakeholder understanding of relevant issues
- encourage providers to proactively implement measures to reduce the likelihood of similar problems arising.

In line with this approach, in June 2024, we released a public report *Empowering change: supporting victims-survivors of family violence*. As part of this report, we highlighted insights from a range of systemic issues including providers:

- experiencing system and process design errors that created the possibility of victim-survivors' residential addresses or other identifying information being disclosed to alleged perpetrators
- requiring victim-survivors to provide evidence that they had been impacted by family violence in inappropriate circumstances.

Empowering consumer understanding and choice

Another key element of our systemic issues investigations was encouraging providers to adapt their approaches to improve consumer choice. This included encouraging providers to:

- give consumers more options to tailor their experience to meet their needs
- provide materials to consumers to facilitate their understanding of what options were available to them.

For example, after the major storm events in February 2024, we worked with an electricity provider whose network was particularly impacted to assist the provider to:

- try and provide accurate and timely information about available compensation to impacted consumers
- offer different options for how consumers could make applications for and receive relevant compensation.

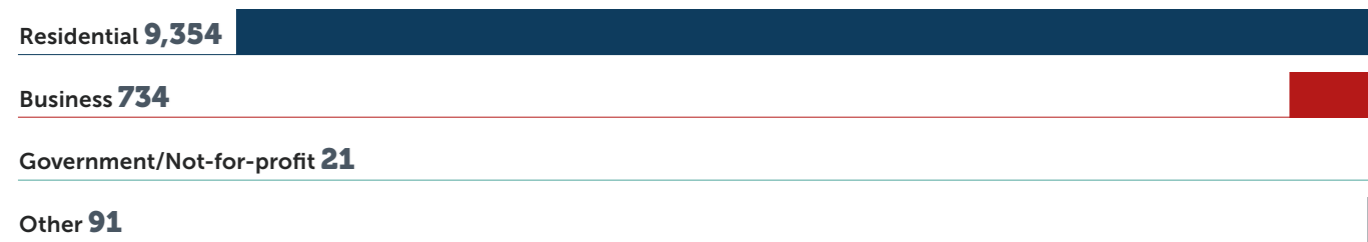


10,200 cases received **↑16%** compared to FY2023

958 enquiries received **↑34%**

9,242 complaints received **↑14%**

Cases by Customer type



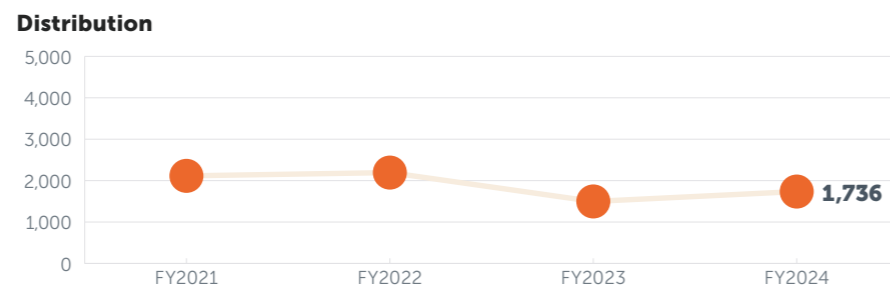
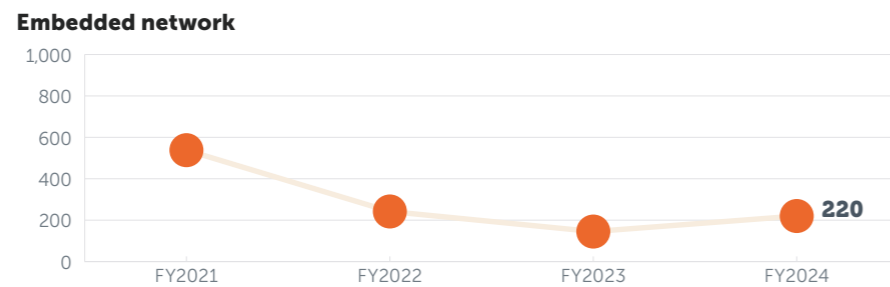
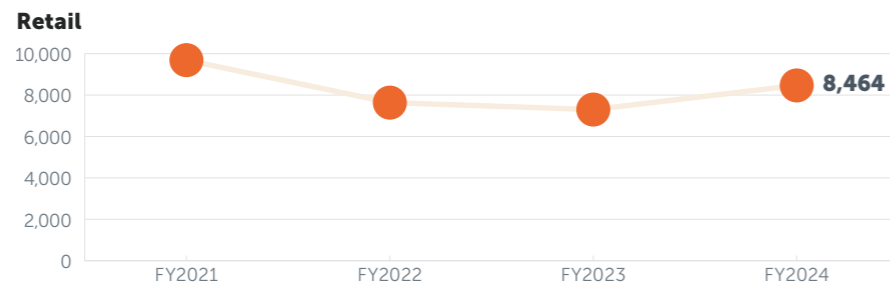
EWOV Limited has 65 electricity members¹ under licence:

- 56 Retailers
- 5 Distributors
- 4 Transmission providers.

A further 557 electricity embedded network entities are members under the *General Exemption Order*.

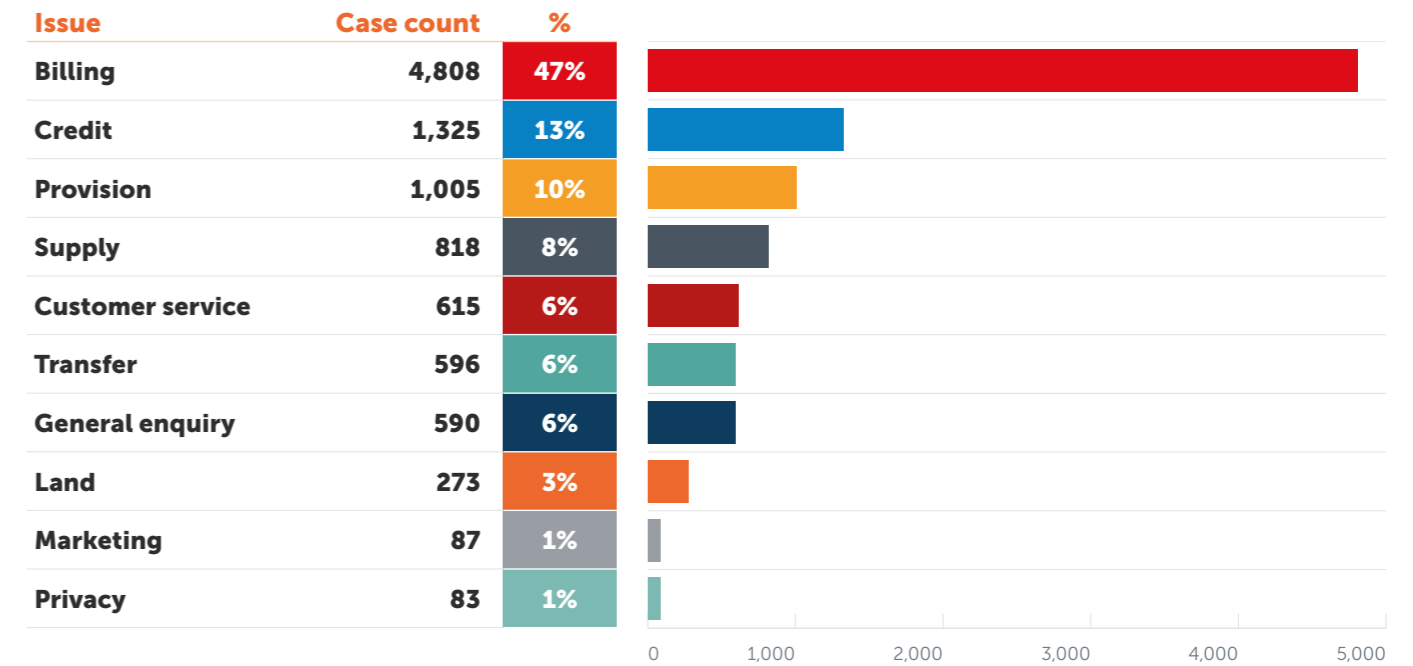
We have one contracting participant that, in 2023/2024, was in the process of applying for a transmission licence in Victoria. A contracting participant is an entity in the electricity, gas or water industry that is not required to be a member but agrees to participate in our scheme.

Recent history of Case numbers



¹ Some EWOV Limited members trade under multiple 'brands'. There's a full list on our website: www.ewov.com.au

Top issues



Sub issues

Billing 4,808	Supply 818	Land 273
Tariff 923	Off supply – unplanned 604	Network assets 106
High 884	Off supply – planned 126	Property damage 60
Error 823	Variation 63	Vegetation management 50
Concession 488	Quality 25	Street lighting 46
Refund/credit 463		Other 6
Fees and charges 330	Customer service 615	Transmission 4
Estimation 201	Failure to respond/inform 255	Easement 1
Delay 191	Poor service 171	
Backbill 162	Incorrect advice/information 96	Marketing 87
Other 135	Online services/applications 93	Other sales channels 55
Format 120		Phone 30
Meter 77	Transfer 596	Door to door 2
Bulk hot water 11	In error 158	
	Contract terms 144	Privacy 83
Credit 1,325	Without consent 129	Data security 18
Payment difficulties 654	Delay 103	Details requested by provider 17
Collection 359	Objection 36	Obtained without consent/identity theft 16
Disconnection/restriction 312	Cooling off rights 26	Other 13
		Details released 11
Provision 1,005		Disclosure refused by provider 8
Existing connection 617	General enquiry 590	
New connection 307	Energy/water 527	
Disconnection/restriction 81	Non-energy/water 63	

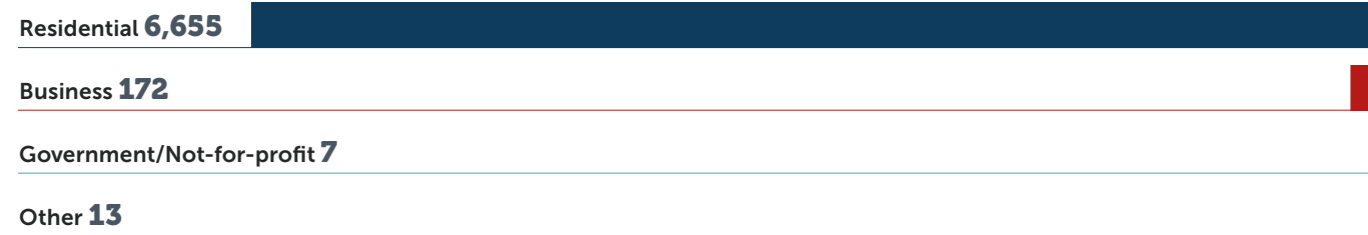
Note: Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number, so may not always add to 100%.

6,847 cases received **↑34%** compared to FY2023

245 enquiries received **↑90%**

6,602 complaints received **↑33%**

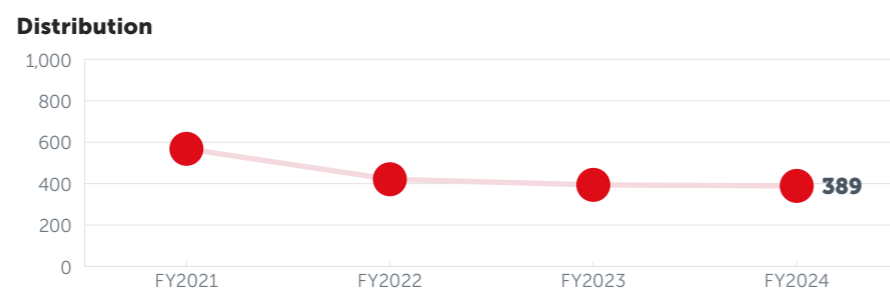
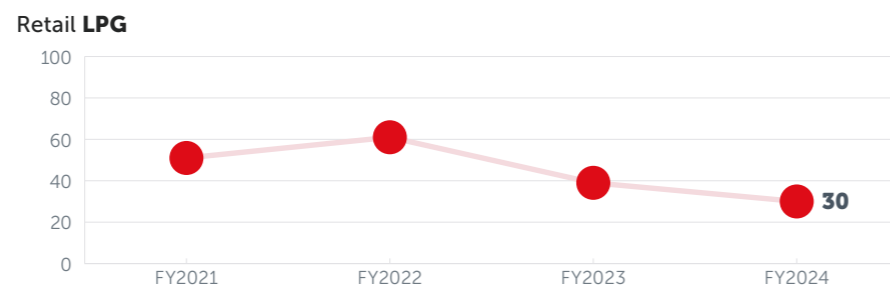
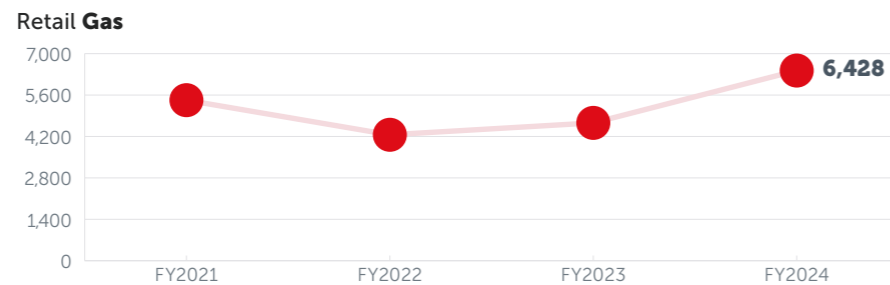
Cases by Customer type



EWOV Limited has 37 gas members¹:

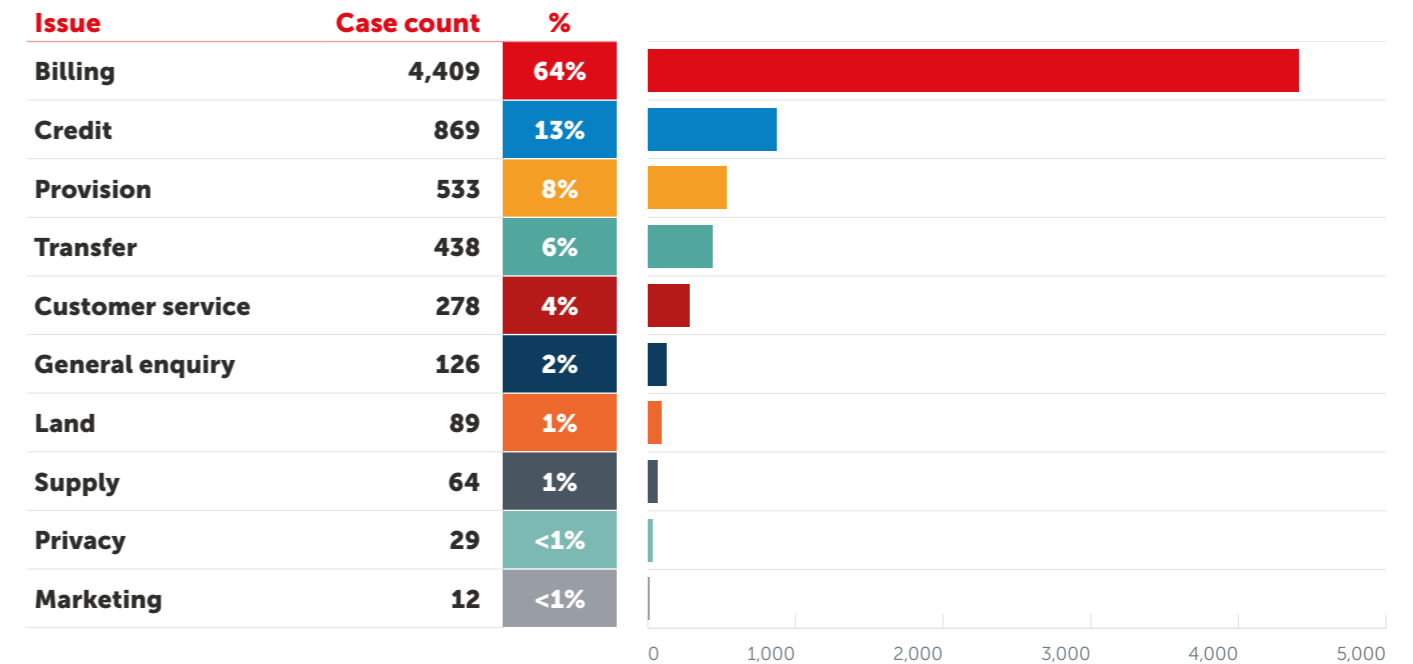
- 28 Natural gas retailers under licence
- 5 Natural gas distributors under licence
- 4 Liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) retailers under the *LPG Industry Code*.

Recent history of Case numbers



¹ Some EWOV Limited members trade under multiple 'brands'. There's a full list on our website: www.ewov.com.au

Top issues



Sub issues

Billing 4,409	Transfer 438	Supply 64
High 1,688	Delay 161	Off supply – unplanned 29
Error 674	In error 105	Quality 19
Estimation 637	Without consent 95	Variation 8
Fees and charges 268	Contract terms 44	Off supply – planned 6
Concession 206	Objection 27	Sewer/Stormwater overflow/Blockage 2
Refund/credit 181	Cooling off rights 6	
Backbill 181		
Tariff 149	Customer service 278	Privacy 29
Bulk hot water 140	Poor service 107	Details requested by provider 9
Delay 99	Failure to respond/inform 87	Data security 6
Meter 83	Incorrect advice/information 49	Other 5
Other 53	Online services/applications 35	Details released 4
Format 50		Obtained without consent/identity theft 3
	General enquiry 126	Disclosure refused by provider 2
	Energy/water 118	
	Non-energy/water 8	
	Land 89	Marketing 12
	Network assets 43	Phone 6
	Property damage 42	Other sales channels 5
	Other 4	Door to door 1
Provision 533		
Existing connection 354		
New connection 122		
Disconnection/restriction 56		
Deliveries stopped 1		

Note: Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number, so may not always add to 100%.

1,481 cases received ↑15% compared to FY2023

105 enquiries received ↑25%

1,376 complaints received ↑14%

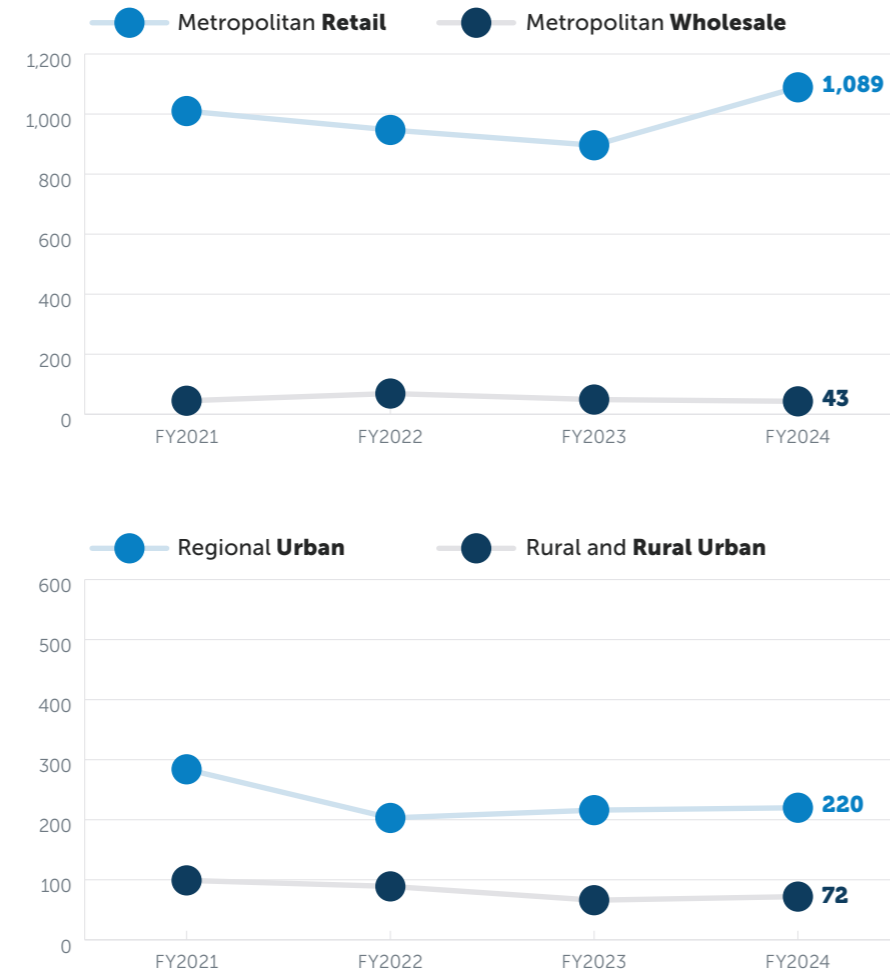
Cases by Customer type



EWOV Limited has 18 water members¹, all State-owned water corporations constituted under the *Water Industry Act 1989*:

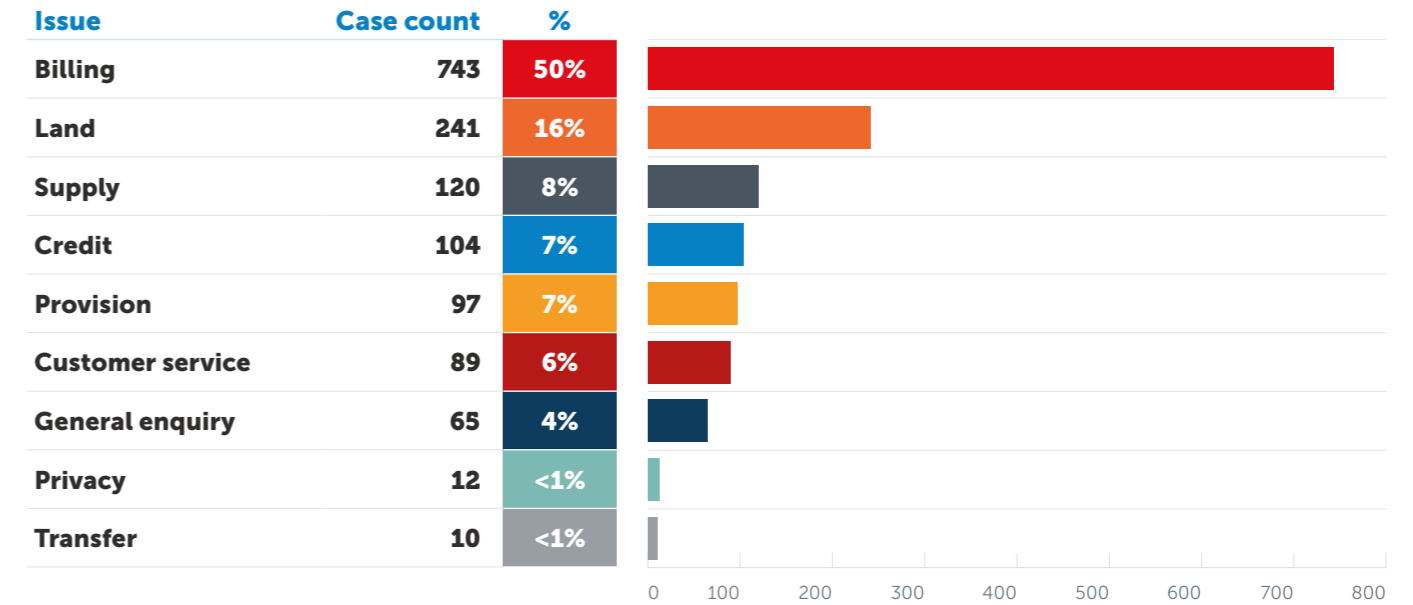
- 3 metropolitan retailers
- 1 metropolitan wholesaler
- 10 regional urban water corporations
- 2 rural water corporations
- 2 rural urban corporations.

Recent history of Case numbers



¹ Listed on our website: www.ewov.com.au. For more information about water corporations, visit water.vic.gov.au/about-us/how-we-work-with-water-corporations

Top issues



Sub issues

Billing 743	Supply 120	General enquiry 65
High 317	Quality 45	Energy/water 57
Fees and charges 134	Sewer/Stormwater overflow/Blockage 41	Non-energy/water 8
Error 88	Off supply – unplanned 22	Privacy 12
Backbill 45	Off supply – planned 6	Details released 4
Refund/credit 42	Variation 5	Obtained without consent/identity theft 3
Other 28	Water licensing 1	Details requested by provider 2
Concession 24	Credit 104	Other 2
Estimation 17	Payment difficulties 75	Disclosure refused by provider 1
Format 17	Collection 27	Transfer 10
Delay 11	Disconnection/restriction 2	Delay 4
Tariff 10	Provision 97	Contract terms 2
Meter 10	Existing connection 47	Objection 2
Land 241	New connection 43	In error 1
Network assets 114	Disconnection/restriction 7	Without consent 1
Property damage 88	Customer service 89	
Easement 18	Failure to respond/inform 42	
Other 14	Poor service 25	
Vegetation management 7	Incorrect advice/information 12	
	Online services/applications 10	

Note: Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number, so may not always add to 100%.

Financial statements

Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

For the year ended 30 June 2024

	2024 \$	2023 \$
Revenue	11,613,942	9,422,645
Administrative expenses	(1,278,180)	(1,206,811)
Bad debts reversal/(expenses)	(10,713)	(90,842)
Consultancy expenses	(44,124)	(152,707)
Depreciation and amortisation expenses	(1,076,238)	(1,052,836)
Employee benefits expenses	(8,875,251)	(6,493,262)
Finance expenses	(140,779)	(158,045)
Occupancy expenses	(319,251)	(304,215)
Policy and Communication expenses	(135,808)	(103,958)
Training and development expenses	(144,950)	(147,325)
Deficit for the year	(411,352)	(287,356)
Income tax expense	–	–
Deficit from continuing operations	(411,352)	(287,356)
Total comprehensive income for the year	(411,352)	(287,356)

Statement of Financial Position

As at 30 June 2024

	2024 \$	2023 \$
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	2,960,780	3,400,274
Trade and other receivables	334,340	111,865
Other financial assets	3,379,607	3,314,916
Total Current Assets	6,674,727	6,827,055
Non-Current Assets		
Intangible assets	68,669	77,053
Property, plant and equipment	991,936	1,271,577
Right-of-Use Assets	2,215,122	2,721,316
Total Non-Current Assets	3,275,727	4,069,946
Total Assets	9,950,454	10,897,001
LIABILITIES		
Current Liabilities		
Lease liabilities	953,697	886,758
Trade and other payables	409,842	346,263
Employee benefits	960,689	862,901
Total Current Liabilities	2,324,228	2,095,922
Non-Current Liabilities		
Lease liabilities	2,223,786	3,184,655
Employee benefits	139,316	178,264
Long-term provisions	937,536	701,220
Total Non-Current Liabilities	3,300,638	4,064,139
Total Liabilities	5,624,866	6,160,061
Net Assets	4,325,588	4,736,940
EQUITY		
Accumulated surplus	4,325,588	4,736,940
Total Equity	4,325,588	4,736,940

Financial statements

Statement of Cash Flows

For the year ended 30 June 2024

	2024 \$	2023 \$
Cash flows from operating activities		
Receipts from Members	12,371,039	9,100,100
Interest received	194,092	103,607
Payments to suppliers and employees	(11,750,072)	(8,889,512)
Finance costs	(133,143)	(158,045)
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	681,916	156,150
Cash flows from investing activities		
Payments for property, plant and equipment	(63,855)	(26,363)
Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities	(63,855)	(26,363)
Cash flows from financing activities		
Repayment of lease liabilities	(893,933)	(829,185)
Net cash provided by/(used in) financing activities	(893,933)	(829,185)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents held	(275,872)	(699,398)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	3,400,274	4,099,672
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year	3,124,402	3,400,274



How to contact EWOV

We can help with complaints about electricity, gas or water providers.

We're free for Victorian consumers and we're independent and fair.

Phone us:

Free call

1800 500 509

Calls from mobile phones may attract charges.
We can call back.

+61 3 8672 4410 (if calling from overseas)

Interpreter service: **131 450**

National Relay Service: **133 677**

Use live chat on our website:

www.ewov.com.au/contact-us

Use the complaint form on our website:

www.ewov.com.au/start-a-complaint

Write to us:

Reply Paid 469 Melbourne VIC 8060

We accept letters in Braille.

Email us:

ewovinfo@ewov.com.au

Fax us:

1800 500 549 (free fax)

