

# ANNUAL REPORT



2019–2020



**Energy & Water  
Ombudsman**  
Queensland

# Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland 2019-2020 Annual Report

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## Communication objective

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

This annual report presents information about the performance of the Ombudsman scheme for the period 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020. It includes our activities and achievements for the financial year against our strategic plan and summarises our future priorities and challenges.

This report is produced under the prescribed requirements of the *Financial Accountability Act 2009* and the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019*. It has been written for the benefit of our stakeholders, including energy and water consumers, retailers and distributors; and members of Queensland Parliament.

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Content from this annual report should be attributed to the *Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland Annual Report 2019-2020*.

## Accessibility

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



This publication is available online from **[www.ewoq.com.au/annual-reports](http://www.ewoq.com.au/annual-reports)** or by contacting the Communications and Engagement team by emailing **[info@ewoq.com.au](mailto:info@ewoq.com.au)** or phoning us on 1800 662 837.

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

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# Letter of compliance

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

11 September 2020

Dear Minister

I am pleased to submit for presentation to the Parliament the Annual Report 2019-2020 and financial statements for the Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland.

I certify that this annual report complies with:

- the prescribed requirements of the *Financial Accountability Act 2009* and the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019*, and
- the detailed requirements set out in the Annual report requirements for Queensland Government agencies, noting minor alterations to this year's design requirements to also meet the expectations of the broader audience of an industry-funded dispute resolution scheme.

A checklist outlining the annual reporting requirements can be found on page 84 of the annual report.

Yours sincerely



**Jane Pires**  
Energy and Water Ombudsman

# section 1

## Our priorities

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

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

## Vision

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

## Values

These are the beliefs and philosophies that drive EWOQ. They are the principles that impact the employee experience we deliver as well as the relationship we develop with our customers, partners, and shareholders.



### INTEGRITY

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



### ACCOUNTABILITY

Each of us is accountable and responsible for our work, attitude and behaviours.



### RESPECT

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



### COMPETENCY

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



### EXCELLENCE

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

## History

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

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

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# Our role

## Our role, structure and strategic direction

### Our role

#### Our primary functions are to:

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

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

### Our structure

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

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

The executive management group assists the Ombudsman in the stewardship of EWOQ.

### Strategic direction

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

#### During 2019-2020, our key priorities included:

- reviewing our scheme in terms of proposed legislative changes
- proactively promoting our services to small energy and water customers
- identifying systemic issues
- redeveloping our website and intranet
- upgrading our case management system
- implementing an electronic document and records management system
- undertaking a customer satisfaction survey and implementing monthly Voice of the Customer surveying
- commissioning an independent review
- reimagining our Indigenous artwork and launching our second Reconciliation Action Plan, the Innovate RAP.

A review of our performance against the strategic plan is on page 20.

### Looking forward

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

#### In 2020-2021, our key projects include:

- implementing a new cloud-based telephony system
- introducing live chat on the new website
- reviewing our dispute resolution process to continuously improve customer experience
- improving our stakeholder engagement and community outreach programs
- contributing to public policy through insights and submissions
- continuing preparations to expand our services in the energy market, including embedded network customers.

section **1**

## Highlights

**7,621**  
cases closed

electricity	gas	water
<b>84%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>6%</b>

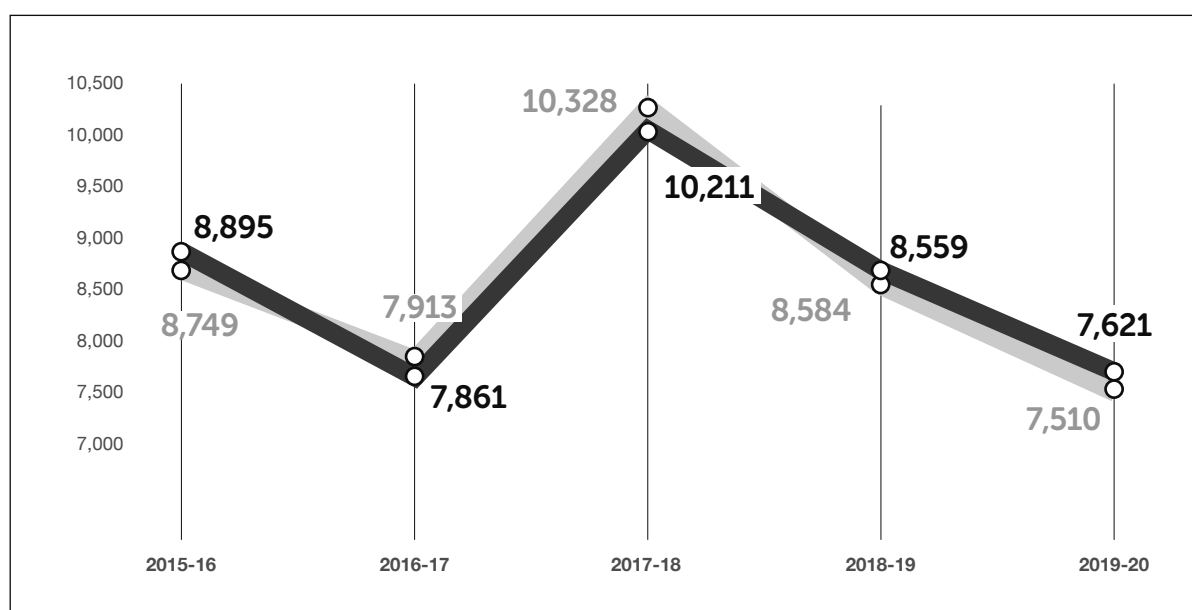
### Cases received and closed by year



Cases received



Cases closed



### Top 3 issues



1. Billing



2. Credit



3. Provision

### Who contacted us?

**95%** Residential**5%** Small business

### Monetary outcomes

Negotiated a total of **1983** outcomes worth **\$878,849\*** for customers

#### Top 5 monetary outcomes

	Number	Amount
1. Billing adjustment	401	\$352,205
2. Goodwill gestures	963	\$243,462
3. Debt waiver	102	\$75,945
4. Refund/EFT issued	96	\$74,376
5. Payment plan offered	234	\$53,604

\* figures rounded to the closest dollar.

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# A Message from the Ombudsman

As Energy and Water Ombudsman for Queensland, I am delighted to present the 2019-2020 annual report, a year where affordability and customer hardship have become areas of greater focus against the backdrop of summer bush fires in parts of Australia and the COVID-19 pandemic.

We've seen both the energy and water sectors proactively respond to these events by introducing a range of measures to support their customers.

In the energy sector, the Energy Charter demonstrated the power of energy companies coming together with a range of commitments to provide support to people and businesses impacted by COVID-19. We also saw the Queensland Government introduce a \$200 COVID-19 household utility assistance payment to provide relief directly to customers via their electricity bill. It has been reassuring to see government and industry act quickly to deliver these measures to ease pressure on consumers.

As the economic effects of the pandemic started to impact Queensland, our service played a role in supporting energy and water customers needing information about hardship support, rebates and concessions – many for the first time.

As a service, we moved our entire team to work from home in late March and continued to deliver our dispute resolution service without disruption to consumers. This resulted in unexpected benefits for our corporate culture as the physical location of team members became less relevant.

This year there has also been a continued spotlight on policy transformation within the energy sector as the review of Queensland's energy legislation continued. As part of the consultation process, we provided a submission to the review of the Queensland energy legislation issues paper, providing our response on the review of the *Energy and Water Ombudsman Act 2006* and the inclusion of residential embedded network customers in the EWOQ scheme.

In May, the Mineral and Energy Resources and other Legislation Amendment Bill passed through Queensland Parliament and amended the *Energy and Water Ombudsman Act 2006*. Once this regulation is in force, it will expand our jurisdiction to include complaints about embedded network operators (exempt sellers) and provide Queenslanders who live in embedded networks – like apartment buildings, caravan parks and retirement villages – access to our free, fair and independent dispute resolution service.

## Our cases

During 2019-2020, electricity made up the bulk of our caseload, accounting for 84 per cent of the 7621 cases closed. Our total cases closed fell from 8559 in

2018-2019, with a significant drop in general enquiries, referrals and refer backs.

We believe the steps taken by our scheme participants to improve their internal dispute resolution processes and to support their customers during COVID-19 has contributed to the downward trend of our case numbers. We encourage these initiatives as they are in the best interests of consumers. Our efforts to raise awareness of our service and continued promotion of the requirement for consumers to contact their retailer or distributor first is also reflected in this result.

The number of investigations our office closed continued to increase during 2019-2020. This is an area we add value by helping both industry and consumers resolve complex issues.

Billing disputes continue to account for more than half of the complaints we receive, followed by credit-related issues (including payment difficulties, hardship and debt listings), which is consistent with previous years. Our third most common area of complaint is provision, which are problems with new or existing connections, followed closely by customer service issues.

## Our contribution

As a free, fair and independent dispute resolution service for energy and water consumers, we are committed to ensuring our service evolves with consumer and member expectations.

Over the past 12 months, we have focused on a number of internal projects designed to improve our services for energy and water consumers – and their providers – and ensuring Queenslanders who need our help know what we do and how to contact us.

We are working to streamline our service and improve customer experience across case management, telephony and online channels. We have delivered significant improvements to our working environment for team members too, with a cloud-based electronic document and records management system and a new intranet.

The first phase of our new website, which launched in June, takes a mobile-first and customer-centred approach designed to make it easier for customers and members to quickly find the information and services they need.

Our case management system has been upgraded and will integrate with our new telephony system and



# section 1

website, incorporating enhanced call and customer functions, including live chat on the website and improved quality assurance and reporting.

We also completed a customer satisfaction survey, implemented regular Voice of the Customer surveys and commissioned an independent review of our service, assessing our complaint handling service and operations against the benchmarks for industry-based dispute resolution.

One of our greatest achievements in 2019-2020 was launching our second Reconciliation Action Plan – our Innovate RAP. Featuring our new Indigenous artwork, the Innovate RAP builds on the foundations of our Reflect RAP and continues our reconciliation journey. As the Ombudsman, I am committed to delivering the actions detailed in the RAP and to helping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers know that it is okay to complain if they have a problem with their electricity, gas or water provider.

We look forward to contributing our insights to broader conversations with energy and water providers and community stakeholders in the interests of improving the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers.

## Our people

During 2019-2020, we continued to invest in and support our people. The groundwork we made last financial year in progressing flexible working arrangements and improving mobility across our teams paid dividends as our entire team moved seamlessly to the new working from home arrangements during March.

We have continued to focus on our people, capability and culture this year and developing the skills of our team to encourage career growth, development and strengthening our succession planning.

Throughout COVID-19, we continued to consult our managers and teams to support our people to perform at their best under the circumstances and reduce the uncertainty around return to work and workplace health and safety. Our move to a Microsoft 365 environment, incorporating Teams, SharePoint and Yammer, prior to the pandemic has allowed us to stay connected and collaborate effectively.

## Our connections

Community outreach and stakeholder engagement are an important part of our service.

Our outreach program during 2019-2020 focused on reaching consumers in regional areas, older Queenslanders and customers in financial difficulty, who we reach through our relationships with financial counsellors and community services that help those in financial hardship. We continued to foster relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, with highlights including visits to Mt Isa and Yarrabah.

While our planned face-to-face outreach activities were cancelled or postponed from late March onwards because of COVID-19, we have continued to create

opportunities to raise awareness of our services by other means, including webinars and mainstream media.

Engaging with our key stakeholders is integral to our service and we continue to look for new ways to develop and strengthen connections with our scheme participants, peers, community groups, government departments and industry regulators.

## Our future

This financial year we've continued our future focus, both in meeting the evolving needs and expectations of customers as well as the proposed legislative changes and an expanded jurisdiction.

With key projects delivered or close to completion, we are well placed to continue to improve our service delivery into the next financial year by working to deliver a better customer experience for all customers across all channels.

We are ready to meet the challenge of an expanded jurisdiction once the Mineral and Energy Resources and other Legislation Amendment Bill is implemented and are looking forward to welcoming the changes and possible new scheme members.

## My thanks

While the changes and challenges of the past 12 months have been significant, I am heartened by the resilience and agility of the energy and water sectors – and how much can be achieved when government and industry work together in the best interests of consumers for these basic essential services

I am grateful for the ongoing support and counsel of the Advisory Council, in particular Anna Moynihan, who has contributed significantly to the scheme over the past five years and who will conclude her term as Chair in the coming financial year. Also, to my peers in the Ombudsman community and my team for their business and industry knowledge and strong performance over the past 12 months, particularly in developing and implementing our rapid response to COVID-19.

I would like to thank our scheme members for their support and commitment to the projects we have undertaken over the past 12 months to improve our service.

While the next 12 months will undoubtedly bring new challenges and opportunities, I am confident we are well placed to continue delivering great results for Queensland's energy and water consumers.



**Jane Pires**  
Energy and Water Ombudsman

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# A Message from the Advisory Council Chair

It has been a year like no other. Weather conditions, including drought and higher average temperatures, signalled an early start to the 2019 bushfire season, with three events in South East Queensland in September. By early 2020, large swaths of the country were being devastated by catastrophic bushfires, with loss of life and communities damaged. Our February Advisory Council meeting minutes recorded our discussions about the effects of the long hot summer on power bills, and, conversely, a deluge which deferred pending water restrictions for customers supplied by the South East Queensland Water Grid.

At this meeting we also discussed an emerging coronavirus, with industry, community members and the Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland (EWOQ) reviewing their business continuity plans and expressing concerns about the potential impacts. These are still unfolding for all of us, with the consequences of COVID-19 extending far beyond this 2019-2020 reporting period.

One of our key Advisory Council functions is to provide advice to EWOQ on current and emerging issues in the energy and water sectors and the implications for an external dispute resolution service for consumers. To help equip us in this role, the Australian and New Zealand Energy and Water Ombudsman Network (ANZEWO), of which EWOQ is a member, commissioned research by the University of Sydney to answer the question *What will energy consumers expect of an energy and water ombudsman scheme in 2020, 2025 and 2030?*

Encompassing six domains, the research report concluded that dispute resolution schemes were critical to the proper regulatory and compliance framework of the energy market. It also advised there was strong support for schemes expanding their jurisdiction to encompass more energy products and services.

From a Queensland perspective, the report was timely given the significant policy development work underway by the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy. The release of its regulatory impact statements for energy legislation review and embedded networks provided the Advisory Council an opportunity to present a submission on two matters – optimal arrangements for the inclusion of embedded networks as scheme participants, and options for improving EWOQ's governance structure to introduce greater flexibility. In terms of the latter, our submission recommended the option of EWOQ transitioning to a company limited by guarantee as we considered this would deliver agility in a

dynamic energy environment. It would also bring EWOQ in line with its counterparts in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia.

We had the opportunity to discuss these and other issues with the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy, the Honourable Dr Anthony Lynham MP, who joined us virtually at our last meeting for 2019-2020.

Earlier in the year I had the pleasure of chairing the fourth meeting of the ANZEWO group held in Brisbane. Our busy agenda canvassed such issues as complaint trends, governance models, anticipated impacts for consumers after the bushfires, and recent independent reviews of Ombudsman schemes. We reviewed the current ANZEWO work program and settled on the priorities for the next 12 months.

For the Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman, this year has involved a range of projects being undertaken, all with the aim of delivering the best EWOQ customer experience and improving the Office's effectiveness. A new telephony system, member portal and website redesign are on track, complemented by improved case management and electronic document and records management systems, and development of an integrated Voice of the Customer program. In addition, EWOQ's independent review is near completion and will deliver important advice on achievement against published performance benchmarks.

Business continuity plans stood EWOQ in good stead as it was able to transition 100 per cent of its team to working remotely in late March with less than a week's notice. The new arrangements under the leadership of Jane Pires and her management team are working very effectively.

In 2019-2020, a total of 7621 cases were closed, a drop of 11 per cent from the previous year. Of the top three cases closed in the reporting year, billing represented 52 per cent, credit 18 per cent and provision 11 per cent. Similar to last year, the percentage of cases managed as an investigation remained high, indicating that those matters being referred to the Office are becoming more complex and the more routine matters are being dealt with more effectively by scheme participants. This is a positive trend for consumers, and, in part, demonstrates the Office's influence in promoting good internal dispute resolution practice.

# section 1

There have been some changes to our Advisory Council membership this year. Chris Owen, Manager Customer Engagement, Gold Coast Water and Waste, City of Gold Coast, joined us in October 2019 as the water industry representative. Simone Bridge from Unitywater was the previous representative. At the same time, we were joined by Sharon Edwards as a community representative from North Queensland. Sharon is a financial counsellor with the Indigenous Consumer Assistance Network, known as ICAN. Mary McLean from Financial Counselling Australia was a previous community representative. We thank Simone and Mary for their contributions on behalf of their respective sectors, and welcome Chris and Sharon to the Council. We were sorry to see community representative Laura Barnes from QCOSS resign in May as she brought a wealth of knowledge and networks to our meetings. We wish her well.

I would like to thank other Council members for their contribution and support this year – Ian Jarratt (Queensland Consumers Association), Robyn Robinson (Council on the Ageing), Jenny Gates (Energy Queensland), Rosemarie Price (Ergon Energy), Iain Graham (Red Energy and Lumo Energy) and David Ackland (EnergyAustralia). I have appreciated their valuable insights and they have helped make my role as Chair very enjoyable.

It has also been a pleasure to work with the Ombudsman Jane Pires and her team again over the past 12 months. We appreciated the secretariat support provided by Jacqui Nelson. Every year is busy, but this year has brought unique challenges and EWOQ has been in good hands under Jane's leadership. Next year will also bring challenges, particularly in terms of customer hardship, as COVID-19 continues to impact on lives and livelihoods.

This is my last report as the Chair of the Advisory Council to the Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland as my five-year term expires in February 2021. It has been a privilege to serve in this role and I wish EWOQ and Advisory Council members all the very best in ensuring energy and water consumers have access to an excellent dispute resolution service.



**Anna Moynihian**  
Chair

## 2019-2020 Advisory Council Members

### Independent Chair

**Anna Moynihian** (from February 2016 to February 2021)

### Industry representatives (distributors and retailers)

**Chris Owen** Gold Coast Water and Waste, City of Gold Coast (from October 2019 to October 2020)

**David Ackland** EnergyAustralia (from April 2019 to October 2020)

**Iain Graham** Red Energy and Lumo Energy (from October 2017 to October 2021)

**Jennifer Gates** Energy Queensland (from May 2018 to October 2021)

**Rosemarie Price** Ergon Energy Retail (from August 2016 to October 2021)

### Consumer representatives

**Ian Jarratt** Queensland Consumers Association (from September 2007 to October 2021)

**Robyn Robinson** Council on the Ageing Queensland (from August 2016 to October 2021)

**Sharon Edwards** Indigenous Consumer Assistance Network (from October 2019 to October 2021)

### Member appointments completed

**Laura Barnes** Queensland Council of Social Service (from July 2018 to May 2020)

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

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

# section 2

## Project update

During 2019-2020 we undertook a number of key projects to improve our business processes and customer service delivery to ensure we continue to deliver a timely, effective, independent and fair dispute resolution service to the people of Queensland.

### Our key projects:

- Case management
- Telephony
- Website
- Member portal
- Intranet
- EDRMS
- Independent review
- Customer satisfaction research



### Case management

An upgrade to our case management system Resolve improved its usability and has allowed for further streamlining of our processes for compliments and complaints, Right to Information and Information Privacy (RTI & IP) and for integration with our new telephony system and member portal.

#### Project progress

- Resolve upgrade complete
- Integration of SMS complete
- Complaints and compliments process implemented
- RTI & IP process ready to be implemented in July 2020
- Integration to telephony system and member portal.

### Telephony

We are implementing a new cloud-based telephony solution to enhance our customer experience and provide omnichannel functionality to contact us. This will deliver:

- improved interactions with customers, regardless of whether they contact us by phone, live chat, online complaint form, email or Facebook Messenger
- seamless call recording with a cloud-based service
- additional functionality to help improve how we work from home
- advanced system reporting.

#### Project progress

- Team workshop and high-level design complete
- Genesys Cloud configuration complete
- Interactive voice response improvements ready to be implemented in July 2020
- Web chat and email processing in progress
- Resolve integration to come.



## New website

Our website redevelopment focused on making it easier for customers and members to find the information and services they need quickly and to submit a complaint online. Developed on the Squiz Matrix platform, the new website takes a mobile-first and customer-centred approach.

### Project progress

- Phase 1 of the new website was launched on 30 June, incorporating a responsive complaints form to guide customers in the right direction for their complaint
- Continuous improvements are planned to improve functionality and customer experience, including incorporating web chat and a member portal.

## Member portal

A member portal will provide scheme participants a secure area of our website to update their contact details and receive reports.

### Project progress

- Member portal is under construction with expected delivery in the first quarter of next financial year.

## Intranet and EDRMS

Records 365, integrated with SharePoint, was chosen for our cloud-based electronic document and records management system (EDRMS) to provide timely management of information, collaboration and compliance with government legislation.

The SharePoint environment also provided a new Intranet with improved search functionality and interactivity through the use of Yammer feeds.

The delivery of both the Intranet and the EDRMS proved particularly useful to help team members stay connected and improve collaboration while working from home.

### Project progress

- The new intranet and EDRMS were both launched in March 2020.

## Independent review

We engaged Cameron Ralph Khoury to conduct an independent review of our scheme to help us understand how well we're performing against the Benchmarks for industry-based customer dispute resolution.

### The review included:

- broader stakeholder consultation
- in-depth analysis of our processes, procedures, data and management oversight mechanisms
- a review of a representative sample of recent disputes.

### Project progress

- Draft report delivered in June 2020 with findings to be used to continue improving our service into the next financial year.

## Customer satisfaction research

Our customer satisfaction research measures how well we're meeting our core goal of providing a free, fair and independent dispute resolution service.

### Project progress

- Schottler Consulting conducted our latest customer research survey between December 2019 and January 2020
- Following this, we now send monthly Voice of the Customer surveys to help us continue to improve our processes, systems and training for team members.

Read highlights from our customer satisfaction survey on page 19.

# section 2

## Dispute resolution process



Our approach is informal and based on the principles of alternative dispute resolution. We seek to establish the facts and issues to help our customers and their supplier better understand the problem at hand, and each other's point of view.

The outcome may be achieved by agreement between the customer and the supplier, or through conciliation based on what we deem a fair and reasonable outcome.

### Our jurisdiction

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

We can investigate unresolved disputes about:

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

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

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



## How we handle disputes

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

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

# section 2

## Dispute resolution complaint stages

### STEP 1 Referral to higher level or investigation

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

#### Referral to higher level (RHL)

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

### STEP 2 Investigation

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

Where our investigations determine the supplier's actions were appropriate, the complaint will be closed and the parties advised of the decision and our reasons. Where an error is found, we will try to negotiate a suitable outcome, for example:

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

### STEP 3 Final order

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

Firstly, a decision can be made under section 22 of the Act to not investigate or to discontinue the investigation. There were 37 cases finalised this way in 2019-2020.

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

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

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

No final orders were issued in 2019-2020.

#### Notice of withdrawal

A customer can withdraw a case during its investigation. There were 17 notice of withdrawals during 2019-2020.

## Quality assurance



We conducted regular quality assurance assessment cycles throughout 2019-2020 with more than 450 cases assessed during the period to ensure our practices are accurate, efficient, consistent and of a high standard.

From July to November 2019, we conducted six-weekly quality assurance assessment cycles, these included a self-assessment followed by a review by team leaders and regional managers. Feedback and improvements identified during these assessments were provided in the final week of the cycle. During this process, 257 cases were reviewed.

From January to May 2020, we trialled a four-week quality assurance cycle, with team leaders undertaking the case assessment and providing feedback and suggested improvements during the last week of each month. In this process, we reviewed 200 cases.

We will continue to streamline our case review process during 2020-2021 as the quality assurance process is integrated into our new telephony system. We plan to increase the number of cases to be reviewed and frequency of reviews, as well as improving our quality assurance reports.

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## Customer locations



### Top 10 locations of our customers



For cases where an incident address was provided, 80 per cent were from South East Queensland, which includes Brisbane, Logan, Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast, Ipswich, the Redlands, Moreton Bay, Somerset, Lockyer Valley and Scenic Rim local government areas.

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

Approximately 83 per cent of our cases came from the following Top 10 locations.

#### Top 10 locations of our customers

##### Brisbane City Council

**26.0%** (1657 cases)

##### City of Gold Coast

**15.1%** (963)

##### Moreton Bay Regional Council

**11.3%** (721)

##### Logan City Council

**7.7%** (492)

##### Sunshine Coast Regional Council

**6.7%** (426)

##### Ipswich City Council

**6.6%** (422)

##### Redland City Council

**3.7%** (234)

##### Cairns Regional Council

**2.2%** (139)

##### City of Townsville

**2.0%** (125)

##### Toowoomba Regional Council

**1.9%** (119)



# section 2

## Systemic issues

There were 82 potential systemic issues recorded in 2019-2020. Billing remains the most common type of systemic issue registered, accounting for 37.7% of potential systemic issues.

# 24

systemic issue notices

A systemic issue is a problem that a customer has with an energy or water company that affects, or could affect, more than one customer. Under the *Energy and Water Ombudsman Act 2006*, we identify any systemic issues that arise from complaints to us.

### Causes of systemic issues

Many factors can cause a systemic issue, including human error, failed systems and lack of policies or procedures.

### Identifying and measuring systemic issues

We identify potential systemic issues in several ways:

- our investigation team monitors complaints and identifies potential systemic issues through our case management system
- we stay informed about current and emerging systemic issues through advice from the Advisory Council and our relationships with scheme participants and government and ombudsmen agencies
- scheme participants may tell us about a systemic issue.

### Resolving systemic issues

In 2019-2020, 24 systemic issue notices were issued to scheme participants. When we identify a systemic issue, we tell the scheme participant, and advise how the issue could be resolved and how to stop it re-occurring.

We also tell the relevant regulatory agency if a systemic issue could breach or violate a legislative code or licence. Depending on the concern, our identification of systemic issues may lead a scheme participant to:

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

### Potential systemic issues

Table 1

Issue	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Billing	34	35	41	27	29
Customer service	14	13	35	13	27
Marketing	2	2	12	9	9
Provision	2	2	17	12	4
Transfer	1	1	11	6	3
Metering	0	2	3	1	0
Credit	1	1	0	0	0
Supply	1	1	0	0	0
Water	1	0	0	0	0
Other	3	5	1	8*	10*
Total	59	62	120	76	82

\*includes disconnection, hardship and network assets.

# section 3

## Our performance

### Time taken to resolve complaints

This year there has been a noticeable change in the type of complaints we received, with an increase in the number of investigations, while refer backs and general enquiries have fallen. This shift in the complaint mix indicates a trend towards more complex complaints, which has affected the overall time taken to resolve complaints.

While there was an 11 per cent decrease in the total number of cases closed from the previous year, level 1 investigations increased by 16 per cent, Level 2 by 12 per cent and Level 3 by 25 per cent. Refer backs and general enquiries experienced the greatest reduction from 2018-2019, with general enquiries decreasing by 26 per cent and refer backs dropping by 25 per cent.

During 2019-2020, 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.

### Performance against service standards

#### Performance targets – time taken to close cases

Table 2

	Target	2015-16		2016-17		2017-18		2018-19		2019-20	
Less than 28 days	80%	8,201	92%	7,209	92%	8,469	83%	7,340	86%	6,020	79%
Less than 60 days	90%	8,681	98%	7,722	98%	9,897	97%	8,350	98%	7,342	96%
Less than 90 days	95%	8,808	99%	7,811	99%	10,117	99%	8,514	99%	7,553	99%
More than 90 days	< 5%	87	1%	50	1%	94	1%	45	1%	68	1%



## Referral to other organisations

During 2019-2020, 12 per cent of the total cases we closed fell within the jurisdiction of other government authorities. We have Memoranda of Understanding with seven 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, stormwater harvesting or stand-alone recycled water.

More than half (60 per cent) of the cases we referred to other government authorities in 2019-2020 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) remained steady while referrals to the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy continued to decline. There was a small increase in the number of cases we referred to the Queensland Ombudsman.

### Cases referred to other organisations

Table 3

Issue	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Office of Fair Trading	594	606	757	617	540
Australian Energy Regulator*	188	54	181	241	217
Queensland Ombudsman	60	67	78	65	70
Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy*	603	235	203	115	66
Australian Competition and Consumer Commission	6	13	4	15	6
Queensland Competition Authority	17	9	5	4	3
Total	1,468	984	1,228	1,057	902

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

# section 3

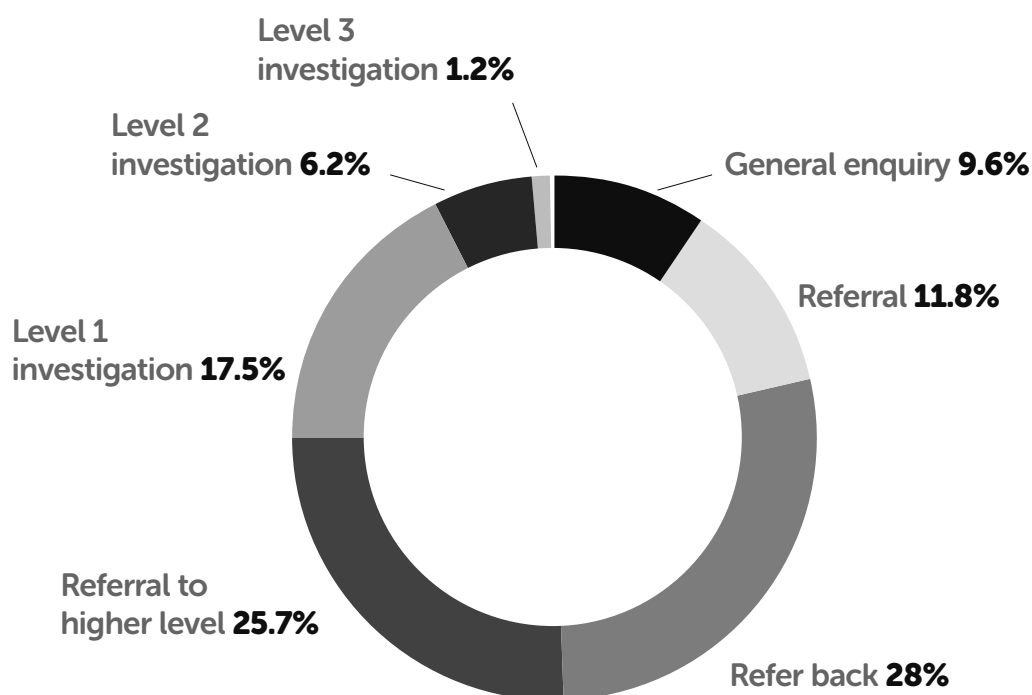
## Case types

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 2019-2020, 28 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). This is down from 33 per cent last year.

### 2019-20 case types



#### Investigations



#### Final orders

No final orders were issued during 2019-2020. 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.

# section 3

## Customer satisfaction survey

We conducted a customer research survey between December 2019 and January 2020. The survey was based on the Australian Government's Benchmarks for industry-based customer dispute resolution.

These benchmarks focus on the six key attributes of effective dispute resolution services: accessibility, independence, fairness, accountability, efficiency and effectiveness.

### Key findings

**87%** of surveyed customers indicated they would recommend EWOQ to others

**86.4%** of customers reported being very satisfied with how courteous, friendly and helpful EWOQ team members were

**79.1%** of customers reported being very satisfied with the ease of finding an ombudsman to complain about an electricity, gas or water retailer

**72.5%** of customers were very satisfied with the time we took to investigate and resolve their complaint

Read the full report online at [www.ewoq.com.au/customer-satisfaction-research](http://www.ewoq.com.au/customer-satisfaction-research)

### “

#### Testimonial

*“Thank you so much for your patience and understanding and for assisting me through this matter. It is extremely hard to have a voice when no one wants to listen, and it was nice to finally have my voice heard after all this time.”*

Since January 2020, we have undertaken Voice of the Customer surveying each month with customers who have had a complaint either:

- referred to a higher level within their electricity, gas or water supplier
- independently reviewed by EWOQ.

These surveys provide regular feedback to help us improve our services to customers, including how we handle complaints, the information we give our customers about our complaints process and our skills in talking with customers about their complaints.

### Contact method

How customers contacted EWOQ in 2019-2020



Phone



Website



Email

**Other** (includes letter, in-person, Facebook and Twitter) = **83 customers or 1%**

See Appendix 1 for figures.

# section 3

## Our performance against the 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 2019-2023 strategic plan focused on our service, our customers, our connections and our people.

### 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.

Table 4

Measure of success	Achievements 2019-2020
Monitor the number and nature of the complaints we receive to ensure our service evolves with changing technologies and consumer needs, while looking out for issues that may affect our business or customers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• discharged statutory responsibility, with operational delegations under the <i>Energy and Water Ombudsman Act 2006</i> maintained</li> <li>• 7,621 cases closed, with 79% closed within 28 days</li> </ul>
Continue to be financially and environmentally sustainable by improving our systems and processes, and ensuring they remain fair, fit for purpose and adaptable for the future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provided financial reports to executive management group every month</li> <li>• monitored our compliance with dispute resolution framework, policies and procedures</li> <li>• maintained an Audit and Risk Management Committee, with four meetings held in 2019-2020</li> <li>• implemented an updated risk management framework</li> <li>• upgraded to Microsoft 365 enabling the team to work remotely in response to COVID-19</li> </ul>
Develop solutions to enable connecting with our customers, communities, teams and others through a variety of digital means.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• introduced SMS updates for case updates</li> <li>• launched a new mobile-optimised website</li> <li>• designed a member portal to be launched in early 2020-2021</li> <li>• cloud-based telephony system to be rolled out in early 2020-2021, including live chat on the website</li> </ul>
Deliver our services within the required agreed response targets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• website available 99.8% of the time</li> <li>• 35 change requests implemented in Resolve case management system in 2019-2020</li> </ul>
EWOQ 2023 and Digital Project completed on time and within agreed budget.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMS successfully rolled out</li> <li>• case management system upgraded</li> <li>• electronic document and records management system implemented</li> <li>• website and intranet redeveloped</li> <li>• cloud-based telephony system ready to be rolled out in early 2020-2021</li> <li>• commissioned an independent review</li> <li>• completed customer satisfaction survey and implemented monthly Voice of the Customer surveying</li> <li>• future state project scoped to continue to enhance customer experience</li> </ul>



## Our customers

### 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.

Table 4 cont.

Measure of success	Achievements 2019-2020
Resolve complaints quickly and efficiently – closing 80% within 28 days and 90% within 60 days.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 79% cases closed in less than 28 days</li> <li>• 96% cases closed in less than 60 days</li> </ul>
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"> <li>• more than 450 cases assessed through quality assurance assessment cycles</li> <li>• regular reviews of performance-related case data considered and discussed within each region and team meetings</li> <li>• feedback from customers and scheme participants considered and responded to, as required</li> <li>• section 22 reviews conducted as required, with 37 section 22 letters sent to customers advising that no further investigation will be undertaken</li> <li>• appeal reviews conducted as required, with 3 appeal reviews undertaken to section 22 decisions (all appeal reviews confirmed)</li> </ul>
Engage with our customers, members and other stakeholders to understand their problems, needs and expectations and deliver solutions that respond to these.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• received 13 customer complaints about our service, with 5 complaints resulting in further action and 8 complaints resulting in no further action</li> <li>• referred 902 cases to other organisations (with whom we have memoranda of understanding) where matters fell within the jurisdiction of other government authorities</li> <li>• total of 1983 monetary outcomes (worth \$878,849) negotiated for customers, including 401 billing adjustments (\$352,205) and 963 goodwill gestures obtained (\$243,462)</li> <li>• 6 new scheme participants approved and welcomed as members</li> <li>• completed compliance audit to ensure scheme participants include our contact details on their websites and disconnection notices</li> </ul>
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"> <li>• completed a customer satisfaction survey, with 87% of surveyed customers stating that they would recommend EWOQ to others</li> <li>• introduced monthly Voice of the Customer surveying</li> <li>• received 59 compliments from customers about the service provided by our team members</li> <li>• feedback from scheme participants considered and service improvements implemented, as required</li> <li>• no allegations of failure to afford procedural fairness were made by scheme participants</li> </ul>

## Our performance against the 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.

Table 4 cont.

Measure of success	Achievements 2019-2020
Share our insights and experiences with industry, community groups and government, to collaboratively improve the sector for all.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• engaged with government and regulators on policy issues and proposed legislation, with 8 submissions written and regular meetings with jurisdictional regulators</li> <li>• participated in national and international Ombudsman networks, including attendance by the Ombudsman at 4 ANZEWO meetings and 3 ANZOA members' meetings (page 25)</li> <li>• team members attended ANZOA interest group meetings every quarter</li> <li>• published the annual report</li> <li>• 8% increase in website sessions</li> <li>• 9 electronic newsletters published</li> <li>• published case studies on our website</li> </ul>
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"> <li>• maintained networks with scheme participants to proactively identify potential systemic issues</li> <li>• 24 systemic issues notices issued (page 15)</li> <li>• systemic issues monitored monthly and reported to regulators</li> <li>• systemic issues reports produced</li> <li>• trend analysis of data and current and emerging issues conducted as required to identify potential systemic issues</li> <li>• provided case data and trend analysis to scheme participants</li> </ul>
Provide 95% of reporting and data requests to industry, government and regulators within agreed timeframes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provided scheme participants regular reporting on scheme outcomes and performance within agreed timeframes</li> <li>• annual report delivered within three months of the end of financial year</li> <li>• 4 briefings prepared for Advisory Council</li> <li>• complaint statistics updated monthly on website and Queensland Government open data portal</li> <li>• billing reports provided to scheme participants with reconciliations</li> <li>• reports delivered to regulators as required</li> <li>• acknowledged media inquiries within 24 hours of receipt and responded to 100% within required timeframes</li> <li>• environmental scanning completed weekly and provided to team members to ensure their awareness of sector updates</li> </ul>
Meet with communities across the state, connecting with them through a variety of in-person and digital means.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• team members attended 100 stakeholder events and 38 community outreach events</li> <li>• positive feedback received from stakeholders following meetings and presentations</li> <li>• expanded our social media presence on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter by 7%, with 953 total followers and a total reach of 129,743</li> </ul>
Explore ways to increase the awareness of our scheme and eliminate perceived barriers of entry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reviewed our complaints processes to ensure we comply with Queensland's new <i>Human Rights Act 2019</i></li> <li>• completed the actions and deliverables of the Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan, including publishing our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan</li> <li>• launched mobile-optimised website written in simple language and with page translation functionality in more than 100 languages</li> <li>• 21 media mentions with publicity value of \$676,954</li> </ul>



# Our people

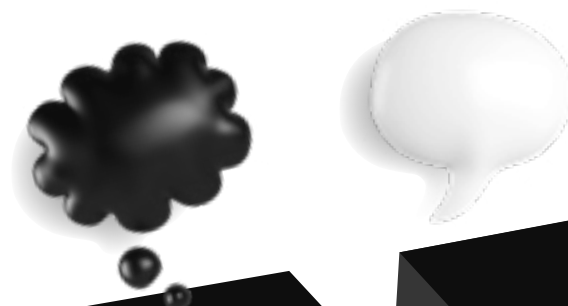
## Commitment: Our people

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.

Table 4 cont.

Measure of success	Achievements 2019-2020
Encourage and support our people to grow and develop by providing a safe, collaborative yet challenging environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• values and achievement-based performance development plans for all team members created and reviewed annually</li> <li>• monthly one-on-one meetings undertaken focussing on performance development and key learnings for each team member</li> <li>• delivered employee-led recognition and achievement program</li> <li>• implemented business continuity plans</li> <li>• transitioned 100% team members to work from home in response to COVID-19</li> </ul>
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"> <li>• recruitment practices supported equal employment opportunities</li> <li>• completed the actions of the Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan, including reimagining our Indigenous artwork and updating privacy film and safety strips in our Brisbane office with elements of the artwork</li> <li>• published an Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan and monitored progress towards its deliverables</li> <li>• worked to foster an environment that supports and encourages learning and development</li> <li>• supported awareness-raising campaigns for equality, diversity and inclusion through internal communication channels</li> <li>• feedback provided through internal meetings and forums, and directly to the Ombudsman via a confidential email account</li> </ul>
Invest in learning and development of our team while balancing output.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1.5% of salaries budget allocated for training and development</li> <li>• hosted our biennial team conference, focussing on risk, resilience and innovation</li> <li>• focussed on social and action learning to develop our team through project work, higher duties and networking opportunities</li> <li>• continued to develop and deliver training to meet identified needs as per performance and development plans</li> <li>• completed succession planning for all key roles</li> <li>• prioritised in-house online learning and onboarding throughout the year</li> </ul>
Focus on our agreed values and behaviours knowing each team member has committed to these.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• values and behaviours agreed in annual performance development and achievement plans</li> <li>• developed unwritten ground rules for the leadership group</li> <li>• developed priority areas for action from our Working for Queensland survey results</li> </ul>



# section 4

## Our connections

One of our functions is to promote the Energy and Water Ombudsman scheme to those who may need our assistance. In 2019-2020, we assisted customers across Queensland and used a range of community outreach activities and information channels, including mainstream and social media, to build awareness of our services.

Our priorities this year have included connecting with older Queenslanders, consumers in regional areas, and customers in financial difficulty, who we reach through our relationships with financial counsellors and community services that help those in financial hardship. We continued to foster relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities too, with highlights including visits to Mt Isa and Yarrabah.

### Community outreach

During 2019-2020, we attended financial literacy workshops and spoke to members of the public about their energy and water bills. We promoted our services through presentations at community events and attended 'bring your bills' events across the state.

During Seniors Week, we attended the Positive Ageing Fair in Cairns, and the Dickson Seniors Expo and Bonner Seniors Expo in the Brisbane region in October. We also attended the Brisbane Disability Expo in November.

We built and maintained strong connections with community workers and financial counsellors by attending the Queensland Council of Social Service (QCOSS) and Financial Counsellors' Association of Queensland (FCAQ) conferences.

### Supporting regional Queensland

Our three Regional Managers based in Cairns, Rockhampton and Brisbane oversee our connections in their regions. During 2019-2020, their teams travelled to Toowoomba, Scenic Rim, Mt Isa, Yarrabah and Yeppoon, connecting with community leaders and providing information to help customers understand their rights and responsibilities when making a complaint about an issue within our jurisdiction.

Our Mt Isa Bring Your Bills Day, co-hosted by Centacare North Queensland and the Office of Fair Trading, was a great success. We helped consumers with their energy bills and worked alongside Ergon Energy to help some attendees get their issues resolved on the spot.

### Indigenous outreach

Our Indigenous outreach program aims to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to become confident and informed consumers, and ensure they are aware of their right to assistance with issues relating to their energy services, and water services for customers in South East Queensland.

During 2019-2020, we connected with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander support networks and supported the annual National Aborigines and Islander Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) week festivities in Cairns, Rockhampton and Brisbane in July. These events provided a great opportunity to showcase our services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customers. We also supported National Reconciliation Week events.

### Connecting online

We continue to promote our services online through our website and social media. These channels have become even more important since community outreach events were put on hold in response to COVID-19.

Our social media reach has continued to grow during 2019-2020 by increased interaction with stakeholders and the community, informing Queenslanders about how we can help with their energy and water problems.

We also contributed to a series of webinars hosted by QCOSS focused on managing household energy efficiency, energy hardship and concessions and finding the best energy deals.

   #EWOQld

 [www.ewoq.com.au](http://www.ewoq.com.au)

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

section  
4

## Our peer networks

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

### ANZOA

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

In addition to regular informal contact with other Ombudsman offices, the Ombudsman attended three ANZOA meetings throughout the year.

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

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

### ANZEWON

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

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

During 2019-2020, ANZEWON members commissioned a joint research paper by the University of New South Wales titled *What will energy consumers expect of an energy and water ombudsman scheme in 2020, 2025 and 2030?*

We attended regular ANZEWON meetings throughout the year, including hosting the ANZEWON Chairs and Ombudsman meeting in Brisbane in February 2020, where we discussed complaint trends, governance issues and the impact of summer bushfires.

Since COVID-19, we've continued to connect via video conference discussing responses to COVID-19 and how we can continue to work with industry to support consumers. This has included talking with scheme participants about their COVID-19 recovery plans so we can assist where possible in the future.

section  
4

# Our contribution to public policy

## Working with government and regulators

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

In 2019-2020, we contributed to public policy in the following ways:

### Queensland Government

#### Review of Queensland's energy legislation

Following consultations on an issues paper released by the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy in 2018, a regulatory impact statement was published in October 2019 for the review of Queensland's energy legislation. We contributed to this review, which included proposals to modernise Queensland's state energy laws by creating a future focused framework.

#### Review of Queensland's dispute resolution for residential embedded network customers

We supported the Department's consultation on dispute resolution for residential embedded network customers. This examined options to provide residential customers who are supplied electricity through embedded networks access to the free dispute resolution service provided by EWOQ.

Following this consultation, the Mineral and Energy Resources and other Legislation Amendment Bill passed through Queensland Parliament in May and amended the *Energy and Water Ombudsman Act 2006*. These amendments allowed for changes to be made in the future to the kinds of energy providers and customers EWOQ can assist, and it is anticipated that changes of this nature will happen in the near future when a new regulation under the *Energy and Water Ombudsman Act 2006* is created.

Once this regulation is in force, it will expand our jurisdiction to include complaints about embedded network operators (exempt sellers) and provide Queenslanders who live in embedded networks – like apartment buildings, caravan parks and retirement villages – access to our free, fair and independent dispute resolution service.

### ACCC

We made a submission to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's Guideline on Prohibiting Energy Market Misconduct Bill and contributed to their consultation on the New Energy Tech Consumer Code.

### AEMC

We made submissions to the Australian Energy Market Commission about:

- regulating conditional discounting
- introducing metering coordinator planned interruptions
- consumer protections in an evolving market: New energy products and services.

### AER

We wrote a letter of endorsement to the Australian Energy Regulator supporting the customer service incentive scheme.

## section 4

# Our Reconciliation Action Plan

One of our greatest achievements in 2019-2020 was launching our second Reconciliation Action Plan — our Innovate RAP — which outlines our commitments towards reconciliation for the next two years.

## Our reconciliation journey

As a free, fair and independent dispute resolution service, we're passionate about creating equal opportunities for all, and a culture of respect and understanding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Our first reconciliation action plan—our Reflect RAP—launched in October 2018. This 12-month plan outlined how we would engage, strengthen and maintain our relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The Reflect RAP gave us amazing opportunities to turn our good intentions into real actions. We helped Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers understand that it's okay to complain if they have a problem with their electricity, gas or water providers – and that their complaints should be treated respectfully.

We expanded our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander outreach program and learned more about the needs and challenges of electricity supply in remote communities and energy and water issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers broadly.

## Continuing the conversation

The aim of our Innovate RAP is to continue the conversation started by our Reflect RAP to create positive change for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples both within EWOQ and in the communities we assist across Queensland.

As part of our commitment to reconciliation over the next two years, we'll:

- continue our community outreach to strengthen and grow our networks and partnerships
- develop and maintain relationships within the communities we serve to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples become confident and informed consumers
- provide a service with manners, respect and courtesy by observing cultural protocols and participating in cultural learning.



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

## Our connections

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

### Our partnerships include:

- Australian and New Zealand Ombudsman Association (ANZO) Indigenous Engagement Interest Group
- Thriving Communities Partnership
- Far North Queensland Indigenous Consumer Taskforce.

## How many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers complain?

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

# 330

cases closed for customers identifying as Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander or both.

**284**  
complaints

**41%**  
billing

**38%**  
credit

By comparison, for complaints where the customer did not identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, 52 per cent were about billing and 17 per cent about credit in 2019-2020.

Billing = high or disputed bills, metering faults, billing errors, rebates and concessions.

Credit = payment difficulties, hardship and disconnections.

# section 5

## Our governance

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

### The following committees oversee our corporate governance:

- Executive Management Group
- Advisory Council (see page 29)
- Audit and Risk Management Committee (see page 31)
- Information Steering Committee.

### Executive management group

The executive management group (EMG) assists the Ombudsman in the stewardship of EWOQ and plays an important role in:

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

### In 2019-2020, our executive management group members were:

#### Jane Pires

##### Energy and Water Ombudsman

Jane Pires was appointed Energy and Water Ombudsman in December 2016 and has more than 30 years of experience in customer service and complaint management, including extensive senior executive experience in dispute resolution, mediation and conciliation.

As Energy and Water Ombudsman, Jane is committed to providing all Queenslanders with access to a free, fair and independent dispute resolution service, contributing to improved service delivery in the energy and water sectors, and fostering a culture of excellence within the team.

With a Master of Business Administration majoring in dispute resolution, Jane is the Australian representative on the committee for international standard 'ISO 10002:2018 Quality management — Customer satisfaction — Guidelines for complaints handling in organizations'. She chairs the Queensland chapter of the Thriving Communities Partnership, and served on the board of the Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals Australia (SOCAP) for 10 years.

#### Eleanor Bray

##### General Manager

– Strategy, Operations and Governance

Eleanor Bray oversees our strategy, governance and operations, including finance, risk and compliance, IT, policy and research, and reporting. With an extensive background in finance, IT and customer experience, Eleanor has worked in both the public and private sector, predominantly in water, energy and mining. She joined EWOQ in April 2020 following the retirement of Lyn Stevens, who had managed corporate services at EWOQ since the scheme was established as Energy Ombudsman Queensland in 2007.

#### John Jones

##### General Manager

– Assessment, Investigation and Resolution

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

#### Leonie Jones

##### Manager – People, Capability and Culture

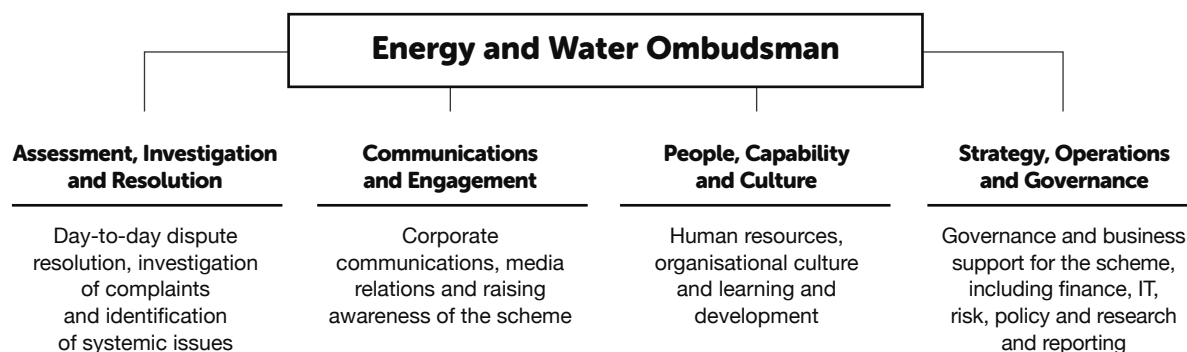
Leonie Jones joined the newly formed People, Capability and Culture team in March 2019 as Manager. Having previously worked in a human resources management role for our shared service provider, and with over 25 years' experience within the public service, Leonie brings with her a depth of management and HR experience. Leonie is accountable for managing and implementing a range of strategic human resources, organisational culture and development initiatives that support EWOQ's strategic objectives.

#### Sonia Cahill

##### Manager – Communications and Engagement

Sonia Cahill has led the newly formed Communications and Engagement team since its inception on 1 July 2019 and is responsible for raising awareness of the scheme. She joined EWOQ in August 2017 and has a background in corporate communications, media relations, publishing, and website and social media management in both public and private sectors in Australia and abroad.

## Organisational structure



## Advisory Council to the Energy and Water Ombudsman

The Advisory Council monitors the independence of the Energy and Water Ombudsman scheme and provides advice to the Energy and Water Ombudsman and the Minister responsible for energy and water on policy, procedural and operational issues relating to the *Energy and Water Ombudsman Act 2006*. This helps to ensure the scheme is fair and effective for consumers and suppliers.

### Advisory Council membership

The Advisory Council meets every quarter and includes an independent chair and at least six other members appointed by the Minister on the Chair's recommendation and after consultation with scheme participants, consumer groups and community welfare organisations. See pages 8-9 for the Chair's message and advisory council members.

There must be an equal number of other members representing industry and consumer interests. Under the Act, at least two of the industry members must represent the interests of energy retailers, at least one must represent the interests of energy distributors, and at least one must represent the interests of the water entities.

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

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

### Roles and responsibilities of council members

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

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

See Appendix 2 for details of fees paid to council members during 2019-2020.

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

See pages 8 and 9 for the Chair's message and a list of advisory council members.

# section 5

## Human rights, code of conduct and ethics

### Human rights

Queensland's new *Human Rights Act 2019* recognises 23 categories of human rights and acknowledges the responsibility of public sector employees to respect, protect and promote the human rights of all individuals.

EWOQ is committed to acting in a way that is compatible with our human rights obligations when we promote our services and interact with the community.

The Act commenced on 1 January 2020 and requires Queensland's public agencies, including EWOQ, to act or make decisions that are compatible with these rights. Section 97 of the Act also requires that EWOQ publish details of any:

- human rights actions taken during the reporting period
- human rights complaints received, including:
  - the number of complaints received
  - the outcome of the complaints
  - any other information prescribed by regulation relating to complaints
- review of policies, programs, procedures, practices or services undertaken in relation to our compatibility with human rights.

Since 1 January 2020, EWOQ has taken the following steps to further the objectives of the Act:

- Training has been provided to team members on how to identify and prevent human rights issues, and how to respond to a human rights complaint.
- A review has been commenced of certain policies, procedures and plans to ensure these documents promote and are compatible with human rights. Seven policies, procedures and plans were reviewed for compatibility with human rights during 2019-2020.
- A human rights working group has been created to handle issues concerning human rights.

EWOQ received no human rights complaints between 1 January 2020 and 30 June 2020.

### Code of conduct and ethics

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

All employees are required to observe the Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service. The principles and values in the Code are incorporated into our policies and procedures as well as individual performance plans. All new team members undertake ethics and code of conduct training during their induction. Refresher training for code of conduct is provided annually. Mandated training in fraud control and corruption prevention was completed to all team members during 2019-2020, along with a tailored online program about bullying and harassment for employees.



#### Testimonial

*"The staff were extremely helpful. They explained the process and managed my matter beyond my expectations. I thought the process would be hard and drawn out, but it was very quick. I received phone calls and emails confirming each step of the process and to provide me with an update."*



# section 5

## Risk management and accountability

### Risk management

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

In accordance with section 23 of the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019*, EWOQ is committed to implementing risk management strategies that ensure efficiency and effectiveness in meeting our objectives, while also providing a safe and healthy workplace for our team.

#### Audit and risk management committee

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

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

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

#### Currently, the committee members are:

- Irene Sitton, Chairperson
- Fiona Trenear, external member
- Eleanor Bray, internal member

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

During 2019-2020, the committee met on four occasions and invited both external and internal audit representatives to regularly attend meetings.

#### Key achievements for 2019-2020

- Endorsed the financial statements 2018-2019 and considered all audit recommendations by external audit.
- Endorsed the strategic and annual internal audit plan for approval by the Energy and Water Ombudsman.
- Monitored ongoing risk management activities within the organisation.
- Monitored progress of the annual internal audit plan and outcomes from audits undertaken.
- Reviewed the Risk Management Framework and policy.



#### Testimonial

*"Everything has worked out perfectly and my retailer is currently removing the default thanks to you. I really can't thank you enough I'm so happy with the outcome!"*

# section 5

## Risk management and accountability

### Internal audit

Our internal audit function is undertaken by the Corporate Administration Agency (CAA) and managed through a service level agreement.

The internal audit workplan is directed through a strategic and annual plan developed in consultation with the Audit and Risk Management Committee and approved by the Ombudsman, which has due regard to professional standards and *the Audit Committee guidelines: Improving accountability and performance* issued by Queensland Treasury.

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

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

### Key achievements for 2019-2020

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

- assets and portable equipment
- corporate card
- procurement, purchasing and accounts payable.

### Business continuity management

Our external service provider CAA maintains a business continuity plan which provides for the recovery and/or continuity of our information technology, human resources and finance functions. We have a comprehensive business continuity plan which was invoked in March 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our entire team successfully conducted our operations remotely as the office closed for a period of time. Plans that meet health guidelines for a safe return to the workplace were developed and are in place.

### Information systems and record keeping

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

### Right to information and protection of personal information

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

All requests for information received during 2019-2020 have been released under the Administrative Access Scheme. We also participated in the Office of the Information Commissioner Queensland (OIC) Privacy Awareness Week and contributed to the s185 annual report.

### External dispute resolution scheme

Since 2015-2016, we have been recognised as an external dispute resolution scheme by the Office of the Australian Information Commission (OAIC) under the *Privacy Act 1988*. We are required to report on serious or repeated interference with privacy or systemic privacy issues relating to these bodies to the OAIC every quarter.

We are also required to provide OAIC with an annual report including a range of data relating to complaints investigated under this jurisdiction.

### Mandatory online reporting

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

- consultancy spending
- language services expenditure
- overseas travel expenditure.

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## Our people

### Workforce profile

At 30 June 2020, 47 officers were employed on a full or part-time basis (43.48 full time equivalent or FTE).



# 43.48 FTE

**Permanent = 33.88 FTE**

**Temp = 9.6 FTE**

# 47 HEADCOUNT

**11%↑** FTE (from 2018-2019 to 2019-2020)

**55%** working from home on a regular basis

**100%** working from home in response to COVID-19

**12%** part-time



**Energy & Water  
Ombudsman  
Queensland**



AO3-AO4	5	1
AO5-AO7	22	9
AO8-CEO	7	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>13</b>

This year has been a period of transition for EWOQ, with a number of long-term permanent employees retiring or pursuing other career opportunities.

Our retention rate was 84 per cent, with seven permanent separations during 2019-2020.

Given our succession planning activities from the previous financial year, we were well-prepared and were able to ensure our corporate knowledge was captured and transferred successfully.

An increase in recruitment activity provided the opportunity to finetune our recruitment processes, utilise our new position description template and recruitment tools that have resulted in solid recruitment decisions. Our new induction program moved largely online and was tested successfully during our COVID-19 working arrangements.

One voluntary redundancy was paid during the period, totalling \$108,676.02.

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6

## Our people

### Flexible working arrangements

With continued improvements in technology enabling chat and video conferencing, we saw a further expansion of our working from home arrangements prior to COVID-19. Since the end of March, our entire workforce across our three locations have successfully worked remotely.

Previously, our dispute resolution team used their time working from home to review casework and undertake professional development, however, our complete range of services are now able to be delivered remotely.

After a successful period of transition and knowledge transfer, two phased retirement arrangements have resulted in the team members leaving EWOQ.

We continue to support part-time arrangements and to champion additional flexible working arrangements such as condensed hours, purchased leave and paid maternity leave. The majority of our workforce benefit from accessing accrued time, and this arrangement has continued during our period of working remotely.

### Leadership and management development

Leadership development included formal training in performance planning, people management and reasonable management action in 2019-2020. Opportunities for higher duties has provided some team members the opportunity to take on leadership roles and for EWOQ to ensure succession plans are actioned.

Our leadership team took part in a strategy planning workshop and mapped our strategic activities to 2023. They also unpacked our employee opinion survey results, determined priority actions and examined our measures of success.

### Employee relations

The State Government Entities Certified Agreement (the Core Agreement) was certified by the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission on 9 June 2020.

### Learning and development

We are committed to developing our people to ensure our services are delivered efficiently and effectively. All team members are encouraged to learn and develop their skills and knowledge through on-the-job training and self-directed learning.

During 2019-2020, our team progressed learning and development needs to meet performance objectives identified through the performance development framework. We provided technical, compliance and role-specific training and professional development activities on a range of topics, including:

- a training course in managing unreasonable conduct
- an online workshop about Aboriginal cultural awareness and understanding
- a two-day team conference themed 'Challenge Yourself'.

We launched an online induction program to provide our new team members insight and information they can navigate at their own pace as part of the onboarding process.

### Performance management framework

EWOQ encourages and supports our people to grow and develop by providing a safe, collaborative yet challenging environment. We have continued to enhance capability and skill development through a new learning and development framework and a performance development system which incorporates induction, probation and regular routine monthly one-on-one meetings.

We have also developed a coaching framework which will enhance our leaders' ability to support and mentor their team members, along with embedding a coaching culture within EWOQ.

## Workforce diversity

We respect and support diversity and inclusion in the workplace and the community we serve. We continue to work with our team to ensure they interact respectfully and competently with people from all cultural backgrounds and are proud to be delivering our second Reconciliation Action Plan, our Innovate RAP.

We are an Equal Employment Opportunity employer and aim to employ a workforce more representative of the wider community. During 2019-2020 we reviewed our applicant information and recruitment practices to ensure these were not barriers to our inclusion agenda.

We are proud of our results in the Working for Queensland employee opinion survey, which indicated an 82 per cent positive response to the anti-discrimination factor, a result 17 centiles higher than the Queensland public sector overall rate, and we will continue to strive to improve on this measure.

## Workplace health and safety

The mental and physical wellbeing of our team is of the utmost importance at EWOQ, and we strived to maintain our workplace health and safety standards during the COVID-19 period, along with a healthy work-life blend.

Our new intranet provided an opportunity to enhance our safety and wellbeing resources, and a health and wellbeing calendar endorsed by our Workplace Health and Safety Committee will ensure a continued focus on specific initiatives, such as ergonomics and mentally healthy workplaces, into the future.



## Employee achievement and recognition program

During 2019-2020, we recognised and celebrated the achievements of our team members with our employee achievement and recognition program called the EWOQ All Stars.

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

- **All Star Award** – a bi-annual award recognising a team member for their overall contribution, ongoing commitment and demonstration of the EWOQ values
- **Bright Star Award** – a quarterly award for innovation, leadership, enthusiasm and problem solving
- **Rising Star Award** – a quarterly award for improvement and development of ideas and actions.

There are also two informal awards: the Shining Star Award, for going above and beyond, and the Rock Star Award, which celebrates team members making a difference, paying it forward or simply making the team laugh.

**2**  
**All Star Awards**

**10**  
**Bright Star Awards**

**5**  
**Rising Star Awards**

# section 7

## Our cases



The top three issues

## The figures and the issues

During 2019-2020, the top three primary issues customers contacted us about were billing, credit and provision, which was the same as in 2018-2019.

Billing remains the most common issue that customers contact us about, accounting for 52 per cent of the complaints we closed in 2019-2020.

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

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

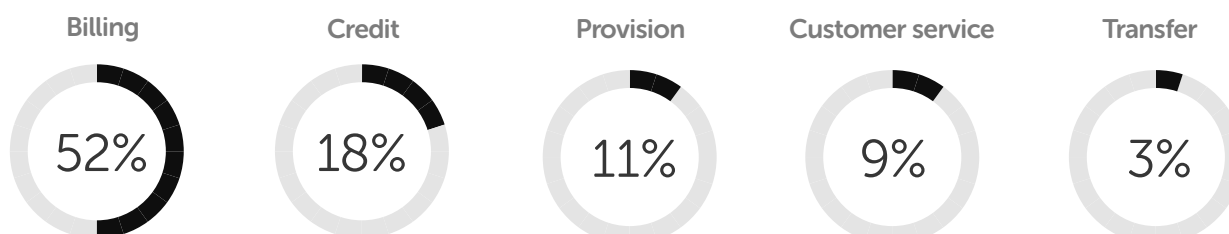
**Complaints** these are cases that are billed to a scheme participant i.e. refer back to supplier, referral to higher level and investigations.

Table 5

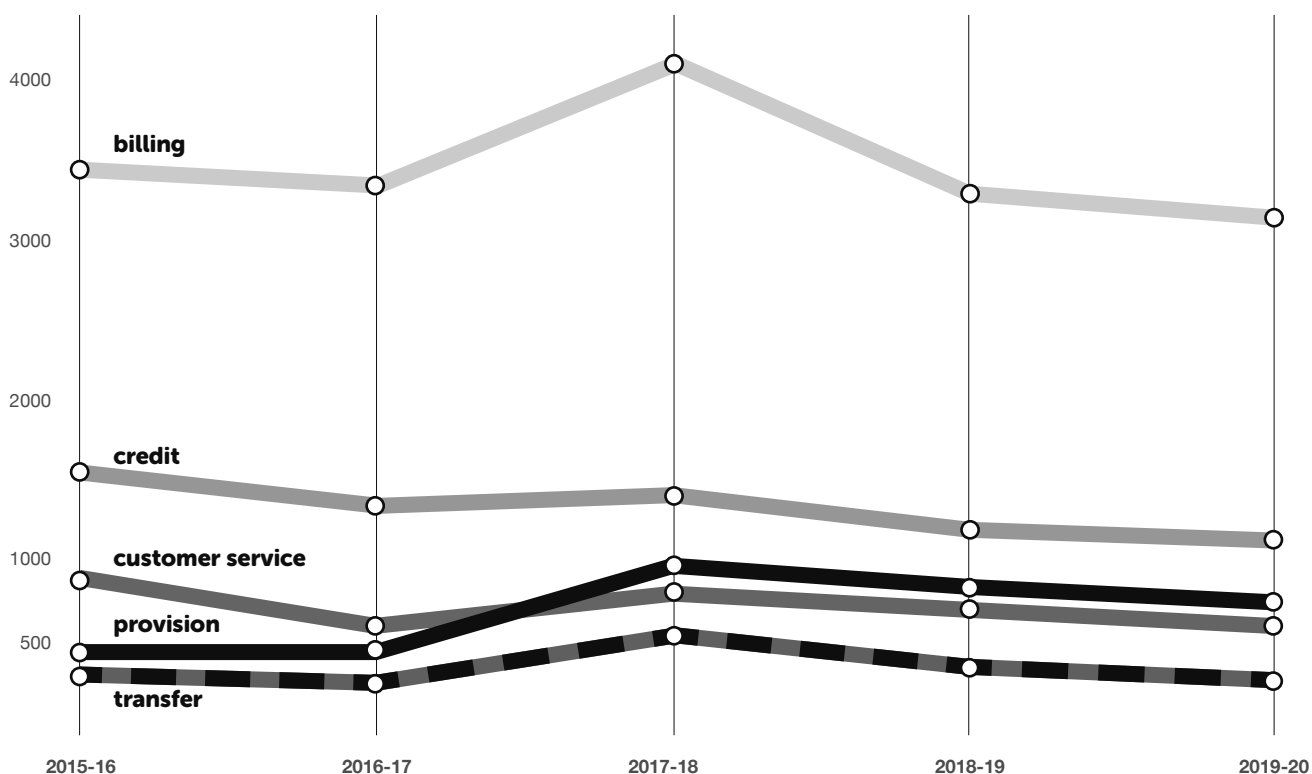
Closed complaints by primary issue

Primary issue	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Billing	3,388	3,326	4,071	3,232	3,109
Credit	1,467	1,265	1,311	1,130	1,075
Provision	340	380	882	732	655
Customer service	768	502	735	639	536
Transfer	192	173	466	344	199
Supply	168	161	183	151	154
Land	39	46	59	86	89
Marketing	31	20	58	52	49
Other	149	147	166	142	121
<b>Total Complaints</b>	<b>6,542</b>	<b>6,020</b>	<b>7,931</b>	<b>6,508</b>	<b>5,987</b>

Top five closed complaints for 2019-2020



### Top five primary issues of complaints closed



While the total number of complaints closed in 2019-2020 decreased by 8 per cent from 2018-2019, the complexity of cases closed by our office is increasing. This is evidenced by the growth of investigation cases and the decrease in refer back and general enquiries.

During this period, the number of refer backs decreased by 25 per cent and general enquiries decreased by 26 per cent. This shows the growing awareness of the role of the ombudsman in stepping in to help after customers have tried to resolve their complaint with their provider and of the types of complaints we handle.

While the overall number of cases we received in 2019-2020 declined, the complaints we close are

increasingly complex. This is evidenced by the increasing number of investigations progressing from level 1 investigations to level 2 and level 3, which reflects the increased time spent by investigation and conciliation officers to resolve these issues.

In 2019-2020, we closed a total of 1897 investigations (up from 1640 in 2018-2019) with 475 closed as level 2 investigations and 90 closed as level 3 investigations.

This is higher than 2018-2019 when we closed 1640 investigations with 423 closed as level 2 investigations and 72 closed as level 3 investigations.

## Cases related to COVID-19

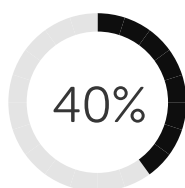
There were 155 closed cases related to COVID-19 during 2019-2020.

**155** closed cases

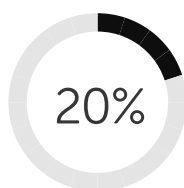
**39%** related to the utility bill relief rebate

**8%** related to job loss or reduced work hours

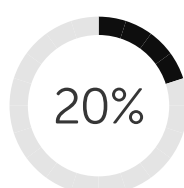
Referral to higher level



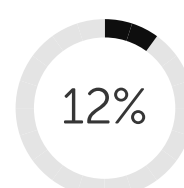
Investigation



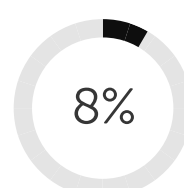
Refer back



General enquiry



Referred to another organisation



**COVID-19**



## Electricity complaints

There were 5370 electricity complaints closed in 2019-2020, which was 404 fewer than last year. Refer backs were the most common electricity case type (35 per cent of complaints) for complaints in 2019-2020, followed by referral to higher level (33 per cent) and investigation (32 per cent). Billing was the most common primary issue (51 per cent of complaints). There has been a noticeable decrease in refer backs relating to billing issues – these comprised 16 per cent of complaints closed in 2019-2020 (down from 21 per cent in 2018-2019).

Closed electricity complaints by primary issue and case type 2019-2020

Table 6

Primary issue	Refer back	Refer to higher level	Investigation	Total
Billing	878	917	955	2,750
Credit	362	282	382	1,026
Provision	183	222	171	576
Customer service	158	237	93	488
Transfer	66	71	52	189
Supply	68	17	42	127
Land	27	20	15	62
Marketing	19	18	9	46
Other	106	0	0	106
Total	1,867	1,784	1,719	5,370

During 2019-2020

Closed electricity complaints by case type

35%

Refer back

33%

Referral to higher level

32%

Investigation

Electricity complaints by case type

51%

Billing

19%

Credit

11%

Provision



## Electricity investigations by primary and secondary issues

Table 7

Primary issue	Secondary issue	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
<b>Billing</b>	High	147	179	368	280	331
	Estimation	41	57	75	104	153
	Error	111	112	122	81	139
	Tariff	34	27	21	31	64
	Back bill	80	47	34	34	42
	Opening/closing account	-	-	50	43	41
	Other	78	77	22	10	40
	Rebate/concession	11	16	53	30	38
	Meter	35	32	39	47	29
	Delay	29	18	24	30	27
	Fees and charges	15	37	31	17	23
	Refund	13	6	13	3	14
	Period	-	-	2	12	5
	Re-bill	9	8	5	3	5
	Incorrect account details	-	-	13	8	4
	Format	-	-	2	1	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>603</b>	<b>616</b>	<b>874</b>	<b>734</b>	<b>955</b>
<b>Credit</b>	Collection	179	166	234	190	162
	Disconnection/restriction	81	88	80	130	143
	Payment difficulties	64	64	57	37	64
	Hardship	-	-	-	11	10
	Privacy	0	1	2	5	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>324</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>382</b>
<b>Provision</b>	Existing connection	30	39	107	109	112
	New connection	6	7	27	17	34
	Disconnection/restriction	13	8	11	18	25
<b>Total</b>		<b>49</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>171</b>
<b>Customer service</b>	Poor service	16	13	25	33	39
	Incorrect advice or information	8	14	20	22	28
	Failure to consult or inform	6	5	12	12	11
	Refund	87	11	4	9	6
	Failure to respond	5	8	8	12	5
	Poor/unprofessional attitude	2	3	2	3	2
	Privacy	0	1	0	2	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>124</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>93</b>

cont...

# section 7

## Electricity complaints

### Electricity investigations by primary and secondary issues

Table 7 cont.

Primary issue	Secondary issue	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
<b>Transfer</b>	Delay	6	5	11	12	18
	Without consent	13	17	39	37	17
	In error	5	9	9	8	6
	Site ownership	5	1	2	5	4
	Cooling off rights	2	0	9	8	2
	Billing	1	1	2	5	2
	Objection/rejected by retailer	2	2	8	3	2
	Error	0	1	6	0	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>34</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Supply</b>	Off supply (unplanned)	4	9	9	8	28
	Variation	13	7	6	5	7
	Off supply (planned)	1	3	2	8	5
	Quality	2	1	6	1	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Land</b>	Network assets	2	4	2	5	7
	Property damage/restoration	-	-	4	5	6
	Vegetation management	1	0	1	2	2
	Easement	0	0	1	0	0
	Other	2	0	1	1	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Marketing</b>	Misleading	1	1	15	2	7
	Information	0	0	0	2	1
	Contract	1	2	2	1	1
	Pressure/coercion	0	0	2	1	0
	Non account holder	0	0	0	1	0
	Door to door	0	0	2	0	0
	Other	0	0	0	2	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Grand total</b>		<b>1,161</b>	<b>1,107</b>	<b>1,602</b>	<b>1,466</b>	<b>1,719</b>



## Electricity retailers

Closed electricity retailer complaints by primary issue 2019-2020

Table 8

Primary issue	Scheme participant	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Billing	Origin Energy Electricity Ltd	1057	890	932	747	905
	AGL Sales (Queensland Electricity) Pty Ltd	636	553	590	488	485
	Ergon Energy Qld Pty Ltd	401	559	538	435	389
	Alinta Energy Retail Sales Pty Ltd <sup>1</sup>	-	-	181	331	353
	EnergyAustralia Pty Ltd	284	281	332	280	230
	Click Energy Pty Ltd <sup>2</sup>	99	142	620	204	132
	Simply Energy	11	24	64	33	55
	Red Energy Pty Ltd	0	38	122	81	48
	Dodo Power & Gas Pty Ltd	27	43	27	19	31
	Powershop Australia Pty Ltd <sup>3</sup>	-	1	20	6	24
	Powerdirect Pty Ltd	189	167	92	92	21
	QEnergy Pty Ltd	35	44	23	22	21
	1st Energy Pty Ltd <sup>4</sup>	-	-	16	37	13
	Locality Planning Energy Pty Ltd <sup>5</sup>	0	11	19	15	10
	Diamond Energy Pty Ltd	1	6	8	5	8
	People Energy Pty Ltd <sup>6</sup>	-	3	6	1	6
	ReAmped Energy Pty Ltd <sup>7</sup>	-	-	-	0	6
	Next Business Energy Pty Ltd <sup>8</sup>	0	0	0	0	5
	Mojo Power Pty Ltd <sup>9</sup>	-	7	20	8	4
	Lumo Energy	162	116	30	7	3
	Sanctuary Energy Pty Ltd	35	9	13	1	3
	Blue NRG Pty Ltd <sup>10</sup>	-	-	-	-	2
	Energy Locals Pty Ltd <sup>11</sup>	-	-	6	0	2
	Discover Energy Pty Ltd <sup>12</sup>	-	-	-	-	1
	Power Club Ltd <sup>13</sup>	-	-	-	0	1
	ERM Power Retail Pty Ltd <sup>14</sup>	0	2	0	2	0
	Momentum Energy Pty Ltd	1	1	0	3	0
	Urth Energy <sup>15</sup>	0	4	-	-	-
Total (Billing)		2,938	2,901	3,659	2,817	2,758

Table 8 cont.

Primary issue	Scheme participant	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
<b>Credit</b>	Origin Energy Electricity Ltd	701	537	538	426	466
	Ergon Energy Qld Pty Ltd	140	191	199	194	198
	AGL Sales (Queensland Electricity) Pty Ltd	252	202	195	165	123
	Alinta Energy Retail Sales Pty Ltd <sup>1</sup>	-	-	20	59	108
	EnergyAustralia Pty Ltd	121	102	106	63	42
	Click Energy Pty Ltd <sup>2</sup>	46	39	71	41	21
	Red Energy Pty Ltd	0	1	30	23	12
	Lumo Energy	66	69	18	15	11
	Simply Energy	4	0	11	8	10
	Powerdirect Pty Ltd	46	47	18	33	9
	1st Energy Pty Ltd <sup>4</sup>	-	-	5	11	8
	Dodo Power & Gas Pty Ltd	4	4	7	6	7
	Diamond Energy Pty Ltd	0	0	0	1	4
	Locality Planning Energy Pty Ltd <sup>5</sup>	1	0	3	5	3
	QEnergy Pty Ltd	1	3	1	2	3
	Energy Locals Pty Ltd <sup>11</sup>	-	-	0	1	2
	Powershop Australia Pty Ltd <sup>3</sup>	-	0	4	4	1
	ReAmped Energy Pty Ltd <sup>7</sup>	-	-	-	0	1
	Mojo Power Pty Ltd <sup>9</sup>	-	0	8	6	0
	Momentum Energy Pty Ltd	3	0	0	1	0
	Next Business Energy Pty Ltd <sup>6</sup>	0	1	0	0	0
<b>Total (Credit)</b>		<b>1,385</b>	<b>1,196</b>	<b>1,234</b>	<b>1,064</b>	<b>1,029</b>
<b>Provision</b>	Origin Energy Electricity Ltd	74	63	203	179	178
	AGL Sales (Queensland Electricity) Pty Ltd	46	57	226	157	81
	Alinta Energy Retail Sales Pty Ltd <sup>1</sup>	-	-	47	44	54
	Ergon Energy Qld Pty Ltd	18	31	43	65	52
	EnergyAustralia Pty Ltd	19	17	24	40	28
	Red Energy Pty Ltd	0	3	20	18	11
	Simply Energy	1	4	10	8	10
	Click Energy Pty Ltd <sup>2</sup>	5	8	80	14	9
	Powerdirect Pty Ltd	7	8	17	13	6
	Powershop Australia Pty Ltd <sup>3</sup>	-	0	0	2	3
	Dodo Power & Gas Pty Ltd	1	3	6	1	3
	Locality Planning Energy Pty Ltd <sup>5</sup>	0	0	0	1	3
	QEnergy Pty Ltd	0	3	3	0	3
	ReAmped Energy Pty Ltd <sup>7</sup>	-	-	-	0	2
	Lumo Energy	9	4	1	5	0
	People Energy Pty Ltd <sup>6</sup>	-	1	1	1	0
	Sanctuary Energy Pty Ltd	1	1	3	0	0
	Mojo Power Pty Ltd <sup>9</sup>	-	1	1	0	0
	Diamond Energy Pty Ltd	1	0	1	0	0
	1st Energy Pty Ltd <sup>4</sup>	-	-	1	0	0
	Momentum Energy Pty Ltd	2	0	0	0	0
<b>Total (Provision)</b>		<b>184</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>687</b>	<b>548</b>	<b>443</b>

Table 8 cont.

Primary issue	Scheme participant	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
<b>Customer service</b>	Origin Energy Electricity Ltd	146	113	146	128	150
	AGL Sales (Queensland Electricity) Pty Ltd	111	90	132	109	66
	Alinta Energy Retail Sales Pty Ltd <sup>1</sup>	-	-	57	80	52
	EnergyAustralia Pty Ltd	38	28	41	23	46
	Ergon Energy Qld Pty Ltd	53	49	61	47	42
	Simply Energy	1	8	15	11	15
	Click Energy Pty Ltd <sup>2</sup>	11	19	93	24	11
	Red Energy Pty Ltd	0	12	11	11	11
	Powershop Australia Pty Ltd <sup>3</sup>	-	1	1	3	5
	Dodo Power & Gas Pty Ltd	12	4	7	3	4
	Sanctuary Energy Pty Ltd	153	10	2	2	4
	1st Energy Pty Ltd <sup>4</sup>	-	-	8	9	3
	QEnergy Pty Ltd	9	11	2	6	3
	Locality Planning Energy Pty Ltd <sup>5</sup>	0	2	1	1	2
	Mojo Power Pty Ltd <sup>9</sup>	-	2	1	1	2
	Diamond Energy Pty Ltd	1	0	1	0	1
	People Energy Pty Ltd <sup>6</sup>	-	0	0	1	1
	ReAmped Energy Pty Ltd <sup>7</sup>	-	-	-	0	1
	Energy Locals Pty Ltd <sup>11</sup>	-	-	1	1	0
	Lumo Energy	25	15	5	5	0
	Powerdirect Pty Ltd	25	12	5	11	0
	Momentum Energy Pty Ltd	0	0	1	0	0
	Urth Energy <sup>15</sup>	1	1	-	-	-
<b>Total (Customer service)</b>		<b>586</b>	<b>377</b>	<b>591</b>	<b>476</b>	<b>419</b>
<b>Transfer</b>	Alinta Energy Retail Sales Pty Ltd <sup>1</sup>	-	-	151	123	53
	AGL Sales (Queensland Electricity) Pty Ltd	45	50	70	67	36
	Origin Energy Electricity Ltd	51	23	60	39	34
	EnergyAustralia Pty Ltd	21	21	33	19	19
	1st Energy Pty Ltd <sup>4</sup>	-	-	20	35	10
	Simply Energy	0	3	13	9	9
	Click Energy Pty Ltd <sup>2</sup>	17	35	73	15	5
	Dodo Power & Gas Pty Ltd	10	4	3	1	5
	Locality Planning Energy Pty Ltd <sup>5</sup>	0	0	0	1	5
	Powerdirect Pty Ltd	15	6	4	7	5
	Red Energy Pty Ltd	0	3	7	2	3
	Ergon Energy Qld Pty Ltd	3	4	4	2	2
	Diamond Energy Pty Ltd	2	1	1	1	1
	Mojo Power Pty Ltd <sup>9</sup>	-	1	2	0	1
	People Energy Pty Ltd <sup>6</sup>	-	0	0	0	1
	ReAmped Energy Pty Ltd <sup>7</sup>	-	-	-	0	1
	Energy Locals Pty Ltd <sup>11</sup>	-	-	2	0	0
	Lumo Energy	13	10	2	0	0
	Sanctuary Energy Pty Ltd	0	1	0	0	0
	Powershop Australia Pty Ltd <sup>3</sup>	-	0	2	2	0
	QEnergy Pty Ltd	3	2	5	1	0
<b>Total (Transfer)</b>		<b>180</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>452</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>190</b>

Table 8 cont.

Primary issue	Scheme participant	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
<b>Marketing</b>	EnergyAustralia Pty Ltd	2	4	1	6	12
	Origin Energy Electricity Ltd	10	5	10	6	11
	AGL Sales (Queensland Electricity) Pty Ltd	10	3	4	11	9
	Alinta Energy Retail Sales Pty Ltd <sup>1</sup>	-	-	12	10	5
	1st Energy Pty Ltd <sup>4</sup>	-	-	4	10	3
	Simply Energy	0	3	11	2	3
	Click Energy Pty Ltd <sup>2</sup>	1	1	8	3	1
	Red Energy Pty Ltd	1	0	0	2	1
	Ergon Energy Qld Pty Ltd	0	0	3	0	1
	QEnergy Pty Ltd	1	2	1	1	0
	Powerdirect Pty Ltd	0	1	1	1	0
	Dodo Power & Gas Pty Ltd	3	0	1	0	0
	Diamond Energy Pty Ltd	0	0	1	0	0
	Powershop Australia Pty Ltd <sup>3</sup>	-	0	1	0	0
	Lumo Energy	2	0	0	0	0
<b>Total (Marketing)</b>		<b>30</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Other</b>	Origin Energy Electricity Ltd	19	17	25	18	28
	Ergon Energy Qld Pty Ltd	25	13	16	20	23
	AGL Sales (Queensland Electricity) Pty Ltd	9	13	18	12	9
	Alinta Energy Retail Sales Pty Ltd <sup>1</sup>	-	-	1	7	5
	Red Energy Pty Ltd	0	0	1	2	3
	Powerdirect Pty Ltd	3	3	2	10	2
	EnergyAustralia Pty Ltd	3	5	6	6	2
	1st Energy Pty Ltd <sup>4</sup>	-	-	0	1	2
	Locality Planning Energy Pty Ltd <sup>5</sup>	0	1	2	2	1
	Simply Energy	0	1	0	0	1
	Mojo Power Pty Ltd <sup>9</sup>	-	0	0	0	1
	Click Energy Pty Ltd <sup>2</sup>	1	2	3	1	0
	Dodo Power & Gas Pty Ltd	7	1	1	1	0
	Lumo Energy	2	2	1	0	0
	Powershop Australia Pty Ltd <sup>3</sup>	-	1	1	0	0
	Sanctuary Energy Pty Ltd	1	0	1	0	0
	Diamond Energy Pty Ltd	0	2	0	0	0
	QEnergy Pty Ltd	1	2	0	0	0
	Urth Energy <sup>15</sup>	0	1	-	-	-
<b>Total (Other)</b>		<b>71</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>Grand total</b>		<b>5,374</b>	<b>4,925</b>	<b>6,759</b>	<b>5,361</b>	<b>4,962</b>

<sup>1</sup> Alinta Energy Retail Sales Pty Ltd joined on 13 August 2017.<sup>2</sup> Click Energy Pty Ltd includes amaysim Energy Pty Ltd data.<sup>3</sup> Powershop Australia Pty Ltd joined on 1 November 2016.<sup>4</sup> 1st Energy Pty Ltd joined on 9 August 2017.<sup>5</sup> Locality Planning Energy Pty Ltd joined on 1 July 2015.<sup>6</sup> People Energy joined on 6 November 2016.<sup>7</sup> ReAmped Energy Pty Ltd joined in August 2018.<sup>8</sup> Next Business Energy joined on 25 November 2015.<sup>9</sup> Mojo Power joined on 14 September 2016.<sup>10</sup> Blue NRG Pty Ltd joined in September 2019.<sup>11</sup> Energy Locals joined on 15 January 2017.<sup>12</sup> Discover Energy Pty Ltd joined in September 2018.<sup>13</sup> Power Club Ltd joined in May 2019.<sup>14</sup> ERM Power Retail joined on 1 July 2015.<sup>15</sup> Urth Energy entered into administration 1 February 2017.



# Electricity distributors

**426**

electricity distributor complaints

**32%**

Most common primary issue = PROVISION

**30%**

2nd most common primary issue = SUPPLY

## Closed electricity distributor complaints by primary issue

Table 9

Primary issue	Scheme participant	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Provision	Energex Ltd	44	54	63	71	94
	Ergon Energy Corporation Ltd	43	49	48	36	39
	Essential Energy	6	4	5	2	3
Total		93	107	116	109	136
Supply	Ergon Energy Corporation Ltd	67	60	49	55	76
	Energex Ltd	63	76	87	64	50
	Essential Energy	3	1	2	2	1
Total		133	137	138	121	127
Customer service	Energex Ltd	63	49	54	70	48
	Ergon Energy Corporation Ltd	22	32	23	21	22
	Essential Energy	2	0	0	1	0
Total		87	81	77	92	70
Land	Energex Ltd	16	16	30	36	35
	Ergon Energy Corporation Ltd	10	10	9	22	27
Total		26	26	39	58	62
Billing	Energex Ltd	0	5	0	0	2
	Ergon Energy Corporation Ltd	2	0	3	0	0
Total		2	5	3	0	2
Credit	Energex Ltd	0	0	0	1	0
Total		0	0	0	1	0
Other	Energex Ltd	37	46	31	25	23
	Ergon Energy Corporation Ltd	9	7	10	6	5
	Essential Energy	4	2	0	1	1
Total		50	55	41	32	29
Grand total		391	411	414	413	426

# section 7

## Electricity retailer and distributor performance

Table 10

### Electricity retailer and distributor performance

Provider <sup>1</sup>	Electricity customer numbers <sup>2</sup>	Complaints closed per 10,000 customers	Cases closed 2019-20	Cases closed 2018-19	% Variance
<b>First tier retailer</b>					
Origin Energy Electricity Ltd	500,001 - 1,000,000	28	1765	1543	14%
Ergon Energy Qld Pty Ltd	500,001 - 1,000,000	10	705	763	-8%
AGL Sales (Queensland Electricity) Pty Ltd	100,001 - 500,000	23	805	1009	-20%
<b>Second tier retailer</b>					
EnergyAustralia Pty Ltd	100,001 - 500,000	33	379	437	-13%
Alinta Energy Retail Sales Pty Ltd	100,001 - 500,000	29	627	654	-4%
Simply Energy	10,001 - 100,000	74	103	71	45%
Click Energy Pty Ltd <sup>3</sup>	10,001 - 100,000	46	180	302	-40%
Dodo Power & Gas Pty Ltd	10,001 - 100,000	46	49	31	58%
Powerdirect Pty Ltd	10,001 - 100,000	28	42	167	-75%
Powershop Australia Pty Ltd <sup>4</sup>	10,001 - 100,000	28	33	17	-94%
Red Energy	10,001 - 100,000	18	89	139	-36%
Locality Planning Energy Pty Ltd	10,001 - 100,000	9	24	25	-4%
1st Energy Pty Ltd	3,001 - 10,000	93	39	103	-62%
QEnergy Limited	3,001 - 10,000	43	30	32	-6%
<b>Distributor</b>					
ENERGEX Ltd	> 1,000,000	2	252	267	-6%
Ergon Energy Corporation Ltd	500,001 - 1,000,000	2	169	140	21%

<sup>1</sup> Only providers with more than 20 complaints have been included in this table. <sup>2</sup> Customer number data provided by the AER for retailers as at 31 December 2019 and for distributors as at 30 June 2019. <sup>3</sup> Click Energy Pty Ltd includes amaysim Energy Pty Ltd data. <sup>4</sup> Sales and marketing activities conducted by Kogan Energy.



### Electricity providers with less than 20 complaints

- Blue NRG Pty Ltd
- CovaU Energy Pty Ltd
- Diamond Energy Pty Ltd
- Discover Energy Pty Ltd
- Elysian Energy Pty Ltd
- Energy Locals Pty Ltd
- ERM Power Retail Pty Ltd
- Essential Energy
- Future X Power
- Globird Energy Pty Ltd
- Lumo Energy
- Metered Energy Holdings Pty Ltd
- Mojo Power Pty Ltd
- Momentum Energy Pty Ltd
- Next Business Energy Pty Ltd
- OVO Energy Pty Ltd
- People Energy Pty Ltd
- Power Club Ltd
- ReAmped Energy Pty Ltd
- Sanctuary Energy Pty Ltd





Gas complaints

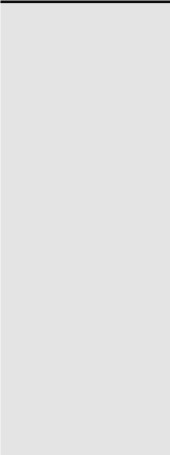
This year, we closed 299 gas complaints, including 79 investigations. Refer backs were the most common gas case type (43 per cent of complaints), while billing was the most common primary issue (52 per cent of complaints).

299  
gas complaints closed

Billing 52%  
most common primary issue

Closed gas complaints by primary issue and case type 2019-2020

Table 11

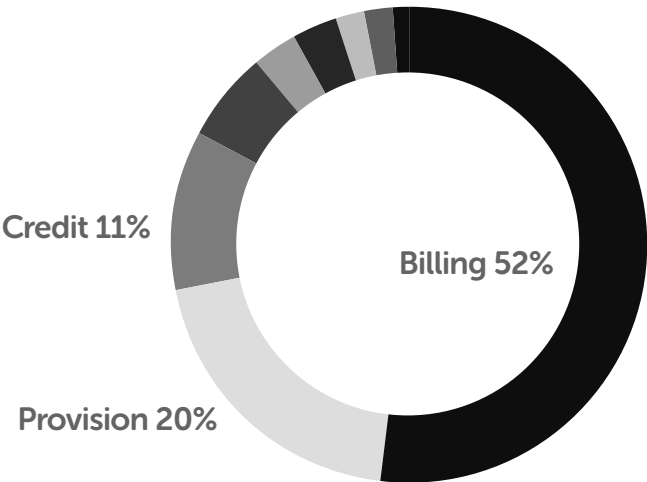


Primary issue	Refer back	Referral to higher level	Investigation	Total
Billing	47	52	56	155
Provision	41	13	5	59
Credit	15	10	8	33
Customer service	8	6	4	18
Transfer	0	5	5	10
Supply	7	1	0	8
Land	4	1	1	6
Other	7	0	0	7
Marketing	1	2	0	3
Total	130	90	79	299

2019-2020  
closed complaints

Gas complaints by primary issue

- Billing 52%
- Provision 20%
- Credit 11%
- Customer service 6%
- Transfer 3%
- Supply 3%
- Land 2%
- Other 2%
- Marketing 1%





## Gas retailers

### Closed gas retailer complaints by primary issue

Table 12

Primary issue	Scheme participant	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
<b>Billing</b>	Origin Energy Retail Ltd	97	67	71	98	88
	AGL Sales (Queensland) Pty Ltd	109	93	106	81	65
	Red Energy (Gas) Pty Ltd <sup>1</sup>	-	-	-	2	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>206</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>156</b>
<b>Credit</b>	Origin Energy Retail Ltd	34	29	27	29	28
	AGL Sales (Queensland) Pty Ltd	19	12	22	23	5
	Western Downs Regional Council	1	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>54</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Provision</b>	Origin Energy Retail Ltd	19	9	28	21	16
	AGL Sales (Queensland) Pty Ltd	20	18	16	13	16
	Red Energy (Gas) Pty Ltd <sup>1</sup>	-	-	-	2	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>39</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Customer service</b>	Origin Energy Retail Ltd	23	10	14	12	10
	AGL Sales (Queensland) Pty Ltd	17	5	17	14	6
	Red Energy (Gas) Pty Ltd <sup>1</sup>	-	-	-	1	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>40</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Transfer</b>	Origin Energy Retail Ltd	7	6	7	6	7
	AGL Sales (Queensland) Pty Ltd	5	3	7	11	2
	Red Energy (Gas) Pty Ltd <sup>1</sup>	-	-	-	3	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>12</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Marketing</b>	AGL Sales (Queensland) Pty Ltd	1	1	0	0	2
	Origin Energy Retail Ltd	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Other</b>	Origin Energy Retail Ltd	6	1	1	4	3
	AGL Sales (Queensland) Pty Ltd	0	2	2	1	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Grand total</b>		<b>358</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>254</b>

<sup>1</sup> Red Energy (Gas) joined on 1 July 2018



## Gas distributors

Closed gas distributor complaints by primary issue

Table 13

Primary issue	Scheme participant	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
<b>Provision</b>	Australian Gas Networks Limited	1	11	13	14	22
	Allgas Energy Pty Ltd	0	2	3	1	5
	Western Downs Regional Council	0	0	1	4	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Supply</b>	Australian Gas Networks Limited	2	3	11	12	7
	Allgas Energy Pty Ltd	0	4	10	6	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Land</b>	Australian Gas Networks Limited	3	0	1	4	5
	Allgas Energy Pty Ltd	0	2	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Customer service</b>	Australian Gas Networks Limited	5	1	7	11	1
	Allgas Energy Pty Ltd	1	2	3	0	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Billing</b>	Allgas Energy Pty Ltd	0	0	0	1	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Other</b>	Australian Gas Networks Limited	1	1	18	12	3
	Allgas Energy Pty Ltd	0	5	10	7	0
	Western Downs Regional Council	1	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Grand total</b>		<b>14</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>46</b>

# Water

## Water complaints

While there was a seven per cent decrease in water complaints overall in 2019-2020, there was an eight per cent increase in investigations during this period.

318

water complaints closed

Billing 64%

most common primary issue

7%

↓ from 2018-19

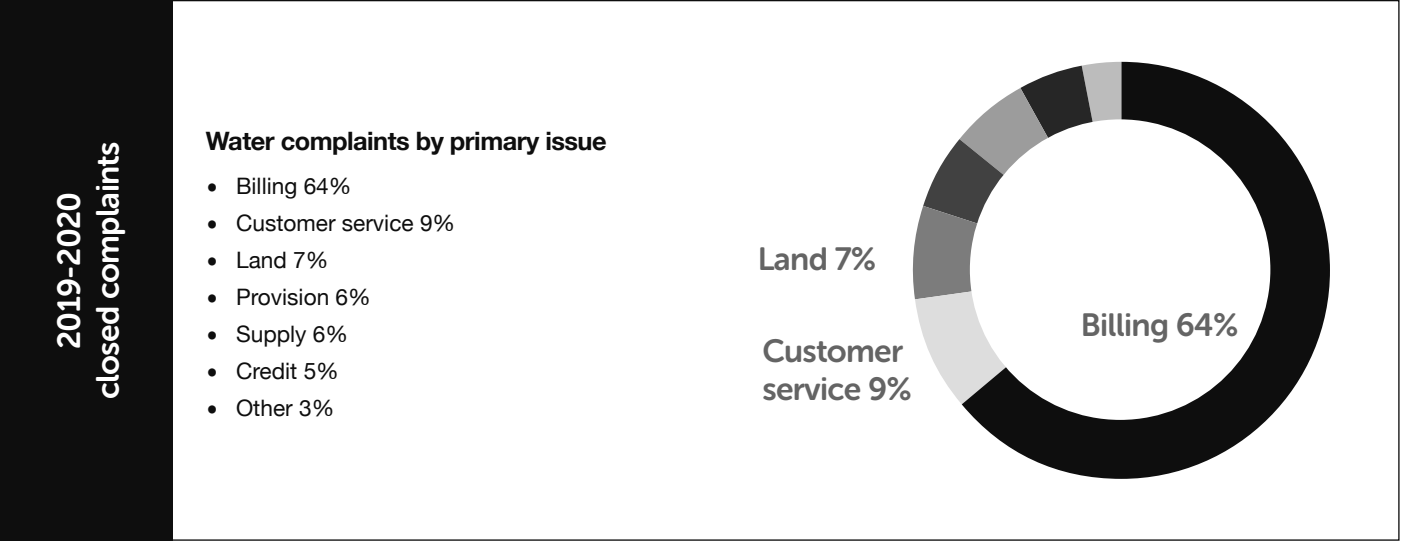
8%

↑ in investigations

Closed water complaints by primary issue and case type 2019-2020

Table 14

Primary issue	Refer back	Referral to higher level	Investigation	Total
Billing	84	47	73	204
Customer service	7	14	9	30
Land	10	6	5	21
Provision	8	8	4	20
Supply	10	4	5	19
Credit	9	4	3	16
Other	8	0	0	8
Total	136	83	99	318





## Water retailers

### Closed water retailer complaints by primary issue

Table 15

Primary issue	Scheme participant	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
<b>Billing</b>	Queensland Urban Utilities	136	129	106	117	98
	Unitywater	69	94	66	66	54
	City of Gold Coast	28	29	40	38	34
	Logan City Council	5	4	13	6	13
	Redland City Council	4	4	7	6	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>242</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>204</b>
<b>Customer service</b>	Queensland Urban Utilities	13	8	11	14	11
	City of Gold Coast	2	3	4	2	6
	Unitywater	9	6	4	5	5
	Redland City Council	0	0	0	1	0
	Logan City Council	0	0	1	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>24</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Credit</b>	Queensland Urban Utilities	14	12	4	6	10
	Unitywater	8	10	13	4	6
	City of Gold Coast	6	5	10	2	0
	Logan City Council	0	1	0	1	0
	Redland City Council	0	0	1	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>28</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Provision</b>	Unitywater	4	6	2	1	3
	Queensland Urban Utilities	4	4	3	3	0
	City of Gold Coast	0	1	0	1	0
	Logan City Council	1	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Other</b>	Queensland Urban Utilities	4	4	1	2	6
	Logan City Council	0	0	1	0	1
	City of Gold Coast	5	4	2	2	0
	Unitywater	2	4	3	0	0
	Redland City Council	0	0	1	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Grand total</b>		<b>314</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>252</b>



## Water distributors

### Closed water distributor complaints by primary issue

Table 16

Primary issue	Scheme participant	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Land	Queensland Urban Utilities	4	8	10	20	13
	Unitywater	4	7	9	4	7
	City of Gold Coast	1	3	0	0	1
	Redland City Council	1	0	0	0	0
Total		10	18	19	24	21
Supply	Queensland Urban Utilities	21	13	13	11	13
	Unitywater	7	3	10	0	5
	Redland City Council	1	0	1	0	1
	City of Gold Coast	4	1	0	0	0
	Logan City Council	0	0	0	1	0
Total		33	17	24	12	19
Provision	Queensland Urban Utilities	7	14	7	8	10
	Unitywater	5	3	5	6	3
	Logan City Council	0	1	0	0	3
	Redland City Council	0	0	0	0	1
	City of Gold Coast	2	0	1	1	0
Total		14	18	13	15	17
Customer service	Queensland Urban Utilities	20	1	5	8	7
	City of Gold Coast	1	0	0	0	1
	Unitywater	4	8	1	3	0
Total		25	9	6	11	8
Other	Queensland Urban Utilities	5	4	2	1	1
	Unitywater	1	3	4	1	0
	City of Gold Coast	3	0	2	0	0
Total		9	7	8	2	1
Grand total		91	69	70	64	66

# section 8

## Financial summary

The financial records of the Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman have been properly maintained throughout the year ending 30 June 2020 in accordance with prescribed requirements.

The risk management and control systems relating to financial management have been operating efficiently, effectively and economically throughout the financial year.

### Our budget

Our budget for 2019-2020 was developed from a zero base without any surplus from the preceding financial year. It has considered known changes in expenditure from the previous year and likely future expenses.

### Projects

As part of the EWOQ 2019-2020 budget, scheme participants contributed \$2.2 million to special projects to improve business processes and customer service delivery. A range of committed expenses and final components to these projects have been delayed due to the impacts from COVID-19 and other factors. As a result, EWOQ will be carrying over \$629,200 for completion of these projects.

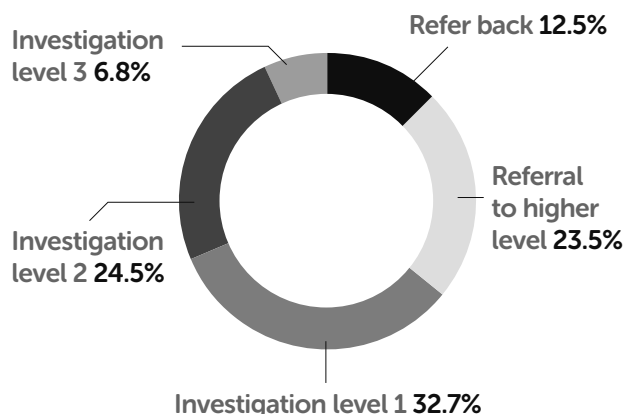
### Revenue (excluding special projects)

A majority of our funding is received from our scheme participants – energy and water retailers and distributors operating in Queensland – who are required to pay an annual participation fee and user pays fees.

Our income for 2019-2020 was \$7.3 million (up from \$6.5 million in 2018-2019) and included:

- \$7 million user pays fees
- \$246,115 participation fees
- \$48,645 other revenue.

#### User pays fee breakdown 2019-2020



### Expenses (excluding special projects)

Our expenses in 2019-2020 were \$7.3 million (up from \$6.5 million in 2018-2019). Employee expenses accounted for 73 per cent of this, with supplies and services accounting for a further 26 per cent. Depreciation, audit fees, and costs associated with our Advisory Council made up the balance of our total expenditure.

### Assets

At 30 June 2020, the Office's assets totalled \$5 million which was comprised of:

- cash and cash equivalents
- receivables
- prepayments
- plant and equipment
- intangible assets.

### Liabilities

As at 30 June 2020, our liabilities totalled \$4.1 million, which include:

- \$2.3 million in unearned revenue
- \$1.3 million in accounts payable
- \$501,957 in employee entitlements.

section  
8

## Financial statements

Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman  
(trading as Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland)  
for the financial year ended 30 June 2020

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## Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman Financial Statements

### For the year ended 30 June 2020

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	Statement of Changes in Equity
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Note 16	Key Management Personnel (KMP) Disclosures
Note 17	Related Party Transactions
Note 18	Commitments
Note 19	Contingencies
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#### ***Certification***

Management Certificate
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**Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman**  
**Statement of Comprehensive Income**  
**For the Year Ended 30 June 2020**

	Notes	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
<b>Operating Result</b>			
<b>Income from Operations</b>			
Scheme fees	2.	7,272	6,459
Other revenue	3.	48	48
<b>Total Income from Operations</b>		<b>7,320</b>	<b>6,507</b>
<b>Expenses from Operations</b>			
Employee expenses	4.	5,373	4,519
Supplies and services	5.	1,913	1,921
Depreciation	10.	1	1
Other expenses	6.	33	59
<b>Total Expenses from Operations</b>		<b>7,320</b>	<b>6,500</b>
<b>Operating result for the year</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Net surplus – Special projects</b>	7.	<b>666</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total Comprehensive Income</b>		<b>666</b>	<b>7</b>

*The accompanying notes form part of these statements*

# Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman

## Balance Sheet

### As at 30 June 2020

	Notes	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	8.	3,918	2,851
Receivables	9.	365	309
Prepayments		130	46
<b>Total Current Assets</b>		<b>4,413</b>	<b>3,206</b>
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>			
Plant and equipment	10.	32	2
Intangible assets	11.	635	-
<b>Total Non-Current Assets</b>		<b>667</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>		<b>5,080</b>	<b>3,208</b>
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
Payables	12.	1,318	854
Accrued employee benefits	13.	502	461
Unearned revenue	14.	2,320	1,619
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>		<b>4,140</b>	<b>2,934</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>		<b>4,140</b>	<b>2,934</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>		<b>940</b>	<b>274</b>
<b>Equity</b>			
Contributed equity		79	79
Accumulated surplus		861	195
<b>Total Equity</b>		<b>940</b>	<b>274</b>

*The accompanying notes form part of these statements*

**Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman**  
**Statement of Changes in Equity**  
**For the Year Ended 30 June 2020**

	Accumulated Surplus \$'000	Contributed Equity \$'000	TOTAL \$'000
<b>Balance as at 1 July 2018</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>267</b>
Net result	7	-	7
<b>Balance as at 30 June 2019</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>274</b>
Net result	666	-	666
<b>Balance as at 30 June 2020</b>	<b>861</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>940</b>

*The accompanying notes form part of these statements*

**Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman**  
**Statement of Cash Flows**  
**For the Year Ended 30 June 2020**

	Note	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>			
<i>Inflows:</i>			
Scheme fees		7,344	8,236
Special projects contribution *		2,236	-
Interest receipts		48	46
GST input tax credits from ATO		276	224
GST collected from members/customers		5	3
Other		1	2
<i>Outflows:</i>			
Employee expenses		(5,354)	(4,509)
Employee expenses - special projects *		(243)	-
Supplies and services		(1,532)	(2,480)
Supplies and services - special projects *		(698)	-
GST remitted to ATO		(5)	(3)
GST paid to suppliers		(312)	(215)
Other		(33)	(29)
<b>Net cash provided by operating activities</b>		<b>1,733</b>	<b>1,275</b>
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>			
<i>Outflows:</i>			
Payment for plant and equipment *		(31)	-
Payment for intangible assets *		(635)	-
<b>Net cash used in investing activities</b>		<b>(666)</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Net increase in cash and cash equivalents</b>		<b>1,067</b>	<b>1,275</b>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents – beginning of financial year</b>	8.	<b>2,851</b>	<b>1,576</b>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents – end of financial year</b>	8.	<b>3,918</b>	<b>2,851</b>

\* Refer to Note 14 for the carry-over funds for special projects not completed in 2019-20.

*The accompanying notes form part of these statements*

## Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman

### Notes to the Financial Statements

#### For the Year Ended 30 June 2020

### Note 1 – Basis of Financial Statement Preparation

#### General Information

These financial statements cover the Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman trading as Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland (EWOQ). EWOQ has no controlled entities. The financial statements include the value of all income, expenses, assets, liabilities and equity for EWOQ as an individual entity.

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

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

#### Authorisation of Financial Statements for Issue

The financial statements are authorised for issue by the Energy and Water Ombudsman and the General Manager Strategy, Operations and Governance at the date of signing the Management Certificate.

#### Compliance with Prescribed Requirements

The financial statements have been prepared in compliance with the *Financial Accountability Act 2009* and the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019*.

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

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

#### Underlying Measurement Basis

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

#### Presentation matters

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

Comparatives - Comparative information reflects the audited 2018-19 financial statements.

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

## Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman

### Notes to the Financial Statements

#### For the Year Ended 30 June 2020

### Note 1 – Basis of financial statement preparation (continued)

#### Taxation

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

Receivables and payables in the Balance Sheet are shown inclusive of GST. GST credits receivable from, and GST payable to, the ATO at reporting date are separately recognised in receivable with Note 9.

#### Key accounting estimates and judgments

The most significant estimates and assumptions made in the preparation of the financial statements related to the depreciation of plant and equipment. Details set out in Note 10. The valuation of plant and equipment necessarily involves estimation uncertainty with the potential to materially impact on the carrying amount of such assets in the next reporting period.

#### New and Revised Accounting Standards

##### *First Time Mandatory Application of Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations*

Three new accounting standards were applied for the first time in 2019-20:

- AASB 15 *Revenue from Contracts with Customers*
- AASB 1058 *Income of Not-for-Profit Entities*
- AASB 16 *Leases*

##### *AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers*

AASB 15 establishes a new five step model for recognising revenue from contracts with customers which includes the scheme fees in Note 2. There is no change in revenue recognition policy under AASB 15.

##### *AASB 1058 Income of Not-for-Profit Entities*

EWOQ has adopted AASB 1058 from 1 July 2019. The standard replaces AASB 1005 'Contributions' in respect to income recognition requirements for not-for-profit. The timing of income recognition under AASB 1058 is dependent upon whether the transaction gives rise to a liability or other performance obligation at the time of receipt. For transfers of financial assets to EWOQ which enable the acquisition or construction of a recognisable non-financial asset EWOQ must recognise a liability amounting to the excess of the fair value of the transfer received from contributions.

EWOQ has received funding from scheme participants disclosed in Note 7 for special projects. The funding received is initially deferred as unearned revenue liability and subsequently recognised as revenue as or when EWOQ satisfies the obligation.

## Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman

### Notes to the Financial Statements

#### For the Year Ended 30 June 2020

#### Note 1 – Basis of financial statement preparation (continued)

##### New and Revised Accounting Standards

##### First Time Mandatory Application of Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations (continued)

##### AASB 16 Leases

AASB 16 requires all leases to be accounted for on the balance sheet as right of use assets and lease liabilities, except for short term leases and leases of low value assets. EWOQ has a lease for office accommodation from the Department of Housing and Public Works through the Queensland Government Accommodation Office. This lease is considered as a government internal arrangement, which is outside the scope of AASB 16. EWOQ continues to account for the lease payment when incurred, consistent with prior years. The application of AASB 16 has no material impact on the financial statements. Refer to Note 18.

##### Early Adoption of Accounting Standards and Interpretations

No Accounting Pronouncements were early adopted in the 2019-20 financial year.

##### Voluntary Changes in Accounting Policy

No voluntary changes in accounting policies occurred during the 2019-20 financial year.

#### Note 2 – Scheme fees

	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>
	<b>\$'000</b>	<b>\$'000</b>
User-pays fees	7,026	6,243
Annual participation fees	246	216
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,272</b>	<b>6,459</b>

##### Accounting Policy

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

EWOQ invoices in advance for annual participation fees to industry scheme participants. User pays fees are invoiced quarterly in advance based on estimated usage and then reconciled back to actuals twice a year. User-pays and annual participation fees are recognised as revenue monthly as prescribed services are performed. Payments received in advance are initially recorded as unearned revenue in Note 14.



## Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman

### Notes to the Financial Statements

#### For the Year Ended 30 June 2020

### Note 3 – Other revenue

	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
Bank interest	47	46
Other revenue	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>48</b>

### Accounting Policy

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

### Note 4 – Employee expenses

	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
<b><i>Employee Benefits</i></b>		
Wages and salaries	3,953	3,371
Employer superannuation contributions	542	470
Long service leave levy	101	64
Annual leave expense	440	338
<b><i>Employee Related Benefits</i></b>		
Payroll tax	237	197
Workers' compensation premium	19	19
Other	81	60
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,373</b>	<b>4,519</b>

	2020	2019
Number of employees	43	40

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

### Accounting Policy

#### ***Employee Benefits***

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

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

Prior history indicates that on average, sick leave taken each reporting period is less than the entitlement accrued. This is expected to continue in future periods.

## Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman

### Notes to the Financial Statements

#### For the Year Ended 30 June 2020

#### Note 4 – Employee expenses (continued)

Accordingly, it is unlikely that existing accumulated entitlements will be used by employees and no liability for unused sick leave entitlements is recognised. As sick leave is non-vesting, an expense is recognised for this leave as it is taken.

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

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

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

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

##### Superannuation

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

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

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

#### Note 5 – Supplies and services

	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>
	<b>\$'000</b>	<b>\$'000</b>
Consultants and contractors	185	396
Travel	53	45
Property lease and rental	530	548
Promotion and entertainment	52	51
Printing, stationery and office supplies	59	48
Information technology	293	209
Communications	46	52
Corporate service charges	582	510
Sundries	113	62
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,913</b>	<b>1,921</b>

## Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman

### Notes to the Financial Statements

#### For the Year Ended 30 June 2020

#### Note 5 – Supplies and services (continued)

##### Accounting Policy

Supplies and Services items are recorded in the period in which the expense is incurred. EWOQ outsources corporate support services. For property lease and rental policy refer to Note 18.

#### Note 6 – Other expenses

	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
Advisory Council fees	8	7
External audit fees*	21	20
Other assurance services**	-	30
Other	4	2
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	<b>33</b>	<b>59</b>
	<hr/>	<hr/>

##### Disclosure

\*Total audit fees paid to the Queensland Audit Office relating to the 2019-20 financial statements are estimated to be \$20,900 (2019: \$20,400). There are no non-audit services included in this amount.

\*\*the assurance services paid to PKF Brisbane were in relation to the independent review of proposed digital strategy and its alignment with business needs in the 2018-19 financial year.

#### Note 7 – Net surplus - Special projects

	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
<b>Special projects revenue</b>		
Scheme participants contributions	1,607	-
<b>Total special projects revenue</b>	<hr/> <b>1,607</b>	<hr/> -
<b>Special projects expenditure</b>		
Employee expenses	243	-
Supplies and services	698	-
<b>Total special projects expenditure</b>	<hr/> <b>941</b>	<hr/> -
<b>Net surplus</b>	<hr/> <b>666</b>	<hr/> -
<b>Special project expenditure capitalised</b>		
Plant and equipment	10. 31	-
Intangibles assets - Capital work in progress	11. 635	-
	<hr/> <b>666</b>	<hr/> -
	<hr/>	<hr/>

## Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman

### Notes to the Financial Statements

#### For the Year Ended 30 June 2020

#### Note 7 – Net surplus - Special projects (continued)

##### Accounting Policy

Contributions from scheme participants has enabled EWOQ to acquire equipment and upgrade the case management system. Equipment was recognised as per Note 10. Intangible assets equal to or greater than \$100,000 will be recognised on completion. Any training costs are expensed as incurred. Expenditure on research activities relating to internally generated intangible assets is recognised as an expense in the period in which it is incurred.

#### Note 8 – Cash and cash equivalents

	<b>2020</b> <b>\$'000</b>	<b>2019</b> <b>\$'000</b>
Cash at bank	3,918	2,851
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,918</b>	<b>2,851</b>

##### Accounting Policy

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

#### Note 9 – Receivables

	<b>2020</b> <b>\$'000</b>	<b>2019</b> <b>\$'000</b>
Trade debtors	265	267
	265	267
GST receivable	56	20
Long service leave reimbursements	42	20
Interest receivable	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>309</b>

## Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman

### Notes to the Financial Statements

#### For the Year Ended 30 June 2020

### Note 9 – Receivables (continued)

#### Accounting Policy

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

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

### Note 10 – Plant and equipment and depreciation expense

	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
<b>Plant and Equipment</b>		
Gross	74	50
Less Accumulated depreciation	(42)	(48)
<b>Total</b>	<u>32</u>	<u>2</u>
<b>Plant and Equipment Reconciliation</b>		
Carrying amount as at 1 July 2019	2	3
Acquisitions	31	-
Depreciation	(1)	(1)
<b>Carrying amount as at 30 June 2020</b>	<u>32</u>	<u>2</u>

#### Accounting Policy

##### Asset Acquisition

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

## Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman

### Notes to the Financial Statements

#### For the Year Ended 30 June 2020

#### Note 10 – Plant and equipment and depreciation expense (continued)

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

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

##### Recognition of Plant and Equipment

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

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

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

##### Measurement of Non-Current Physical Assets using Cost

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

##### Impairment

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

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

##### Depreciation

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

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

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

**Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman**  
**Notes to the Financial Statements**  
**For the Year Ended 30 June 2020**

**Note 10 – Plant and equipment and depreciation expense (continued)**

**Depreciation Disclosures**

The following depreciation rates were used:

Plant and equipment                      12.5 - 20%

**Note 11 – Intangible assets**

	<b>2020</b> <b>\$'000</b>	<b>2019</b> <b>\$'000</b>
Capital work in progress	635	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>635</b>	<b>-</b>
Carrying amount at 1 July 2019	-	-
Acquisitions	635	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>635</b>	<b>-</b>

**Accounting Policy**

On completion these assets will be capitalised based on actual costs incurred to purchase, develop and install and will be amortised over the intangible's useful life.

Expenditure relating to research activities and training have been expensed as incurred.

**Note 12 – Payables**

	<b>2020</b> <b>\$'000</b>	<b>2019</b> <b>\$'000</b>
User-pays fees - refunds	866	717
Accrued expense	452	137
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,318</b>	<b>854</b>

**Accounting Policy**

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

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

**Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman**  
**Notes to the Financial Statements**  
**For the Year Ended 30 June 2020**

**Note 13 – Accrued employee benefits**

	<b>2020</b> <b>\$'000</b>	<b>2019</b> <b>\$'000</b>
<b>Current</b>		
Wages payable	-	65
Annual leave	478	376
Long service leave levy payable	24	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>502</b>	<b>461</b>

**Accounting Policy** – refer to Note 4

**Note 14 – Unearned revenue**

	<b>2020</b> <b>\$'000</b>	<b>2019</b> <b>\$'000</b>
<b>Current</b>		
Unearned revenue – user-pays fees	1,691	1,619
Unearned revenue – special projects	629	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,320</b>	<b>1,619</b>

**Accounting Policy** – refer to Note 2

Cash received from scheme participants in respect of services to be provided in 2020-21 financial year are recognised as unearned revenue as well as the carry-over of funds received from scheme participants from projects not completed in 2019-20.

**Disclosure**

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

**Note 15 – Financial instruments**

**Financial Instruments - Accounting Policy on Recognition**

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



## Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman

### Notes to the Financial Statements

#### For the Year Ended 30 June 2020

### Note 15 – Financial instruments (continued)

#### Financial Instruments – Classification and Presentation

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

	Notes	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
<i><u>Financial Assets</u></i>			
Cash and cash equivalents	8.	3,918	2,851
Receivables at amortised cost	9.	365	309
<b>Total</b>		<b>4,283</b>	<b>3,160</b>
<i><u>Financial Liabilities</u></i>			
Payables at amortised cost	12.	1,318	854
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,318</b>	<b>854</b>

### Note 16 – Key management personnel (KMP) Disclosures

#### Details of Key Management Personnel

The following details for key management personnel include those positions that had authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of EWOQ during 2019-20 and 2018-19. Further information about these positions can be found in the body of the Annual Report under the section relating to Executive Management. Two additional key management personnel and one name change have been included in the 2019-20 financial year.

Position	Position Responsibility
Energy and Water Ombudsman	The strategic leadership, efficient and effective management of EWOQ, including its operational and financial performance.
General Manager, Assessment, Investigation and Resolution	Responsible for leading the complaint investigation and dispute resolution functions of EWOQ.
General Manager, Business Support (until March 2020)	Responsible for efficient and effective business support services to EWOQ and to ensure all statutory reporting obligations are met.
General Manager, Strategy, Operations and Governance	Responsible for the delivery of services including governance, finance, facilities management, reporting and analysis, providing strategic advice on policies and emerging industry issues.
General Manager, Reporting, Policy and Research (ended 30 June 2019)	Responsible for leading advice on complex policies and emerging issues, and overseeing the reporting, research and root cause analysis process.
Manager, People, Capability and Culture	Responsible for leading strategic HR solutions and contemporary HR services to meet business and cultural development needs within EWOQ.
Manager, Communications and Engagement	Responsible for strategic communication and engagement solutions for EWOQ.

**Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman**  
**Notes to the Financial Statements**  
**For the Year Ended 30 June 2020**

**Note 16 – Key management personnel (KMP) disclosures (continued)**

**KMP Remuneration Policies**

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

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

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

Short term employee expenses which include:

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

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

Post-employment expenses – mainly superannuation obligations.

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

## Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman

### Notes to the Financial Statements

#### For the Year Ended 30 June 2020

### Note 16 – Key management personnel (KMP) disclosures (continued)

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

#### Remuneration Expenses

##### 2019-20

Position	Short term Employee Expenses		Long Term Employee Expenses	Post-Employment Expenses	Termination Benefits	Total Expenses
	Monetary Expenses \$'000	Non-Monetary Expenses \$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Energy and Water Ombudsman	231	5	5	29	-	270
General Manager, Assessment, Investigation and Resolution	150	5	4	19	-	178
General Manager, Business Support (ended March 2020)	65	5	2	8	-	80
General Manager, Strategy, Operations and Governance (from May 2020)	31	-	-	3		34
Manager, People, Capability and Culture (from 1 July 2019)	136	-	3	16	-	155
Manager, Communications and Engagement (from 1 July 2019)	130	-	3	15	-	148
Total Remuneration	743	15	17	90	-	865

**Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman**  
**Notes to the Financial Statements**  
**For the Year Ended 30 June 2020**

**Note 16 – Key management personnel (KMP) disclosures (continued)**

**2018-19**

Position	Short term Employee Expenses		Long Term Employee Expenses	Post-Employment Expenses	Termination Benefits	Total Expenses
	Monetary Expenses \$'000	Non-Monetary Expenses \$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Energy and Water Ombudsman	227	8	5	27	-	267
General Manager, Assessment, Investigation and Resolution	149	8	3	19	-	179
General Manager, Business Support	122	8	3	16	-	149
General Manager, Reporting, Policy and Research (ended 30 June 2019)	93	-	2	17	-	112
Total Remuneration	591	24	13	79	-	707

**Performance Payments**

No KMP remuneration packages provide for performance or bonus payments.

**Note 17 – Related Parties Transactions**

**Transactions with people/entities related to KMP**

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

## Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman

### Notes to the Financial Statements

#### For the Year Ended 30 June 2020

### Note 18 – Commitments

#### Non-Cancellable Lease

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

	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
Not later than one year	550	535
Later than one year and not later than five years	422	770
<b>Total</b>	<b>972</b>	<b>1,305</b>

### Accounting Policy

Lease payments are representative of the pattern of benefits derived from the leased assets and are expensed in the periods in which they are incurred. Refer Note 1.

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

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

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

### Note 19 – Contingencies

There were no other known contingent assets or liabilities at 30 June 2020.

### Note 20 – Events Occurring After Balance Date

The COVID-19 outbreak is unlikely to have a significant impact on EWOQ's business.

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

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

These general purpose financial statements have been prepared pursuant to s.62(1)(a) of the *Financial Accountability Act 2009* (the Act), s.39 of the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019* and other prescribed requirements. In accordance with s.62(1)(b) of the Act we certify that in our opinion:

- a) the prescribed requirements for establishing and keeping the accounts have been complied with in all material respects; and
- b) the financial statements have been drawn up to present a true and fair view, in accordance with prescribed accounting standards, of the transactions of the Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman for the financial year ended 30 June 2020 and of the financial position of the office as at the end of that year; and

We acknowledge responsibility under s.7 and s.11 of the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019* for the establishment and maintenance, in all material respects, of an appropriate and effective system of internal controls and risk management processes with respect to financial reporting through the reporting period.



Eleanor Bray  
General Manager, Strategy, Operations &  
Governance  
Office of the Energy and Water  
Ombudsman  
Date  
12 August 2020



Jane Pires  
Energy and Water Ombudsman  
Office of the Energy and Water  
Ombudsman  
Date  
12 August 2020



## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman

### Report on the audit of the financial report

#### Opinion

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

In my opinion, the financial report:

- a) gives a true and fair view of the entity's financial position as at 30 June 2020, and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended
- b) complies with the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*, the Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019 and Australian Accounting Standards – Reduced Disclosure Requirements.

The financial report comprises the balance sheet as at 30 June 2020, the statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, notes to the financial statements including summaries of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, and the management certificate.

#### Basis for opinion

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

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

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

#### Responsibilities of the entity for the financial report

The Office is responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*, the Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019 and Australian Accounting Standards – Reduced Disclosure Requirements, and for such internal control as the Office determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

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



### **Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial report**

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

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

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

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





### Statement

In accordance with s.40 of the *Auditor-General Act 2009*, for the year ended 30 June 2020:

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

### Prescribed requirements scope

The prescribed requirements for the establishment and keeping of accounts are contained in the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*, any other Act and the Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019. The applicable requirements include those for keeping financial records that correctly record and explain the entity's transactions and account balances to enable the preparation of a true and fair financial report.

*Irshaad Asim*

Irshaad Asim  
as delegate of the Auditor-General

17 August 2020  
Queensland Audit Office  
Brisbane

**section 9****Appendices**

# section 9

## Appendix One: Data

**Table 17. Five-year closed cases**

Closed cases	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Electricity	7,504	6,636	8,838	7,231	6,386
Gas	644	552	732	699	593
Water	560	540	519	467	452
Not any of the above	187	133	122	162	190

**Table 18. Customer profile**

Sector	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Residential	8,470	7,401	9,735	8,113	7,258
Small business	424	455	469	438	361
Government	1	5	7	8	2
Total	8,895	7,861	10,211	8,559	7,621

**Table 19. Closed case types**

Case type	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
General enquiry	885	857	1,052	994	732
Referral	1,468	984	1,228	1,057	902
Refer back	3,340	3,003	3,702	2,861	2,133
Refer to higher level	1,919	1,791	2,481	2,007	1,957
Level 1 investigation	847	915	1,275	1,145	1,332
Level 2 investigation	333	270	405	423	475
Level 3 investigation	103	41	68	72	90
Final order	0	0	0	0	0

**Table 20. Five-year contact method**

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Phone	6,433	5,619	7,089	5,760	5,013
Website	1,684	1,620	2,316	2,057	1,981
Email	616	511	682	630	544
Other*	162*	111*	124*	112*	83†

\*includes fax, letter and in-person

†includes letter, in-person, Facebook and Twitter

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## Appendix One: Data continued

**Table 21. Five-year received and closed by year**

	Received	Closed
<b>2015-16</b>	8,749	8,895
<b>2016-17</b>	7,913	7,861
<b>2017-18</b>	10,328	10,211
<b>2018-19</b>	8,584	8,559
<b>2019-20</b>	7,510	7,621

**Table 22. Received and closed cases by month 2019-20**

	Received	Closed
<b>Jul-19</b>	738	737
<b>Aug-19</b>	733	672
<b>Sep-19</b>	672	666
<b>Oct-19</b>	750	692
<b>Nov-19</b>	645	707
<b>Dec-19</b>	494	569
<b>Jan-20</b>	689	645
<b>Feb-20</b>	628	659
<b>Mar-20</b>	639	665
<b>Apr-20</b>	506	566
<b>May-20</b>	474	495
<b>Jun-20</b>	542	548
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,510</b>	<b>7,621</b>

## Appendix Two: Advisory Council

Advisory Council to the Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland (EWOQ)						
Act or instrument		Energy and Water Ombudsman Act 2006				
Functions		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Monitors the Energy and Water Ombudsman's independence.</li><li>• Provides advice and recommendations to the Energy and Water Ombudsman about the scheme's appropriateness, scope and effectiveness; policies and practices relating to the scheme's administration and conduct; processes to improve how the scheme responds to stakeholder needs; and the promotion of the scheme and preparation of the annual report.</li><li>• Receives and considers financial budgets and business plans by the Ombudsman, including guidelines for calculating and structuring user-pays fees.</li><li>• Makes recommendations to the Minister responsible for energy and water, and the Ombudsman, on the scheme's financial budget and business plan.</li></ul>				
Achievements		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provided advice on current and emerging issues in the energy and water sectors and the implications for an external dispute resolution service for consumers, industry and government.</li><li>• Submitted advice to the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy as part of its Regulatory Impact Statements for Energy Legislation Review and Embedded Networks review.</li><li>• Hosted the annual meeting of Chairs and Ombudsmen of the Australian and New Zealand Energy and Water Ombudsman Network (ANZEWO) which, amongst other matters, reviewed the current shared work program and settled on priorities for the 12 months.</li><li>• Participated in the ANZEWO-commissioned research report <i>What will energy consumers expect of an energy and water ombudsman scheme in 2020, 2025 and 2030?</i> Delivered by the University of Sydney, the report offered useful and timely insights for EWOQ and the Advisory Council.</li><li>• Joined by the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy at our Advisory Council meeting in May.</li><li>• Provided input into the independent review of EWOQ conducted by consultancy firm Cameron Ralph Khoury.</li></ul>				
Financial reporting		Transactions to the entity are accounted for in the financial statements of Office of the Energy and Water Ombudsman.				
Remuneration						
Position	Name	Meetings/sessions attendance	Approved annual, sessional or daily fee	Approved sub-committee fees if applicable	Actual fees received	
Chairperson	Anna Moynihan	5 of 5	Daily fee: \$390	N/A	\$6045	
Member	Chris Owen <sup>1</sup>	3 of 4	Daily fee: \$300	N/A	N/A	
Member	David Ackland	4 of 4		N/A	N/A	
Member	Iain Graham	4 of 5		N/A	N/A	
Member	Ian Jarratt	5 of 5		N/A	\$900	
Member	Jennifer Gates	3 of 5		N/A	N/A	
Member	Laura Barnes <sup>2</sup>	4 of 5		N/A	N/A	
Member	Mary McLean <sup>3</sup>	1 of 1		N/A	N/A	
Member	Simone Bridge <sup>3</sup>	0 of 1		N/A	N/A	
Member	Sharon Edwards <sup>1</sup>	4 of 4		N/A	N/A	
Member	Robyn Robinson	4 of 5		N/A	\$1451	
Member	Rosemarie Price	5 of 5		N/A	N/A	
No. scheduled meetings/sessions	5					
Total out of pocket expenses	\$108					

<sup>1</sup> Term commenced on 10 October 2019

<sup>2</sup> Term concluded on 29 May 2020

<sup>3</sup> Term concluded on 7 October 2019

## Appendix Three: Compliance Checklist

Summary of requirement		Basis for requirement	Annual report reference
<b>Letter of compliance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A letter of compliance from the accountable officer or statutory body to the relevant Minister/s</li> </ul>	ARRs – section 7	Page 2
<b>Accessibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Table of contents</li> <li>Glossary</li> </ul>	ARRs – section 9.1	Contents Appendix 4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public availability</li> </ul>	ARRs – section 9.2	Page i
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interpreter service statement</li> </ul>	<i>Queensland Government Language Services Policy</i> ARRs – section 9.3	Page i
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Copyright notice</li> </ul>	<i>Copyright Act 1968</i> ARRs – section 9.4	Page i
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information Licensing</li> </ul>	<i>QGEA – Information Licensing</i> ARRs – section 9.5	Page i
<b>General information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introductory Information</li> </ul>	ARRs – section 10.1	About EWOQ
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Machinery of Government changes</li> </ul>	ARRs – section 10.2, 31 and 32	N/A
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agency role and main functions</li> </ul>	ARRs – section 10.2	About EWOQ
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operating environment</li> </ul>	ARRs – section 10.3	About EWOQ
<b>Non-financial performance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government's objectives for the community</li> </ul>	ARRs – section 11.1	N/A
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Other whole-of-government plans / specific initiatives</li> </ul>	ARRs – section 11.2	N/A
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agency objectives and performance indicators</li> </ul>	ARRs – section 11.3	Our performance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agency service areas and service standards</li> </ul>	ARRs – section 11.4	Our performance
<b>Financial performance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Summary of financial performance</li> </ul>	ARRs – section 12.1	Financial summary
<b>Governance – management and structure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organisational structure</li> </ul>	ARRs – section 13.1	Our governance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive management</li> </ul>	ARRs – section 13.2	Our governance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government bodies (statutory bodies and other entities)</li> </ul>	ARRs – section 13.3	Our governance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public Sector Ethics</li> </ul>	<i>Public Sector Ethics Act 1994</i> ARRs – section 13.4	Our governance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Human Rights</li> </ul>	<i>Human Rights Act 2019</i> ARRs – section 13.5	Our governance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Queensland public service values</li> </ul>	ARRs – section 13.6	About EWOQ
<b>Governance – risk management and accountability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Risk management</li> </ul>	ARRs – section 14.1	Our governance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Audit committee</li> </ul>	ARRs – section 14.2	Our governance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal audit</li> </ul>	ARRs – section 14.3	Our governance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>External scrutiny</li> </ul>	ARRs – section 14.4	Our governance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information systems and recordkeeping</li> </ul>	ARRs – section 14.5	Our governance
<b>Governance – human resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic workforce planning and performance</li> </ul>	ARRs – section 15.1	Our people
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Early retirement, redundancy and retrenchment</li> </ul>	<i>Directive No.04/18 Early Retirement, Redundancy and Retrenchment</i> ARRs – section 15.2	Our people
<b>Open Data</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Statement advising publication of information</li> </ul>	ARRs – section 16	Our governance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultancies</li> </ul>	ARRs – section 33.1	<a href="https://data.qld.gov.au">https://data.qld.gov.au</a>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overseas travel</li> </ul>	ARRs – section 33.2	<a href="https://data.qld.gov.au">https://data.qld.gov.au</a>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Queensland Language Services Policy</li> </ul>	ARRs – section 33.3	<a href="https://data.qld.gov.au">https://data.qld.gov.au</a>
<b>Financial statements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Certification of financial statements</li> </ul>	FAA – section 62 FPMS – sections 38, 39 and 46 ARRs – section 17.1	Financial statements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Independent Auditor's Report</li> </ul>	FAA – section 62 FPMS – section 46 ARRs – section 17.2	Independent Auditor's Report

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## Appendix Four: Glossary

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

**CASE** any contact a customer has with EWOQ including, general enquiry, refer back to supplier, referral to higher level, investigation, or referral to another organisation.

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

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

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

**EMBEDDED NETWORK** a site (usually apartment blocks, retirement villages, caravan parks and shopping centres) where the electrical wiring is configured in such a way that the site owner on-sells energy to tenants and residents.

**EWOQ** Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland

**EXEMPT SELLER** an energy seller who only sells energy incidentally at a specific site to a defined group of customers.

**GENERAL ENQUIRY** a customer has a query about electricity, gas or water that is not a complaint.

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

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

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

**PROVISION** a case issue relating to problems with new or existing connections, etc.

**REFER BACK** when a customer has not contacted their supplier to try to resolve their issue prior to submitting their complaint to EWOQ we refer the complaint back to the supplier.

**REFERRAL TO HIGHER LEVEL (RHL)** EWOQ can refer a customer's complaint to a higher level of authority within the supplier before starting an investigation.

**REFERRAL TO OTHER ORGANISATIONS** we have Memoranda of Understanding with other government authorities who have jurisdiction over aspects of the energy or water sector outside our jurisdiction, including Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy; Office of Fair Trading; and Australian Energy Regulator.

**SCHEME PARTICIPANT** energy distributors and retailers operating in Queensland and water distributors/retailers in South East Queensland which must join the EWOQ scheme.

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

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

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

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## Appendix Five: Scheme participants

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

Scheme participant	Product type	Service type
1st Energy Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer
AGL Sales (Queensland Electricity) Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer
AGL Sales (Queensland) Pty Ltd	Gas	Retailer
Alinta Energy Retail Sales Pty Ltd	Electricity and gas	Retailer
Allgas Energy Pty Ltd	Gas	Distributor
amaysim Energy Pty Ltd also trading as Click Energy Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer
Australian Gas Networks Limited	Gas	Distributor
Blue NRG Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer
City of Gold Coast	Water	Distributor and Retailer
CovaU Energy Pty Ltd	Electricity and gas	Retailer
Diamond Energy Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer
Discover Energy Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer
Dodo Power & Gas Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer
Elysian Energy Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer
Energex Ltd	Electricity	Distributor
EnergyAustralia Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer
Energy Locals Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer
Ergon Energy Corporation Ltd	Electricity	Distributor
Ergon Energy Queensland Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer
ERM Power Retail Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer
Essential Energy	Electricity	Distributor
Globird Energy Pty Ltd	Electricity and gas	Retailer
Locality Planning Energy Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer
Logan City Council	Water	Distributor and Retailer

Scheme participant	Product type	Service type
Lumo Energy (Queensland) Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer
Maranoa Regional Council	Gas	Distributor and Retailer
Metered Energy Holdings Pty Ltd	Electricity and gas	Retailer
Mojo Power Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer
Momentum Energy Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer
Next Business Energy Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer
Online Power and Gas Pty Ltd (trading as Future X Power)	Electricity	Retailer
Origin Energy Electricity Ltd	Electricity	Retailer
Origin Energy Retail Ltd	Gas	Retailer
OVO Energy Pty Ltd	Electricity and gas	Retailer
People Energy Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer
Power Club Limited	Electricity	Retailer
Powerdirect Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer
Powershop Australia Pty Ltd*	Electricity	Retailer
QEnergy Limited	Electricity	Retailer
Queensland Urban Utilities	Water	Distributor and Retailer
ReAmped Energy Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer
Redland City Council	Water	Distributor and Retailer
Red Energy Pty Ltd	Electricity and gas	Retailer
Sanctuary Energy Pty Ltd	Electricity	Retailer
Simply Energy	Electricity	Retailer
Unitywater	Water	Distributor and Retailer
Western Downs Regional Council	Gas	Distributor and Retailer

\* Sales and marketing activities conducted by Kogan Energy



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Thank you for reading the Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland 2019-2020 Annual Report.  
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**Energy and Water  
Ombudsman Queensland**

Free call **1800 662 837**

[info@ewoq.com.au](mailto:info@ewoq.com.au)

[www.ewoq.com.au](http://www.ewoq.com.au)

**Keep in touch**

   [#EWOQld](https://www.ewoq.com.au)



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