



ELECTRICITY, GAS AND WATER COMPLAINTS

Information for Victorian Members of Parliament and Electorate Officers

Constituents sometimes approach Members of Parliament or Electorate Officers with electricity, gas (including LPG) or water complaints. This fact sheet explains when they or you, acting on their behalf, should contact the Energy and Water Ombudsman (Victoria) (EWOV).

An industry-based scheme

EWOV is an independent industry-based dispute resolution scheme. We are approved by the independent economic regulator, the Essential Services Commission of Victoria.

Unlike statutory Ombudsmen, we do not receive any funding from government. Instead, EWOV charges the energy companies and water corporations for the complaints we handle.

This provides an incentive for the energy companies and water corporations to directly settle complaints within their companies.

Does the company know about your constituent's complaint?

If a customer has not spoken with their energy company or water corporation, we usually refer them back to the company's contact centre (Unassisted Referral).

If a customer has spoken to their energy company or water corporation once, EWOV usually asks a higher-level representative at the company to contact the customer within five business days (Assisted Referral).

Please check if your constituent has spoken with the energy company or water corporation about their complaint. If they haven't, they should try direct resolution before contacting EWOV.

All the stages of our complaint handling process are outlined in our *How we help* brochure: <http://ow.ly/H1dr3049e6y>.

Tips for resolving complaints

Check you have the following details about your constituent's complaint:

- the supply point (their address)
- details of any disputed bills
- when and who they previously spoke with at the company
- what they want to resolve their issue/s.

Find out where your constituent stands

Most of the rights and responsibilities of your constituent — and those of their company — are set out in codes.

For electricity and natural gas, the main codes are the:

- [Energy Retail Code](#)
- [Electricity Distribution Code](#)
- [Gas Distribution System Code](#).

For urban and rural water, there are [Customer Service Codes](#).

These are all available on the Victorian Essential Services Commission's website: esc.vic.gov.au.

For LPG (bottled gas), the Victorian *LPG Retail Code* applies to Elgas, Kleenheat, Origin Energy and Supagas. This code is available here: <http://ow.ly/ZSkTf>

You can also phone EWOV on Freecall **1800 500 509** for information.



EWOV is a company limited by guarantee — not a government agency. EWOV is an impartial industry-based customer dispute resolution scheme. If your constituent wants your help in dealing with us, they will need to complete an [Authority form](#) for you to act on their behalf.

Getting an Authority to do things

EWOV requires an Authority whenever a third party acts for a consumer. We have a specific Authority form for Members of Parliament and Electorate Officers.

Constituents can choose how much authority they give you. By ticking a box or boxes on the Authority form, they can authorise you to do one or both of the following:

- provide us with initial complaint details
- act on their behalf (“in the shoes of the complainant”), with full authority to make decisions, in relation to their complaint.

Why does EWOV need this Authority?

EWOV is subject to the [Privacy Act 1988](#) (Cth). We need the Authority to ensure the requirements of that Act are complied with so we can fully assist you and your constituent.

Under our Charter and Constitution, EWOV provides reports to the Essential Services Commission of Victoria, not to government or Parliament.

How to get a copy of the Authority form

It's on our website (<http://ow.ly/GyLC3049emT>). You can also phone us on **1800 500 509** and we can email or fax it to you.

What if your constituent is unhappy about EWOV?

EWOV's website (<http://ow.ly/SEUy3049eMi>) has our policies for complaints about:

- case handling or progression
- the closure of a complaint
- the operation of the EWOV scheme.

If your constituent wants you to act on their behalf in a complaint about EWOV, please ask them to fill out an Authority form.

Other dispute resolution services in Victoria

EWOV can assist with electricity, gas (including LPG) and water complaints in Victoria.

Other dispute resolution services can assist with other types of complaint issues that constituents may raise. Before phoning them, make sure your constituent has spoken with the company or government department/agency about their complaint.

Communications

- **Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman**
1800 062 058 or tio.com.au
- **Postal Industry Ombudsman**
1300 362 072 or pio.gov.au

Financial services (banking, brokers, credit, insurance, superannuation)

- **Australian Financial Complaints Authority**
1300 931 678 or afca.org.au

Public transport

- **Public Transport Ombudsman Victoria**
1800 466 865 or ptovic.com.au

Government departments and agencies

- **Commonwealth Ombudsman** (e.g. immigration, taxation, Centrelink)
1300 362 072 or ombudsman.gov.au
- **Ombudsman Victoria** (e.g. Human Services, Education, Councils)
1800 806 314 or ombudsman.vic.gov.au

Other consumer issues

- **Consumer Affairs Victoria**
1300 558 181 or consumer.vic.gov.au