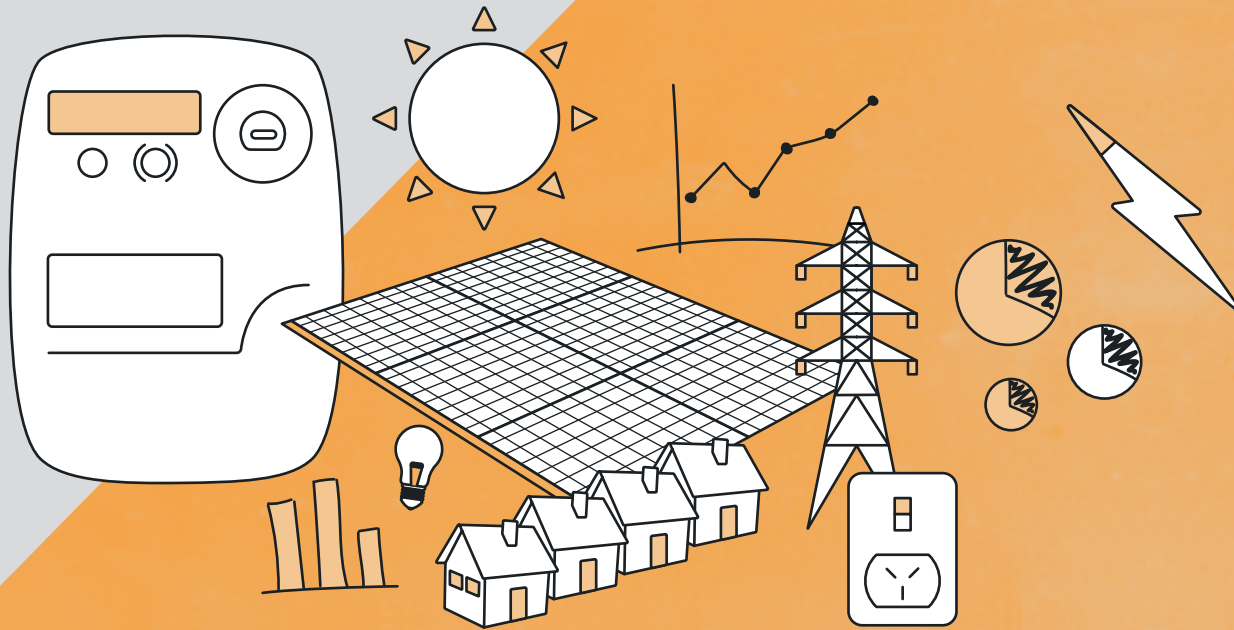




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QUARTERLY EWOV

SOLAR AND SMART METER REPORT



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EWOV'S FINAL SOLAR AND SMART METER REPORT

In this special and final stand-alone *Solar and Smart Meter Report*, we explore the common issues customers complained about over the 10-year period and look at the changes with Smart Meters and in the solar industry over that time. In the future, EWOV will include relevant solar and Smart Meter case data and analysis, where appropriate, in our online quarterly publication, *Res Online*¹.

History of EWOV's solar and Smart Meter data and reporting

EWOV started capturing data about the number of Manually Read Interval Meter (MRIM) cases received over 10 years ago, on 1 January 2006. This data included both bi-directional solar MRIMs and standard MRIMs. EWOV released its first public six-monthly *Interval Meter Report* on 27 August 2008. We received just 94 cases between 1 January 2008 and 30 June 2008.

The report evolved to include Smart Meter (also known as Advanced Meter) cases in the April 2009 edition following the Victorian Government's Smart Meter rollout. On 1 July 2009, we changed our reporting to quarterly periods with the revamped *Solar and Smart Meter Report Update* and also separated digital electricity meters into three categories:

- MRIM
- Solar (bi-directional)
- Smart Meter.

In January 2015, we launched our new-look and renamed *Solar and Smart Meter Report*, which provided more streamlined data and analysis. All of our previous editions of this report are housed on our website².

Solar and Smart Meter Report retrospective

Between 1 January 2006 and 30 June 2016, EWOV handled 26,457 Smart Meter and standard MRIM cases. At the height of the rollout and during government reviews, EWOV was receiving approximately 3,000 Smart Meter-related cases every six months – or about 24 cases every working day.

Over the same period, EWOV handled 43,774 solar cases. At the pinnacle of Victorian customer uptake of rooftop solar photovoltaic (PV) systems, EWOV was receiving over 5,000 solar cases every six months – equivalent to approximately 40 cases every working day.

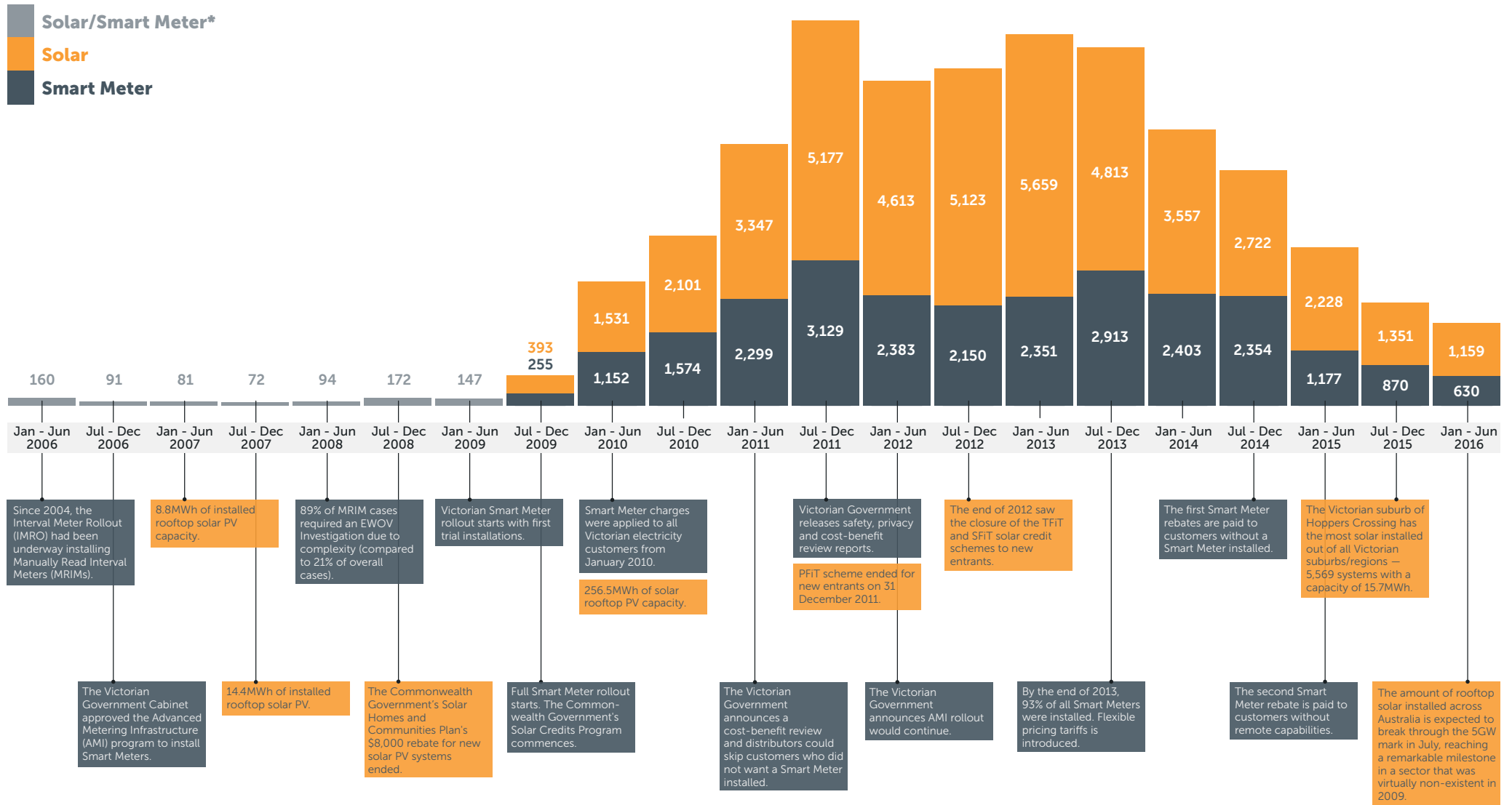
The graph on [page 4](#) provides an overview of EWOV solar and Smart Meter cases received between 1 January 2006 and 30 June 2016. It also compares the fluctuating number of cases against a timeline of the significant events that occurred in the electricity industry in Victoria over this period, including:

- the government reviews of the Smart Meter rollout
- the implementation of government solar incentives and rebates
- flexible pricing commencing
- the closure of feed-in tariff (FiT) schemes to new entrants
- the Victorian Government considering options to manage ongoing poor consumer sentiment about Smart Meter installations.

¹ *Res Online* is available at: <https://www.ewov.com.au/publications-and-media>

² Solar and Smart Meter Report archive available at: <https://www.ewov.com.au/reports>

Ten years of solar and Smart Meter cases



* Solar and Smart Meter cases were combined issues up until June 2009. From July 2009 they were counted as separate cases.

Smart Meters

From 2009 to 2011, Smart Meter case numbers rose strongly and then peaked in the July to September 2011 quarter. The Victorian Government at the time advised customers that they could refuse the installation of a Smart Meter while its review of the Smart Meter rollout was underway.

Cases again peaked at the end of 2012, with EWOV receiving a significant number of calls from customers following the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) December 2012 meeting which discussed whether the Victorian rollout was still mandatory. COAG had at the time decided to introduce a non-compulsory national rollout of Smart Meters, however, this decision did not impact Victoria. Media coverage may have also contributed to an increase in Smart Meter cases received by EWOV in certain periods.

More recently, EWOV has seen a decline in the receipt of Smart Meter cases since the start of the 2014-15 financial year. This is unsurprising, given the Smart Meter rollout is effectively complete and has become 'business as usual'.

Over time, EWOV also saw a shift in the issues customers raised relating to their Smart Meter. In most reporting periods, High Bill issues dominated customer complaints. However, historically customers were complaining about the installation of the meter and the flow-on effects of having a new meter with new technological features. EWOV continues to see customers experience issues with their Smart Meter including:

- usable Smart Meter data formats³
- start and end reads on bills⁴
- loss of off-peak usage.

As illustrated in the graph on [page 4](#), Smart Meter cases have reduced significantly. In the future, EWOV anticipates that customers' concerns will increasingly relate to the benefits of the Smart Meters as they become more widely available. For example, access to data, demand management, supply capacity control products, direct load control, smart appliances, and energy management services. EWOV will continue to monitor these issues and report on them when and where relevant.

³ EWOV has investigated this issue via Systemic Issues, for example, SI/2014/10.

⁴ EWOV has investigated this issue via Systemic Issues, for example, SI/2014/38, SI/2014/23, SI/2013/105, and SI/2013/83.

Solar

Solar cases peaked in the last six months of 2011 and last six months of 2012 as more and more customers moved to access government rebates, incentives and soon-to-close premium and transitional FiT schemes. The rapid uptake of a new technology and the closure of FiT schemes to new entrants caused some customer confusion and dissatisfaction, leading to many complaints to retailers, distributors and EWOV.

Since then, EWOV has recorded a steady and significant reduction in solar-related cases. This has been driven by a number of factors that are outlined on [page 8](#). In the future, EWOV anticipates that customer concerns about new products and services, private solar installers, and the solar subsidiaries of EWOV's scheme participants will continue to be an ongoing theme as more customers take up rooftop solar PV systems and the expected widespread uptake of battery storage comes to fruition. As noted, EWOV has observed significant changes in the energy industry since we began operating 20 years ago and the impacts these can have on complaints. Therefore, we expect that any further substantive changes may drive some customer confusion and complaints. EWOV will continue to monitor these issues and report on them when and where relevant.

Putting EWOV's Smart Meter cases into perspective

Background: Smart Meters and Manually Read Interval Meters (MRIMs)

In 2004, the rollout of manually read interval meters (MRIMs) in Victoria commenced – known as the 'Interval Meter Rollout' (IMRO) program. In 2005, a cost-benefit study was commissioned to review IMRO and the program evolved into the Advanced Metering Infrastructure Rollout (AMIRO). In 2006, the Victorian Government approved the rollout of the new Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) program.

The AMI program aimed to record and measure electricity use in more detail than accumulation meters⁵ allowed, in order to help Victorians manage their electricity usage, enable more efficient pricing and facilitate better customer service from electricity distributors and retailers. Installing these meters also aimed to move Victoria towards a smart grid – generating efficiencies in network operations, improving the reliability and quality of electricity supply, enabling innovative network and retail tariffs, and demand management services to encourage peak demand reduction.

⁵ Accumulation meters record the total amount of energy used over a period of time and are physically read by a meter reader, usually about every three months, so that customers can be billed for the electricity used.

To meet these objectives, accumulation meters were to be replaced with a 2.5 million Smart Meter rollout across Victorian residential homes and small businesses between 2009 and 2013.

To pay for this, new infrastructure charges were applied to all Victorian electricity customer's bills from January 2010.

As opposed to an accumulation meter which records total energy consumption over time, Smart Meters:

- record energy use over short intervals, typically every half-hour
- can communicate directly with the electricity distributor
- can more readily identify faults, tampering or outages
- can enable remote meter reading and remote connection/disconnection
- allow new smart appliances to be connected to the meter as well as a network (Home Area Network (HAN)) and facilitate home energy management.

Installation progress

By the end of 2013 (the official program rollout end point), 93% of Victorian residential and small business properties had a Smart Meter installed⁶. There were several causes for distributors not completing full installation across Victoria, including:

⁶ Figure 2A, *Status of the rollout and AMI program improvements*, Auditor General of Victoria, page 17. Available at: <http://www.audit.vic.gov.au/publications/20150916-Smart-Meters/20150916-Smart-Meters.pdf>

- some customers actively refusing the installation of a Smart Meter
- some properties had access issues that prevented installation
- the government at the time advised customers that they could wait until official reviews were complete to have a Smart Meter installed
- the distributor had not yet attempted to install a Smart Meter.

By 30 June 2014, 99% of the rollout was complete with 2.8 million Smart Meters installed across Victoria. Of these, 87% had remote reading capabilities⁷. However, there are ongoing issues for some distributors to enable remote readings to all Smart Meters. One distributor is currently fixing these issues by implementing the remediation actions outlined in an Administrative Undertaking with the Essential Services Commission⁸. This is expected to be completed by 31 March 2017.

⁷ Figure 2A, *Status of the rollout and AMI program improvements*, Auditor General of Victoria, page 17. Available at: <http://www.audit.vic.gov.au/publications/20150916-Smart-Meters/20150916-Smart-Meters.pdf>

⁸ Available at ESC's website: <http://www.esc.vic.gov.au/document/energy/26269-ausnet-services-smart-meter-undertaking/>

Smart Meter rebates

In August 2014, the Victorian Government announced the introduction of two Smart Meter rebates. The Smart Meter rebates were payments distributors made to eligible customers who either did not have a Smart Meter installed or did not have a Smart Meter with remote capabilities. They were designed as compensation for the benefits these customers missed.

Reviews and reports

While the AMI rollout was underway, there were also several reviews of the program. In 2009, the Victorian Auditor-General completed a review of the rollout⁹ which found that there were improvements that could be made to the program. Four further studies were completed in 2011, to review the:

- cost-benefit¹⁰
- privacy impact¹¹
- safety of Smart Meters (Electromagnetic Field (EMF))¹²
- impacts of new pricing arrangements.

In summary, these reviews ultimately found that:

- Smart Meters are safe and fall well within the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA)'s requirements for electromagnetic and radiofrequency emissions. The results also showed that the EMF levels from Smart Meters were lower than the levels from other common household items (including baby monitors, microwaves and mobile phones).
- Consumers can benefit from flexible pricing, including the continuation of flat tariffs.
- There were no unauthorised disclosures from the collection of personal information associated with the implementation of the Smart Meter program.
- Privacy controls were strong and metering data is protected.
- Retailers and distributors should review and update their privacy policies to ensure that all metering data should be handled in accordance with the National Privacy Principles.

Online tools for consumers

Launched in April 2012, the Switch On campaign aimed to help Victorians take charge of their power bills. The campaign promoted the Switch On website¹³, an independent source of information about electricity usage, saving tips, incentives and energy infrastructure. In April 2014, the price comparator tool My Power Planner¹⁴ was launched and in late 2015, My Power Planner was expanded to include gas and solar contract offers.

⁹ Towards a 'smart grid' – the roll-out of Advanced Metering Infrastructure: <http://www.audit.vic.gov.au/publications/2009-10/111109-AMI-Full-Report.pdf>

¹⁰ Department of Treasury and Finance *Advanced Metering Infrastructure Cost Benefit Analysis*: http://www.smartmeters.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/1175574/Deloitte-Final-CBA-2-August.pdf

¹¹ PIA Report *Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI)*: http://www.smartmeters.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/1175589/Lockstep-DPI-AMI-PIA-Report-1.2.1.pdf

¹² AMI Meter Electromagnetic Field Survey: <http://www.smartmeters.vic.gov.au/about-smart-meters/reports-and-consultations/ami-meter-em-field-survey-report>

¹³ <http://switchon.vic.gov.au/>

¹⁴ <https://mpp.switchon.vic.gov.au/>

Putting EWOV's solar cases into perspective

Background: solar

When EWOV first started reporting on solar cases in July 2009 the industry was in its infancy; there were approximately 8,000 rooftop solar PV systems installed in Victoria, equating to less than 1% of total households¹⁵.

Government rebates, incentives and falling system installation costs helped drive the mass market uptake of rooftop solar PV systems from 2009 onwards. EWOV observed a corresponding increase in solar cases as more households and small businesses installed solar systems. A strong uptake trend has continued and Australia is expected to pass 5GWh of installed rooftop solar PV capacity in July 2016¹⁶ with over 1.55 million systems installed on Australians' rooftops¹⁷.

In the last decade, EWOV has handled nearly 44,000 solar-related cases. As mentioned earlier, in our first *Interval Meter Report*, we received just 94 cases.

This volume quickly and sharply increased as more generous government incentives and rebates were implemented to encourage households and businesses to install solar PV systems.

Soon, at the height of customer uptake of rooftop solar PV systems, EWOV was receiving over 5,000 solar cases every six months – equivalent to approximately 40 cases every working day.

Customers who complained to EWOV about solar issues commonly had problems with:

- getting their solar meter installed
- the solar paperwork to get their system connected to the electricity grid
- having the correct FiT applied to their bills (or applied at all)
- billing delays and errors
- their private solar installer¹⁸
- their solar system failing to operate or having a fault¹⁹
- having their FiT changed without notification.

These issues generated many complaints to electricity retailers, distributors and EWOV. Changes to federal and state solar PV system incentives, rebates and FiTs also caused confusion and dissatisfaction for some customers navigating the complexities of having a system installed and connected to the electricity grid.

A sustained decrease in cases

However, as previously reported, EWOV has continued to see large decreases in solar cases. Over the five quarters, between 1 April 2015 and 30 June 2016, solar cases decreased by 52%. These decreases can be largely attributed to:

- enhanced business-to-business procedures
- better customer communications from retailers and distributors about getting solar installed and connected to the grid
- the subsiding residual issues following the closure of FiT schemes to new entrants
- better understanding of the pre-installation requirements
- improved internal complaint resolution by industry
- a flattening in the uptake of solar PV systems following the end of government rebates and premium FiT schemes²⁰.

¹⁵ Clean Energy Regulator: <http://www.cleanenergyregulator.gov.au/RET/Forms-and-resources/Postcode-data-for-small-scale-installations>

¹⁶ Renew Economy, 12 July 2016: <http://reneweconomy.com.au/2016/australia-break-5gw-rooftop-solar-mark-july-16858>

¹⁷ Data obtained from Clean Energy Regulator website on 18 July 2016: <http://www.cleanenergyregulator.gov.au/RET/Forms-and-resources/Postcode-data-for-small-scale-installations>

¹⁸ Which are generally out of EWOV's jurisdiction; EWOV refers these cases to Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV).

¹⁹ These cases are generally outside EWOV's jurisdiction; EWOV refers these customers to CAV.

²⁰ Australian residential solar market is dying, but commercial is thriving, *Renew Economy*, available at: <http://reneweconomy.com.au/2015/australian-residential-solar-market-is-dying-but-commercial-is-thriving-95037>

SOLAR AND SMART METER CASES

The remainder of this report details the solar and Smart Meter cases presented by Victorian energy customers to the Energy and Water Ombudsman (Victoria) (EWOV) for the period of 1 April 2016 to 30 June 2016.

Solar and Smart Meter Cases

Figure 1 illustrates the number of solar and Smart Meter cases EWOV received in the April-June 2016 quarter.

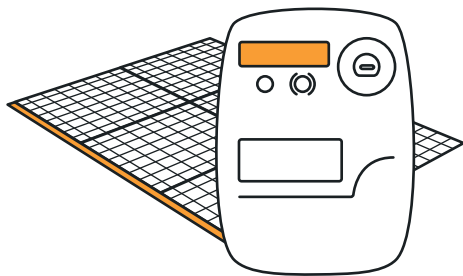
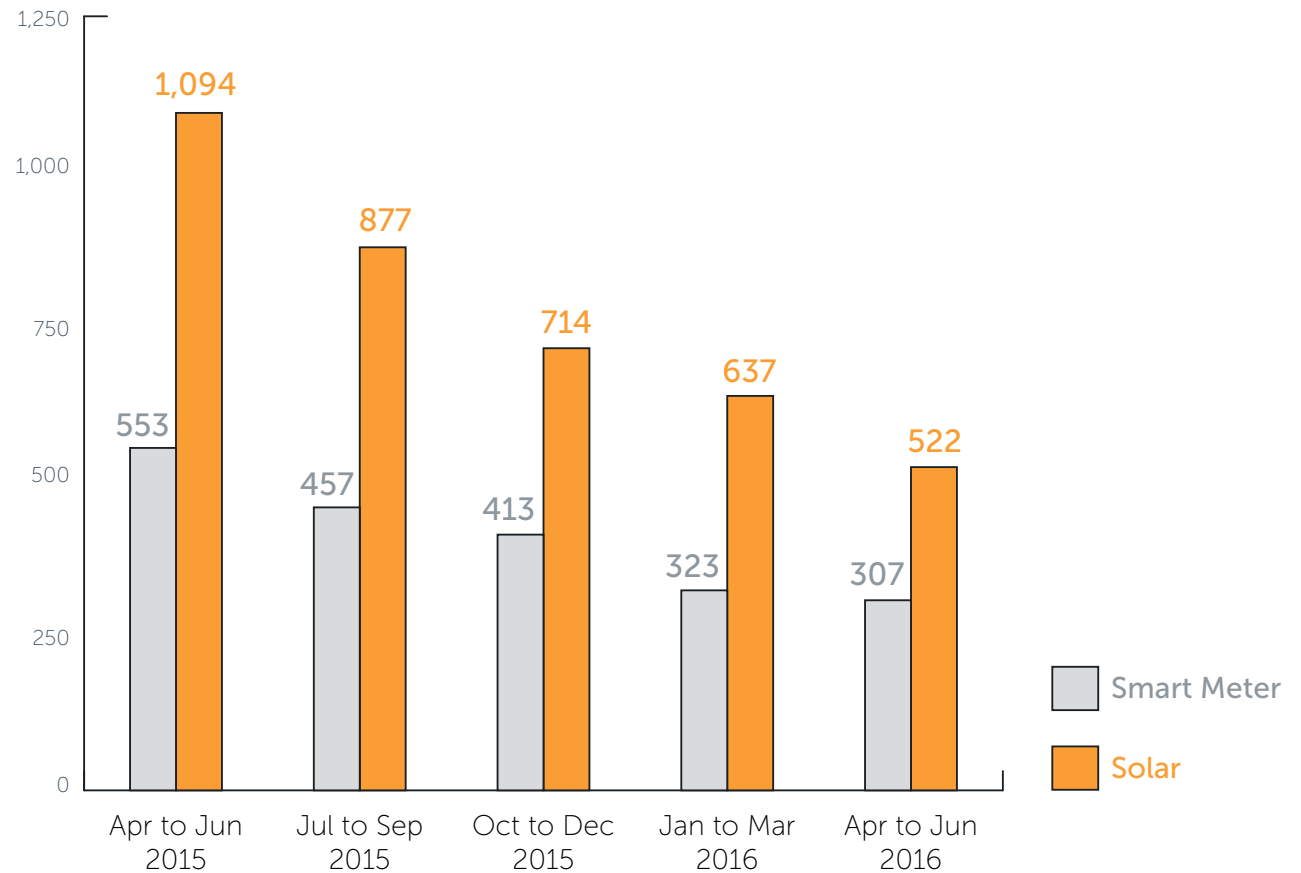


FIGURE 1.

Solar and Smart Meter cases by quarter, April–June 2015 quarter to April–June 2016 quarter



SMART METER UPDATE

EWOV Smart Meter Cases Down 5%

- During the April-June 2016 quarter, EWOV observed a 5% decrease in Smart Meter cases compared to the previous quarter (1 January 2016 to 31 March 2016), with a total of 307 cases registered.
- Compared with the same quarter in 2015, Smart Meter cases are down 45% from 553 cases.
- As previously noted, EWOV expected Smart Meter-related cases to reduce as the rollout is now effectively complete²¹ and Smart Meters have become the accepted 'norm' in Victoria.

Figure 2 shows the Smart Meter cases registered between 1 April 2015 and 30 June 2016. As Figure 2 shows, most cases are handled as Referrals while some Investigations are needed for more complex Smart Meter cases.

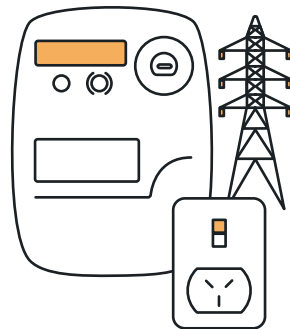
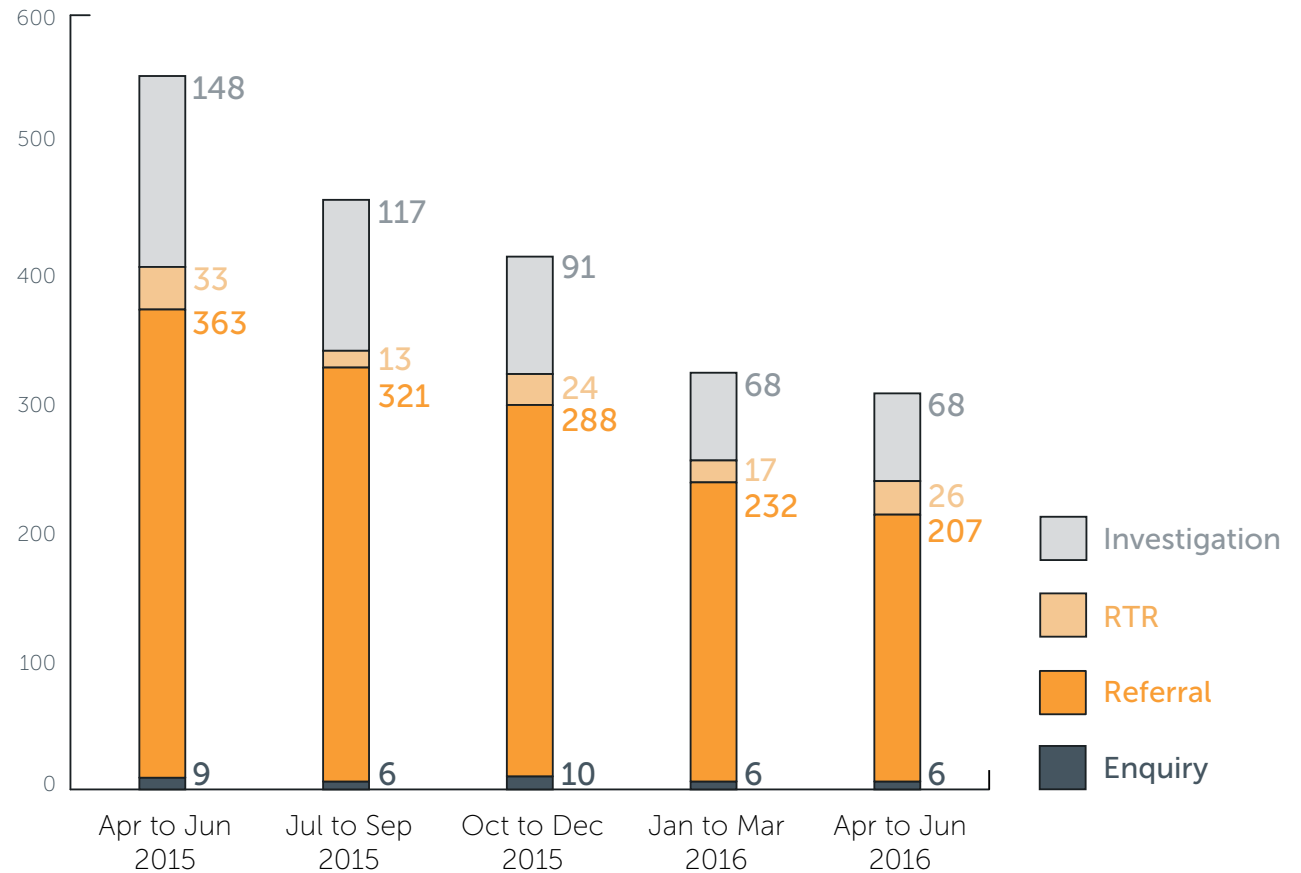


FIGURE 2.

Smart Meter cases by case level and quarter, April–June 2015 quarter to April–June 2016 quarter



Descriptions of case levels: Enquiry, Referral, Real Time Resolution (RTR) and Investigation are available in the Glossary on page 18.

21 Victorian Government Smart Meter website: <http://www.smartmeters.vic.gov.au/about-smart-meters/end-of-rollout>

Smart Meter Issues and Case Trends

The table below shows the top 10 Smart Meter issues registered between 1 April 2016 and 30 June 2016 compared to the prior quarter and the same quarter in 2015. As seen in previous quarters, Billing cases are the main source of customer contact to EWOV. However, encouragingly most issues have decreased when compared to the same period in 2015 – a theme EWOV has observed for several quarters.

Of the 307 Smart Meter cases:

- 240 cases were recorded against electricity retailers (78%) – down three percentage points compared to last quarter.
- an additional 62 cases (20%) were registered against distributors²², up two percentage points from last reporting period.
- most customer complaints were residential (85%) and business customers accounted for 15%²³.
- the increase in debt collection cases was due to flow-on effect of Smart Meter-related billing issues.

Retailers' and distributors' Smart Meter cases

For more Smart Meter case data, **Table 3** on [page 15](#) shows the cases received by company and distribution area.

TABLE 1.

The top 10 Smart Meter issues, April–June 2015 quarter, January–March 2016 quarter, April–June 2016 quarter

ISSUE	NUMBER OF ISSUES PER QUARTER			% CHANGE	
	APR–JUN 2015	JAN–MAR 2016	APR–JUN 2016	Year-on-Year	Quarter-on-Quarter
	Billing > High > General	82	62	44	DOWN 46%
Credit > Disconnection / Restriction > Arrears > Imminent	39	28	25	DOWN 36%	DOWN 11%
Billing > Backbill > Other	37	21	24	DOWN 35%	UP 14%
Billing > Estimation > High	48	16	18	DOWN 63%	UP 13%
Billing > Tariff > Loss of Off Peak Rates	38	15	18	DOWN 53%	UP 20%
Credit > Collection > Debt Collection Agency	1	4	15	UP 1,400%	UP 275%
Credit > Disconnection / Restriction > Arrears > Actual	26	20	12	DOWN 54%	DOWN 40%
Provision > Existing Connection > Meter Exchange	12	11	11	DOWN 8%	NO CHANGE
Provision > Existing Connection > Other	6	9	11	UP 83%	UP 22%
Provision > Existing Connection > Safety > EMF	6	2	9	UP 50%	UP 350%

²² Note: Five Smart Meter cases were not allocated against an EWOV Scheme Participant.

²³ One case was registered for a not-for-profit organisation.

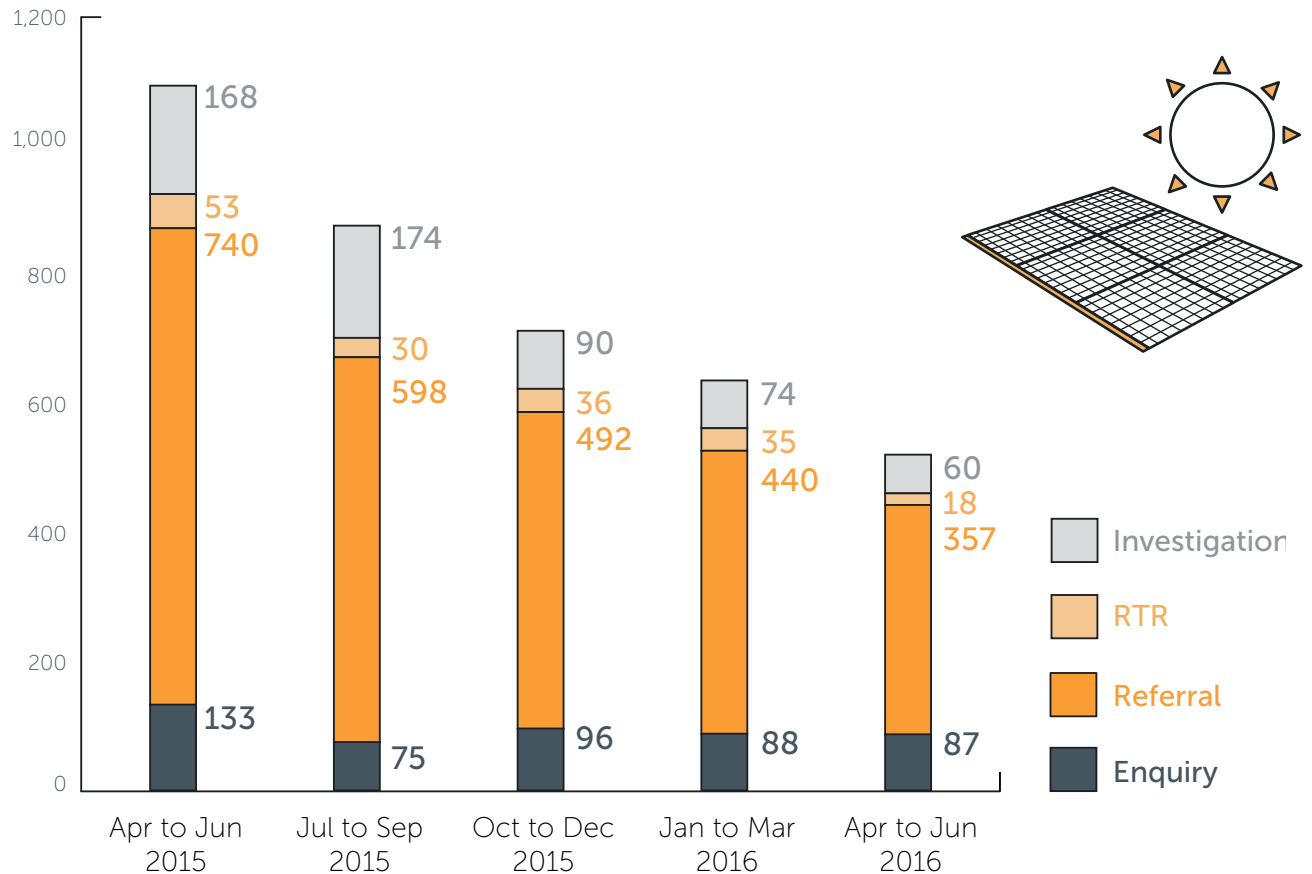
SOLAR UPDATE

EWOV Solar Cases Down 18%

- Between 1 January 2001 and 30 June 2016, Victorians had installed 289,053 small-scale solar PV systems, up from 282,295²⁴ reported in the last edition of this report²⁵ (up 2.4% or 6,758 systems – almost identical to last quarter).
- 14.7%²⁶ of the total dwellings in Victoria have a solar system, up from 14.2% in the previous edition of this report.
- EWOV solar cases continued the decline, a trend seen over several quarters. They fell another 18% in the April to June 2016 quarter compared to the previous quarter, with a total of 522 cases received.
- When compared to the same quarter in 2015, solar cases received during the April to June 2016 quarter were down 52% from 1,094 cases.
- As previously noted, one of the main drivers in the reduction of EWOV solar cases is that many issues customers were experiencing with FiT schemes appear to have subsided.

FIGURE 3.

Solar cases by case level and quarter, April–June 2015 quarter to April–June 2016 quarter



Descriptions of case levels: Enquiry, Referral, RTR and Investigation are in the Glossary on page 18.

24 Data from Clean Energy Regulator: <http://www.cleanenergyregulator.gov.au/RET/Forms-and-resources/Postcode-data-for-small-scale-installations>

25 Page 9, EWOV Quarterly Solar and Smart Meter Report – April 2016: <https://www.ewov.com.au/reports/solar-and-smart-meter-report-april-2016>

26 Australian PV Institute (APVI) Solar Map, funded by the Australian Renewable Energy Agency, accessed from: <http://pv-map.apvi.org.au/historical#4/-26.67/134.12>

Solar Issues and Case Trends

Private solar installers and EWOV scheme participants' solar businesses

Since EWOV commenced reporting on solar cases and issues, we have continued to see a constant flow of cases about private solar installers, with as many as 300 cases registered every six months during the peak of EWOV's solar case receipt.

In the current reporting period, EWOV received 88 solar cases (17% of total solar cases, up three percentage points on the prior quarter) that involved an issue with a customer's private solar installer or an EWOV scheme participant's solar business. For complaints about private solar installers, EWOV does not have jurisdiction to investigate the complaint as private solar installers are not required to be an EWOV scheme participant²⁷. EWOV also receives complaints about EWOV scheme participants that have a solar business (such as selling and installing solar panels and batteries). These are generally not in EWOV's jurisdiction because under EWOV's Charter²⁸ these solar businesses are regarded as being 'commercial activities outside the scope' of the scheme participant's electricity licence.

TABLE 2.

The top 10 solar issues, April–June 2015 quarter, January–March 2016 quarter, April–June 2016 quarter

ISSUE	NUMBER OF ISSUES PER QUARTER			% CHANGE	
	APR–JUN 2015	JAN–MAR 2016	APR–JUN 2016	Year-on-Year	Quarter-on-Quarter
	General Enquiry > Energy / Water	119	83	77	DOWN 35%
Provision > Existing Connection > Supply Upgrade > Delay	87	60	59	DOWN 31%	DOWN 2%
Billing > High > General	57	58	39	DOWN 32%	DOWN 33%
Billing > Tariff > Premium Feed In > Not Applied	65	43	28	DOWN 57%	DOWN 35%
Billing > Backbill > Other	23	14	20	DOWN 13%	UP 43%
Billing > Tariff > General Feed In > Not Applied	55	31	20	DOWN 64%	DOWN 35%
Billing > Tariff > Premium Feed In > Contract	10	15	16	UP 60%	UP 7%
Billing > Tariff > No Feed In > Not applied	7	18	15	UP 114%	DOWN 17%
Provision > Existing Connection > Other	4	9	12	UP 200%	UP 33%
Billing > Error > Other	20	14	11	DOWN 45%	DOWN 21%

²⁷ EWOV refers these customers to Consumer Affairs Victoria.

²⁸ EWOV's Charter is available at: <https://www.ewov.com.au/about-us/charter-and-constitution>

When EWOV receives cases about private solar installers or the solar businesses of EWOV scheme participants, we refer customers to Consumer Affairs Victoria. Since collecting solar data, EWOV has consistently seen customers complain about:

- having faulty inverters and/or panels, often resulting in missed solar generation credits
- delays having systems installed
- problems with the paperwork submitted to the customer's retailer, often involving incorrect information and delays
- businesses that have gone into administration or become insolvent
- property damage, usually when the solar panels were installed.

Of the 522 solar cases:

- the majority were registered against electricity retailers (78%), down two percentage points on the previous quarter
- a further 5% were recorded about electricity distributors, down one percentage point on last quarter
- 88 cases (17%) were not allocated against a scheme participant, up 4 percentage points on last reporting period
- the majority were from residential customers (96%) while business customers recorded 4% of cases registered.

As reported in the past few editions, EWOV has observed large reductions in FiT cases as a proportion of total solar cases. They decreased from a proportion of 40% in the July to September 2015 quarter to 29% in the following two quarters, and then to 26% last quarter. As the following graphs demonstrate, problems with having FiTs applied to bills continues to be the most common issue for customers and customers are complaining the most about PFiT issues.

For more solar case data, **Table 4** on [page 16](#) shows the cases received by company and distribution area.

FIGURE 4.

Type of Feed-in Tariff cases, April–June 2016 quarter

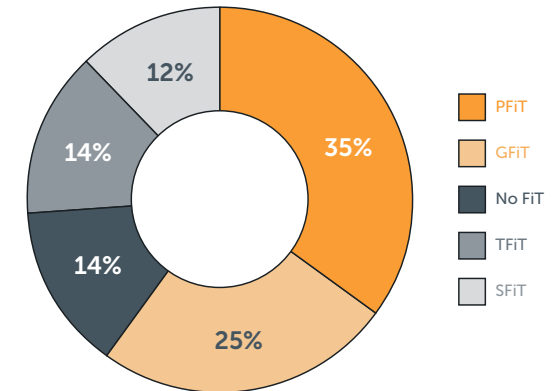


FIGURE 5.

Type of Feed-in Tariff sub-issues, April–June 2016 quarter

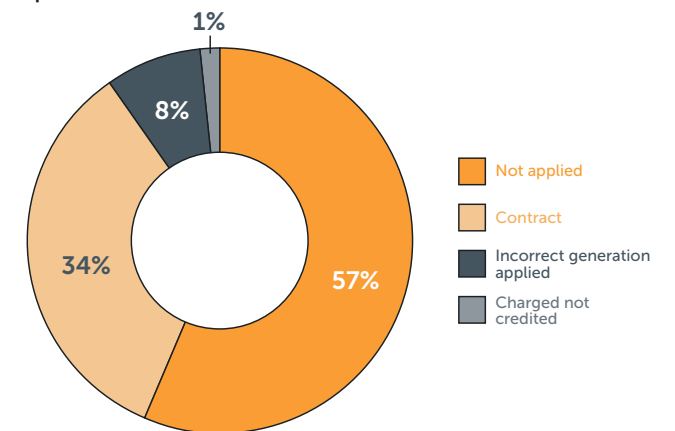


TABLE 3.

Case Registration Snapshot - Smart Meter Cases, April–June 2016 quarter

COMPANY	DISTRIBUTORS						TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
	Distributor 1	Distributor 2	Distributor 3	Distributor 4	Distributor 5	Not allocated		
Retailer 1		1					1	0%
Retailer 2		1					1	0%
Retailer 4	2	2		2	1		7	2%
Retailer 5	1	8	1	4	1		15	5%
Retailer 6	1						1	0%
Retailer 7	4	10		3	1		18	6%
Retailer 8	1	3		9	1	1	15	5%
Retailer 10	1	1					2	1%
Retailer 11	4	6	3	17	4		34	11%
Retailer 13	8	6		6	7		27	9%
Retailer 14					1		1	0%
Retailer 15	1	1					2	1%
Retailer 16	5	6	2	5	1		19	6%
Retailer 17	16	12	3	4	1	1	37	12%
Retailer 18		1					1	0%
Retailer 19	5	38	1	10	3		57	19%
Retailer 20	1						1	0%
Retailer 21	1						1	0%
Distributor 1	6						6	2%
Distributor 2		28					28	9%
Distributor 3			4				4	1%
Distributor 4				12			12	4%
Distributor 5					12		12	4%
Not allocated		1	1	1		2	5	2%
TOTAL	57	125	15	73	33	4	307	
PERCENTAGE	19%	41%	5%	24%	11%	1%		

TABLE 4.

Case Registration Snapshot - Solar Cases, April–June 2016 quarter

COMPANY	DISTRIBUTORS						TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
	Distributor 1	Distributor 2	Distributor 3	Distributor 4	Distributor 5	Not allocated		
Retailer 1				1			1	0%
Retailer 3				1			1	0%
Retailer 4	8	9		5	2	2	26	5%
Retailer 5	10	14		7		1	32	6%
Retailer 7	8	9		3		1	21	4%
Retailer 8	2	5		1			8	2%
Retailer 9	1	2		1			3	1%
Retailer 10		2				1	4	1%
Retailer 11	16	17		25	11		69	13%
Retailer 12		1					1	0%
Retailer 13	14	17	1	14	4	1	51	10%
Retailer 14				1			1	0%
Retailer 15	3	4	1	1	3		12	2%
Retailer 16	7	10	1	7	6		31	6%
Retailer 17	26	31	3	15	6		81	16%
Retailer 19	11	34		16	4	2	67	13%
Distributor 1	7						7	1%
Distributor 2		5					5	1%
Distributor 3			2				2	0%
Distributor 4				10			10	2%
Distributor 5					1		1	0%
Not allocated	18	19		16	4	31	88	17%
TOTAL	131	179	8	124	41	39	522	
PERCENTAGE	25%	34%	2%	24%	8%	7%		

CONTEXT

Readers of this report should take into account the following:

Reporting is by primary issue

Each case EWOV receives is categorised with a primary issue which falls into one of nine issue categories: billing, credit, customer service, general enquiry, land, marketing, provision, supply and transfer. Descriptions of the issue categories are on [page 19](#). If the customer's statement indicates that the case is about more than one issue, EWOV may register a second (or even third) issue for the one case. For example, a case may be registered as both high bill and meter exchange.

Figures in this report refer to primary issue only. In other words, the data in the report only reflects the main issue in the solar or Smart Meters case, even if second and third issues were registered.

EWOV's analysis is limited by its scope

EWOV only examines the cases it receives, limiting our ability to analyse trends and their causes. For example, we may not always know how many solar customers a company may service; nor do we know how effective each company's internal complaint procedures are.

Most cases are Referred Complaints

This report is based on data taken from enquiries and complaints. Complaints are categorised as either Unassisted Referrals, Assisted Referrals, Real Time Resolutions or Investigations (see the Glossary on [page 18](#)). EWOV does not investigate Referred Complaints and is limited to hearing only the customer's account of the issue.

Customers sometimes re-contact EWOV

Customers sometimes re-contact EWOV because after a referral back to their company, their concerns remain unresolved. This can mean that EWOV registers an Assisted Referral after a previous Unassisted Referral, or a Real Time Resolution after a failed Assisted Referral, and so on.

Customers sometimes lodge more than one case

Based on the customer's statement, EWOV sometimes registers two or more cases for one customer – for example, one case about a billing delay and one case about the variation of contract terms/price. Also, a customer may have issues with two different companies at the same time.

Case data is subject to adjustment

EWOV sometimes reports the same measures in different publications. Data for these reports may be compiled on different dates, which can mean that some cases have been re-opened, escalated or re-categorised as more information came to light. This can result in small variations in reported figures across different reports.

Percentages

Due to rounding, some percentages may not total 100%.

GLOSSARY

Complaint

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction regarding a policy, practice or customer service performance of an energy or water company which is part of the EWOV scheme, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

Enquiry

An enquiry is a customer's request for general information (e.g. about the Smart Meter rollout). This information may be provided by EWOV or the customer may be referred to another agency.

Referred Complaint

EWOV does not know the outcome of these referred complaints, except where the referral does not resolve the issue for the customer and they come back to us. There are two types of referred complaints:

Unassisted Referral

Where a customer has not yet spoken with their company about their complaint and they are referred back to the company's contact centre.

Assisted Referral

Where a customer has spoken with someone at their company's contact centre about their complaint, but it remains unresolved and the matter is referred to a higher level complaint resolution officer at the company.

Real Time Resolution

EWOV's Real Time Resolution Team receives failed Assisted Referral calls from customers and then works to negotiate a fair and reasonable resolution of the complaint – all within a one-call approach.

Investigation

A complaint for investigation is registered where:

- an Assisted Referral or Real Time Resolution case has failed, as the matter remains unresolved, and the customer has recontacted EWOV, or
- the matter is complex and unlikely to be resolved as an Assisted Referral or by Real Time Resolution, or
- the energy or water company has requested an escalation to an Investigation.

Not allocated

This case type is registered when a customer tells EWOV about their concern but it does not involve an EWOV scheme participant, or the customer does not know or tell us the company's name.



EWOV ISSUE CATEGORIES

Billing

Generating and sending bills and payment processes.

Credit

Unpaid bills and the action taken to collect arrears, including supply disconnection/restriction and debt collection.

Customer Service

Service received or not received.

General Enquiry

A request for information only, where a complaint is outside EWOV's jurisdiction or where the complaint relates to another industry such as telecommunications.

Land

The effect on property of company activities or network assets.

Provision

The connection of a property to the energy or water network.

Marketing

How energy retailers go about winning new customers.

Supply

The physical delivery of the energy or water service.

Transfer

Switching an account to a new energy retailer.