

users refugees new migrants non english speaking olde  
grants elderly senior citizens indigenous community low  
groups people with disabilities and their carers prisoners  
bank Glenside Dalrymple Maribyrnong Wer  
Melbourne Whittlesea Keon Park Heidelberg Flemington  
Footscray Glenroy Richmond Stonnington Council Don  
Maroondah Council Whitehorse Council Mooroolbark  
Whitehorse Balaclava Caulfield Brighton Cheltenham G  
Boronia Upper Ferntree Gully Knox Rowville Hallam Yar  
Noble Park Frankston Mildura Swan Hill Hamilton Portla  
Warrnambool Camperdown Ballarat Bendigo Horsham  
Shepparton Wangaratta Wodonga Euroa Seymour Shep  
Kinglake West Geelong Hoppers Crossing Ocean Grove  
Clayton Cranbourne San Remo Inverloch Morwell Sale  
Bairnsdale Lakes Entrance Wantirna Pakenham Cockato  
Gippsland Lilydale Brimbank Glenroy Darebin Moonee V  
Maribyrnong Werribee Melbourne Whittlesea Keon Park  
Flemington West Footscray Glenroy Richmond Stonnin  
Council Doncaster Maroondah Council Whitehorse Co  
Mooroolbark Croydon Whitehorse Balaclava Caulfield B  
Cheltenham Glen Waverley Boronia Upper Ferntree Gu  
Rowville Hallam Yarraman Noble Park Frankston Mildura  
Hamilton Portland Warrnambool Camperdown Ballarat  
Horsham Echuca Shepparton Wangaratta Wodonga Eu  
mour Shepparton Kinglake West Geelong Hoppers Cros  
Ocean Grove Werribee Clayton Cranbourne San Remo  
Morwell Sale Rosedale Bairnsdale Lakes Entrance Wanti  
Cockatoo Gippsland financial counsellors community v  
legal advisors disability assistants citizen advice employe  
vulnerable energy and water users refugees new migran  
english speaking older migrants elderly senior citizens in  
community low income groups people with disabilities

# 2013 ANNUAL REPORT



ENERGY AND WATER  
OMBUDSMAN  
Victoria **Listen Assist Resolve**

## About EWOV

The Energy and Water Ombudsman (Victoria) (EWOV) is an external dispute resolution (EDR) scheme. It operates on an independent industry-based Ombudsman model, approved by the Essential Services Commission. EWOV's services are free to customers.

We can assist with most issues that arise between customers and electricity, gas and water companies—including the provision and supply of a service, the failure to provide or supply a service, billing, credit, payment arrangements, disconnection and restriction, marketing, transfer, poles, wires, pipes, meters, vegetation management and land.

We use alternative dispute resolution processes to resolve energy and water complaints independently, informally and quickly. Our aim is to achieve fair and reasonable outcomes, having regard to good industry practice and the law.

We provide impartial advice, information and referral in response to enquiries.

From the cases we receive, we identify potential systemic issues and, as appropriate, report these to the relevant energy or water company and industry regulator.

We put information about energy and water complaints, issues and trends into the public arena.

We work with energy and water companies, regulators and consumer groups to drive customer service improvements and help prevent complaints.

Our policies and processes comply with the *Benchmarks for Industry-Based Customer Dispute Resolution Schemes (National Benchmarks)* published in 1997 by the Commonwealth Department of Industry, Science and Tourism. These *National Benchmarks* focus on the principles of accessibility, independence, fairness, accountability, efficiency and effectiveness.

## Our vision

EWOV will provide a wholly impartial and highly esteemed dispute resolution service for Victorian energy and water consumers and our scheme participants. The strength of our stakeholder relationships is paramount and our scheme will be respected by customers, energy and water companies, consumer groups, regulators and government. We will be an employer of choice.

## Our mission

We will achieve our vision by:

- persistently maintaining our independence and high professional standards
- living our cultural values
- continually evolving as an organisation to implement the most effective and efficient processes
- continuously benchmarking our performance against world's best practice
- ensuring consumer awareness of their rights and responsibilities
- enhancing customer capability and knowledge
- assisting energy and water companies to generate the sustainable resolution of complaints
- recognising that our staff remain the heart of our scheme and providing them with support, encouragement and the environment to succeed
- remaining vigilant of, and responsive to, changes within the industry landscape for any impact on EWOV.

## Our guiding principles

**Independence:** impartial complaint resolution, not advocacy

**Access:** ready access for individual consumers

**Equity:** fairness to all parties

**Quality:** highest professional standards

**Effectiveness:** high calibre people, supported by training and technology

**Efficiency:** optimal resource use

**Community awareness:** community awareness building

**Linkages:** effective stakeholder links and working relationships

**This Annual Report is prepared and distributed in accordance with the Ombudsman's responsibility under the EWOV Charter and the National Benchmarks. After the extensive changes of 2011-12, we approached 2012-13 with two key areas of focus. The first was consolidation of the EWOV 2.0 changes to our processes, procedures and work practices. The second was more active engagement with our external stakeholders. Both of these aspects of our work are essential to our being able to deliver effective outcomes for energy and water customers and the broader Victorian community.**



# Energy and Water Ombudsman (Victoria) 2013 Annual Report

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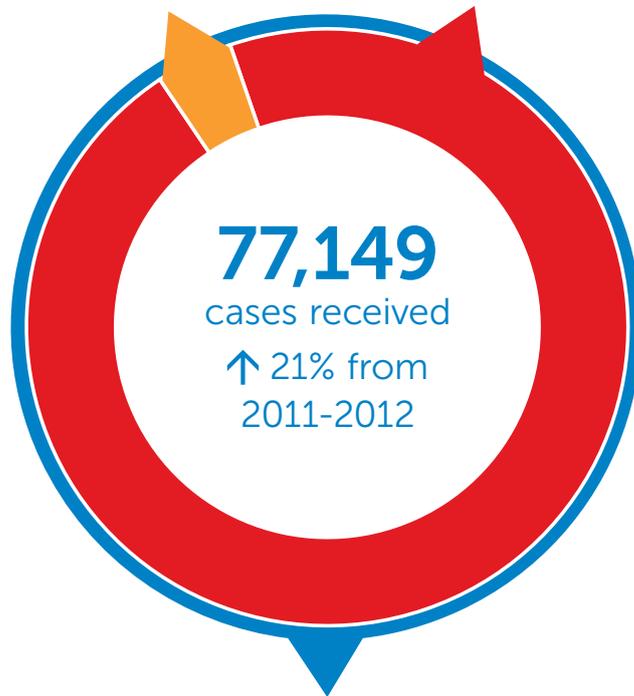
### Cases received

**2,583 enquiries**

↓ 8% from 2011-12

**74,566 complaints**

↑ 22% from 2011-12



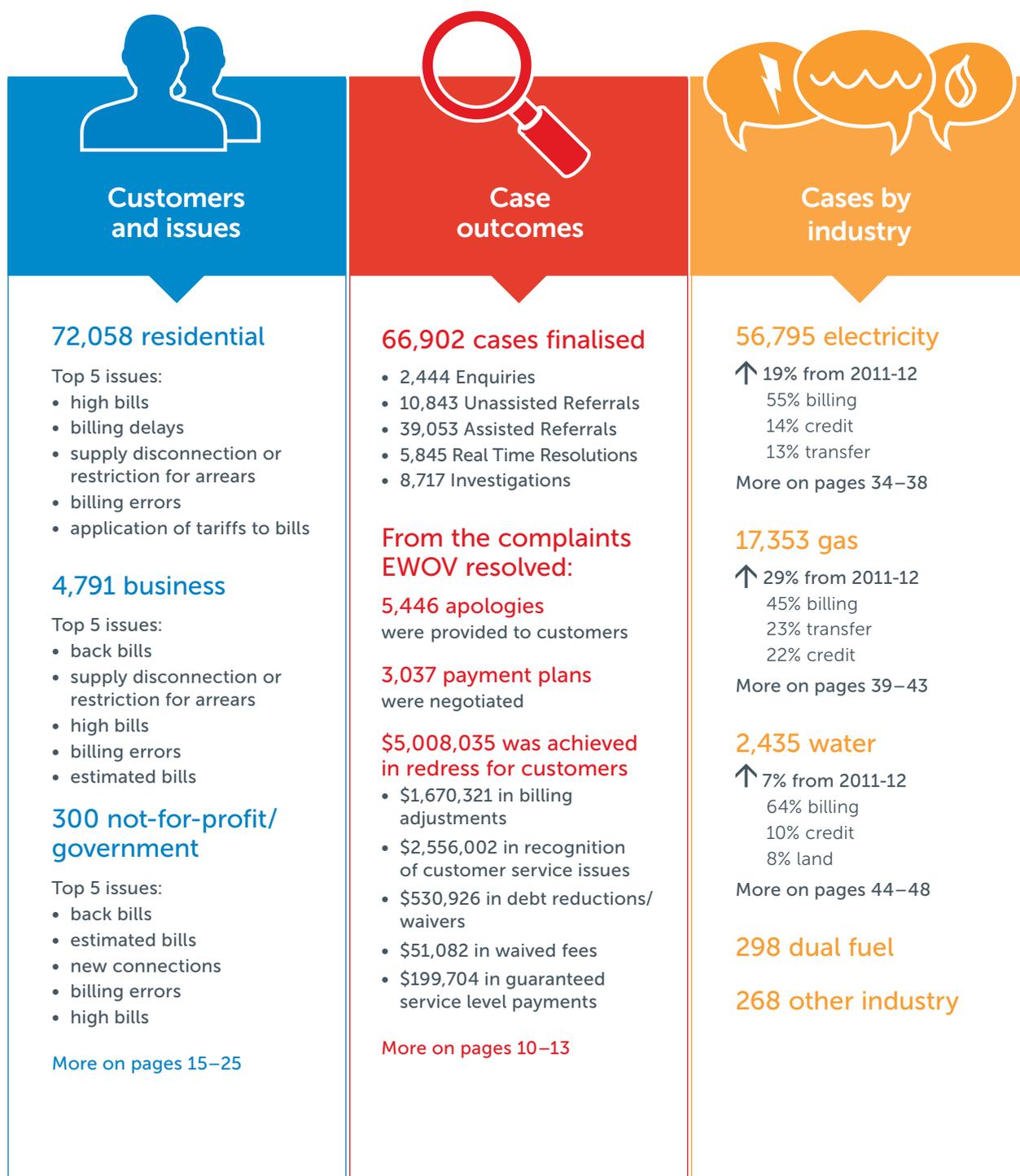
**40,927 billing cases**

↑ 26% from 2011-12

**12,245 credit cases**

↑ 19% from 2011-12

More on page 14



# Message from the Chair

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**After the extensive changes of 2011-12, the Board fully supported the Ombudsman's 2012-13 focus on consolidation, coupled with more active engagement with external stakeholders.**

Effective change requires good communication. It is important that EWOV's stakeholders (internal and external) are well informed about why our scheme operates the way it does and why we make the changes we do. Complementing that, EWOV must demonstrate its willingness to engage, to listen, to learn and to adapt to the demands of a constantly changing external environment.

The Board is delighted with how Ombudsman, Cynthia Gebert, has approached her role and used her first full year to address these things.

The EWOV team's performance across the six strategic focus areas designated by the Board—customer service, scheme participants, reach/influence, innovation, human resources and finance—has been excellent. There is an evident commitment to evolution and new ways of working. The processes introduced last year as a result of EWOV 2.0, have been consolidated and refined and shown to have improved the scheme's services. In this regard, the Board was pleased to see the very positive results of the independent review of the Assisted Referral and Real Time Resolution processes, indicating that customers are receiving a much improved service through EWOV 2.0. Adding to this, we were very pleased to see the scheme's total costs for 2012-13 brought in 21% under budget.

Encouraged by the Board, the Ombudsman is also revisiting EWOV's relationships with key external stakeholders, especially scheme participants and the community sector. This is critical, given the fast-moving, complex environment in which we operate—one which can pose challenges to the maintenance of constructive stakeholder relationships.

Turning to the Board itself, I thank all of the directors for their diligence and attention to ensuring EWOV's independence and effectiveness. They bring strong and varied, professional and personal skillsets, which together serve us very well. There were some changes during the year. In July 2012, we welcomed Peter Gartlan of the Financial & Consumer Rights Council, who brings considerable experience of external dispute resolution. At the end of June 2013, we farewelled Mark O'Brien of the Tenants' Union of Victoria and thanked him for his significant contributions over nine years.

The excellent working relationship between the Board and the Ombudsman is founded on mutual respect and awareness of our particular roles. While the Board is responsible for the business affairs and property of the EWOV Limited company, it is the Ombudsman who is responsible for the EWOV scheme's day-to-day operation. We rely on her to give us confidence that the EWOV team is achieving its goals, alert to innovation and able to adapt to changing circumstances.

The Ombudsman and the Board can rightly take great pride in EWOV's achievements and the manner in which our scheme continues to provide such a high quality, independent and impartial external dispute resolution service.



**Hon. Tony Staley AO**  
Chairperson, EWOV Limited Board

# Message from the Ombudsman

**Our overall aim for 2012-13 was to balance an internal focus on consolidation with an active approach to our external relationships, especially with EWOV's scheme participants and the community sector.**



## Handling 21% more cases

2012-13 proved to be another demanding and challenging year, with customers lodging 21% more cases with us than they did in 2011-12. We received 77,149 cases in total. 74,566 of them were complaints. Greater customer awareness and experience of issues related to energy and water—including rising costs, affordability, payment difficulties and threatened or actual energy disconnection—contributed significantly to the increases. Billing issues continued to be the most common driver of customer complaints, particularly high bills.

Ongoing systemic problems with company billing systems led to billing errors and billing delays. A range of billing-related solar issues emerged in the wake of customer uptake of solar power. You'll find the cases and issues data for 2012-13 on pages 14 to 21, more about the billing and credit issues on pages 22 to 25, and industry data and trends on pages 34 to 48.

*Chairperson of EWOV Limited, the Hon. Tony Staley AO with Ombudsman, Cynthia Gebert*

## Working within to consolidate the process changes

Our first focus for 2012-13 was on consolidation of the EWOV 2.0 changes to our processes, procedures and work practices. EWOV 2.0 was the 2011-12 review process directed at working out how to position us to deal effectively and efficiently with rising complaint volumes. As I said in last year's *Annual Report*, the EWOV 2.0 review really helped us understand what we must focus on, consistently, to manage the inherent tensions between fairness, impartiality and efficiency, and maintain an appropriate balance of these aspects. So, 2012-13 saw us carefully and constantly monitoring the new processes, seeking and acting on feedback from stakeholders, refining our Best Practice Procedures and consolidating other process changes. With a sustained focus on continuous improvement, we:

- reduced the average case handling time of our Intake Officers by 57%, largely through targeted questioning of customers to obtain key information up-front
- successfully used Real Time Resolution to resolve 5,845 failed complaint referrals to energy and water companies, overcoming the need for EWOV investigation of those complaints
- achieved a 10% reduction in the average cost per case.

Positively, a recent independent review of the Assisted Referral and Real Time Resolution processes identified that fairness and independence have not been diminished by the efficiency gains.

It also confirmed that we are recognising, and appropriately supporting, vulnerable customers and those in hardship.

This was a great outcome, demonstrating that continuous refinement of our processes is delivering benefits to both customers and scheme participants.

As we continued to look at whether EWOV was set up to do things as well as it could, it became clear that some structural changes would help us maximise the benefits of the operational changes we'd made. Following a restructure to consolidate all case handling functions (operational and strategic) under one General Manager Operations, we welcomed Treasure Jennings to this new role. Treasure is contributing the experience of a diverse career, founded on the delivery of organisational effectiveness and

Positively, a recent independent review of the Assisted Referral and Real Time Resolution processes identified that fairness and independence have not been diminished by the efficiency gains.

change leadership in customer service and business settings.

One of the more difficult things about working in a dispute resolution environment is that most of the people who contact you are unhappy about something. This can really affect staff motivation. As a result of EWOV 2.0, we've introduced more flexible work practices and are now able to use our human resources differently and more productively.

Our aim is an organisational infrastructure that encourages people to be successful, self-reliant and independent. At the same time, it's important that we all understand the practicalities of our operating environment—that EWOV needs to evolve and adapt, month to month, year to year—that it's a journey on which we never quite 'arrive'. Because

each year is slightly different from the last, and the environment in which we operate is constantly changing, our organisation must be nimble and responsive. There will be change—we will need to adapt what we do—we must be comfortable with a level of operational uncertainty. Building and supporting this kind of 'evolving' focus in the EWOV culture is important and one of our priorities.

## Engaging with our key external stakeholders

If we are to deliver effective outcomes for energy and water customers and the broader Victorian community, it's also essential we have effective and collaborative working relationships with EWOV's external stakeholders. This was our other area of focus in 2012-13.

### Scheme participants

Conscious of the value of personal contact at the most senior level, I undertook a series of meetings with the Chief Executive Officers and senior staff of the energy and water companies participating in our scheme. Feedback was positive and there was evident optimism about the changes we've been making, particularly around the EWOV 2.0 review, our identification of the need for change and the anticipated outcomes. There was a high level of satisfaction that EWOV has invested in improving the efficiency of its processes, is delivering cost savings to scheme participants and is working to contain its growth. Positively, CEOs and their staff have indicated that, overall, their working relationships with us are effective and they are keen to continue to foster this.

A number of CEOs spoke openly about changes in the way their company views and engages with its customers, which will hopefully reduce some of the demand on our services.

During the year, we met more frequently with the scheme participants whose EWOV complaint volumes were the greatest. One

strategy we adopted was to encourage more of their staff to work from our office for a period. Whether this was for days, weeks or (in some cases) months, it provided valuable opportunities for information sharing and improved working relationships.

We also ran quarterly briefing and feedback sessions on the process changes arising from EWOV 2.0. As the year went on, the structure and objectives of these sessions became more tailored to particular companies. We delivered monthly training sessions and independently-facilitated complaint handling workshops for company staff. All the while, we were conscious to ensure that these initiatives, designed to improve dispute resolution efficiency and effectiveness, didn't compromise EWOV's independence and impartiality. The industry sections of this report, starting with electricity on page 34, include case data for the industry overall, industry segments and five-year trends for individual companies.

### Community agencies

As part of our 'looking outwards' focus, we also undertook a comprehensive and very well received Community Roadshow. This initiative was focused on talking to the community organisations which work directly with the most vulnerable energy and water customers. Because we know it's important work, we spend a lot of time creating EWOV resources to help customers. It's equally important that the people who can make the most use of these resources know they're readily available and easy to obtain.

Through the Community Roadshow we were able to showcase EWOV's resources directly to financial counsellors and community agency workers. It also provided a great opportunity to renew and build our relationships with key community organisations. The roadshow was only one aspect of a broader community engagement strategy. There's more on page 28.

### Regulators

Given our first-hand experience of the issues facing customers, it's always been important that EWOV is able to engage effectively with industry regulators, in particular with Victoria's Essential Services Commission.

We have a long history of drawing on our case data and complaint handling experience to contribute to public policy dialogue. Victoria's energy and water industries continue to operate in changing regulatory environments. Looking forward, the challenge for us will be how to engage actively and effectively with multiple regulators and state and national regulatory frameworks to ensure this contribution continues. Our contributions to public policy, through regulatory, government and other consultation processes during 2012-13, are covered in more detail on page 29.

Over a challenging 12 months, the EWOV team worked well to deliver on the strategic goals and objectives set by the Board.

### Ombudsmen

Being an Ombudsman brings its own particular challenges and there's enormous value in being able to seek advice and support from your peers. Throughout the year, EWOV continued to benefit significantly from the knowledge and experience of my Ombudsman colleagues, through both the Australia & New Zealand Energy and Water Ombudsman Network (ANZEWO) and my membership of the Australian and New Zealand Ombudsman Association (ANZOA).

### Public reporting

To help all of our stakeholders keep up-to-date with trends and issues arising from the cases lodged with EWOV, we continued to produce a number of specific-purpose publications throughout the year.

Key amongst these is *Res Online*, a quarterly e-newsletter which provides transparent and timely information on case and issues trends (by industry, industry sector and company).

### Thank you

Over a challenging 12 months, the EWOV team worked well to deliver on the strategic goals and objectives set by the Board.

We achieved most of the planned strategic tasks, with the remainder forming part of an ongoing work program. EWOV has always been about team effort and 2012-13 was no exception. Thank you to my staff for continuing to work with fairness, care and skill in a tough environment.

Thank you also to the EWOV Board and, in particular, Chairperson Tony Staley, whose support and practical advice has been much appreciated. Your input has certainly helped us strive to achieve workable solutions to some difficult operational issues.

We go into 2013-14 focused on co-operation and collaboration, to ensure EWOV hits the right balance between effectiveness and efficiency and responds appropriately to the demands of its changing environment.



**Cynthia Gebert**

Energy and Water Ombudsman  
(Victoria)

# The EWOV Limited Board

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Energy and Water Ombudsman (Victoria) Limited (EWOV Limited) is a company limited by guarantee. Its members are the energy and water companies licensed by Victoria's Essential Services Commission (ESC) to operate in Victoria. Its Board comprises four consumer directors nominated by the ESC, four energy/water industry directors elected by EWOV Limited's electricity, gas and water members, and an independent Chairperson.

The EWOV Limited Board meets every two months and is responsible for the business affairs and property of the company, including corporate governance, approval of budgets, risk management, strategic planning and ensuring the Ombudsman's independence. It also appoints the Ombudsman, who is responsible for the EWOV scheme's day-to-day operation.



## Hon. Tony Staley AO

**Chairperson,**

*appointed 30 November 1998*

Made an Officer of the Order of Australia in January 2007, Tony Staley is also Chairman of auDA (the internet regulator), the Cooperative Research Centres Association of Australia and the Victorian Disability Advisory Council. Educated in law and political science, he is a former Commonwealth Government Minister.



## Carolyn Bond AO

**Consumer Director,**

*appointed 27 June 2007*

Carolyn Bond brings to the Board over 20 years' experience working in the consumer advocacy field, most recently as co-CEO of Consumer Action Law Centre. She represents consumer interests on a range of bodies. Carolyn was made an Officer of the Order of Australia in January 2013.



## David Headberry

**Consumer Director,**

*appointed 20 June 2002*

David Headberry is Managing Director, Headberry Partners P/L, which specialises in assisting energy customers secure low-cost, reliable energy supplies and providing customer input to government and regulatory reviews and investigations on energy supply issues. A qualified engineer, he is also the Public Officer for Major Energy Users Inc, a national group representing the views of major energy consumers. David has been appointed to the Australian Energy Regulator's inaugural Consumer Challenge Panel.



## Josephine Monger

**Industry Director,**

*appointed 14 June 2012*

With over 15 years' experience in the retail energy industry, Josephine is the Head of Customer Experience for AGL Energy. Before joining AGL in 2008, she worked in management consulting, delivering business strategy and change programs for large energy companies across Australia, UK and Europe. She is also a director of the Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW.



### Neil Brennan

**Industry Director,**  
*appointed 22 August 2002*

Managing Director of Western Water, Neil Brennan has over 30 years' experience in the water industry and is a Past President of the Institute of Water Administration.



### Peter Gartlan

**Consumer Director,**  
*appointed 1 July 2012*

Peter Gartlan is Executive Officer of the Financial and Consumer Rights Council, the peak body for financial counsellors in Victoria. He also sits on the board of the Consumer Action Law Centre. Peter is a former consumer representative on the General Insurance Code Compliance Committee and a former Director of Insurance Brokers Disputes Limited.



### Claire Hamilton

**Industry Director,**  
*appointed 1 December 2011*

Claire is General Manager, Risk and Assurance, for energy transmission and distribution business SP AusNet. Within SP AusNet, she is responsible for improving operations by leading enterprise risk management and providing an independent assurance service. A chartered accountant, Claire brings over 15 years' experience in the energy industry.



### Mark O'Brien

**Consumer Director,**  
*appointed 30 June 2004*

Chief Executive Officer of the Tenants Union of Victoria, Mark O'Brien has worked in tenancy advice and advocacy, in both paid and unpaid capacities, since 1987. He previously worked in government and the construction industry as a civil and structural draftsman.



### Christina Wilson

**Industry Director,**  
*appointed 10 February 2011*

With 4.5 years in the energy sector and as Retail Executive – Customer Sales and Operations, Christina led Origin Energy's consumer facing business for 3.5 years and through its Transformation Program. As a Group Manager in Energy Markets, she currently oversees risk and regulatory compliance across the division. Christina joined Origin Energy in 2009 from senior roles in the financial services and retail sectors.

### Christopher See

**Company Secretary**  
*appointed 21 October 2008*

# Our dispute resolution process

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### Overall approach

EWOV's approach is informal and based on the principles of alternative dispute resolution (ADR). The work we do is often described as external dispute resolution (EDR), because we are independent, impartial and external to the companies participating in the EWOV scheme (the scheme participants).

Essentially, we look to uncover the facts to help the customer and their company better understand the issues and each other's point of view. We work towards agreement on a resolution and the actions which will bring that resolution about. The outcome may be achieved directly between the customer and the company, or it may be conciliated by us.

Figure 1 summarises the stages of our dispute resolution process and reports on the outcomes of complaints and enquiries for 2012-13.

### Cases, enquiries, complaints

The term **case** covers all customer contacts with EWOV. Each case is registered as either a 'complaint' or an 'enquiry' and handled in accordance with our Best Practice Procedures.

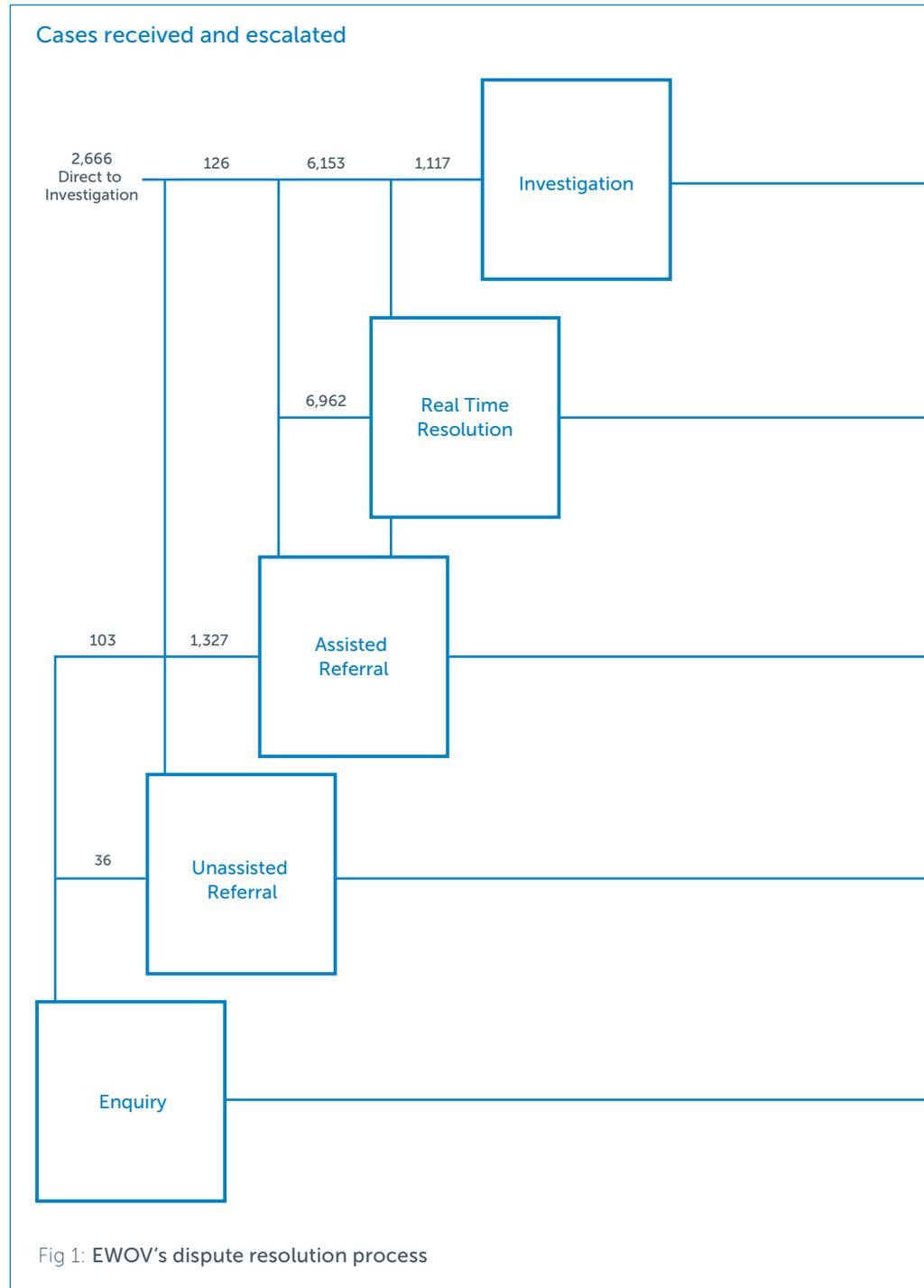
We define a **complaint** as 'an expression of dissatisfaction regarding a policy, a practice or the customer service performance of an energy or water company which is an EWOV scheme participant, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected'.

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

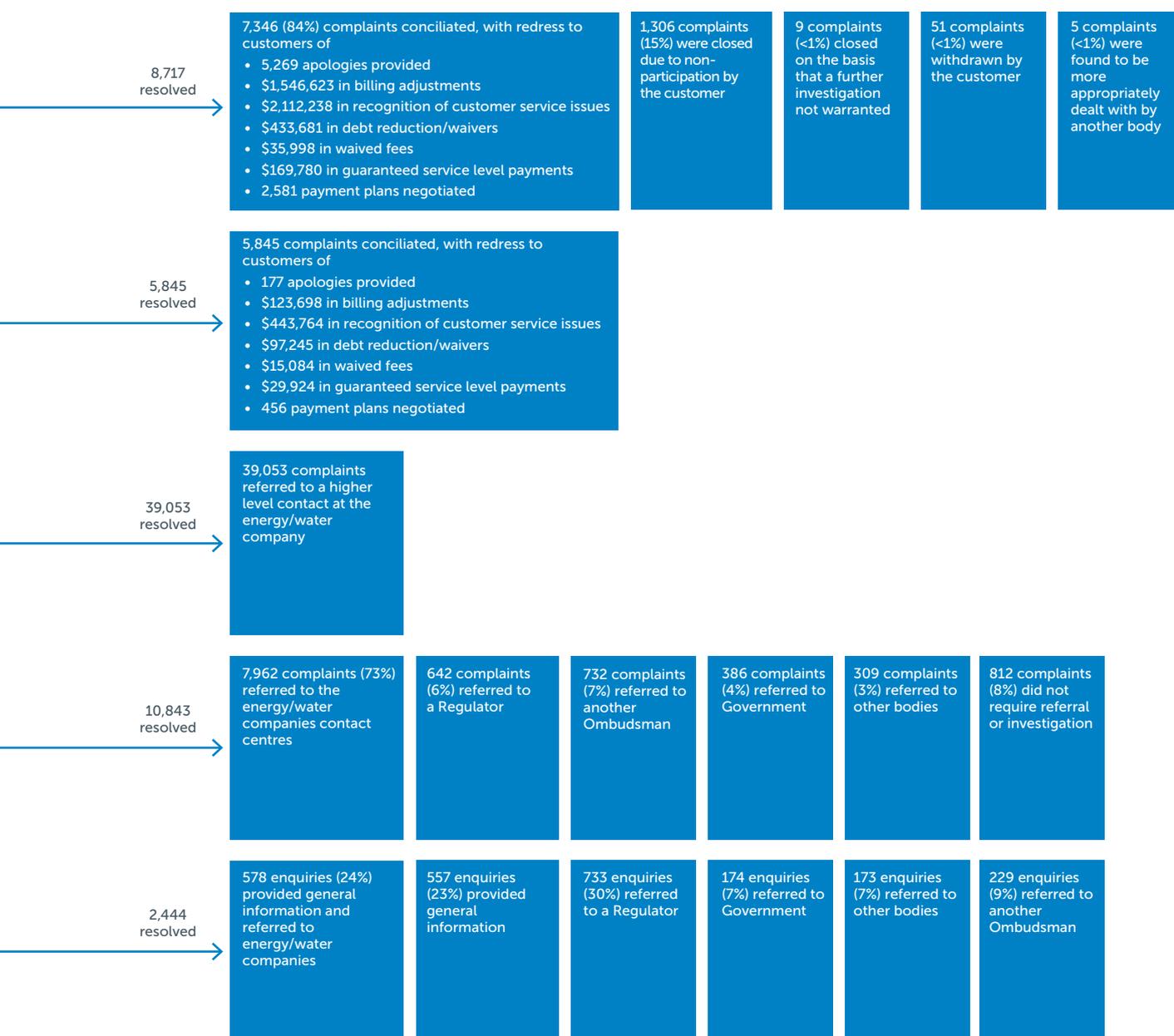
### Complaint stages

We receive and resolve complaints at a number of stages:

- Unassisted Referral
- Assisted Referral
- Real Time Resolution
- Investigation



## Case outcomes



### Unassisted Referral

In 2012-13, we resolved 10,843 complaints at the Unassisted Referral stage—73% of these (7,962 complaints) were resolved through referral of the customer to their company’s call/contact centre. We referred the customer back in this way because they contacted us before they raised their complaint with the company. Figure 1 includes more information about how Unassisted Referrals were resolved.

### Assisted Referral

In 2012-13, at the Assisted Referral stage, we resolved 39,053 complaints that weren’t resolved when the customer contacted their company directly. At this stage, after providing the customer with some information about their rights and responsibilities relevant to the complaint, we referred them to a designated higher level contact within their company.

Assisted Referral gives the company another opportunity to reconnect with their customer to resolve the complaint. It also helps build the customer’s confidence that the company will resolve any future

problems. Undertaken effectively, the Assisted Referral process can successfully and significantly reduce the number of complaints which need to go through to Real Time Resolution and Investigation.

As Figure 2 shows, in 2010-11, for every 2.1 Assisted Referrals we received, we opened one Investigation. By 2012-13, that conversion rate had improved to one Investigation for every 5.2 Assisted Referrals.

### Real Time Resolution

In 2012-13, we resolved 5,845 complaints through Real Time Resolution, a process we developed as part of EWOV 2.0.

Despite the resolution opportunities that the Assisted Referral process offers, not all Assisted Referrals result in resolution. Some customers return to us still dissatisfied with the solution their company has proposed.

Our Real Time Resolution Team deals with customer calls about failed Assisted Referrals and works to resolve these complaints quickly, through customer education and direct negotiation with the customer and

Fig 2: The change in Investigation to Assisted Referral ratios over the past 5 years



their company. Our aim is to reach a fair and reasonable outcome, typically within 24 hours, without the need for us to open an Investigation.

Figure 3 shows the positive impact of the Real Time Resolution process, coupled with greater use of Assisted Referral. We estimate that, without Real Time Resolution, we would have opened 58% more Investigations in 2012-13.

The following outcomes were achieved from the 5,845 complaints we resolved through Real Time Resolution:

- 177 apologies were provided to customers.
- 456 payment plans were negotiated.
- \$709,715 was achieved in redress for customers:
  - \$123,698 in billing adjustments
  - \$443,764 in recognition of customer service issues
  - \$97,245 in debt reductions/waivers
  - \$15,084 in waived fees
  - \$29,924 in guaranteed service level payments.

### Investigation

In 2012-13, we resolved 8,717 complaints through Investigation.

We open an Investigation in the following situations:

- An Assisted Referral has failed, the matter remains unresolved and the customer has recontacted us.
- Discretion has been used to bypass the Assisted Referral process because the customer is particularly vulnerable or has special circumstances.
- The matter is complex and unlikely to be resolved as an Assisted Referral.
- An attempt at Real Time Resolution has failed.
- The company has requested an escalation to an Investigation.

Having opened an Investigation, it's our task to arrive at an independent view of what happened. In doing this, we take account of what's fair and reasonable, good industry practice and current law and codes.

Investigations are also subject to the stages set out in EWOV's upgrade policy (particularly around resolution timeframes) and a complaint may be upgraded where the company doesn't respond to our Investigation in a timely manner.

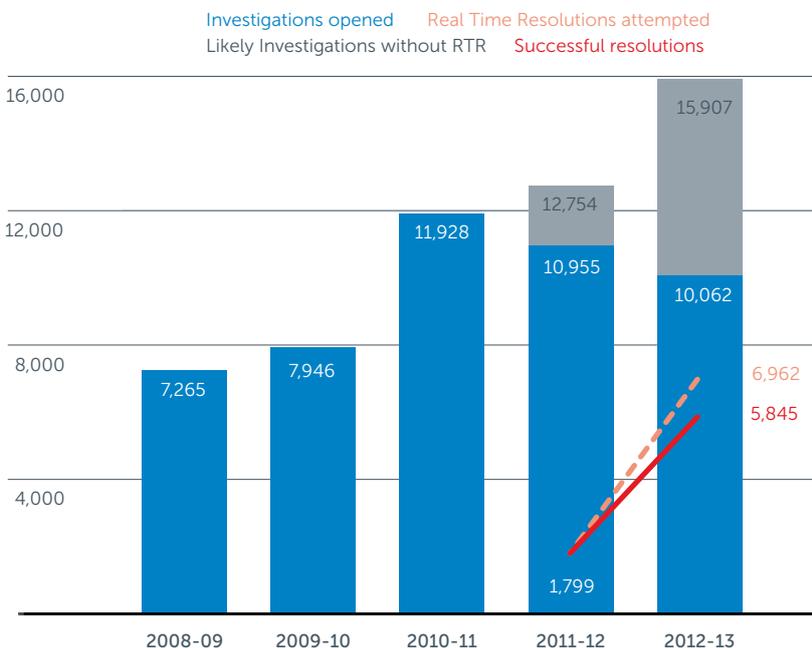
The following outcomes were achieved from the 8,717 complaints we investigated and conciliated:

- 5,269 apologies provided to customers
- 2,581 payment plans negotiated
- \$4,298,320 achieved in redress for customers:
  - \$1,546,623 in billing adjustments
  - \$2,112,238 in recognition of customer service issues
  - \$433,681 in debt reductions/waivers
  - \$35,998 in waived fees
  - \$169,780 in guaranteed service level payments.

### Binding Decision

If a complaint goes through the process of Investigation without a resolution being achieved, the Ombudsman has the power to close the case (if it is assessed that further investigation isn't warranted) or make a Binding Decision. This decision is binding on the company, if the customer accepts it. Otherwise, the customer may choose to take action in another forum, such as a court. It hasn't been necessary for the Ombudsman to make a Binding Decision since 2003.

Fig 3: The impact of Real Time Resolution



# Trends in cases and complaints

## 2012-13 compared with 2011-12

Figure 4 shows EWOV's case receipt for 2012-13.

We received a total of 77,149 cases, 21% more than in 2011-12. 2,583 were enquiries (down 8%) and 74,566 were complaints (up 22%).

By industry we received:

- 56,795 electricity cases, 19% more than in 2011-12. 1,892 were enquiries (down 4%) and 54,903 were complaints (up 20%)
- 17,353 gas cases, 29% more than in 2011-12. 315 were enquiries (down 20%) and 17,038 were complaints (up 30%)
- 2,435 water cases, 7% more than in 2011-12. 107 were enquiries (up 1%) and 2,328 were complaints (up 7%)
- 298 dual fuel cases, 201% more than in 2011-12. All except one were complaints. Dual fuel cases are those where the customer's complaint isn't specifically related to either electricity or natural gas. The customer may, for example, be complaining about the general conduct of a sales representative selling a dual fuel (electricity and gas) contract.

## 2012-13 compared with 2008-09

Figure 5 tracks complaints received by EWOV over the last five years.

Over that period, total complaints increased 106% from 36,169 to 74,566. Electricity complaints were up 123%, natural gas complaints up 72%, LPG complaints up 6%, dual fuel complaints up 13% and water complaints up 72%.

Fig 4: The 77,149 cases received by EWOV in 2012-13

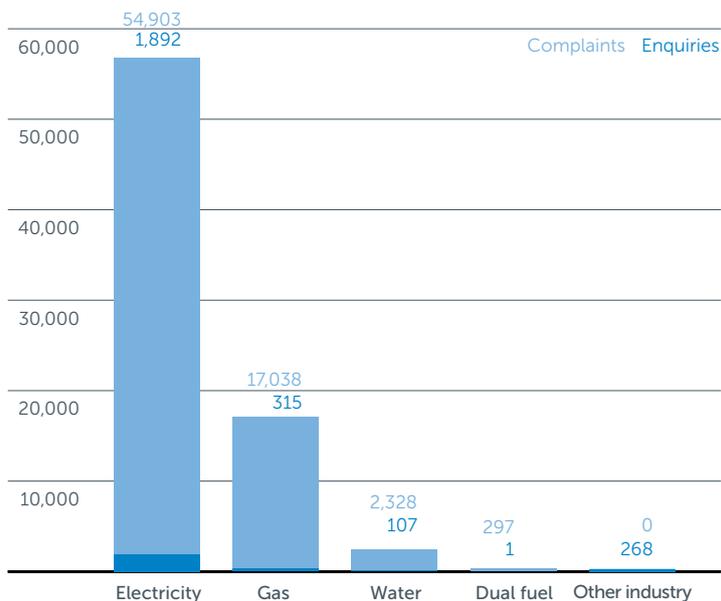
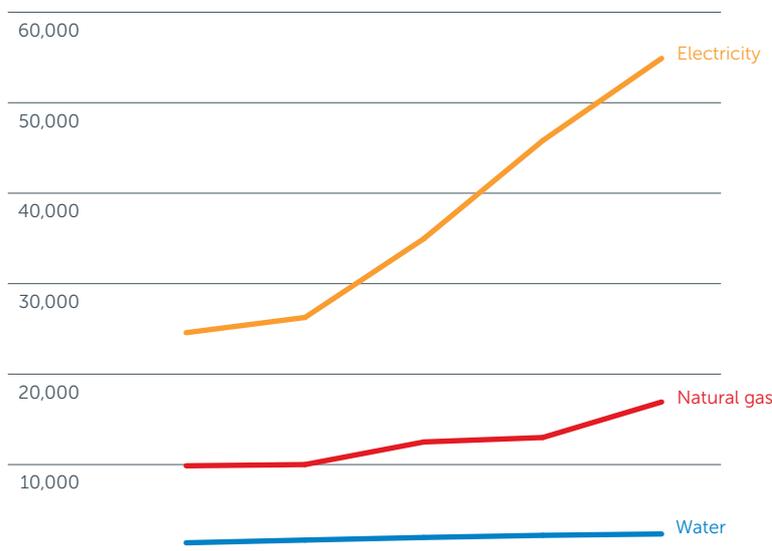


Fig 5: Complaints received – overall and by industry, past 5 years



	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Electricity	24,578	26,262	34,967	45,810	54,903
Natural gas	9,862	10,000	12,499	12,990	16,918
LPG	113	93	89	101	120
Dual fuel	263	356	92	99	297
Water	1,353	1,654	1,941	2,176	2,328
<b>Total</b>	<b>36,169</b>	<b>38,365</b>	<b>49,588</b>	<b>61,176</b>	<b>74,566</b>

## Residential/business split

EWOV's assistance was sought by 72,058 residential customers (up 20% from 2011-12), 4,791 business customers (up 30%) and 300 not-for-profit or government customers (up 40%). The mix of 93% residential and 6% business largely reflects that of 2011-12.

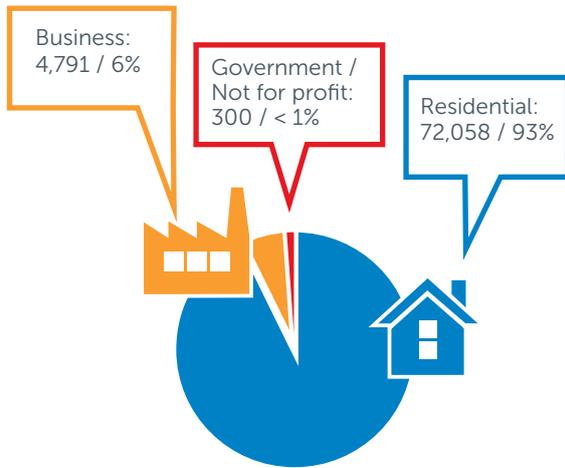


Fig 6: Residential, business and other customers

## Metropolitan/regional and rural split

73% of customers were from metropolitan Melbourne (down from 74% in 2011-12 and 76% in 2010-11). 27% were from regional and rural Victoria (up from 26% in 2011-12 and 24% in 2010-11).

Figure 11 on page 16 tracks trends in EWOV cases received from residential customers in each Victorian Council and Shire area for the past three years. In 2012-13, the parts of Victoria with the highest rates of EWOV cases (energy and water combined) per 1,000 of population were City of Banyule, Baw Baw Shire, Hepburn Shire, East Gippsland Shire and Mount Alexander Shire.

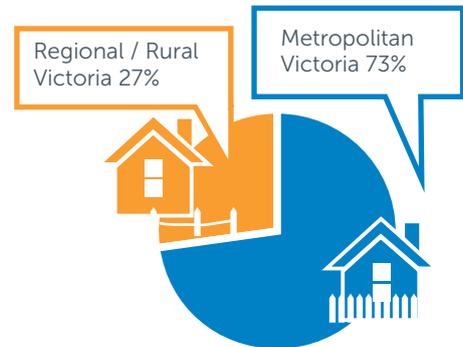


Fig 7: Metropolitan and regional/rural

## Why customers contacted us

84% of customers were dissatisfied with the outcome of their contact with their energy or water company. 8% were dissatisfied that the company responded slowly or didn't take action to address their complaint.

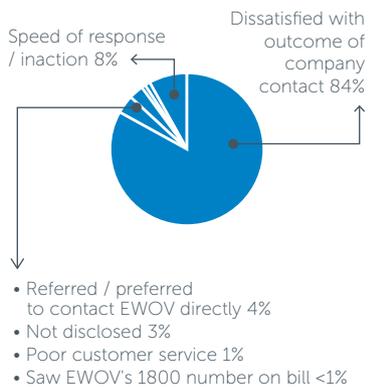


Fig 8: Why customers contacted us

## How they made contact

While most customers (80%) rang us, there was a significant increase in use of email and the complaint form on our website. The proportion of cases lodged electronically increased from 13% to 19%, largely due to our website improvements.

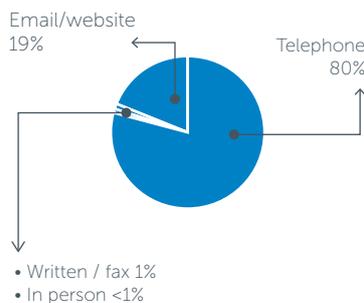


Fig 9: How customers contacted us

## How they knew to contact us

45% of customers said they already knew about EWOV, up 3% from 2011-12. 16% said they found out about us through their energy or water company, also up 3%.

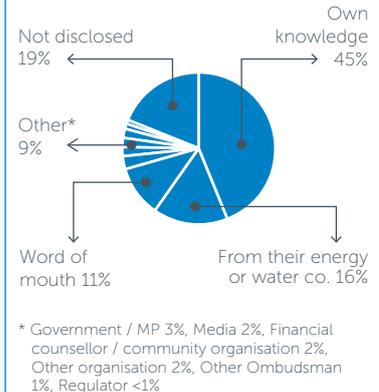


Fig 10: How customers found out about us

Fig 11: By Council/Shire, cases EWOV received from residential customers

Council/Shire area	map no.	Population 2011-12	Residential cases 2012-13	Residential cases per 1,000 population		
				2012-13	2011-12	2010-11
Alpine S	57	12,169	174	14.30	12.53	8.27
Ararat RC	62	11,321	195	17.22	10.38	9.62
Ballarat C	41	96,752	157	1.62	0.61	1.12
Banyule C	11	123,231	2,693	21.85	15.73	18.25
Bass Coast S	38	30,367	520	17.12	14.89	11.91
Baw Baw S	47	44,375	930	20.96	12.94	11.42
Bayside C	16	96,767	1,004	10.38	5.91	7.48
Benalla & Mansfield	46	21,813	383	17.56	12.44	10.32
Boroondara C	3	167,977	1,325	7.89	5.71	5.82
Brimbank C	17	193,168	1,871	9.69	8.84	9.35
Buloke S	64	6,358	86	13.53	8.51	8.37
Campaspe S	54	36,746	604	16.44	10.25	9.94
Cardinia S	37	79,786	1,155	14.48	10.64	9.44
Casey C	28	266,891	2,952	11.06	10.34	7.69
Central Goldfields S	52	12,549	217	17.29	15.59	11.04
Colac Otway S	49	20,502	233	11.36	6.39	6.85
Corangamite S	50	16,358	159	9.72	6.25	5.56
Darebin C	10	144,146	1,987	13.78	10.59	11.92
East Gippsland S	70	43,103	808	18.75	15.02	9.76
Frankston C	29	131,188	1,713	13.06	12.07	12.38
Gannawarra S	65	10,398	134	12.89	10.83	8.94
Glen Eira C	15	139,175	1,538	11.05	8.24	8.68
Glenelg S	71	19,764	262	13.26	9.20	10.49
Golden Plains S	40	19,376	199	10.27	8.37	8.65
Greater Bendigo C	44	103,550	1,539	14.86	14.21	11.53
Greater Dandenong C	20	145,052	1,257	8.67	7.26	7.02
Greater Geelong C	32	217,574	3,152	14.49	11.33	9.00
Greater Shepparton C	55	62,320	881	14.14	11.75	11.19
Hepburn S	42	14,620	302	20.66	12.08	15.67
Hindmarsh S	75	5,806	92	15.85	8.74	9.71
Hobsons Bay C	6	88,082	933	10.59	9.42	8.88
Horsham RC	74	19,667	309	15.71	9.06	6.46
Hume C	24	178,740	1,983	11.09	8.65	9.02
Indigo S	67	15,431	211	13.67	12.29	7.19
Kingston C	21	149,519	1,378	9.21	6.85	7.17
Knox C	19	154,055	1,640	10.65	11.67	7.08
Latrobe C	59	73,672	1,199	16.27	9.85	10.53
Loddon S	53	7,491	133	17.75	14.00	11.52
Macedon Ranges S	34	43,371	609	14.03	15.10	10.65
Manningham C	12	117,184	1,253	10.69	6.84	8.23
Maribyrnong C	7	76,703	790	10.30	9.67	10.58
Maroondah C	18	107,879	1,605	14.87	11.59	10.27
Melbourne C	1	105,706	1,165	11.02	5.34	11.04
Melton S	23	117,420	1,629	13.87	13.48	11.57
Mildura RC	77	52,209	531	10.17	7.40	7.19
Mitchell S	35	36,215	598	16.51	14.80	10.34
Moira S	66	28,694	446	15.54	13.84	10.05
Monash C	14	180,302	1,537	8.52	7.04	6.74
Moonee Valley C	8	113,300	1,178	10.40	7.62	9.22
Moorabool S	33	29,263	496	16.95	15.52	12.48
Moreland C	9	156,953	1,455	9.27	6.90	8.27
Mornington Peninsula S	30	150,599	2,046	13.59	11.37	11.43
Mount Alexander S	43	17,791	330	18.55	18.27	17.06
Moyne S	61	16,223	265	16.33	8.11	8.41
Murrindindi S	36	13,265	234	17.64	10.23	9.40
Nillumbik S	26	62,504	933	14.93	4.16	6.44
Northern Grampians S	63	11,851	68	5.74	3.49	3.90
Port Phillip C	5	100,443	1,291	12.85	8.47	9.80
Pyrenees S	51	6,721	88	13.09	6.18	12.94
Queenscliffe B	31	3,091	31	10.03	4.61	5.53
South Gippsland S	48	27,802	445	16.01	13.51	10.86
Southern Grampians S	72	16,331	213	13.04	6.48	7.22
Stonnington C	4	100,911	901	8.93	4.89	5.81
Strathbogie S	45	9,681	140	14.46	11.36	8.88
Surf Coast S	39	27,167	376	13.84	11.78	8.67
Swan Hill RC	78	20,930	214	10.20	9.97	6.80
Towong S	69	5,978	106	17.73	8.61	7.81
Wangaratta RC	56	27,122	469	17.29	11.24	9.03
Warrnambool C	60	32,878	372	11.31	7.95	7.98
Wellington S	58	42,147	655	15.54	13.48	9.56
West Wimmera S	73	4,217	36	8.54	7.83	4.79
Whitehorse C	13	159,133	1,389	8.73	6.79	8.23
Whittlesea C	25	168,964	2,030	12.01	9.35	7.78
Wodonga RC	68	36,629	569	15.53	11.98	9.01
Wyndham C	22	178,687	2,277	12.74	12.54	10.68
Yarra C	2	80,688	988	12.24	8.59	9.38
Yarra Ranges S	27	148,822	2,075	13.94	10.91	9.15
Yarriambiack S	76	7,082	92	12.99	9.01	7.83

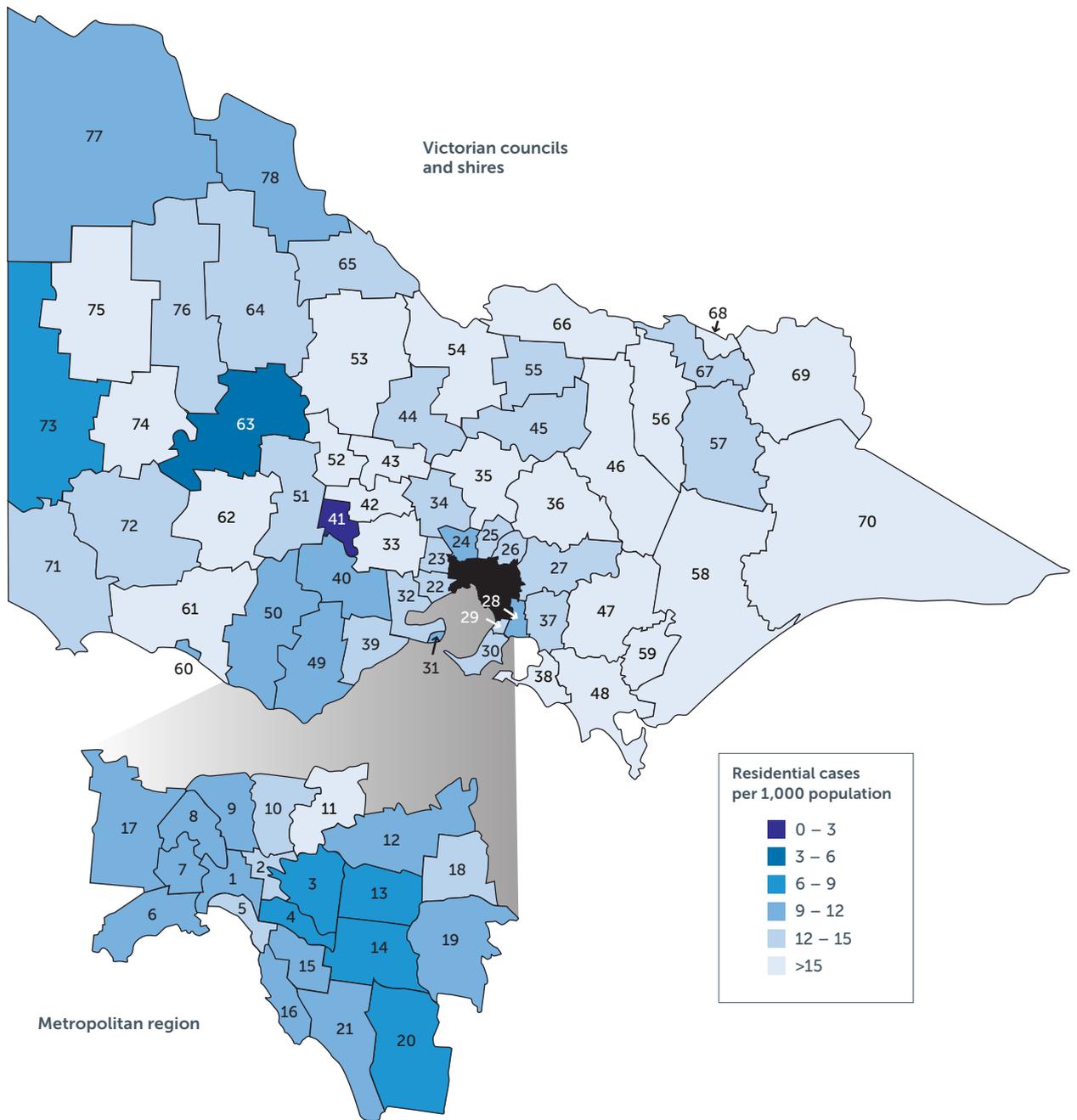
## NOTES:

Variations in numbers are attributable to customers overseas, interstate or not providing EWOV with address details.

Excludes residential cases where the customer didn't disclose a Victorian suburb/postcode or was from interstate or overseas, as well as non-residential cases.

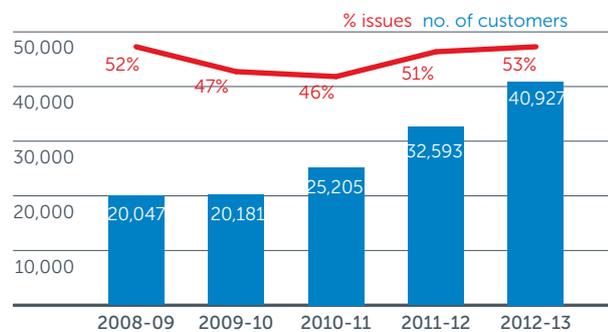
Populations are based on Australian Bureau of Statistics data. The 2012-13 data is not yet available.

Cases are allocated to Council/Shire areas based on the suburb/postcode. Where a suburb/postcode bridges more than one Council/Shire, cases have been divided across those Councils/Shires. The sum of cases for each Council/Shire has then been rounded to the nearest whole number.



# The issues customers complained about

Fig 12: Trends in billing cases



## Billing accounted for 53% of issues

### Overall

40,927 energy and water customers raised billing as their main issue, 26% more customers than in 2011-12. 77% of billing issues were about electricity, 19% were about gas and 4% were about water. A small number related to dual fuel (electricity and gas) accounts. The 2012-13 billing issues were largely driven by energy and water price increases and energy companies not being able to explain to customers the reasons for a variety of billing issues.

### Most common billing issues

- High bill – raised by 9,017 customers, 54% more than in 2011-12.
- Billing delay – raised by 6,364 customers, 40% more than in 2011-12.
- Billing error – raised by 5,596 customers, 29% more than in 2011-12.
- Back bill – raised by 5,169 customers, 46% more than in 2011-12.
- Tariff – raised by 5,140 customers, 4% more than in 2011-12.

### Electricity

31,455 electricity customers raised billing as their main issue, 21% more customers than in 2011-12. The most common electricity billing issues were high bills (up 52%), billing delay (up 27%) and tariffs (up 4%).

### Gas

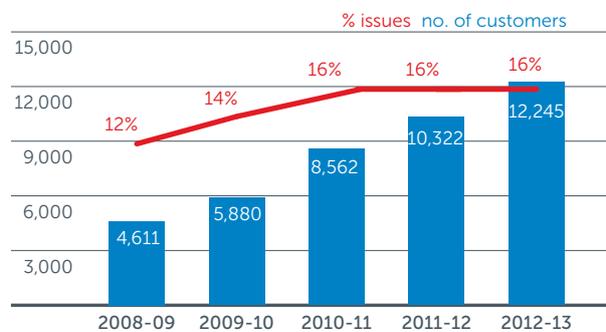
7,731 gas customers (almost all of them natural gas customers) raised billing as their main issue, 50% more customers than in 2011-12. The most common gas billing issues were high bills (up 76%), billing error (up 47%) and billing delay (up 170%).

### Water

1,569 water customers raised billing as their main issue, 10% more than in 2011-12. The most common water billing issues were high bills (up 24%), fees and charges (up 8%) and billing errors (down 34%).

There's more about the billing issues, including case studies, on pages 22 and 23.

Fig 13: Trends in credit cases



## Credit accounted for 16% of issues

### Overall

Credit is about the capacity of customers to pay their bills and stay on supply. 12,245 energy and water customers raised credit as their main issue, 19% more customers than in 2011-12.

### Most common credit issues

- Energy disconnection/water restriction – raised by 6,134 (mostly energy) customers, 12% more than in 2011-12.
- Debt collection – raised by 3,664 customers, 25% more than in 2011-12.
- Payment difficulties – raised by 2,434 customers, 29% more than in 2011-12.

### Electricity

8,171 electricity customers raised credit as their main issue, 22% more customers than in 2011-12. The most common credit issues among electricity customers were supply disconnection (up 13%) debt collection (up 29%) and payment difficulties (up 34%).

### Gas

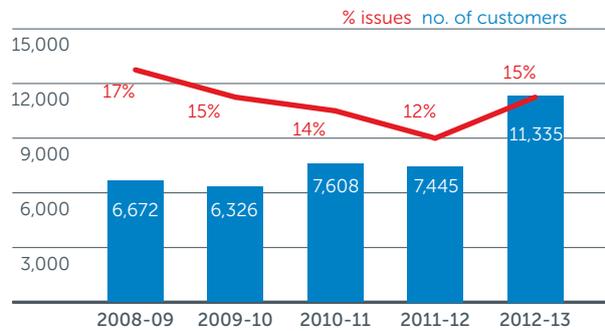
3,764 gas customers (mostly natural gas customers) raised credit as their main issue, 12% more customers than in 2011-12. The most common credit issues among gas customers were supply disconnection (up 9%) debt collection (up 14%) and payment difficulties (up 18%).

### Water

254 water customers raised credit as their main issue, 9% more than in 2011-12. The most common credit issues among water customers were debt collection (up 23%), payment difficulties (down 3%) and supply restriction (unchanged).

There's more about credit issues, including case studies, on pages 24 and 25.

Fig 14: Trends in transfer cases



### Transfer accounted for 15% of issues

Transfer is an energy issue only. It refers to the process of switching an electricity or natural gas account from one energy retailer to another. 11,335 energy customers raised transfer as their main issue, 52% more customers than in 2011-12. Cases from electricity customers were up 53% and cases from gas customers were up 50%. The increases were largely due to the ongoing effects of one large energy retailer's billing system upgrade and associated billing-related issues.

#### Most common transfer issues

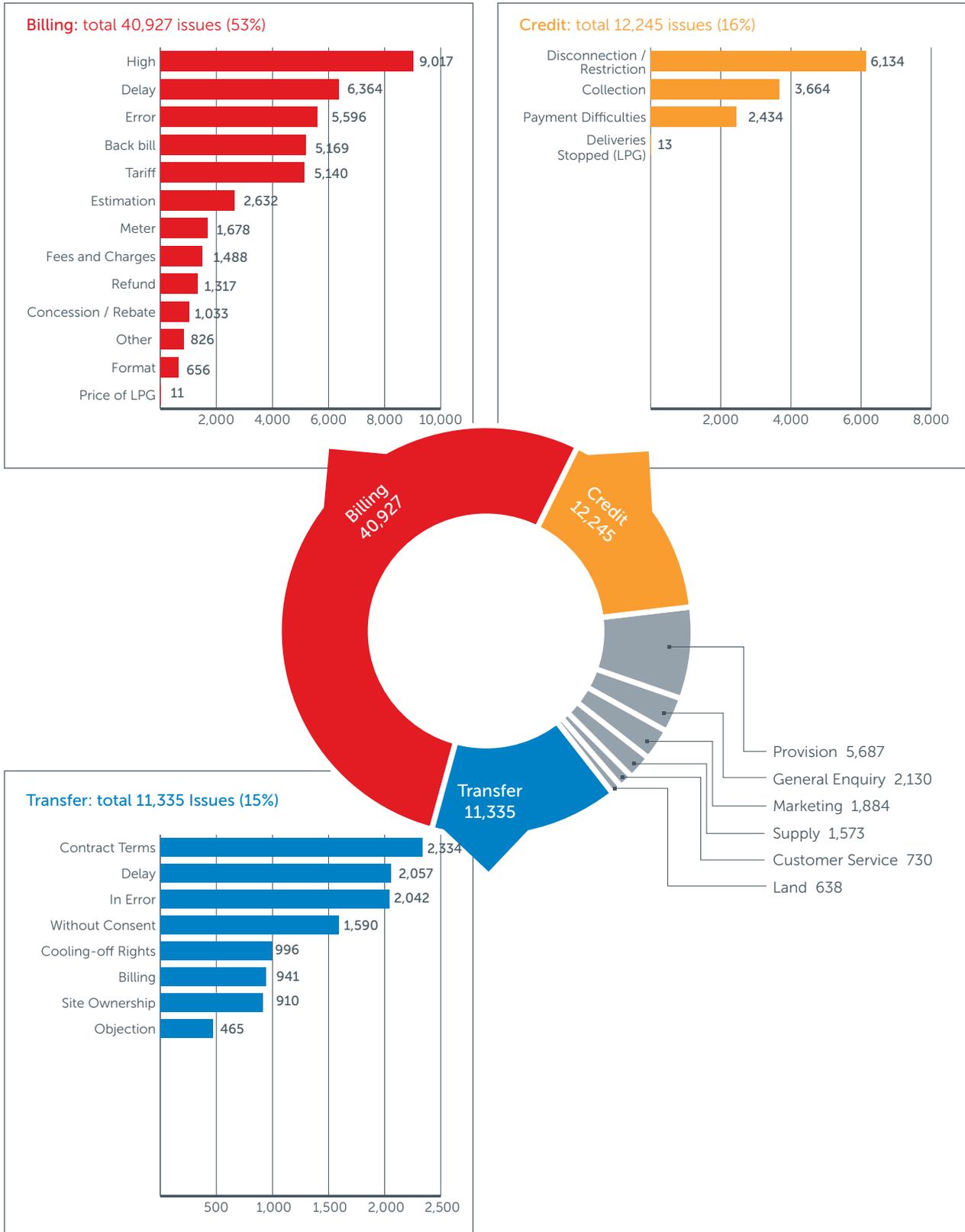
- Contract terms (up 52%): We received many cases that highlighted customer confusion about a 'discount' built into the contract offer and a discount applicable only when bills were paid on time—customers found that the discount on their first bill didn't match their understanding of the discount they were told about at the time of marketing.
- Transfer delay (up 59%): The increase in transfer delay cases was primarily caused by the billing system problems of one large energy retailer. Typically, a customer experiencing a delay in transferring to their new energy retailer also complained that they hadn't received their first bill, or that when they did receive it the bill was higher than expected because it was for a billing period of sometimes several months.
- Transfer in error (up 72%): The increase in transfer error cases was also indicative of energy retailer billing system problems, as well the use of incorrect meter details and customers quoting an address that didn't correspond with the details in the transfer data base (Market Settlement and Transfer Solution, 'MSATS').

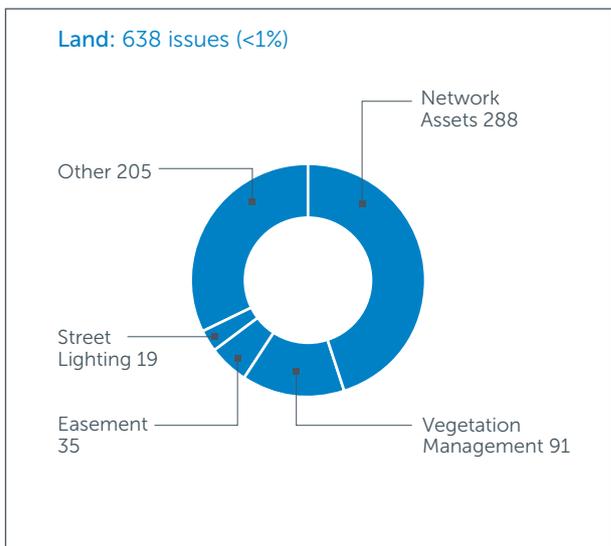
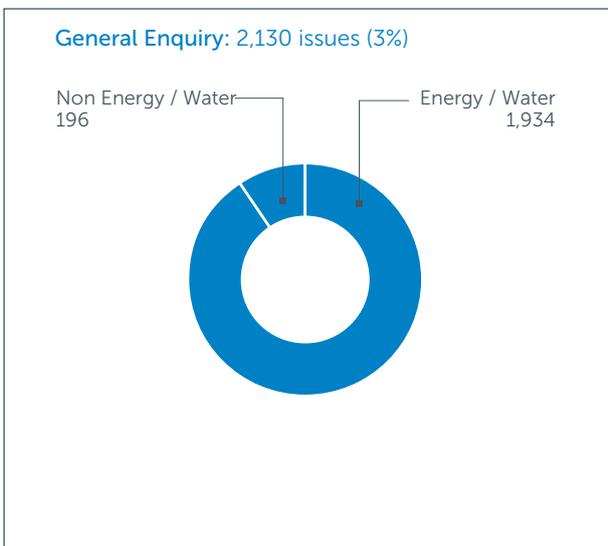
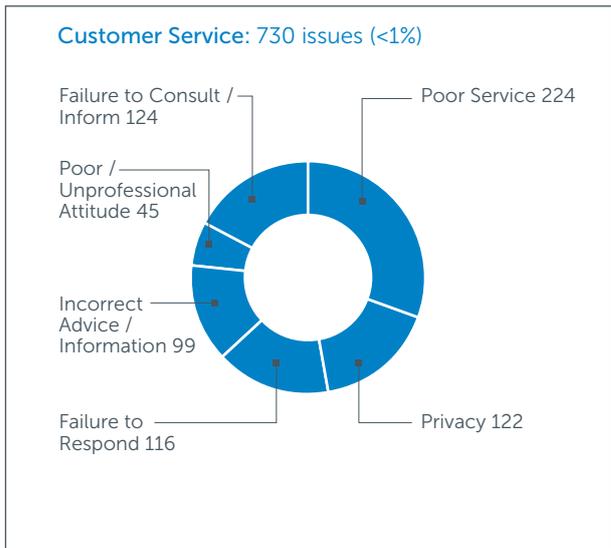
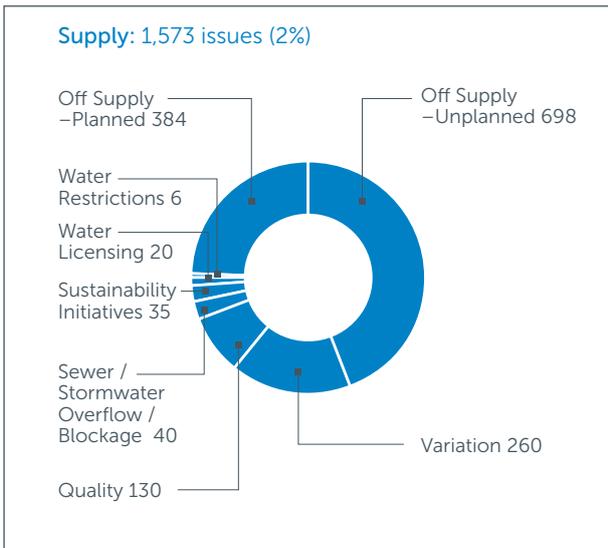
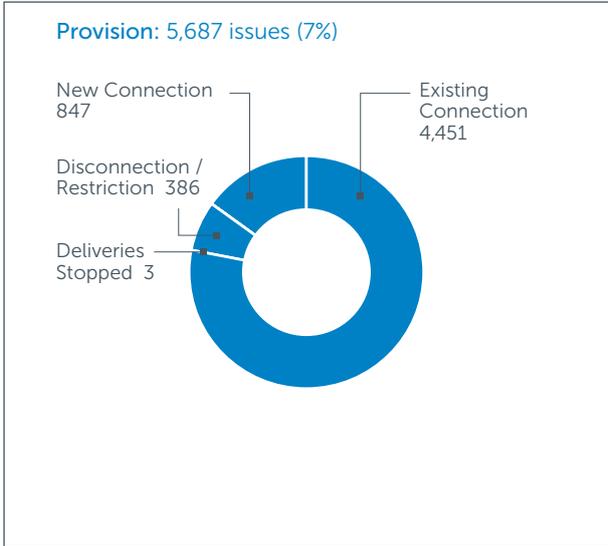
#### A quick guide to EWOV's issues categories

<b>Billing</b>	bills and payment processes
<b>Credit</b>	unpaid bills and the action taken to collect arrears
<b>Transfer</b>	switching an account to a new energy retailer
<b>Provision</b>	the connection of a property to the energy or water network
<b>Marketing</b>	how energy retailers go about winning new customers
<b>Supply</b>	the physical delivery of the energy or water service
<b>Customer Service</b>	service received or not received
<b>Land</b>	the effect on property of company activities or network

During the life of a complaint, EWOV may recategorise the initial case issue as more information comes to light about the actual nature of the complaint.

Fig 15: The main issues customers raised with us





**Billing is clearly an ongoing issue for customers and problems continue to emerge following changes to company billing systems. Here's a closer look at some of the more common issues behind the billing cases we received in 2012-13.**

In 2012-13, 40,927 energy and water customers complained about a billing issue, 26% more customers than in 2011-12. Most commonly, customers raised the issues of high bill, billing delay and billing error.

A further 16,479 customers raised billing as an issue associated with their main issue. For example, the complaint may have presented to us as one about the credit issue of payment difficulties, but the customer also complained that they found themselves in this situation after receiving an unexpectedly high bill.

### High bills

High bill continued to be the most common billing issue overall. It was the main issue for 9,017 energy and water customers, up 54% from 5,852 customers in 2011-12. By customer group, 8,531 residential customers (up 56%), 463 business customers (up 27%) and 23 not-for-profit/government customers (up 44%) raised high bill as their main issue. The main drivers of high bill complaints were energy and water price increases and energy companies not being able to explain to their customers the reasons for high bills. Many customers found they needed EWOV's assistance to get answers to their concerns. Of the 9,017 high bill cases we recorded in 2012-13, 6,198 were handled as Assisted Referrals/Real Time Resolutions and 1,302 as Investigations. Many of these customers had already made more than one attempt to resolve the issue with their company directly and unsuccessfully before contacting us. Often, they told us their high bill concern was largely dismissed when they rang their company—they were told the bill was correct and it had to be paid (often in a lump sum).

### System-related billing delays

Almost 65% of billing delay cases were about the billing system problems of one large energy retailer, which changed its system at the beginning of September 2012. A technical issue with the billing system changeover meant the retailer was unable to send bills to thousands of customers. This caused a unique problem for EWOV because, while we opened Investigations in response to customer complaints about this billing problem, we couldn't close

our Investigations until the bills were finally issued and we'd been able to assess the back billing to ensure it complied with section 6.2 of the *Energy Retail Code*. We addressed the situation by allocating all billing delay cases for that retailer to two of our Lead Conciliators, who worked with a specific contact within the retailer. As the back bill relating to each Investigation was issued, we checked it to ensure compliance with the *Energy Retail Code*. Once this had been done, the Investigation was allocated to a different Conciliator to discuss the response with the customer and close the complaint.

### Solar billing

We received 10,786 solar cases in 2012-13, up 11% from 2011-12. 7,181 of them (67%) were about billing. 2,988 of the solar billing cases (42%) were about the billing of a Feed-in Tariff.

While the Premium Feed-in Tariff scheme closed in December 2011, non-application of the Premium Feed-in Tariff was still the most common issue in the solar cases we received in the July to September 2012 quarter. From October to December 2012, solar customers continued to complain about billing. However, for the first time since the second half of 2009, non-application of the Premium Feed-in Tariff was replaced by delay in upgrading the customer's supply, as the most common solar issue. This development was largely due to delays by electricity retailers in processing service order requests and delayed meter reconfiguration and/or installation by electricity distributors.

From January to March 2013, customers started to contact us about loss of Premium Feed-in Tariff

credits, saying they were being told their electricity accounts weren't eligible. Contributing to this were problems with tariff reassignment requests, which were raised by the electricity retailer but not actioned by the distributor and not double-checked by the retailer, and changes to retailer billing systems which resulted in the Premium Feed-in Tariff on the customer's account reverting to the Standard Feed-in Tariff. By the April to June 2013 quarter, 26% of all solar cases involved the billing of one of the Feed-in Tariffs—the (closed) Premium Feed-in Tariff, the Transitional Feed-in Tariff, the Standard Feed-in Tariff or the new General Feed-in Tariff.

### Smart Meter billing

In 2012-13, we received 4,501 cases about Smart Meters, down 13% on cases for 2011-12.

2,738 of the Smart Meter cases (61%) were about billing. 958 (35%) of these were about high bills and 430 (16%) were about billing delays. Almost half of the cases about delayed Smart Meter billing involved the large energy retailer mentioned previously.

Often, billing of the customer's account was delayed or estimated around the time the Smart Meter was installed and then they received a high (but correct) catch-up bill based on a meter reading. Some high bills were found to be based on incorrect peak or off-peak rates. Resolution of Smart Meter billing complaints was complicated by the fact that the customer's old meter had been replaced by the Smart Meter, so testing of it for accuracy wasn't possible. Recognising the situation, retailers sometimes provided a customer service payment in lieu of further investigation.

#### CASE STUDY

### BILLING DELAYS AND THEN NO PREMIUM FEED-IN TARIFF

**In January 2013, the customer contacted us about non-application of the Premium Feed-in Tariff (PFiT).**

His electricity retailer had installed his solar system in early 2011 and his solar documents were submitted before the PFiT cut-off date. A Smart Meter was installed in early November 2012 and the customer understood it was configured for solar. He said that, despite several requests, his electricity retailer said his solar documents couldn't be found. Responding to our investigation, the retailer apologised and confirmed it had received the customer's solar paperwork and his PFiT application and had sent them on to the local distributor. When contacted, the distributor said the paperwork hadn't been received. The customer missed out on the PFiT. When the Smart Meter was installed in November 2012, he was placed on the Transitional Feed-In Tariff (TFiT). Based on the size of his solar system (1.54 kWh) and its estimated annual generation of 650 kWh, the retailer calculated the difference between the two tariffs as \$3,521.55 for the life of the PFiT scheme. It offered the customer this amount as a credit. It also offered \$675.09 for the solar credits he missed between when his solar panels were installed and when he went onto the TFiT. The customer chose to receive the total credit of \$4,196.64 by cheque. 2012/44944

#### CASE STUDY

### EWOV INVESTIGATION CONFIRMS BILLING AS ACCURATE

**The customer complained of high bills after a Smart Meter was installed in late January 2010.**

She understood the peak and off-peak timings, but didn't believe the bill reflected her usage. The electricity retailer advised us that the customer's bills were based on actual meter readings and reflected her historical usage. It provided information to confirm the meter readings. We calculated the customer's average historical usage at between 11 and 12 kWh per day and, on this basis, concluded the billing was accurate. We converted this information to graphs and tables and sent it to the customer. She asked for more detailed data (half hour interval meter readings) so she could check whether her off-peak usage was recording correctly. This was provided, but she remained concerned that it didn't match her usage. She was also dissatisfied that her retailer didn't automatically provide full interval read data to customers. We arranged for EWOV's independent electrician to make a site visit. From estimates the customer gave him about her daily use of each appliance, we produced a table showing how much electricity she estimated she was using per appliance, compared with the billed usage. Based on her estimates, she was using 12.66 kWh on average per day in summer and 14.58 kWh per day in winter. Half of this was estimated to be off-peak. We showed that her estimations matched the usage on her bill. On this basis, the customer accepted that the billing was accurate. We advised her that, although she wasn't currently eligible for the company's online Smart Meter portal, she could purchase an in-home display to monitor her electricity consumption in real-time. She agreed to pay her outstanding bill and the complaint was closed. 2012/35472

**Because our credit category is about the capacity of customers to pay their bills and stay on supply, it is an indicator of affordability problems and financial hardship.**

## Cases show growing affordability issues

In 2012-13, credit was the main issue for 12,245 customers who contacted EWOV. This was 19% more customers than in 2011-12. Another 5,671 customers raised credit as an issue associated with their main issue.

The credit sub-issues are energy disconnection/water restriction for arrears, debt collection and payment difficulties. Energy disconnection/water restriction for account arrears was the main issue for 6,134 customers (up 12%). It was followed by debt collection as the main issue for 3,664 customers (up 25%) and payment difficulties as the main issue for 2,434 customers (up 29%).

## Seeking practical, customer-focused solutions

The affordability of essential services has become a major issue for the Australian community. Our cases tell us this, our Ombudsman colleagues say the same, energy retailers and water corporations acknowledge it and media reports confirm it. Recent energy and water price increases won't help. Economists are predicting reduced growth and increased unemployment. Facing rising industry cost pressures, some energy retailers have increased their use of disconnection, or the threat of disconnection, as a means of

collecting debt. Others are on-selling debt. The past year saw a number of community initiatives designed to highlight and discuss practical solutions to energy and water affordability.

As part of our community engagement program, we've actively contributed EWOV's experience of affordability issues to the broader community discussion. For example, in October 2012, we participated in an Energy and Water Forum facilitated by Kildonan UnitingCare for the staff of energy and water retailers—the focus of the forum was support for Indigenous consumers. The Ombudsman contributed to a UnitingCare Energy Affordability Forum in March 2013, which brought together a diverse group of stakeholders to work towards a joint understanding of the affordability issues facing energy customers and how these might be addressed. In April 2013, with the other Energy Ombudsmen from around Australia (and representatives of the Energy Retailers Association of Australia and the Australian Council of Social Service), the Ombudsman participated in a National Energy Affordability Roundtable, which generated a number of recommendations for industry, consumer advocates and government to take action on energy affordability issues. In June 2013, we took part in a forum run by the Vulnerable Customer Taskforce led by the metropolitan water corporations. This Taskforce has been formed to oversee a water industry-wide response to supporting vulnerable water customers.

### CASE STUDY

#### ELDERLY CUSTOMER RECEIVES ASSISTANCE AFTER SUPPLY DISCONNECTION

The customer was elderly and vision-impaired. She said her electricity had been disconnected without warning and her electricity retailer was seeking a payment of almost \$2,000 before reconnection. She hadn't made payments to her electricity account for two years because she'd been in hospital for long periods. By the time she contacted EWOV, she was in financial hardship and could afford to pay only \$50 a fortnight. Because of her vision issues, the electricity disconnection was also a health and safety concern. We arranged for same day reconnection of the customer's electricity supply. Responding to our investigation of the customer's complaint, the retailer advised that it hadn't offered her hardship assistance because she hadn't made contact. And, as it had no concession details on file, concessions hadn't been applied to her account. We calculated the customer's average fortnightly consumption at \$47 and, with her agreement and that of her electricity retailer, we set up a \$50 a fortnight payment plan. When the retailer backdated applicable concessions, the customer's arrears reduced from \$3,321.02 to \$2,139.57. The retailer included her in its hardship program and assisted with an application for a Utility Relief Grant. It agreed to issue her bills in large print so she could read them easily. She was also given a direct contact within the retailer's hardship team.  
2013/23373

CASE STUDY

**DEBT COLLECTION ACTIVITY EVEN THOUGH CUSTOMER WAS IN FINANCIAL HARDSHIP**

The customer’s complaint was about the debt collection action taken by her gas retailer.

She said her purse had been stolen earlier in the year and, with it, correspondence from the retailer including barcodes for making her payments under an agreed payment plan. The customer contacted the retailer asking for the information to be sent to her again, so she could continue making the payments. She said she didn’t receive it. Instead, she was contacted by the retailer’s debt collectors and told that her agreed payment plan must increase. She sought EWOV’s assistance because she was under financial stress and couldn’t afford to pay more than \$10 a week. We worked with the retailer to consider payment options in line with the customer’s capacity to pay and to assess her for its financial hardship program. She had, by that time, closed her gas account leaving a debt of \$222. The retailer accepted the customer’s offer to pay this off at \$10 a fortnight. 2012/33736

Fig 16: Tracking EWOV’s credit-related actual and imminent energy disconnection and water restriction cases against unrequested disconnections and restrictions by energy and water companies

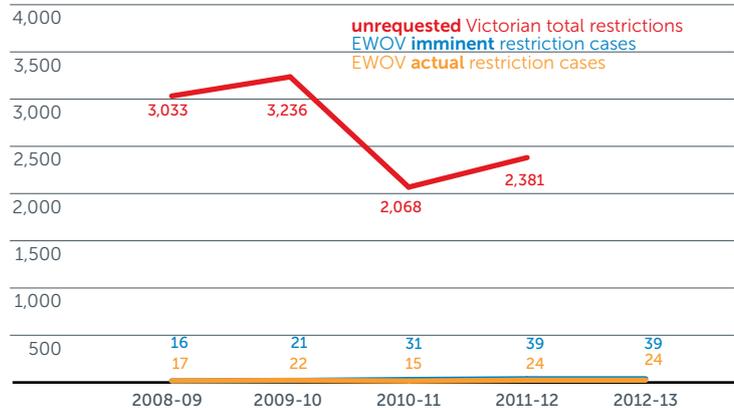
**ELECTRICITY**



**GAS**



**WATER**



The data on unrequested electricity and gas disconnections and water restrictions in Figure 16 has been published in the Essential Services Commission’s (ESC) Comparative Performance Reports. The corresponding data for 2012-13 has not been published yet.

## Our systemic issues role

A number of documents underpin EWOV's systemic issues identification and reporting responsibilities. These include the *EWOV Charter* at sections 7.1 and 7.2, the *EWOV Constitution*, our regulatory memoranda of understanding and reporting protocols, and the *Benchmarks for Industry-Based Customer Dispute Resolution Schemes (National Benchmarks)*. Monitoring and identification of systemic issues gives us the opportunity to alert the company concerned, help bring about a timely and efficient solution, and reduce the potential effect on a wider group of customers. Our reporting of systemic issues brings a greater level of transparency to industry practices, helping to drive customer service improvements and prevent complaints.

## How we define a systemic issue

Our definition of a 'systemic' issue is an issue, problem or change in company policy or practice that affects, or has the potential to affect, a number of customers. It may be caused by (but isn't limited to) one or more of the following:

- A system change
- An alteration in performance levels (i.e. quality of supply, access to call centre)
- A policy or procedure change
- A lack of policy/procedure
- A lack of clear regulatory guidelines
- Regulatory non-compliance
- The conduct of an energy or water provider's employee, agent, servant, officer or contractor (e.g. a door-to-door marketer)
- The action of a stakeholder (e.g. legislative or regulatory change leading to misunderstanding or misapplication of the change).

This definition draws on definitions used by the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC), other Ombudsman schemes, current best practice thinking and the *National Benchmarks*.

Our definition of a 'systemic' issue is an issue, problem or change in company policy or practice that affects, or has the potential to affect, a number of customers.

## Our systemic issues process

Our systemic issues process involves the stages of identification, registration, investigation, referral and reporting.

### Identification

We identify systemic issues through our case receipt, review of case numbers and issues, staff feedback and advice from stakeholders, including scheme participants, regulators and consumer groups.

### Registration and assessment

Where a case is identified as having a systemic aspect, this is referred to our Systemic Issues Specialist who handles it separately to the resolution of the particular customer's complaint. We register the issue, check for similar complaints and establish the likelihood of the issue actually being systemic.

### Referral

We contact the energy or water company. Sometimes it's already aware of the problem, but sometimes it isn't. Often this will result in the issue being addressed without any further action on our part. Where the company doesn't take timely or appropriate action, or where we assess the issue as significant, we may also refer the issue to the industry regulator for investigation.

### Investigation

In water, we investigate and seek redress for affected customers, with a report to the Department of Environment and Primary Industries (formerly to the Department of Sustainability and Environment) on the outcome and whether the water corporation has co-operated with us to resolve the issue appropriately. This differs from our energy role, where we refer the issue to the Essential Services Commission Victoria, which has a statutory responsibility to carry out its own investigations.

### Reporting

We inform regulators through meetings and written reports. Scheme participants receive de-identified reports, as does the EWOV Board. We publish de-identified systemic issues through the quarterly *Res Online* publication and the *Annual Report*. Internally, systemic issue updates are provided to EWOV staff, via training sessions and case reports.

## Energy issues investigations identified as systemic and closed in 2012-13

- Significant billing delays and subsequent back billing SI/2011/80
- Manual application of Standard Feed-in Tariff SI/2012/51
- Inaccurate consumption graphs on bills SI/2012/52
- Compensation for missed Premium Feed-in Tariff SI/2012/45
- Billing on incorrect tariff after billing system upgrade SI/2012/38
- Incorrect solar tariff/loss of solar credits SI/2012/55
- Overcharging from incorrect service process for solar installation SI/2012/68
- Frequent and unplanned electricity supply outages SI/2012/71
- Confusing supply connection process as a result of system limitations SI/2012/73
- Delay in passing on Guaranteed Service Level payments SI/2012/73
- Unauthorised direct debits after back billing SI/2012/79
- No issue dates on bills SI/2012/81
- Confusing meter reading terminology SI/2012/3
- Contracts set up without customer consent SI/2012/50
- Billing cycle changes without customer consent SI/2012/86
- Energy account transferred without consent after contact with telecoms store SI/2012/87
- Back billing of consumption charges SI/2012/91
- Wrongful disconnection payment because EWOV's number wasn't provided SI/2012/93
- Customers suddenly on payment plans SI/2012/96
- Delays in providing solar metering data SI/2012/104
- No notification of mid-year price rise SI/2012/101
- Sales company promoting offers that it couldn't deliver SI/2012/117
- Customers asked to complete paperwork again to continue receiving feed-in tariff SI/2012/107
- Customers sent wrong Ombudsman contact information SI/2012/124
- Sales representative engaged in fraudulent door-to-door sales activity SI/2012/111
- Incorrect billing of some customers on time-of-use tariff SI/2012/83
- Extra solar credits applied to some accounts SI/2012/63
- Wrong EWOV phone number in welcome packs SI/2012/105
- Payment cards not received despite repeated customer requests SI/2012/115
- Customers missed out on prompt payment discount SI/2012/94
- Extra charges on some reminder and disconnection notices SI/2012/95
- Dealing with damage claims after severe overvoltage incident SI/2013/14
- Errors in applying the Standard Feed-in Tariff SI/2012/75
- Incorrect scaling factor applied to some Smart Meters SI/2013/19
- Wrong advice about non-approval of Transitional Feed-in Tariff applications SI/2013/23
- Ongoing lengthy outages along business strip SI/2013/22
- Difficulty getting into hardship program SI/2013/21
- Lengthy billing delays SI/2012/106
- Cooling-off cancellation requests not actioned in required timeframe SI/2013/11
- Disconnection warning notices with incorrect timeframe SI/2012/80
- Direct debit problems SI/2012/108
- Placement on shortened collection cycle leads to wrongful disconnection SI/2013/38
- Incorrect information in solar brochure SI/2013/32
- Disconnection notices for credit balances SI/2013/3
- Door-to-door marketer gives misleading information regarding solar tariffs SI/2013/6
- Door-to-door marketer claimed to have an EWOV relationship SI/2013/42
- Disconnection warning notices sought insufficient payment to prevent disconnection SI/2013/31

## Water issues investigations identified as systemic and closed in 2012-13

- Overcharging related to desalination plant construction delay SI/2012/53
- Delays processing 'Notice of Disposal' cheques SI/2012/97
- Recovery of sewerage undercharging SI/2012/114
- Due dates on bills hand-altered SI/2013/7
- Water quality issues SI/2013/13
- Billing of incorrect usage from a fault with a specific meter type SI/2013/3

# Engaging with the community

28

**We use a range of community outreach activities and information channels to reach customers and their representatives, building EWOV awareness and customer capability.**

## On the road

From Frankston to Ballarat, Swan Hill to Brunswick, Mildura to Geelong, Bendigo to Wodonga, our 2012-13 Community Roadshow reached 167 community agencies and over 800 community workers, including financial counsellors, legal advisors, disability assistants and citizen advice bureau staff. Essentially our aim was to showcase EWOV information and resources, which frontline workers in community organisations and agencies can use to assist people who present with energy and water questions and concerns. The visits involved a brief, informal presentation about the services we provide and a 'tour' of our website. We also distributed resources, such as our new factsheets and poster. Each presentation was intentionally informal and flexible, so discussion could be driven by issues important to the attendees at that location. Commonly these were around financial hardship, supply disconnection, high bills, billing complexity, the Smart Meter rollout and energy marketing (particularly to vulnerable customers, such as the elderly and new migrants).

## Online resources

In April 2012, as part of a new approach to expand community awareness of our role and processes, we launched a new EWOV website. In developing it, our focus was on building customer knowledge through educational videos and improved information materials. The growing uptake of the site is evidenced by more page views and greater use of our online tools. In 2012-13, the site received 87% more direct traffic,

80% more referral traffic and 106% more mobile phone traffic than it did in 2011-12. There were almost 9,000 views of our new customer videos. Visits to our publications pages were up 193%. Fact sheet page views were up 409% and case studies page views were up 303%.

## A targeted publication

We continued to produce *EWOV Connect*, a quarterly e-newsletter that we write specifically for Victorian community, welfare and health services workers. Published on our website, *EWOV Connect* helps us provide these frontline workers with tips and information they can draw on to help their clients, as well as keeping them up with changes in the energy and water sectors. Over the past year, it was also a great vehicle for fulfilling information requests made by the community workers we met during our roadshow.

## At our offices

In April 2013, a 'behind the scenes' EWOV familiarisation workshop saw us host a group of Victorian financial counsellors at our office. Participants gained a first-hand feel for our work, by listening to calls being handled by our staff at different points of the dispute resolution process. They also shared with us their experiences of the energy and water issues facing their clients. We plan to run more of these workshops in 2013-14.

## Through community events

Over the year, we actively participated in a range of other community education events too. For example, we took part in ten *Bring*

*Your Bills* days in metropolitan and rural locations. These events enable members of the public (particularly vulnerable and low-income consumers) to come along without an appointment, for advice and assistance with concerns they may have about bills, other energy or water issues, fines, legal matters and government programs.

We also joined with other Ombudsman schemes to present at events, including an *Unlocking the Codes* professional development day run by the Financial & Consumer Rights Council and the annual External Dispute Resolution (EDR) Forum.

## With a new brochure and poster

Eye-catching visuals are helping us get important information across simply and clearly.



**We draw on our case handling experience, to highlight issues with energy and water policies and processes and, as appropriate, make the case for change.**

## An independent perspective

EWOV is a regular contributor to the consultation processes of other bodies, especially regulators and government. We base our input on our case data, which is a unique, current and rich source of information on energy and water issues and trends. We are also able to provide insight to how energy and water companies are responding to customer complaints. In 2012-13, much of our policy work continued to be with the Essential Services Commission Victoria.

## At the table

- Monthly EWOV/Essential Services Commission working agenda meetings to discuss case trends and systemic issues.
- Quarterly meetings with the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) to discuss case trends and systemic issues and as part of the AER's Better Regulation Program – Customer Reference Group.
- National Energy Affordability Roundtable organised by the Australian Energy Ombudsmen, Energy Retailers Association of Australia and Australian Council of Social Service in May 2013.
- Meetings of Consumer Affairs Victoria's Energy Marketing Working Group and Forum.
- Quarterly meetings of Energy Assured Limited and as part of its Stakeholder Working Group.
- With Victorian State Government departments: Regulatory working group on flexible pricing; Communications working group on flexible pricing; Feed-in Tariff working group; Distributed generation systemic issues working group.

## Through formal submissions

We made ten formal submissions to public energy and water consultations by the **Essential Services Commission Victoria** (ESC).

In water, these included the draft Water Plans for the four metropolitan water corporations and the *Water Customer Service Code Review* around regulation of debt management powers. In relation to debt management, we supported the fair and reasonable approach that the ESC's guiding principles provided, particularly for vulnerable customers. We also contributed to consultation on the *2013 Water Price Review*, suggesting a range of actions water companies could take to improve how they assist vulnerable customers.

In energy, we supported the ESC's decision to harmonise Victoria's regulatory codes and guidelines with the National Energy Customer Framework, expressing a preference for the existing (or a higher) standard of customer protection, with minimal confusion and interruption. We also supported the ESC's decision to review the regulatory auditing process for energy businesses, to facilitate better quality audits. In relation to the review of retail energy performance indicators, we raised some questions about the wrongful disconnection payment data being provided to the ESC by energy retailers.

We made two formal submissions to the **Australian Competition & Consumer Commission** (ACCC).

We supported measures to ensure energy comparator services meet the same standards and be subject to the same oversight as other door-to-door energy marketing methods. We also contributed our experience of debt collection complaints to the ACCC's review of the *Debt Collection Guideline for Collectors and Creditors 2005*.

We welcomed the recommendations of the *Draft Report – Power of choice – Giving consumers options in the way they use electricity* issued by national regulator, the **Australian Energy Market Commission** (AEMC), particularly around protections for

vulnerable consumers to ensure they aren't financially worse-off under a flexible pricing regime. We also took up the AEMC's invitation to comment on options for mitigating the financial risks caused by the failure of a large electricity retailer, among other things, expressing concerns about the potential effects on residential customers, particularly those in financial hardship.

Our comments on the *Customer Consultation Paper – Victorian Gas Access Arrangement Review* put out by the **Australian Energy Regulator** focused on the potential impact of an increase in gas transmission or distribution charges on EWOV's affordability cases.

Our submission to the **Senate Select Committee Inquiry on Electricity Prices** noted the effect that electricity prices have across a range of complaint areas—especially customer financial hardship, energy disconnections and higher than expected energy bills. We commented on the Inquiry's Terms of Reference—around vulnerable and low income customers, customer choice and information, energy efficiency and new technologies.

We made a submission to the review of the *Benchmarks for Industry-Based Customer Dispute Resolution Schemes (National Benchmarks)* undertaken by the **Commonwealth Consumer Affairs Advisory Council**. In it, we noted the value of the Benchmarks as a guide to the core principles and practices underpinning EWOV's effectiveness.

We welcomed the report on *Privacy for the National Smart Metering Program* put out by the **Standing Council on Energy and Resources** as building on the work done by the ESC in Victoria to ensure the privacy of customers' Smart Meter data and suggested the ESC's principles could be broadly applied in the national context.

We welcomed the **Clean Energy Council's** proposal for improved monitoring of solar photovoltaic (PV) retailers, including a voluntary code of conduct, as a means of promoting higher standards of customer protection and best practice in the solar PV retailer industry.

Six specific focus areas underpinned EWOV's 2012-13 strategic plan— customer service, scheme participants, reach and influence, innovation, human resources, and finance.

## Customer service

We focused on providing quality service to energy and water customers contacting EWOV.

We achieved a 57% reduction in Intake Officers' average case handling time (relative to 2011-12) through targeted questioning of customers to obtain key information up front.

An 84% success rate in resolving failed Assisted Referrals through Real Time Resolution meant that we avoided the need for an additional 5,845 Investigations, while providing customers with quicker outcomes.

Independent assessment of Assisted Referral and Real Time Resolution for their fairness and independence found these processes are impartial and working well to deliver early resolution outcomes.

We consolidated the EWOV 2.0 productivity gains through:

- measures to ensure that vulnerable or at risk customers can bypass the Assisted Referral process, where appropriate
- quarterly reviews of the effectiveness of the EWOV 2.0 Best Practice Procedures to ensure the uplift in performance is maintained or, where possible, improved
- greater use of Batch discussions with scheme participants to progress complaints without the need for lengthy written communication, reducing average days to close and having a positive effect on our working relationships

Fig 17: Incoming calls

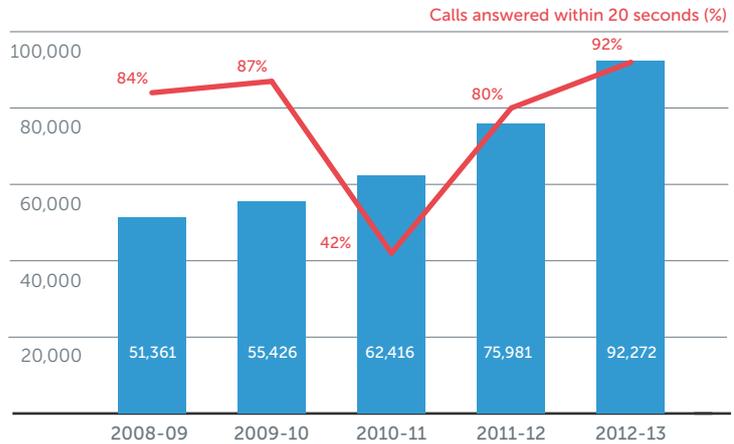


Fig 18: Average days to close Investigations

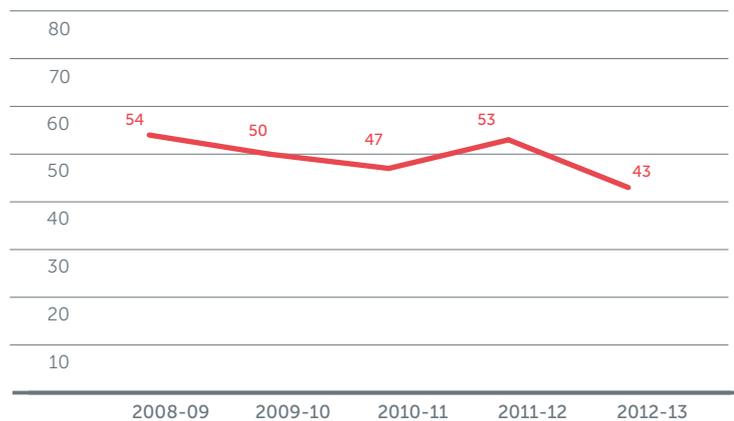
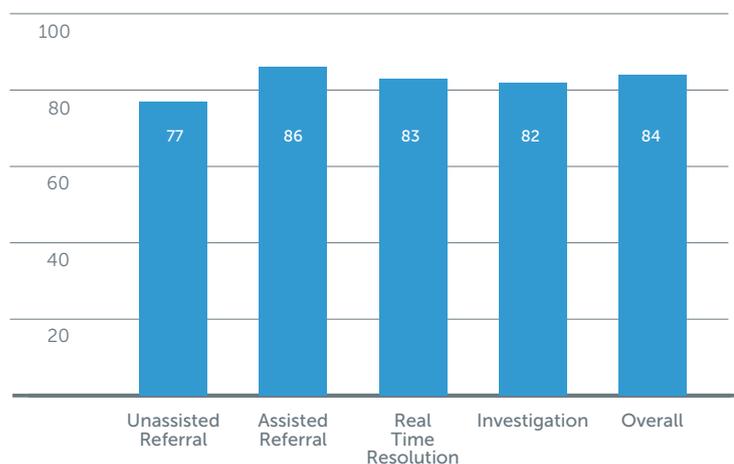


Fig 19: Customer satisfaction survey results (%)



- a workforce planning program to maximise the benefits of our flexible workforce capability, including cross-training in Best Practice Procedures for all operations staff to enable movement across the scheme as required
- successful reallocation of groups of staff to address complaint receipt developments—for example temporarily increasing our Real Time Resolution and Intake areas, to assist with incoming call volumes due to the finalisation of the Transitional Feed-in-Tariff scheme and when a large energy retailer implemented its new billing system.

We restructured our management team to align with the strategy underpinning our current operating model. A General Manager Operations role was created with overarching responsibility for end-to-end case handling process and all associated team manager roles.

We performed strongly against most of our case closure key performance indicators, just missing on 28 days energy case closure and finishing the year with more cases aged over 90 days than the target level.

## Scheme participants

**We focused on fostering effective scheme participant relationships and working with the companies to drive continued customer service improvements.**

While maintaining the necessary independence, we encouraged more scheme participant staff into the EWOV office (for days, weeks and months) to enable face-to-face information sharing and improve working relationships.

We met more frequently with the companies whose complaint volumes were the highest, working together to bring about effective resolution for customers.

We ran quarterly briefing and feedback sessions on the EWOV 2.0 changes. Over the year, the structure and objectives of these sessions became more tailored to particular companies.

The Ombudsman completed the series of Chief Executive Officer and senior staff meetings.

We delivered monthly training sessions and independently-facilitated complaint handling workshops for scheme participant staff.

## Reach and influence

**We focused on building customer capability for handling their own complaints and maintaining effective relationships with community stakeholders.**

Use of the new EWOV website (launched 2 April 2012) continued to grow:

- 87% more direct traffic
- 80% more referral traffic
- 73% more customers used the online complaint form
- Almost 9,000 views of our new customer videos
- 409% more visitors to our fact sheet pages
- 193% more visitors to our publications pages
- 46% more views of our quarterly newsletter, *Res Online*
- 303% more views of our case studies
- 484% more views of 'hot topics'.

We completed a Community Roadshow, visiting 167 organisations across Victoria to meet with over 800 community workers.

We actively participated in a range of community education and other key stakeholder campaigns.

Through a 'Connecting EWOV' internal communications review, we improved the usability of and staff engagement with our intranet, for greater internal knowledge-sharing and team collaboration. We also developed five key communication values for EWOV, based on the principle of 'right method for the right message to be delivered to the right stakeholders'.

## Innovation

**We focused on pursuing continuous improvement.**

We identified emerging complaint issues, and took advantage of the greater resource flexibility from EWOV 2.0 to reallocate resources across the complaint handling process to the areas of greatest demand.

We regularly reviewed the Best Practice Procedures to ensure their ongoing effectiveness and we developed additional procedures to support the handling of new complaint types.

We implemented a revised Quality Control and Quality Assurance Framework that balances immediate feedback from team managers with independent quality assurance, to support a fair, independent and efficient service.

We embarked on a process of improvements to the three key information systems which underpin EWOV's work—the staff intranet, the scheme participant extranet and the human resources information system.

## Human Resources

**We focused on building a vibrant, engaged and dynamic workforce.**

We realigned the responsibilities of the Human Resources team, to rebalance strategic and operational demands and deliver more contemporary learning and development services.

We completely reviewed our internal and scheme participant training.

We received the preliminary results from the 2012-13 staff survey. While there were extremely positive results in the Intake area, high complaint volumes appear to have affected the results for Real Time Resolution and Investigations staff. A comprehensive action plan will address priority areas.

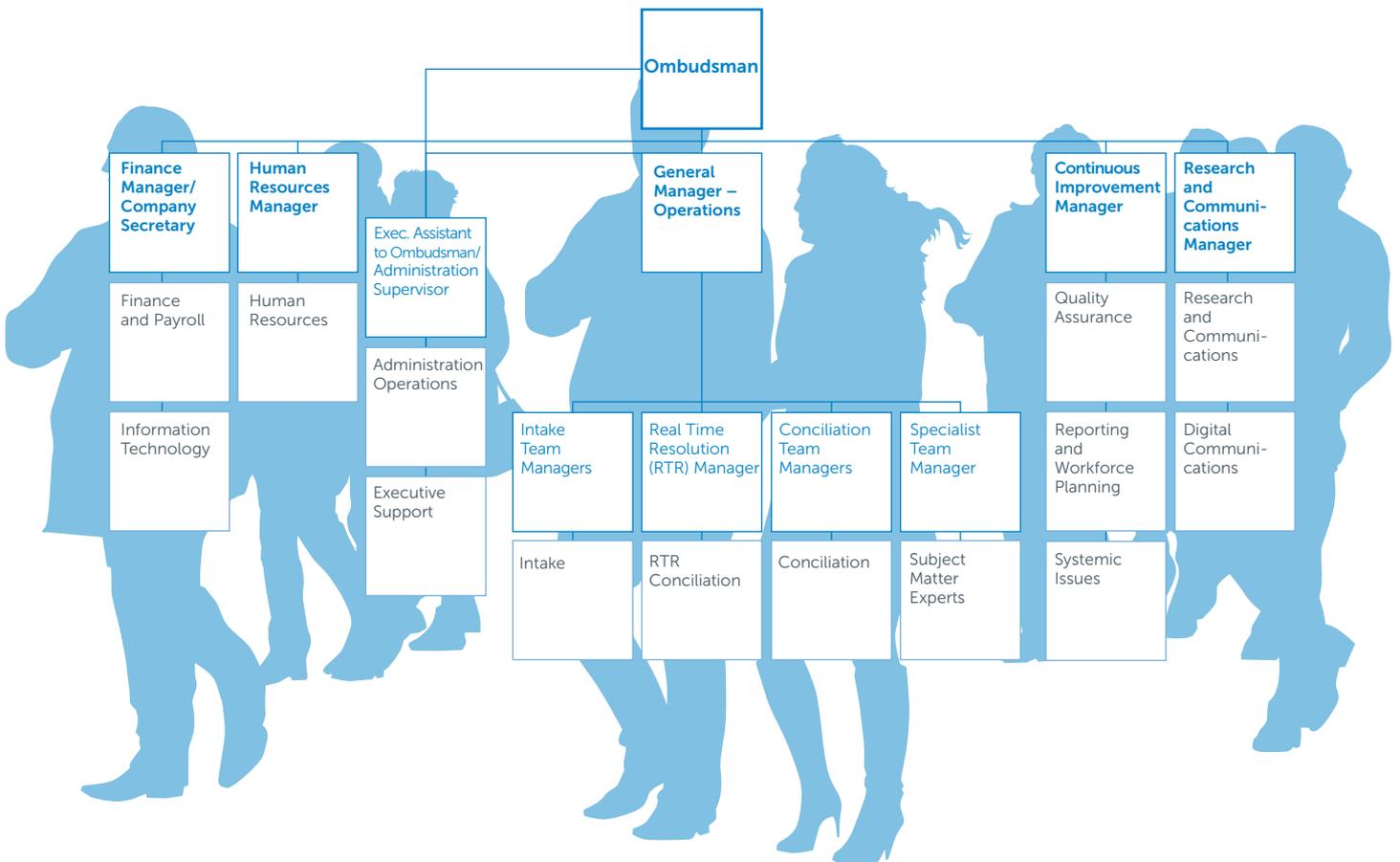
## Finance

**We focused on responsible management of scheme resources, balancing efficiencies with effectiveness.**

We brought EWOV's total costs in at \$13.5 million, 21% under budget. The major savings were in human resources (\$2.8 million), administration (\$485,000) and capital expenditure (\$239,000).

We achieved a 10% reduction in the average cost per case.

Fig 20: Our organisation



# Scheme participants

**EWOV Limited's register of  
71 members at 30 June 2013**

## 26 electricity retailers

AGL Sales Pty Ltd  
Alinta Retail Energy Pty Ltd  
Aurora Energy Pty Ltd  
Australian Power and Gas Pty Ltd  
Blue NRG Pty Ltd  
Click Energy Pty Ltd  
Country Energy  
Diamond Energy Pty Ltd  
Dodo Power & Gas Pty Ltd  
EnergyAustralia  
ERM Power Retail Pty Ltd  
Go Energy Pty Ltd  
Lumo Energy Australia Pty Ltd  
Momentum Energy Pty Ltd  
Neighbourhood Energy Pty Ltd  
Origin Energy Electricity Ltd  
Pacific Hydro Retail Pty Ltd #  
People Energy Pty Ltd +  
Powerdirect  
Powerdirect Australia Pty Ltd  
Powershop Australia Pty Ltd  
Red Energy Pty Ltd  
Simply Energy  
SPI Electricity Pty Ltd (SP AusNet)  
Sun Retail Pty Ltd  
TRUenergy Pty Ltd

## 5 electricity distributors

CitiPower Pty  
Jemena Electricity Networks  
Powercor Australia Ltd  
SPI Electricity Pty Ltd (SP AusNet)  
United Energy Vic

## 2 electricity transmission companies

Basslink Pty Ltd  
SPI PowerNet Pty Ltd (SP AusNet)

## 10 natural gas retailers

AGL Sales Pty Ltd  
AGL Sales (Queensland)  
(formerly Sun Gas Retail Pty Ltd)  
Australian Power and Gas Pty Ltd  
EnergyAustralia  
Lumo Energy Australia Pty Ltd  
Origin Energy Retail Ltd  
Origin Energy Vic Pty Ltd  
Red Energy Pty Ltd  
Simply Energy  
TRUenergy Pty Ltd

## 4 natural gas distributors

Envestra Limited  
Multinet Gas Vic  
SPI Networks (Gas) Pty Ltd  
(SP AusNet)  
Vic Gas Distribution Pty Ltd

## 5 liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) retailers

Elgas Limited  
Origin Energy Retail Ltd  
Origin Energy-Powergas Pty Ltd  
Supagas Pty Ltd  
Wesfarmers Kleenheat Gas Pty Ltd

## 3 metropolitan water retailers

City West Water Corporation  
South East Water Corporation  
Yarra Valley Water Corporation

## 1 metropolitan water wholesaler

Melbourne Water Corporation

## 11 regional urban water corporations

Barwon Water Corporation  
Central Gippsland Region  
Water Corporation \*  
Central Highlands Region  
Water Corporation  
Coliban Region Water Corporation  
East Gippsland Region  
Water Corporation  
Goulburn Valley Region  
Water Corporation  
North East Region Water Corporation  
South Gippsland Region  
Water Corporation  
Wannon Region Water Corporation  
Western Region Water Corporation  
Westernport Region  
Water Corporation

## 2 rural water corporations

Goulburn-Murray Rural  
Water Corporation  
Gippsland and Southern Rural  
Water Corporation

## 2 rural urban water corporations

Grampians Wimmera Mallee  
Water Corporation  
Lower Murray Urban and Rural  
Water Corporation

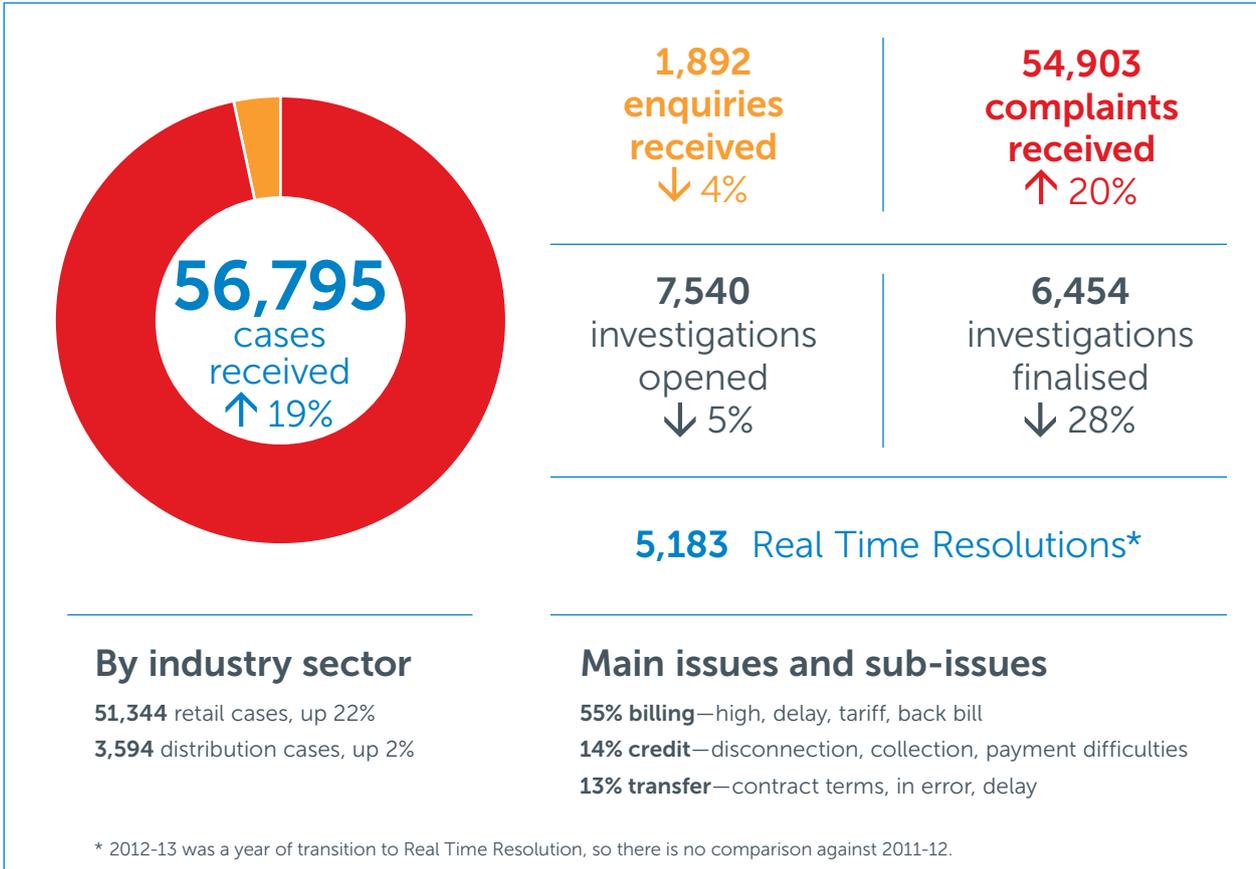
### NOTES

# Pacific Hydro Retail Pty Ltd joined on 23 August 2012.

+ People Energy joined on 6 December 2012.

\* Central Gippsland Region Water Corporation is commonly known as Gippsland Water.  
Integral Energy left on 15 July 2012, having given 12 months' notice.

## 2012-13 cases overall



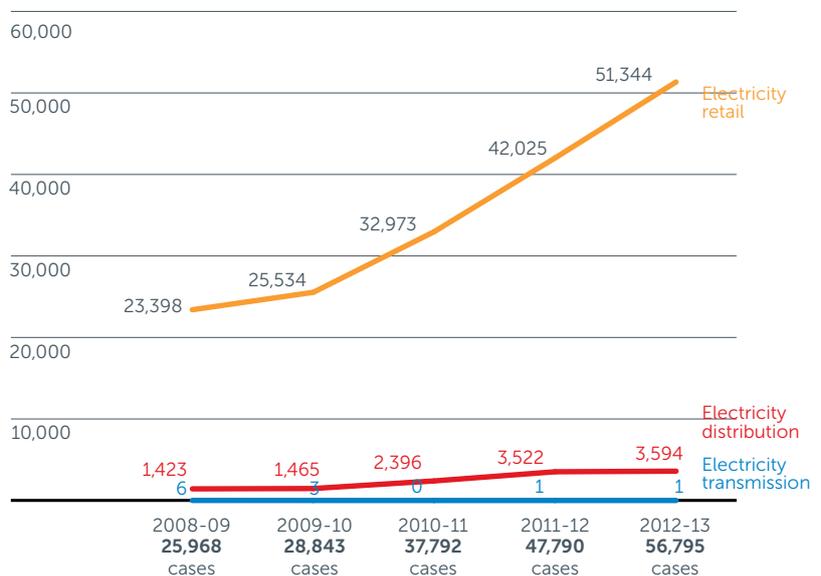
The electricity industry in Victoria is privately owned, independently regulated and operates within the National Energy Market.

There are just over 2.33 million electricity customers in Victoria. These customers can choose their retailer. They can't choose their distributor, because each of the five electricity distributors owns the 'poles and wires' network in a specific part of the state. At 30 June 2013, 26 retailers, 5 distributors and 2 transmission companies were electricity participants in the EWOV scheme.

### For more information

- Behind the billing cases page 22
- Behind the credit cases page 24

Fig 21: Trends in electricity cases



Note: The overall cases for each year also includes a number of cases which were non-industry specific.

Fig 22: Electricity cases we received and finalised in 2012-13

		OVERALL CASES		ENQUIRIES	TOTAL COMPLAINTS	COMPLAINTS RECEIVED			RTR <sup>1</sup>	investigations finalised
		2012-13	2011-12			investigations	assisted referrals	unassisted referrals		
<b>RETAIL</b> customer bandwidth <sup>^</sup>										
AGL Sales	☺☺☺	6,949	6,057	133	6,816	1,501	4,302	1,013	498	1,406
Alinta Energy <sup>2</sup>	☺	232	0	19	213	14	137	62	10	5
Aurora Energy	☺	3	2	1	2	0	0	2	0	0
Australian Power & Gas	☺	2,566	1,963	48	2,518	388	1,767	363	217	309
Blue NRG <sup>3</sup>	☺	5	-	0	5	0	4	1	0	0
Click Energy	☺	384	126	14	370	38	254	78	26	32
Diamond Energy	☺	27	18	1	26	5	16	5	1	1
Dodo Power & Gas	☺	311	157	8	303	12	225	66	21	12
EnergyAustralia	☺	2,278	1,155	46	2,232	229	1,483	520	187	195
EnergyAustralia (formerly TRUenergy)	☺☺☺	17,018	12,052	173	16,845	2,360	12,544	1,941	2,254	1,706
ERM Power <sup>3</sup>	☺	2	-	0	2	0	0	2	0	0
Integral Energy Australia	☺	35	11	4	31	0	1	30	0	0
Lumo Energy	☺	3,286	3,578	60	3,226	251	2,429	546	237	242
Momentum Energy	☺	640	289	11	629	103	416	110	62	90
Neighbourhood Energy	☺	981	852	19	962	133	686	143	78	107
Origin Energy	☺☺☺	11,063	11,008	129	10,934	1,700	7,654	1,580	992	1,655
Origin Energy (Country Energy <sup>4</sup> )	☺	418	302	11	407	43	273	91	39	37
People Energy <sup>3</sup>	☺	13	-	3	10	0	2	8	0	0
Powerdirect (AGL)	☺	811	528	11	800	145	524	131	38	123
Powerdirect Australia (AGL)	☺	3	2	1	2	0	0	2	0	0
Red Energy	☺	1,804	1,497	36	1,768	151	1,281	336	120	133
Simply Energy	☺	2,515	2,426	32	2,483	164	1,931	388	165	151
Sun Retail (Electricity)	☺	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total retail</b>		<b>51,344</b>	<b>42,025</b>	<b>760</b>	<b>50,584</b>	<b>7,237</b>	<b>35,929</b>	<b>7,418</b>	<b>4,945</b>	<b>6,204</b>
<b>DISTRIBUTION</b> % customers ~										
CitiPower	12%	224	223	10	214	18	110	86	10	13
Jemena Electricity Networks	12%	455	506	19	436	29	248	159	31	21
Powercor Australia	27%	582	759	15	567	49	303	215	43	47
SP AusNet	24%	1,251	1,093	43	1,208	57	790	361	74	53
United Energy Distribution	25%	1,082	941	28	1,054	150	659	245	80	116
<b>Total distribution</b>		<b>3,594</b>	<b>3,522</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>3,479</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>2,110</b>	<b>1,066</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>250</b>
<b>TRANSMISSION</b>										
Basslink		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SP AusNet		1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
<b>Total transmission</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>NON COMPANY SPECIFIC</b>										
Non company specific		1,856	2,242	1,017	839	0	0	839	0	0
<b>ELECTRICITY TOTALS</b>		<b>56,795</b>	<b>47,790</b>	<b>1,892</b>	<b>54,903</b>	<b>7,540</b>	<b>38,039</b>	<b>9,324</b>	<b>5,183</b>	<b>6,454</b>

## NOTES:

2,839 electricity Investigations were upgraded to Stage 2 during the year, 1,285 were upgraded to Stage 3 and 512 were upgraded to Final Stage.

1. The Real Time Resolution (RTR) process commenced on 1 July 2012.

2. Alinta Energy joined EWOV as an electricity and gas retail participant in April 2012 but was not marketing until 2012-13.

3. Blue NRG, People Energy and ERM Power joined EWOV as electricity retail participants in June 2012 but were not marketing until 2012-13.

Retailers engaged in marketing activities take the view that their marketing may have an impact on their case numbers from time to time.

<sup>^</sup> Customer bandwidths: ☺ denotes less than 250,000 customers at 30 June 2013; ☺☺ 250,001 - 500,000 customers; ☺☺☺ 500,001 - 750,000 customers. From the Essential Services Commission's *Energy Retailers Comparative Performance Report Pricing 2012 - 2013* (October 2013).

# Electricity continued

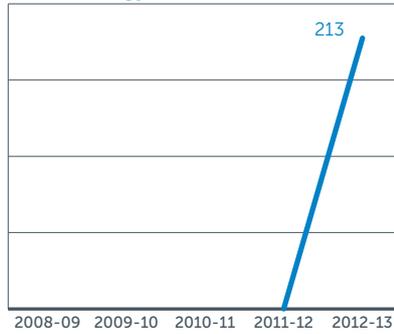
Fig 23: Complaint receipt trends for electricity companies – past 5 years

## ELECTRICITY RETAIL

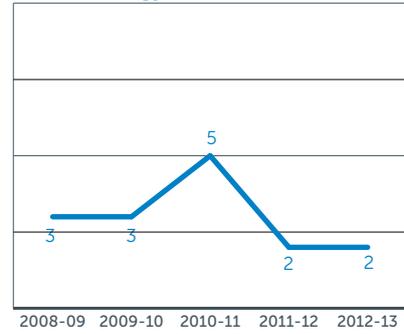
### AGL Sales



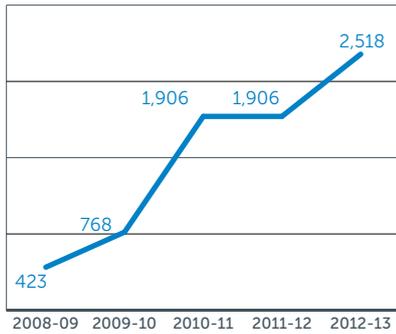
### Alinta Energy <sup>4</sup>



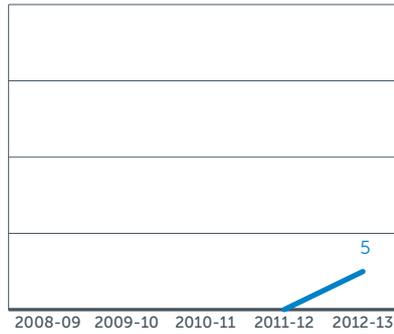
### Aurora Energy



### Australian Power & Gas



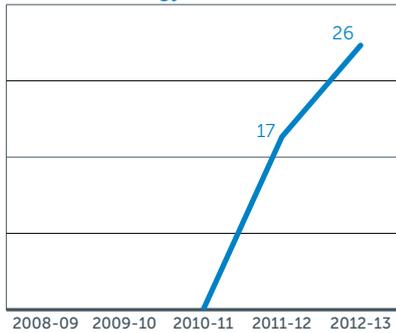
### Blue NRG <sup>5</sup>



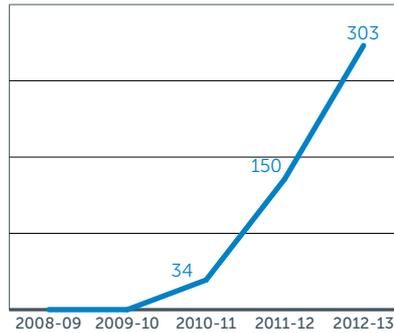
### Click Energy



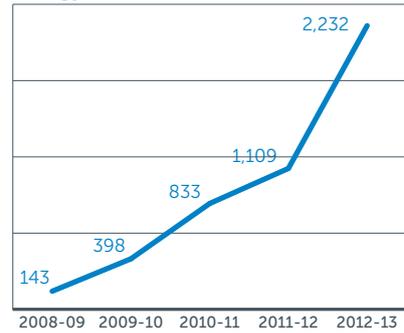
### Diamond Energy <sup>1</sup>



### Dodo Power & Gas



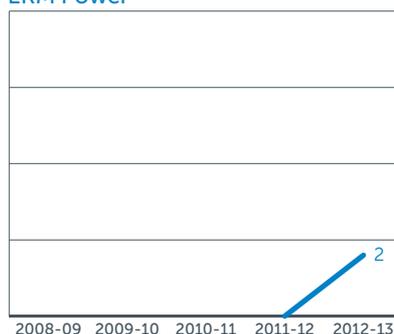
### EnergyAustralia



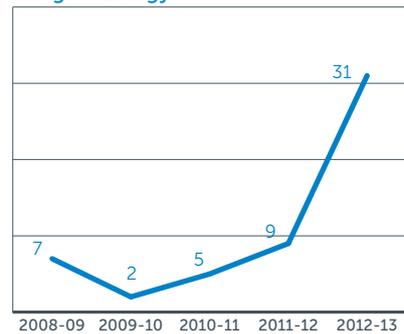
### EnergyAustralia (formerly TRUenergy)



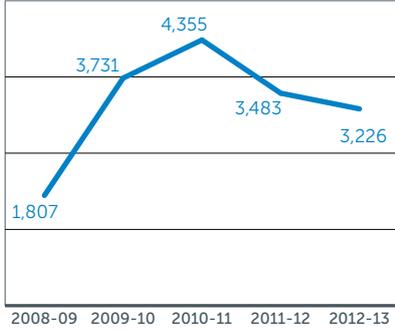
### ERM Power <sup>5</sup>



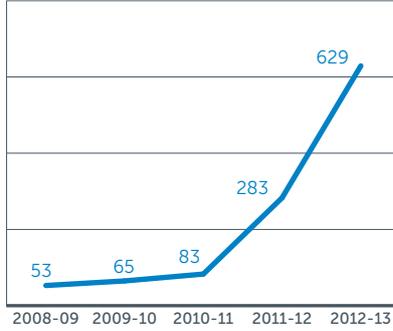
### Integral Energy<sup>3</sup>



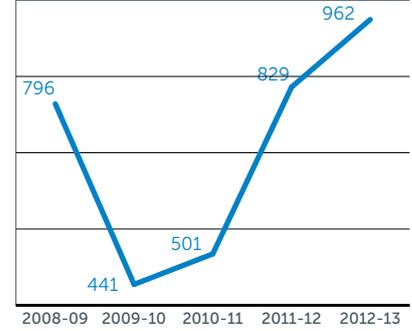
Lumo Energy <sup>2</sup>



Momentum Energy Pty Ltd



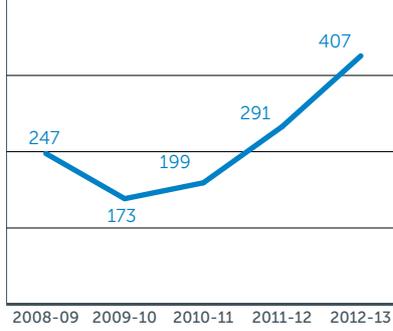
Neighbourhood Energy



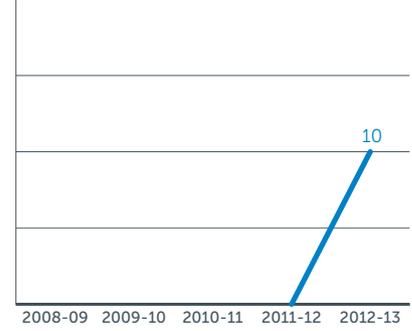
Origin Energy



Origin Energy (Country Energy)



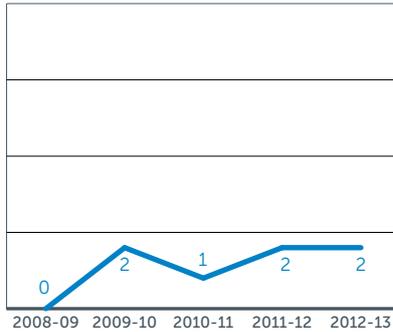
People Energy <sup>5</sup>



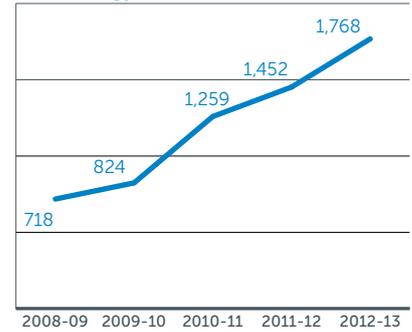
Powerdirect (AGL)



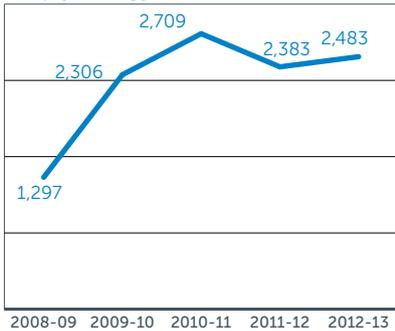
Powerdirect Australia (AGL)



Red Energy

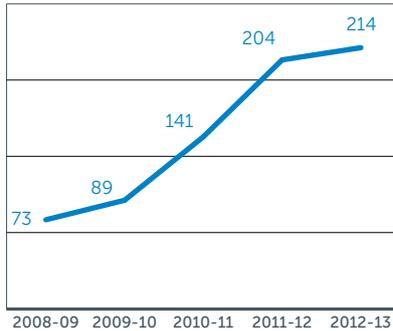


Simply Energy

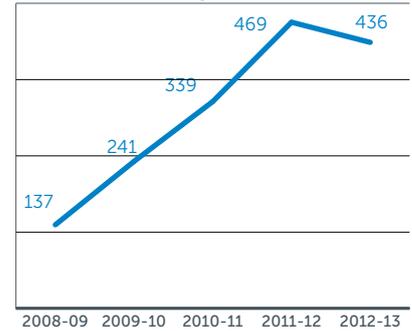


**ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTION**

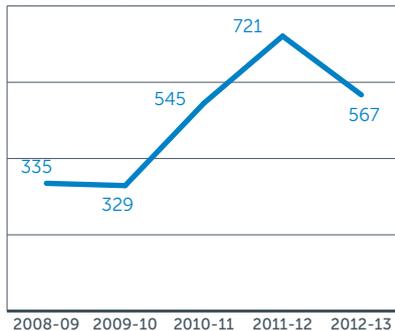
CitiPower



Jemena Electricity Networks



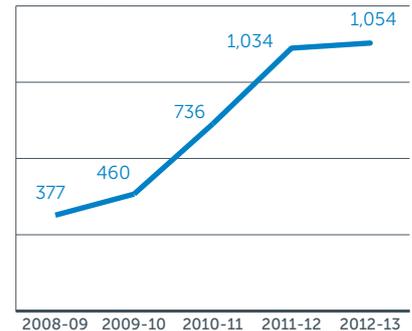
Powercor Australia



United Energy Distribution

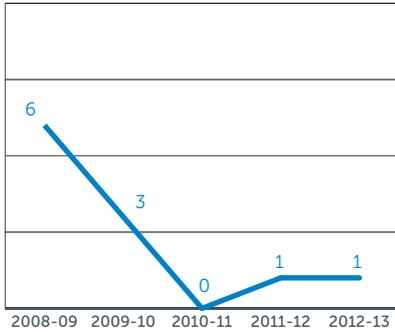


SP AusNet



## ELECTRICITY TRANSMISSION

### SP AusNet

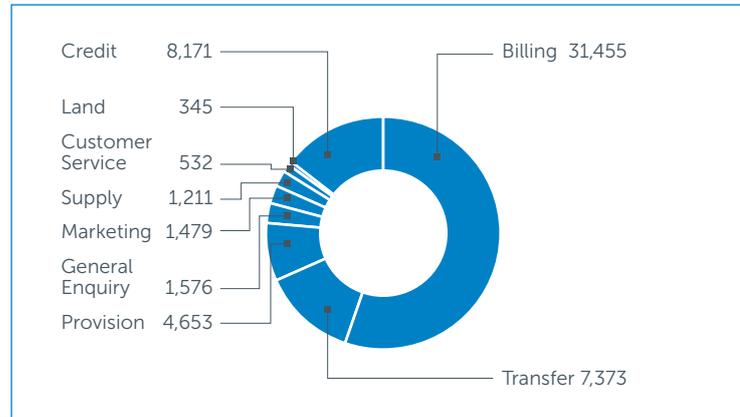


**NOTES:**

No cases have been registered for transmission company, Basslink, over the past 5 years.

1. Diamond Energy joined EWOV as an electricity retail participant in December 2010, but was not marketing until 2012-13.
2. Until July 2010, Lumo Energy was known as Victoria Electricity.
3. Integral Energy left EWOV on 15 July 2012.
4. Alinta Energy joined EWOV as an electricity and gas retail participant in April 2012 but was not marketing until 2012-13.
5. Blue NRG, People Energy and ERM Power joined EWOV as electricity retail participants in June 2012 but were not marketing until 2012-13.

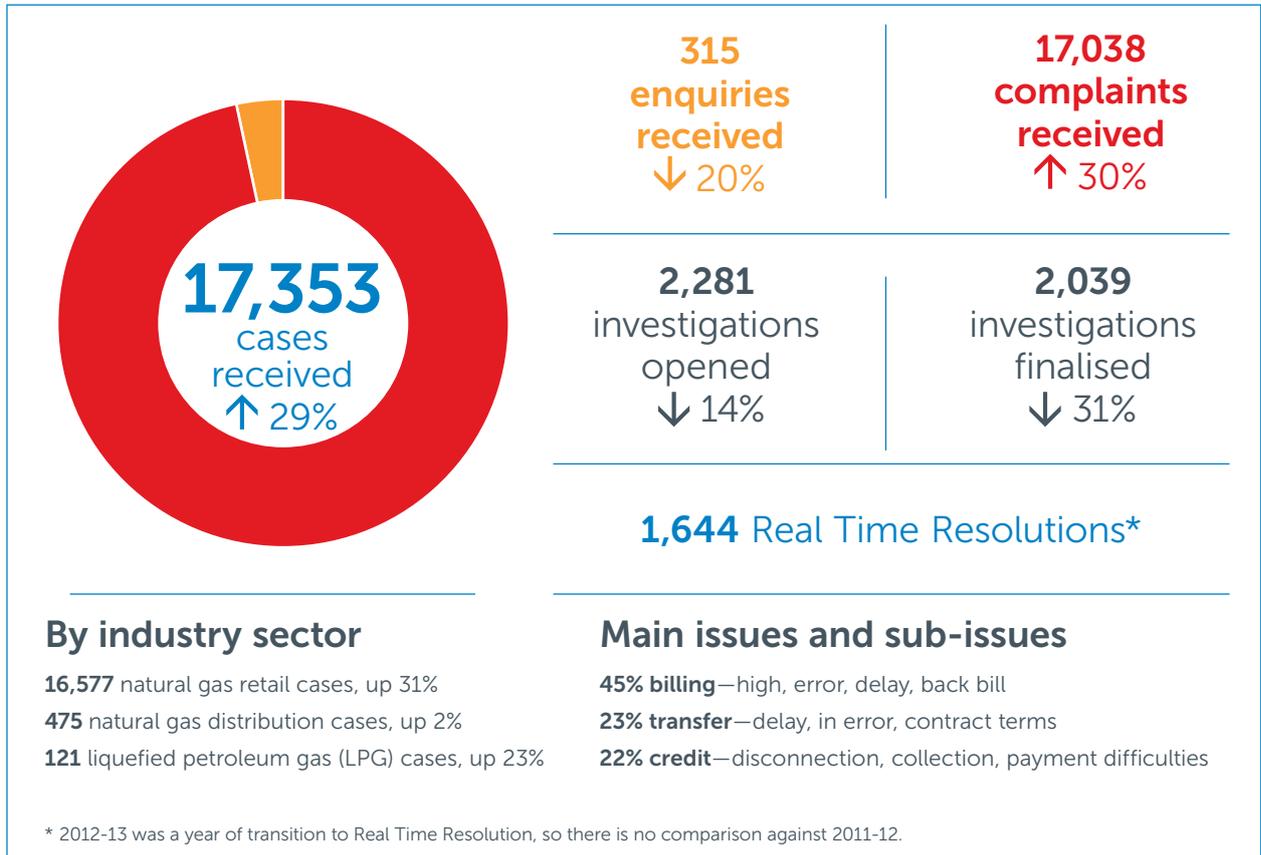
Fig 24: Main issues raised by electricity customers



Issues	Number
<b>Total issues</b>	<b>56,795</b>
<b>Billing (55%)</b>	<b>31,455</b>
High	6,315
Delay	5,265
Tariff	4,960
Back bill	4,314
Error	3,769
Estimation	1,949
Meter	1,229
Fees and Charges	996
Refund	949
Concession / Rebate	690
Other	555
Format	464
<b>Credit (14%)</b>	<b>8,171</b>
Disconnection	3,981
Collection	2,586
Payment Difficulties	1,604
<b>Transfer (13%)</b>	<b>7,373</b>
Contract Terms	1,677
In Error	1,398
Delay	1,189
Without Consent	1,063
Cooling-off Rights	692
Billing	567
Site Ownership	494
Objection	293
<b>Provision (8%)</b>	<b>4,653</b>
Existing Connection	3,895
New Connection	491
Disconnection	267

Issues	Number
<b>General Enquiry (3%)</b>	<b>1,576</b>
Energy	1,573
Non Energy	3
<b>Marketing (3%)</b>	<b>1,479</b>
Misleading	847
Pressure Sales	284
Information	152
Other	147
Non Account Holder	49
<b>Supply (2%)</b>	<b>1,211</b>
Off Supply - Unplanned	565
Off Supply - Planned	357
Variation	239
Sustainability Initiatives	32
Quality	18
<b>Customer Service (&lt;1%)</b>	<b>532</b>
Poor Service	164
Failure to Consult / Inform	100
Privacy	89
Failure to Respond	73
Incorrect Advice / Information	72
Poor / Unprofessional Attitude	34
<b>Land (&lt;1%)</b>	<b>345</b>
Network Assets	154
Vegetation Management	86
Other	72
Street Lighting	19
Easement	14

## 2012-13 cases overall



The natural gas industry in Victoria is privately owned, independently regulated and operates within the National Energy Market.

There are almost 1.8 million natural gas customers in Victoria. These customers can choose their retailer. They can't choose their distributor, because each of the four natural gas distributors owns a network of pipes in a specific part of the state.

Customers using LPG at home, or in their business, can choose to purchase it from LPG retailers or resellers operating in their area. EWOV's jurisdiction extends to LPG retailers only.

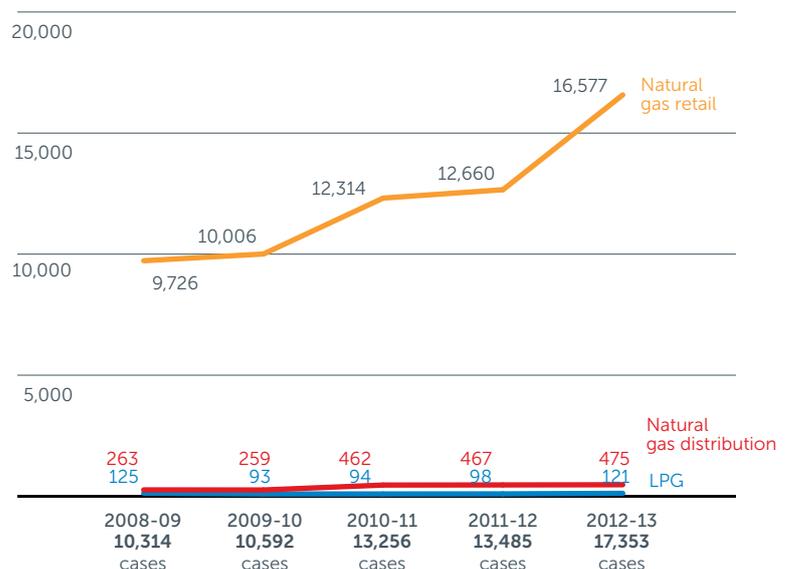
At 30 June 2013, 10 natural gas retailers, 4 natural gas distributors and 5 liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) retailers were gas participants in the EWOV scheme.

### For more information

Behind the billing cases page 22

Behind the credit cases page 24

Fig 25: Trends in gas cases



Note: The overall cases for each year also includes a number of cases which were non-industry specific.

# Gas continued

40

Fig 26: Gas cases we received and finalised in 2012-13

		OVERALL CASES		ENQUIRIES	TOTAL COMPLAINTS	COMPLAINTS RECEIVED			RTR <sup>1</sup>	investigations finalised
		2012-13	2011-12			investigations	assisted referrals	unassisted referrals		
<b>NATURAL GAS RETAIL</b> customer bandwidth <sup>^</sup>										
AGL Sales	👤👤👤	2,806	2,585	38	2,768	601	1,753	414	205	588
AGL Sales Qld	👤	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Alinta Energy <sup>2</sup>	👤	64	-	3	61	2	49	10	1	1
Australian Power & Gas	👤	1,166	1,082	15	1,151	214	794	143	83	168
Dodo Power & Gas	👤	18	-	0	18	0	13	5	0	0
EnergyAustralia	👤	691	294	13	678	54	490	134	54	44
EnergyAustralia (formerly TRUenergy)	👤👤👤	5,830	3,092	60	5,770	628	4,529	613	765	492
Lumo Energy	👤	1,164	1,219	19	1,145	120	879	146	80	115
Origin Energy	👤👤👤	3,440	3,158	38	3,402	492	2,500	410	338	466
Red Energy	👤	477	415	8	469	52	340	77	19	54
Simply Energy	👤	921	815	18	903	65	715	123	63	62
<b>Total natural gas retail</b>		<b>16,577</b>	<b>12,660</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>16,365</b>	<b>2,228</b>	<b>12,062</b>	<b>2,075</b>	<b>1,608</b>	<b>1,990</b>
<b>NATURAL GAS DISTRIBUTION</b> % customers ~										
Envestra	31%	150	171	4	146	9	87	50	7	7
Multinet Gas	36%	226	192	11	215	23	145	47	15	23
SP AusNet	33%	99	104	4	95	8	60	27	10	7
<b>Total natural gas distribution</b>		<b>475</b>	<b>467</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>NON COMPANY SPECIFIC</b>										
Natural gas		173	253	76	97	0	0	97	0	0
LPG		7	7	2	5	0	0	5	0	0
<b>LPG (RETAILER SPECIFIC)</b>										
Elgas		49	63	3	46	3	23	20	2	3
Kleenheat		22	12	2	20	3	11	6	1	3
Origin Energy LPG		43	18	0	43	6	28	9	1	5
Powergas		0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Supagas		7	3	1	6	1	3	2	0	1
<b>Total LPG (retailer specific)</b>		<b>121</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>GAS TOTALS</b>		<b>17,353</b>	<b>13,485</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>17,038</b>	<b>2,281</b>	<b>12,419</b>	<b>2,338</b>	<b>1,644</b>	<b>2,039</b>

**NOTES:**

1,225 gas Investigations were upgraded to Stage 2 during the year, 266 were upgraded to Stage 3 and 102 were upgraded to Final Stage.

Gas retailers engaged in marketing activities take the view that their marketing may have an impact on their case numbers from time to time.

1 The Real Time Resolution (RTR) process commenced on 1 July 2012.

2 Alinta Energy joined EWOV as an electricity and gas retail participant in April 2012 but was not marketing until 2012-13.

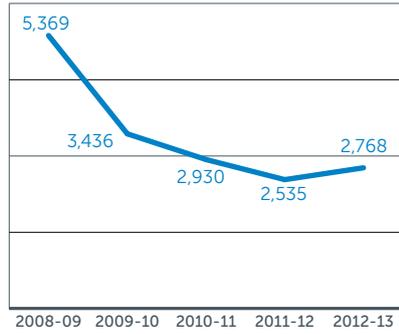
<sup>^</sup> Customer bandwidths: 👤 denotes less than 250,000 customers at 30 June 2013; 👤👤 250,001 - 500,000 customers; 👤👤👤 500,001 - 750,000 customers. This information is taken from the Essential Services Commission's *Energy Retailers Comparative Performance Report Pricing 2012 - 2013* (October 2013). LPG customer numbers are not currently available.

~ Natural gas distributors' customer shares are based on 2011 customer numbers in the Australian Energy Regulator (AER)'s *Victorian Gas Distribution Businesses - Comparative Performance Report 2009 - 2011* (March 2013).

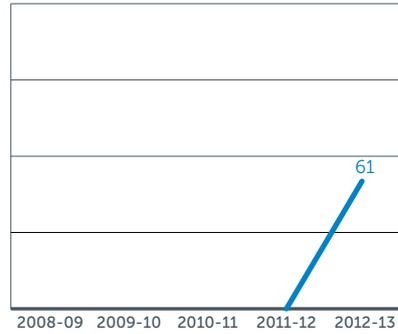
Fig 27: Complaint receipt trends for gas companies – past 5 years

**NATURAL GAS RETAIL**

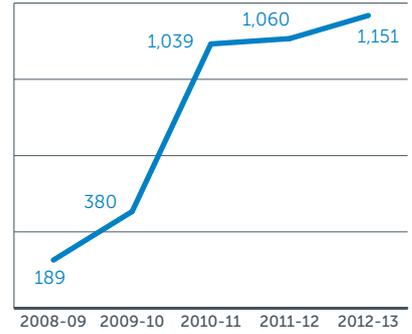
**AGL Sales**



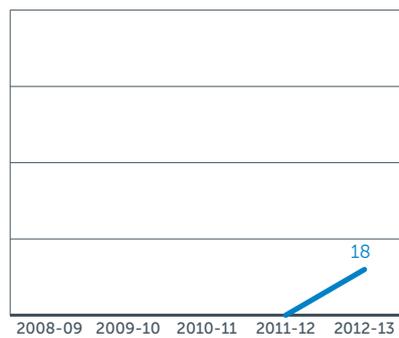
**Alinta Energy**



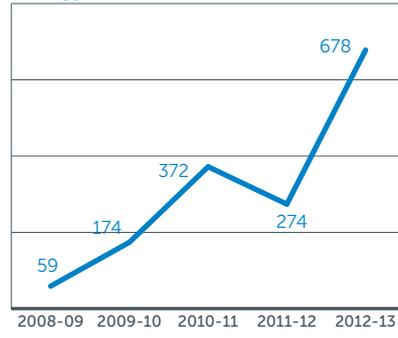
**Australian Power & Gas**



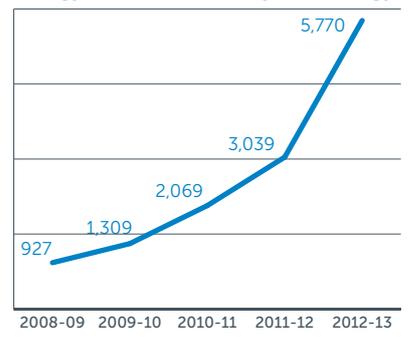
**Dodo Power & Gas**



**EnergyAustralia**



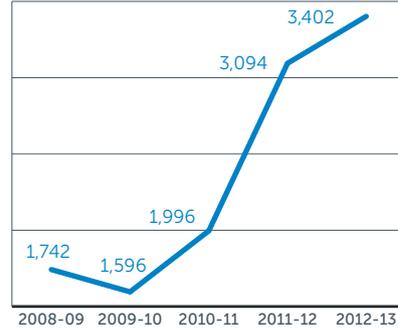
**EnergyAustralia (formerly TRUenergy)**



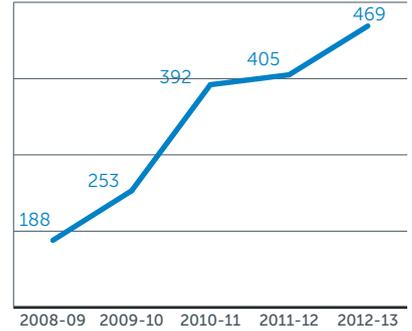
**Lumo Energy**



**Origin Energy**



**Red Energy**



**NATURAL GAS DISTRIBUTION**

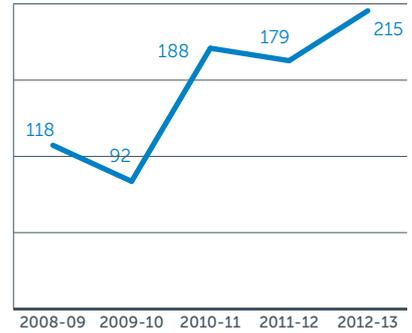
**Simply Energy**



**Envestra**



**Multinet Gas**



# Gas continued

42

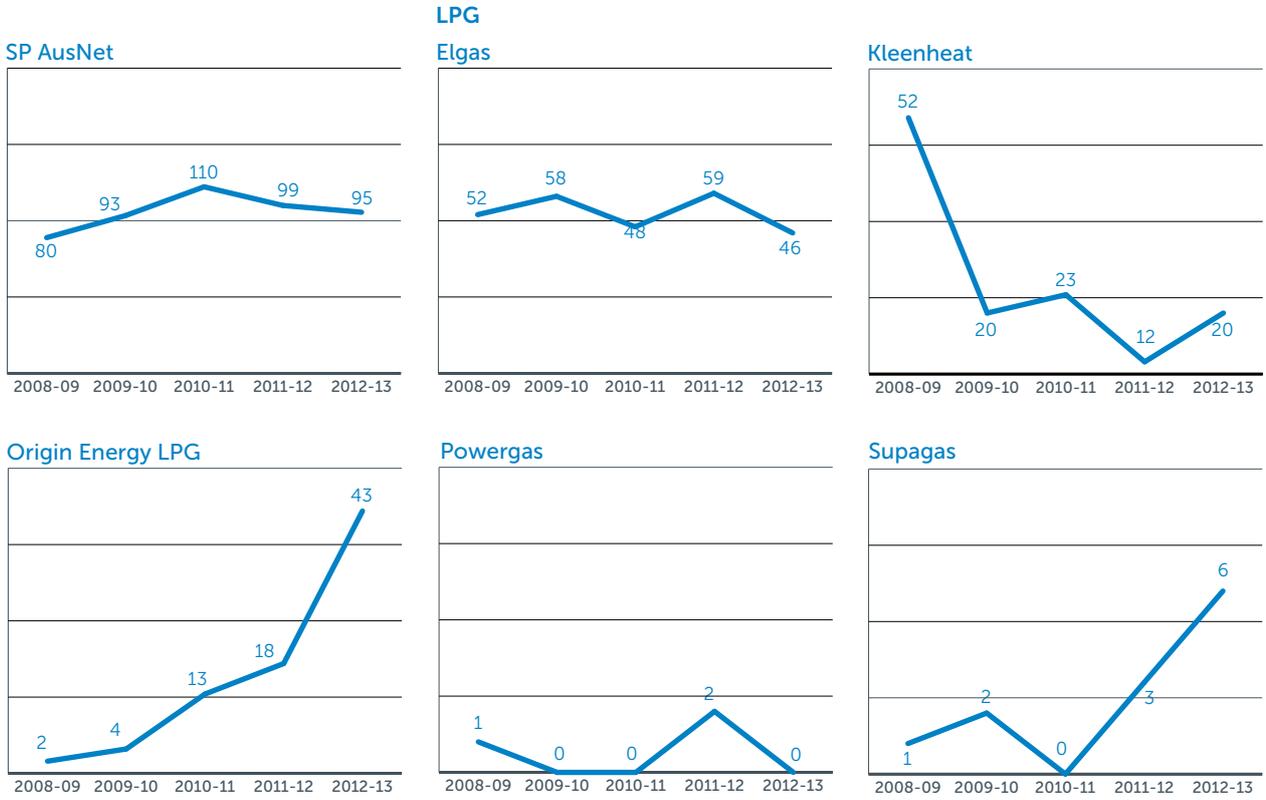
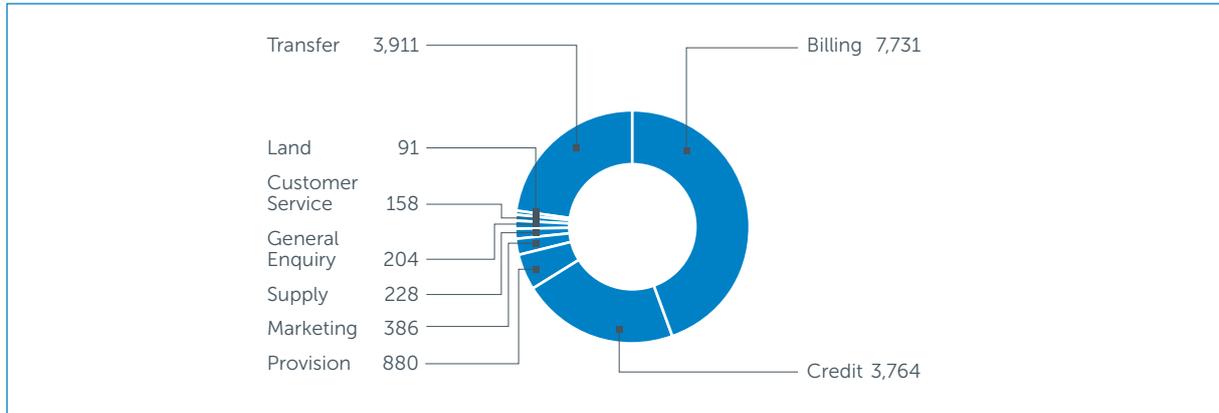


Fig 28: Main issues raised by gas customers

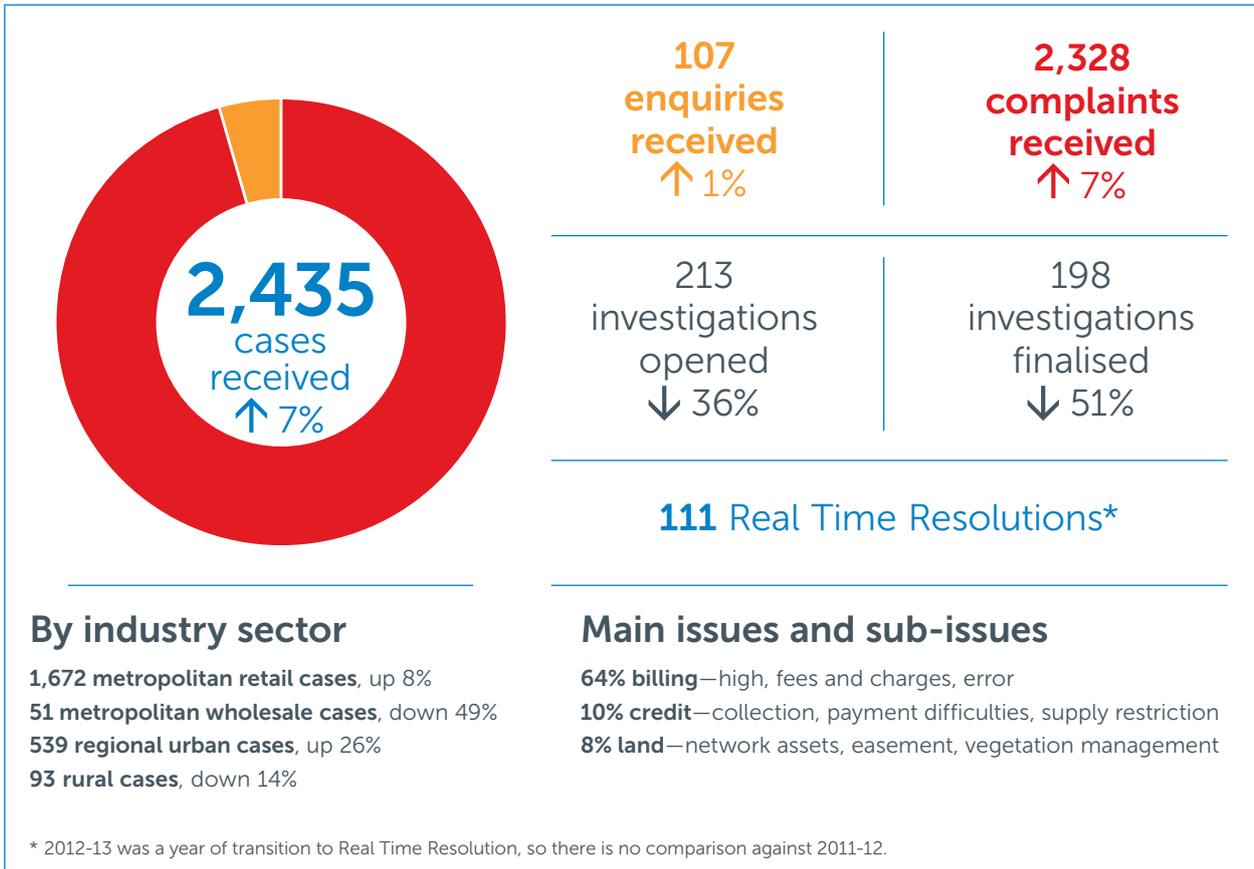


Issues	Number
<b>Total issues</b>	<b>17,353</b>
<b>Billing (45%)</b>	<b>7,731</b>
High	1,960
Error	1,613
Delay	1,065
Back bill	718
Estimation	648
Meter	404
Refund	324
Concession / Rebate	280
Other	203
Fees and Charges	202
Tariff	160
Format	143
Price of LPG	11
<b>Transfer (23%)</b>	<b>3,911</b>
Delay	862
In Error	643
Contract Terms	633
Without Consent	521
Site Ownership	415
Billing	371
Cooling-off Rights	294
Objection	172

Issues	Number
<b>Credit (22%)</b>	<b>3,764</b>
Disconnection	2,090
Collection	939
Payment Difficulties	722
Deliveries Stopped	13
<b>Provision (5%)</b>	<b>880</b>
Existing Connection	481
New Connection	282
Disconnection	114
Deliveries Stopped	3
<b>Marketing (2%)</b>	<b>386</b>
Misleading	267
Pressure Sales	57
Information	24
Other	23
Non Account Holder	15
<b>Supply (1%)</b>	<b>228</b>
Off Supply - Unplanned	113
Quality	76
Off Supply - Planned	21
Variation	17
Sustainability Initiatives	1

Issues	Number
<b>Customer Service (&lt;1%)</b>	<b>158</b>
Poor Service	50
Failure to Respond	37
Privacy	29
Incorrect Advice / Information	18
Failure to Consult / Inform	16
Poor / Unprofessional Attitude	8
<b>Land (&lt;1%)</b>	<b>91</b>
Network Assets	44
Other	44
Easement	3
<b>General Enquiry (1%)</b>	<b>204</b>
Energy	203
Non Energy	1

## 44 2012-13 cases overall



19 water corporations constituted under the *Water Act 1989* make up Victoria's water sector. All are State-owned water corporations which provide a range of water services to customers within their service areas—water supply, sewage and trade waste disposal and treatment, water delivery for irrigation and domestic and stock purposes, drainage and salinity mitigation services. Some of them also manage bulk water storages and designated recreational areas throughout Victoria.

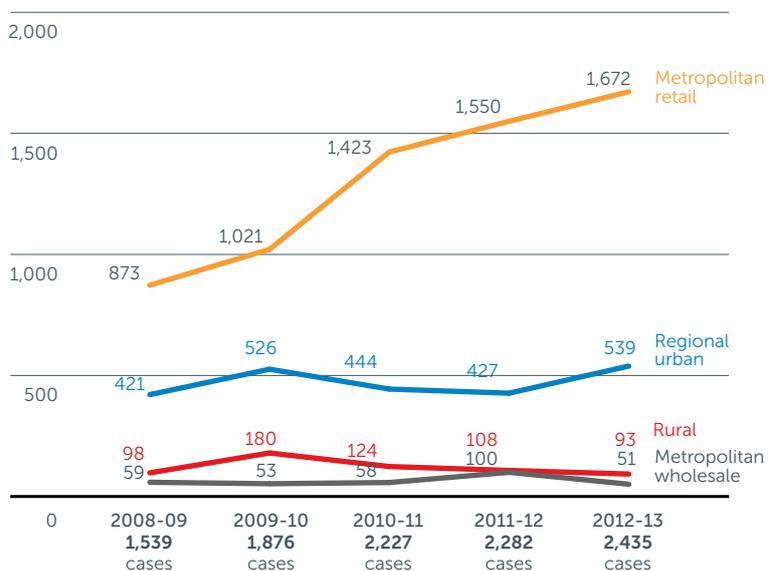
At 30 June 2013, 3 metropolitan retailers, 1 metropolitan wholesaler, 11 regional urban water corporations, 2 rural water corporations and 2 rural urban water corporations were water participants in the EWOV scheme.

### For more information

Behind the billing cases page 22

Behind the credit cases page 24

Fig 29: Trends in water cases



Note: The overall cases for each year also includes a number of cases which were non-industry specific.

Fig 30: Water cases we received and finalised in 2012-13

	OVERALL CASES		ENQUIRIES	TOTAL COMPLAINTS	COMPLAINTS RECEIVED			RTR <sup>1</sup>	investigations finalised
	2012-13	2011-12			investigations	assisted referrals	unassisted referrals		
<b>METROPOLITAN RETAIL (sector share)</b>									
City West Water (22%)	455	424	11	444	59	275	110	19	51
South East Water (38%)	415	373	15	400	29	282	89	16	25
Yarra Valley Water (40%)	802	753	18	784	71	560	153	44	72
<b>Total metropolitan retail water</b>	<b>1,672</b>	<b>1,550</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>1,628</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>1,117</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>148</b>
<b>METROPOLITAN WHOLESALE</b>									
Melbourne Water	51	100	3	48	6	19	23	0	7
<b>REGIONAL URBAN (sector share)</b>									
Barwon Water (21%)	108	65	6	102	9	51	42	4	8
Central Highlands Water (10%)	54	54	1	53	4	32	17	7	4
Coliban Water (10%)	77	52	3	74	12	49	13	2	11
East Gippsland Water (3%)	13	10	0	13	1	10	2	1	1
Gippsland Water (10%)	45	48	0	45	1	33	11	2	1
Goulburn Valley Water (8%)	32	21	1	31	1	23	7	1	1
Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water (5%)	26	25	0	26	1	18	7	1	0
Lower Murray Water (5%)	10	17	0	10	1	5	4	0	1
North East Water (7%)	47	20	3	44	4	29	11	3	3
South Gippsland Water (3%)	10	13	1	9	1	6	2	0	1
Wannon Water (6%)	60	39	0	60	5	32	23	3	5
Western Water (8%)	40	45	2	38	0	28	10	3	0
Westernport Water (2%)	17	18	0	17	0	12	5	1	0
<b>Total regional urban water</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>427</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>522</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>RURAL (sector share)</b>									
Goulburn-Murray Water (55%)	61	58	1	60	5	38	17	3	3
Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water (13%)	17	28	0	17	1	9	7	0	2
Lower Murray Water (12%)	7	11	0	7	1	5	1	1	1
Southern Rural Water (21%)	8	11	1	7	1	4	2	0	1
<b>Total rural water</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>NON COMPANY SPECIFIC</b>									
Non company specific	80	97	41	39	0	0	39	0	0
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>2,435</b>	<b>2,282</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>2,328</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>1,520</b>	<b>595</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>198</b>

## NOTES:

8 water Investigations were upgraded to Stage 2 during the year, 11 were upgraded to Stage 3 and none were upgraded to Final Stage.

Metropolitan and regional urban water corporations' sector shares are based on the water customer numbers in the ESC's *Water performance report - Performance of urban water businesses 2011-12* (December 2012).

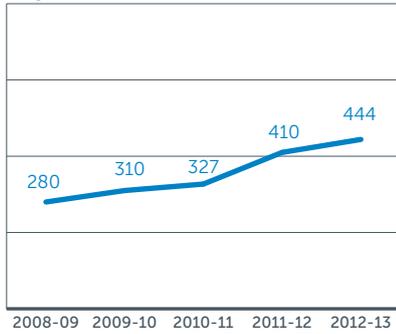
1 The Real Time Resolution (RTR) process commenced on 1 July 2012.

# Water continued

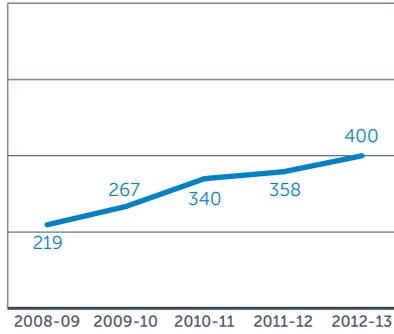
Fig 31: Complaint receipt trends for water corporations – past 5 years

## METROPOLITAN RETAIL

### City West Water



### South East Water

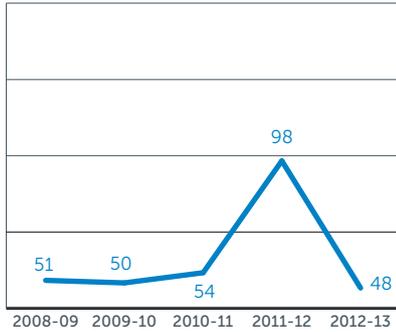


### Yarra Valley Water



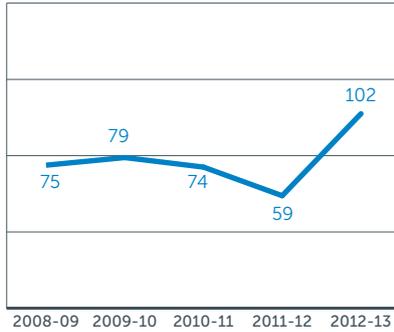
## METROPOLITAN WHOLESALE

### Melbourne Water

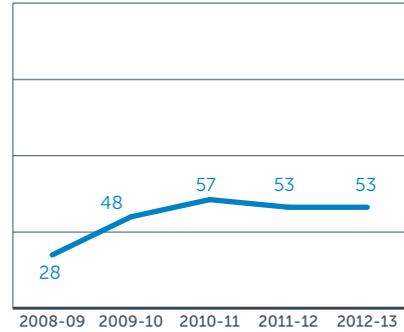


## REGIONAL URBAN

### Barwon Water



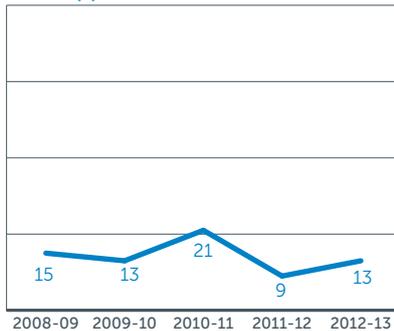
### Central Highlands Water



### Coliban Water



### East Gippsland Water



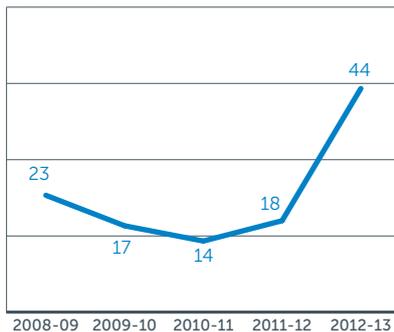
### Gippsland Water



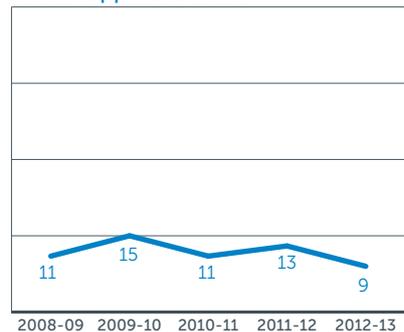
### Goulburn Valley Water



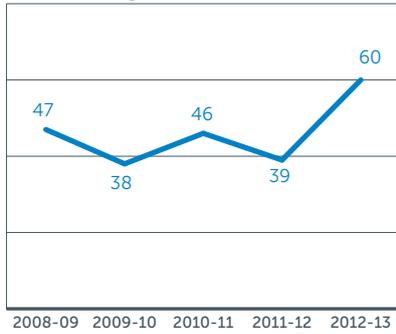
### North East Water



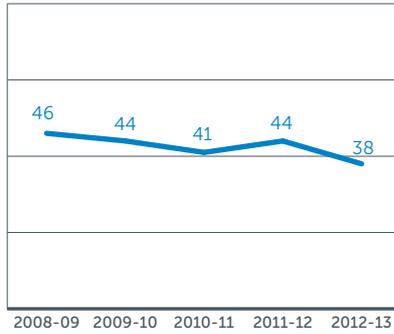
### South Gippsland Water



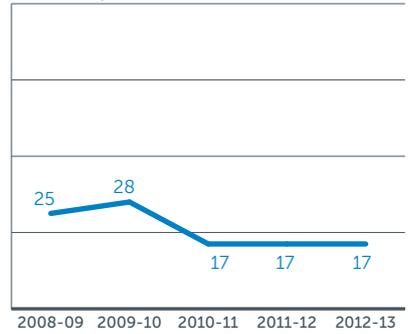
Wannon Region Water



Western Water

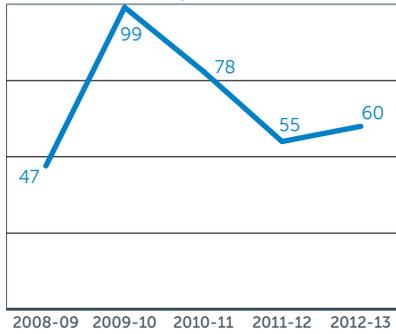


Westernport Water

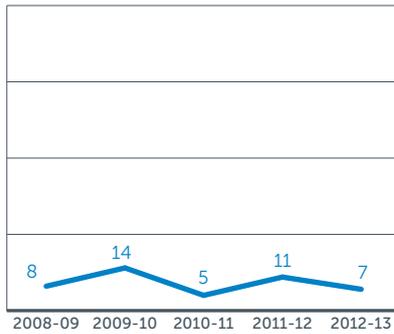


**RURAL**

Goulburn-Murray Rural Water



Southern Rural Water



**RURAL URBAN**

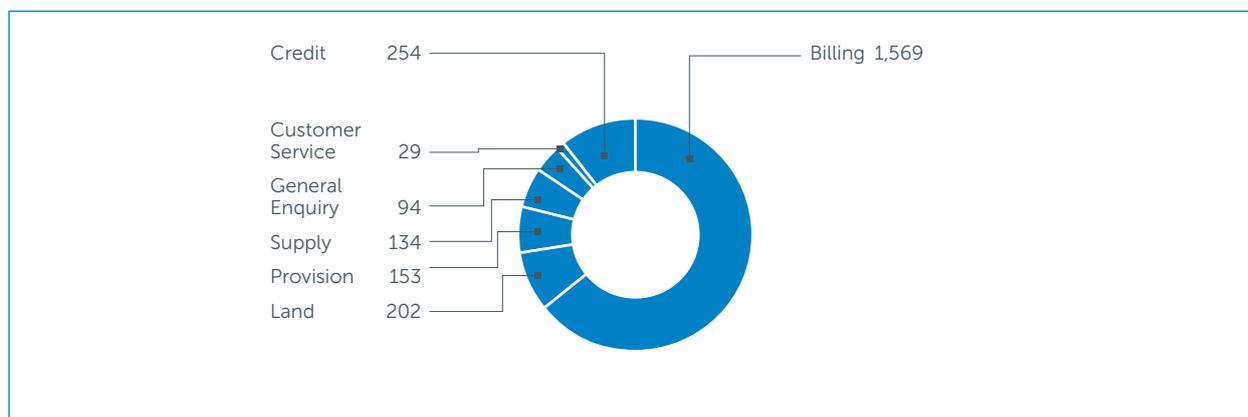
Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water



Lower Murray Water



Fig 32: Main issues raised by water customers



Issues	Number
<b>Total issues</b>	<b>2,435</b>
<b>Billing (64%)</b>	<b>1,569</b>
High	706
Fees and Charges	288
Error	152
Back bill	124
Other	67
Concession / Rebate	49
Format	44
Meter	41
Estimation	31
Refund	27
Delay	23
Tariff	17
<b>Credit (10%)</b>	<b>254</b>
Collection	121
Payment Difficulties	70
Restriction	63

Issues	Number
<b>Land (8%)</b>	<b>202</b>
Network Assets	90
Other	89
Easement	18
Vegetation Management	5
<b>Provision (6%)</b>	<b>153</b>
Existing Connection	74
New Connection	74
Restriction	5
<b>Supply (6%)</b>	<b>134</b>
Sewer / Stormwater Overflow / Blockage	40
Quality	36
Off Supply - Unplanned	20
Water Licensing	20
Off Supply - Planned	6
Water Restrictions	6
Variation	4
Sustainability Initiatives	2

Issues	Number
<b>Customer Service (1%)</b>	<b>29</b>
Failure to Consult / Inform	8
Poor Service	8
Incorrect Advice / Information	7
Failure to Respond	3
Privacy	2
Poor / Unprofessional Attitude	1
<b>General Enquiry (4%)</b>	<b>94</b>
Water	94

## Income Statement

For the year ended 30 June 2013

	2013	2012
	\$	\$
<b>Revenue</b>	<b>15,075,903</b>	16,035,598
Employee benefits expense	<b>(9,838,490)</b>	(10,767,683)
Depreciation and amortisation expense	<b>(389,764)</b>	(377,071)
Loss on disposal of plant and equipment	<b>(11,929)</b>	0
Rental expense	<b>(1,207,318)</b>	(1,116,618)
Administration expenses	<b>(967,026)</b>	(1,429,544)
Consultancy expenses	<b>(553,812)</b>	(1,350,124)
Marketing expenses	<b>(99,362)</b>	(148,247)
Training and development	<b>(184,837)</b>	(347,293)
Office lease make good obligations	<b>(33,600)</b>	(33,600)
Surplus before income tax expense	<b>1,789,765</b>	465,418
Income tax expense	-	-
<b>Total Comprehensive Income for the year</b>	<b>1,789,765</b>	465,418

### Balance Sheet

As at 30 June 2013

	2013	2012
	\$	\$
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	8,589,020	7,026,703
Trade and other receivables	1,000	0
Other	232,091	71,192
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>8,822,111</b>	7,097,895
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>		
Plant and equipment	996,744	1,191,714
<b>Total Non-Current Assets</b>	<b>996,744</b>	1,191,714
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>9,818,855</b>	8,289,609
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Trade and other payables	2,483,568	2,918,974
Provisions	620,791	535,616
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>3,104,359</b>	3,454,590
<b>Non-Current Liabilities</b>		
Provisions	412,880	323,168
<b>Total Non-Current Liabilities</b>	<b>412,880</b>	323,168
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>3,517,239</b>	3,777,758
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>6,301,616</b>	4,511,851
<b>Members' Equity</b>		
Retained earnings	6,301,616	4,511,851
<b>Total Members' Equity</b>	<b>6,301,616</b>	4,511,851

## Statement of Cash Flows

For the year ended 30 June 2013

	2013	2012
	\$	\$
<b>Cash Flows from Operating Activities</b>		
Levy receipts from Members (inclusive of goods and services tax)	<b>15,970,528</b>	18,066,114
Payments to suppliers and employees (inclusive of goods and services tax)	<b>(14,557,347)</b>	(16,599,996)
Interest received	<b>355,859</b>	492,738
<b>Net cash (outflow)/inflow from operating activities</b>	<b>1,769,040</b>	1,958,856
<b>Cash Flows from Investing Activities</b>		
Payments for plant and equipment	<b>(206,723)</b>	(397,805)
Proceeds from sale of assets	<b>0</b>	0
<b>Net cash (outflow) from investing activities</b>	<b>(206,723)</b>	(397,805)
<b>Net (decrease)/increase in cash and cash equivalents</b>	<b>1,562,317</b>	1,561,051
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the Financial Year</b>	<b>7,026,703</b>	5,465,652
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the Financial Year</b>	<b>8,589,020</b>	7,026,703

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## Quick guide to tables/graphs/charts in this report

- Fig 1: EWOV's dispute resolution process (pages 10 and 11)
- Fig 2: The change in Investigation to Assisted Referral ratios over the past 5 years (page 12)
- Fig 3: The impact of Real Time Resolution (page 13)
- Fig 4: The 77,149 cases received by EWOV in 2012-13 (page 14)
- Fig 5: Complaints received – overall and by industry, past 5 years (page 14)
- Fig 6: Residential, business and other customers (page 15)
- Fig 7: Metropolitan and regional/rural (page 15)
- Fig 8: Why customers contacted us (page 15)
- Fig 9: How customers contacted us (page 15)
- Fig 10: How customers found out about us (page 15)
- Fig 11: By Council/Shire, cases EWOV received from residential customers (page 16)
- Fig 12: Trends in billing cases (page 18)
- Fig 13: Trends in credit cases (page 18)
- Fig 14: Trends in transfer cases (page 19)
- Fig 15: The main issues customers raised with us (page 20)
- Fig 16: Tracking EWOV's credit-related actual and imminent energy disconnection and water restriction cases against unrequested disconnections and restrictions by energy and water companies (page 25)
- Fig 17: Incoming calls (page 30)
- Fig 18: Average days to close Investigations (page 30)
- Fig 19: Customer satisfaction survey results (page 30)
- Fig 20: Our organisation (page 32)
- Fig 21: Trends in electricity cases (page 34)
- Fig 22: Electricity cases we received and finalised in 2012-13 (page 35)
- Fig 23: Complaint receipt trends for electricity companies, past 5 years (page 36)
- Fig 24: Main issues raised by electricity customers (page 38)
- Fig 25: Trends in gas cases (page 39)
- Fig 26: Gas cases we received and finalised in 2012-13 (page 40)
- Fig 27: Complaint receipt trends for gas companies, past 5 years (page 41)
- Fig 28: Main issues raised by gas customers (page 43)
- Fig 29: Trends in water cases (page 44)
- Fig 30: Water cases we received and finalised in 2012-13 (page 45)
- Fig 31: Complaint receipt trends for water corporations, past 5 years (page 46)
- Fig 32: Main issues raised by water customers (page 48)



## How to contact EWOV

We can help if you have a problem with an electricity, gas or water company which you can't resolve directly with that company. Our services are free and available to everyone.

### Phone us

1800 500 509 (free call)

Calls from mobile phones may attract charges. We can ring you back.

If calling from a restricted phone service, ring 12550 (Telstra reverse charges) and ask for (03) 8672 4460. We will accept the reverse charges and the call cost.

Interpreter service: 131 450

National Relay Service: 133 677

### Write to us

GPO Box 469 Melbourne 3001

### Email us

[ewovinfo@ewov.com.au](mailto:ewovinfo@ewov.com.au)

### Use the forms on our website

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

### Fax us

1800 500 549 (free fax)

ABN: 57 070 516 175



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