

# Do you have a problem with your electricity, gas or water services provider?

## Call the Energy and Water Ombudsman

Revised  
November 2017

The Energy and Water Ombudsman Western Australia is an independent, impartial body that investigates and resolves complaints about electricity, gas and water services providers in Western Australia.

**Our services are free.**

### Who can complain to us?

Residential and small business customers of electricity, gas or water services and other people affected by a water service can complain to us orally or in writing. You can authorise another person to act on your behalf.

### Who can you complain to us about?

You can complain about the electricity, gas and water services providers listed on our website at [www.ombudsman.wa.gov.au/energyandwater](http://www.ombudsman.wa.gov.au/energyandwater) or you can contact us for information.

### When should you complain to us?

Before contacting us, you should try to resolve your complaint with the electricity, gas or water services provider. If your complaint is not resolved, or if there is an unreasonable delay, you can contact us. Your complaint must be about events that you have known about for less than 12 months (unless there are special circumstances).

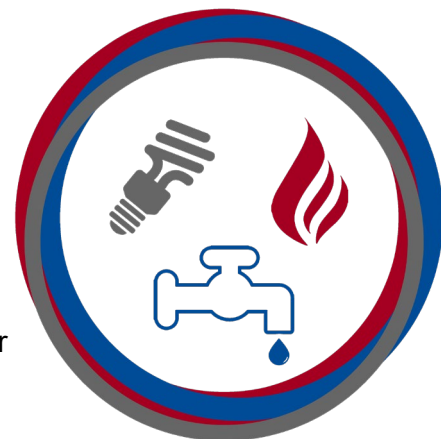
### What can we investigate?

- **Supply of electricity, gas or water services** - including the quality and reliability of supply and the supply of drainage, irrigation or sewerage.
- **Billing** - including disputed bills, disputed meter readings, fees and pensioner rebates.
- **Credit and payment** - including consideration of the circumstances of a particular customer.
- **Debt recovery** - including debt collection.
- **Disconnection** - including restriction of supply.
- **Service standard payments** - for not meeting electricity or water service standards.
- **Marketing** - including gas, electricity or water for sale and transfers between providers.
- **Use of statutory powers in relation to land** - including use of a provider's powers in relation to a person's own land, neighbouring land or property.
- **Water services that affect a person** - including people other than customers.

### What can't we investigate?

- The setting of prices or tariffs or determining price structures.
- The content of Government policies.
- Commercial activities not covered by the provider's electricity, gas or water service licence.
- Complaints under consideration by, or previously considered by, any court or tribunal or the Ombudsman considers should be dealt with by a court or tribunal.
- Matters that are required by law to only be handled by another authority.

We may decline to investigate your complaint if it is not about something that happened to you or affected you personally or there is a more appropriate body to deal with the complaint or an investigation or further investigation is not warranted.



**Free, independent and fair complaint resolution**

## What happens when you make a complaint?

The way we handle your complaint depends on what action has already been taken to resolve it, as shown in the diagram.

We will ask you to try to resolve the matter with the electricity, gas or water services provider first. If your complaint remains unresolved, we will investigate and, where appropriate, try to resolve the complaint.

## What happens if we investigate?

We are impartial and do not act for either party and our processes are informal and as timely as possible.

We contact your provider to get more information about your concerns. We may also contact you for more information and will listen to both you and your provider.

We must take certain things into account, including:

- Events beyond the provider's reasonable control; and
- Actions that a regulator has directed the provider to take.

The length of time it takes to investigate can vary. For more complex matters, it can take some time for us to collect and consider all the relevant information. We will contact you during the investigation when there are developments in your case. If your complaint takes longer than usual, we will keep in contact with you to inform you about the progress of our investigation.

## How will my complaint be resolved?

During the investigation, we look for opportunities to resolve your complaint by agreement between you and your provider. If you agree to a resolution, we will stop our investigation and close your complaint.

If your provider cannot agree on a resolution with you:

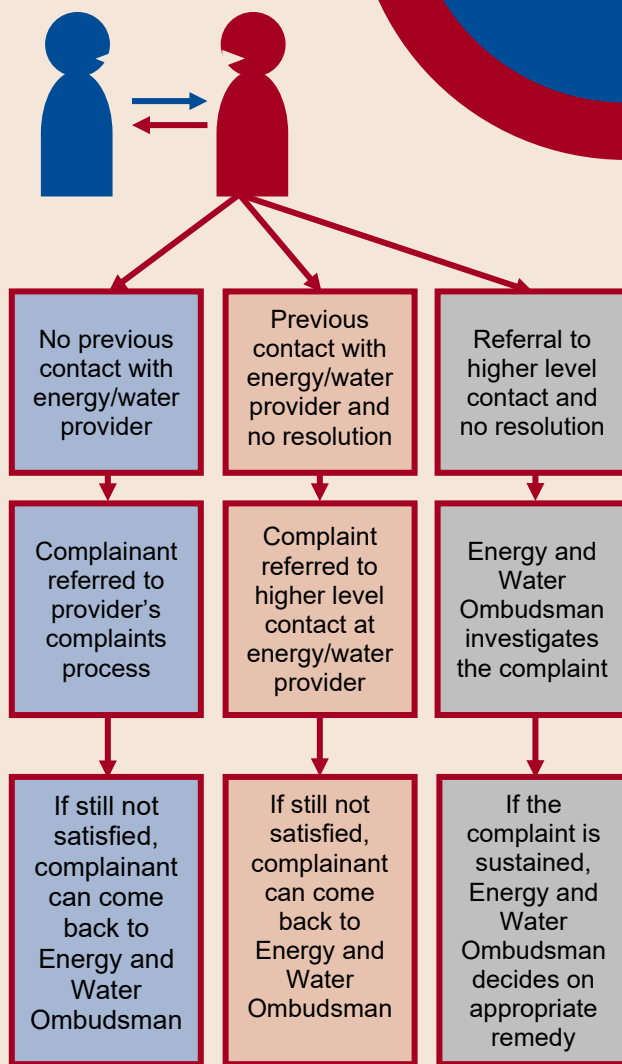
- We may form the view that your complaint is not substantiated or a reasonable resolution has been offered in the circumstances and stop our investigation; or
- The Ombudsman may resolve your complaint by making a binding decision on action to be taken by the provider to resolve the issue. The Ombudsman has the authority to make binding decisions up to a value of \$20,000 or up to \$50,000 with the agreement of the provider. The provider must comply with the Ombudsman's decision but you may elect whether or not to accept the decision. If you do not accept the decision, you may pursue a remedy through any other options available to you.

## How to contact us

You can ask us for information or lodge a complaint orally or in writing at the contact details shown below or can use our Online Form or print a form from our website.

Complainant contacts the Energy and Water Ombudsman

How we handle complaints



# Energy and Water Ombudsman Western Australia

Call us 08 9220 7588 or Freecall 1800 754 004 (toll free from landlines)



Interpreter 131 450



National Relay Service Quote 08 9220 7555

TTY 133 677

Voice-only (speak and listen) 1300 555 727

SMS Relay Text 0423 677 767

Use the online form on our website [www.ombudsman.wa.gov.au/energyandwater](http://www.ombudsman.wa.gov.au/energyandwater)

Email us at [energyandwater@ombudsman.wa.gov.au](mailto:energyandwater@ombudsman.wa.gov.au)

Write to us at PO Box Z5386 St Georges Terrace Perth WA 6831