



Energy & Water
Ombudsman NSW
Free, fair and independent

EWON Membership Application Pack

Information to assist applicants who operate under
the exemption framework

Last updated September 2018

**Energy & Water
Ombudsman NSW**

Fax 1800 821 291
Free Call 1800 246 545

Web ewon.com.au
Email omb@ewon.com.au

ABN 21079718915
Post PO Box A2436 Sydney South NSW 1235



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1. Introduction

This application pack will assist you in putting together the information necessary for your application and in completing the EWON Membership Application form and Agreement.

The following documents are included in the pack:

- Complaints Handling Policy Template. This is designed to assist you develop a complaint handling policy, if your company does not already have one. The template also contains references to the *Australian/New Zealand Standard: Guidelines for complaint management in organisations*, and links to other complaint handling resources.
- Summary of Member Fees 2018/2019. This is a summary of the current fee schedule.

We have also included an application checklist. Please ensure all the information referred to in the checklist is submitted with your application form and member agreement. This will assist us in preparing your application for consideration by the EWON Board.

2. The Application Process

Membership decisions are usually made by the EWON Board. The EWON Board has delegated the authority to approve membership to exempt entities to the Ombudsman.

Documentation you provide needs to make clear how you will satisfy the criteria for membership of EWON. This includes information about your internal complaint and dispute resolution process, as well as how you will make customers aware that they can come to EWON for independent advice and assistance, as well as if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of a complaint to your organisation.

All information to support an application needs to be provided prior to your application being put forward to the Ombudsman for approval.

3. About EWON

EWON is the government approved dispute resolution scheme for New South Wales electricity and gas customers, and some water customers. EWON was founded in 1998 as an industry-based Ombudsman scheme to independently resolve complaints about Members of the scheme.

As an Ombudsman scheme, we work towards a fair and reasonable outcome for all parties. We are an independent body – we are not a consumer advocate, nor do we represent industry.

We don't just handle complaints – the work we do in the areas of policy and influencing, systemic issues, stakeholder engagement, outreach and awareness raising is also important.

EWON Constitution and Charter

- EWON operates according to its [Constitution and Charter](#)
- Under the Constitution, the **EWON Board** is responsible for corporate governance, funding, policy and strategy. The EWON Board ensures the organisation's independence through its composition of consumer and industry representatives.
- A **Consultative Council meeting** is also established under the Constitution to provide a forum for us to engage and consult with stakeholders, including consumer groups and small business and Members.

Principal responsibilities from the Charter

- **Handle complaints** about the conduct of providers of energy or water services fairly, informally and expeditiously, without charge to the person making the enquiry or complaint.
- **Promote EWON** to consumers and small businesses.
- Encourage and provide advice to Members on the development and maintenance of good complaint-handling practices to assist in the **reduction and avoidance of complaints**.

Our Mission

We aim to provide high quality, independent dispute resolution and to help raise customer service standards in the energy and water industries.

For more information see our website ewon.com.au

4. Complaint handling resources

Under the AER (Retail) Exempt Selling Guidelines and the Electricity Network Service Provider Registration Exemption Guideline there are conditions relating to consumer protections and ensuring customers are aware of the energy ombudsman scheme.

Conditions for exempt sellers

Under the AER (Retail) Exempt Selling Guideline exempt sellers must provide their contact details to the customer and include those contact details on all billing. The exemption holder must develop a set of procedures for dealing with complaints and inform customers of these procedures including their right to contact the ombudsman to lodge a complaint or receive independent advice and information.

The following conditions apply to exempt sellers and relate to specific consumer protections, complaint handling and referring customers to EWON. These are only some of the conditions that exempt sellers are bound by under the AER (Retail) Exempt Selling Guideline.

Condition 2 - Information provision

1. The exempt person must advise exempt customers, in writing, at the start of their tenancy/residency/agreement of the following:
 - a. The legal name, trading name (if relevant) and contact details of the exempt seller
 - d. The exempt customer's rights in relation to dispute resolution including:
 - i. any right the exempt customer has to access the energy ombudsman scheme (if applicable), including to lodge a complaint for free independent information and advice, or any relevant external dispute resolution body in the state or territory in which the exempt customer is located and
 - ii. the exempt person's procedures for handling complaints and disputes.

Condition 3 – Billing and payment arrangements

3. An exempt person must include the following particulars in a bill for an exempt customer:
 - a. the legal name, trading name (if relevant) and contact details of the exempt seller.

Condition 9 - Payment difficulties and disconnection or de-energisation

4. A disconnection warning notice issued pursuant to condition 9(2)(d)(ii) must:
 - g. include details (where applicable) of the existence and operation of the energy ombudsman, including contact details and
 - h. include contact details for the exempt seller.

Condition 10 - When disconnection or de-energisation is prohibited

1. An exempt person must not disconnect or cease energy supply to an exempt customer's premises where:
 - c. the exempt customer has made a complaint directly related to the proposed reason for disconnection or de-energisation to the exempt person, the energy ombudsman or another relevant external dispute resolution body and the complaint remains unresolved or

Condition 16 – Dispute resolution

1. An exempt person must develop and make a set of procedures, detailing the exempt person's procedures for handling complaints and disputes, and those procedures must be provided to exempt customers in accordance with condition 2(1)d(i)
2. The procedures must be consistent with the Australian Standard *AS/NZS 1002:2014 Guidelines for complaint management in organizations* as amended and updated from time to time.
3. In the event of a complaint or a dispute concerning the sale of energy to an exempt customer, and in the absence of a determination of the relevant tenancy tribunal if the customer is a tenant, the exempt person must:
 - c. advise the exempt customer:
 - i. of any right the exempt customer has to access an energy ombudsman (if applicable), including to lodge a complaint or for free independent information and advice, or any other external dispute resolution body in the state or territory where the exempt customer is located, and
 - ii. of the telephone number and other contact details of the energy ombudsman (if applicable).

Conditions for exempt networks

Under the Electricity Network Service Provider Registration Exemption Guideline exempt networks must develop a set of procedures for dealing with complaints and inform customers of these procedures including their right to contact the ombudsman to lodge a complaint or receive independent advice and information.

The following conditions apply to exempt networks and relate to specific consumer protections, complaint handling and referring customers to EWON. These are only some of the conditions that exempt sellers are bound by under the Electricity Network Service Provider Registration Exemption Guideline.

4.1 General requirements

- 4.1.6. Where charges are to apply for services provided by, or in connection with, an exempt network, the following dispute resolution conditions apply:
 - (a) An exempt person must develop and make a set of procedures detailing the exempt person's procedures for handling complaints and disputes, and those procedures must be provided to exempt customers in accordance with condition 4.8.1.1(b)(i).
 - (b) The procedures must be consistent with the Australian Standard *AS/NZS 10002:2014 Guidelines for complaint management in organizations* as amended and updated from time to time.
 - (c) In the event of a complaint or dispute concerning the supply of energy to an exempt customer, and in the absence of a determination of the relevant tenancy tribunal if the customer is a tenant, the exempt person must:
 - i. deal with the complaint or dispute in accordance with the exempt person's procedures for handling complaints and disputes, and
 - ii. make reasonable endeavours to resolve the dispute, and advise the exempt customer:
 - of any right the exempt customer has to access an energy ombudsman (if applicable), including to lodge a complaint or for free independent information and advice, or any other external dispute resolution body in the State or Territory where the exempt customer is located, and

- of the telephone number and other contact details of the energy ombudsman (if applicable).

A dispute resolution mechanism does not require approval by the AER but must be of a type ordinarily applicable to disputes of the kind, be reasonably accessible, timely, binding on the parties to the dispute and not subject to excessive or unnecessary costs nor to costs disproportionate to the amount in dispute.

Where a network owner or operator appoints an agent they, as the principal, remain responsible for ensuring this condition is satisfied.

4.8 Information provision

An Exempt Network Operator must provide information to customers on request, maintain a contact point and keep records as set out in this condition 4.8.

4.8.1 Provision of information to exempt customers

1. The Exempt Network Operator must advise an exempt customer, in writing, at the start of their tenancy/electricity sale agreement of the following:
 - a. any right of the exempt customer, under State or Territory laws, to elect to purchase energy from a retailer of their choice and information on the options for metering that would allow this choice
 - b. the exempt customer's rights in relation to dispute resolution including:
 - i. any right that the exempt customer has to access the energy ombudsman scheme (if applicable), including to lodge a complaint or for free independent information and advice, or any other relevant external dispute resolution body in the State or Territory in which the exempt customer is located.
 - ii. the exempt person's procedures for handling complaints and disputes.

Information for customers and referral to EWON

The following provides guidance about the information that must be provided to customers about EWON and how to refer to EWON in your complaint handling material and on your website.

EWON's Constitution requires members to inform customers that EWON is available to provide them with a free complaints resolution service. This includes making customers aware that they can come directly to EWON for independent advice and assistance.

This information is to be provided to customers verbally, in writing, on your website and in your dispute resolution policy.

The EWON Board has formed the view that material which informs customers about EWON, including Member websites, should align with six key elements. The notification to customers must:

1. use language or other means of communication that are reasonably clear to people across the full range of the providers' customers;
2. be provided in a position and format that is reasonably accessible to those customers when it is currently relevant to them;
3. state that EWON is a free and independent service that can provide information, advice and assistance to customers having concerns about any of the provider's services (subject to any specified exceptions);

4. not state or imply that customers must take their concerns to the provider before contacting EWON;
5. not state or imply that contacting EWON is unlikely to be of assistance to a customer;
6. include contact details for EWON and a link or address for the EWON website.

The Board has also noted that these key elements do not prevent providers from strongly encouraging customers to contact them first and explaining the potential benefits of doing so. Indeed, EWON welcomes appropriate statements of this kind.

Suggested wording

Below is an example to assist you develop your customer referral to EWON. Your referral should reflect your brand/style and be aligned with your internal dispute resolution (IDR) process. Your IDR process should be in accordance with the Australian and NZ Standard Guidelines for complaint handling in organisations AS/NZS10002:2014.

Example 1:

We have an easy accessible complaints process in place should something go wrong. Please note that you also always have the option to contact the Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW (EWON) at any time for independent advice and assistance. EWON's contact details are below.

Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW

Freecall 1800 246 545

Freefax 1800 812 291

Post Reply Paid 86550, Sydney South NSW 1234

Email complaints@ewon.com.au

Website www.ewon.com.au

Example 2:

All our customers have the right to contact the Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW (EWON) at any time for independent advice and assistance. However, we do hope you will contact us directly to allow us the opportunity to rectify any issues. EWON's contact details are below.

Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW

Freecall 1800 246 545

Freefax 1800 812 291

Post Reply Paid 86550, Sydney South NSW 1234

Email complaints@ewon.com.au

Website www.ewon.com.au

Website content

Ideally, a provider's website has a search function that directs customers to the correct area when typing the words 'complaint', 'dispute' and 'ombudsman'. If a search function is not available, the information should be placed in a logical place and be easy to navigate for a full range of customers.

The website should provide customers with clear information on how to lodge a complaint with your organisation, and also provide information on the role of EWON and our free and independent dispute resolution service.

Complaint Handling Policy Template

EWON Membership Requirements

A requirement of EWON membership is to have in place an internal complaints handling policy and complaints handling service for the benefit of customers, and to publicise that service to your customers. These requirements come from EWON's Constitution and the National Energy Retail Law, the Water Industry Competition Act and the AER's exempt entity guidelines.

EWON has developed template tools in order to assist new and existing members meet and continue to fulfil these obligations. This template is designed as a guide for the development or update of your company's complaint handling policy.

Each member will have its own approach in terms of presentation, style and language. This document provides guidance about the essential components of a complaint handling policy.

Acknowledgements

This document is based on the 'Complaints Handling Model Policy' developed by the NSW Ombudsman. With the NSW Ombudsman's agreement, EWON has adapted it for use by members of an industry ombudsman scheme.

The development of this policy has been informed by the following:

- Australian and New Zealand Standard Guidelines for complaint handling in organizations AS/NZS 10002:2014
- NSW Ombudsman Effective complaint handling guidelines, 2nd Edition, December 2010
- Victorian Ombudsman Councils and complaints - a good practice guide, February 2015
- Joint publication of the NSW Ombudsman and Department of Local Government Complaints Management in Councils Practice note no. 9, revised July 2009
- Ombudsman Western Australia Guidelines on complaint handling, November 2010
- Commonwealth Ombudsman Better Practice Guide to Complaint handling 1, April 2009
- NESTA Grumbles Gripes and Grievances The Role of Complaints in Transforming Public Services, April 2013
- Scottish Public Services Ombudsman SPSO Statement of Complaint handling Principles, 2011
- The British and Irish Ombudsman Association Guide to Principles of good complaint handling, 2007
- NSW Ombudsman Managing Unreasonable Complaint Conduct – a Model Policy and Procedure 2012
- Victorian Ombudsman Good Practice Guide, November 2007
- Disability Services Commissioner Victoria Good Practice Guide and Self Audit Tool, 2nd Ed. 2013.

Complaint Handling Policy Template

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This policy is intended to ensure that we handle complaints fairly, efficiently and effectively. Our complaint management system is intended to:

- enable us to respond to issues raised by customers making complaints in a timely and cost-effective way
- boost customer confidence in our processes, and
- provide information that can be used by us to deliver quality improvements in our products, services, staff and complaint handling.

This policy provides guidance to our staff and people who wish to make a complaint on the key principles and concepts of our complaint management system.

1.2 Scope

This policy applies to all staff receiving or managing complaints from customers regarding our products and services.

1.3 Commitment

This company expects staff at all levels to be committed to fair, effective and efficient complaint handling. The following table outlines the nature of the commitment expected from staff and the way that commitment should be implemented.

Who	Commitment	How
Head of [company name]	Promote a culture that values complaints and their effective resolution	Report publicly on [company name]'s complaint handling. Provide adequate support and direction to key staff responsible for handling complaints. Regularly review reports about complaint trends and issues arising from complaints. Encourage all staff to be alert to complaints and assist those responsible for handling complaints to resolve them promptly. Encourage staff to make recommendations for system improvements. Recognise and reward good complaint handling by staff. Support recommendations for product, service, staff and complaint handling improvements arising from the analysis of complaint data.

continued overleaf

Complaint Handling Policy Template

<p>Manager responsible for complaint handling</p>	<p>Establish and manage our complaint management system.</p>	<p>Provide regular reports to [the head of the company] on issues arising from complaint handling work.</p> <p>Ensure recommendations arising out of complaint data analysis are canvassed with [the head of the company] and implemented where appropriate.</p> <p>Recruit, train and empower staff to resolve complaints promptly and in accordance with [company name]'s policies and procedures.</p> <p>Encourage staff managing complaints to provide suggestions on ways to improve the organisation's complaint management system.</p> <p>Encourage all staff to be alert to complaints and assist those responsible for handling complaints resolve them promptly.</p> <p>Recognise and reward good complaint handling by staff.</p>
<p>Staff whose duties include complaint handling</p>	<p>Demonstrate exemplary complaint handling practices</p>	<p>Treat all people with respect, including people who make complaints.</p> <p>Assist people make a complaint, if needed.</p> <p>Comply with this policy and its associated procedures.</p> <p>Keep informed about best practice in complaint handling.</p> <p>Provide feedback to management on issues arising from complaints.</p> <p>Provide suggestions to management on ways to improve the organisation's complaints management system.</p> <p>Implement changes arising from individual complaints and from the analysis of complaint data as directed by management.</p>
<p>All staff</p>	<p>Understand and comply with [company name]'s complaint handling practices.</p>	<p>Treat all people with respect, including people who make complaints.</p> <p>Be aware of [company name]'s complaint handling policies and procedures.</p> <p>Assist people who wish to make complaints access the [company name]'s complaints process.</p> <p>Be alert to complaints and assist staff handling complaints resolve matters promptly.</p> <p>Provide feedback to management on issues arising from complaints.</p> <p>Implement changes arising from individual complaints and from the analysis and evaluation of complaint data as directed by management.</p>

Complaint Handling Policy Template

2. Terms and Definitions

Complaint

Expression of dissatisfaction made to or about us, our products, services, staff or the handling of a complaint where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required.

Complaint management system

All policies, procedures, practices, staff, hardware and software used by us in the management of complaints.

Policy

A statement of instruction that sets out how we should fulfill our vision, mission and goals.

Procedure

A statement or instruction that sets out how our policies will be implemented and by whom.

Complaint Handling Policy Template

3. Guiding principles



3.1 Facilitate complaints

People focus

We are committed to seeking and receiving feedback and complaints about our services, systems, practices, procedures, products and complaint handling.

Any concerns raised in feedback or complaints will be dealt with within a reasonable time frame.

People making complaints will be:

- provided with information about our complaint handling process
- provided with multiples and accessible ways to make complaints
- listened to, treated with respect by staff and actively involved in the complaint process where possible and appropriate, and
- provided with reasons for our decision/s and any options for redress or review.

No detriment to people making complaints

We will take all reasonable steps to ensure that people making complaints are not adversely affected because a complaint has been made by them or on their behalf.

Anonymous complaints

We accept anonymous complaints and will carry out an investigation of the issues raised where there is enough information provided.

Accessibility

Information about how to make a complaint must be easily accessible for a customer, including information on our complaints handling policy.

We will also provide customers with information on their right to contact the Energy & Water Ombudsman of NSW at any time for independent advice and information, as well as go to EWON if they are dissatisfied with our handling of their complaint or dispute. We will provide EWON's contact details on our website.

Complaint Handling Policy Template

Note: It is a condition of EWON membership to inform your customers that EWON is available to provide them with a free complaints resolution service. Also to make customers aware that they can come directly to EWON for independent advice and information.

No charge

Complaining to us is free.

3.2 Respond to complaints

First call resolution

Where possible, complaints will be resolved at first contact with [company name].

Responsiveness

We will promptly acknowledge receipt of complaints.

We will assess and prioritise complaints in accordance with the urgency and/or seriousness of the issues raised. If a matter concerns an immediate risk to safety or security the response will be immediate and will be escalated appropriately.

We are committed to managing people's expectations, and will inform them as soon as possible, of the following:

- the complaints process
- the expected time frames for our actions
- the progress of the complaint and reasons for any delay
- their likely involvement in the process, and
- the possible or likely outcome of their complaint.

Objectivity and fairness

We will address each complaint with integrity and in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner.

We will ensure that the person handling a complaint is different from any staff member whose conduct or service is being complained about.

Conflicts of interests, whether actual or perceived, will be managed responsibly. In particular, internal reviews of how a complaint was managed will be conducted by a person other than the original decision maker.

Responding flexibly

Our staff are empowered to resolve complaints promptly and with as little formality as possible. We will adopt flexible approaches to service delivery and problem solving to enhance accessibility for people making complaints and/or their representatives.

We will assess each complaint on its merits and involve people making complaints and/or their representative in the process as far as possible.

Complaint Handling Policy Template

Confidentiality

We will protect the identity of people making complaints where this is practical and appropriate.

Personal information that identifies individuals will only be disclosed or used by the [company name] as permitted under the relevant privacy laws, secrecy provisions and any relevant confidentiality obligations.

3.3 Manage the parties to a complaint

Complaints involving multiple organisations

Where a complaint involves multiple organisations, we will work with the other organisation/s where possible, to ensure that communication with the person making a complaint and/or their representative is clear and coordinated.

Subject to privacy and confidentiality considerations, communication and information sharing between the parties will also be organised to facilitate a timely response to the complaint.

Where a complaint involves multiple areas within our organisation, responsibility for communicating with the person making the complaint and/or their representative will also be coordinated.

Where our services are contracted out, we expect contracted service providers to have an accessible and comprehensive complaint management system. We take complaints not only about the actions of our staff but also the actions of service providers.

Complaints involving multiple parties

When similar complaints are made by related parties we will try to arrange to communicate with a single representative of the group.

Empowerment of staff

All staff managing complaints are empowered to implement our complaint management system as relevant to their role and responsibilities.

Staff are encouraged to provide feedback on the effectiveness and efficiency of all aspects of our complaint management system.

Managing unreasonable conduct by people making complaints

We are committed to being accessible and responsive to all people who approach us with feedback or complaints. At the same time our success depends on:

- our ability to do our work and perform our functions in the most effective and efficient way possible
- the health, safety and security of our staff, and
- our ability to allocate our resources fairly across all the complaints we receive.

When people behave unreasonably in their dealings with us, their conduct can significantly affect the progress and efficiency of our work. As a result, we will take proactive and decisive action to manage any conduct that negatively and unreasonably affects us and will support our staff to do the same in accordance with this policy.

Complaint Handling Policy Template

4. Complaint management system

First call resolution



Escalated call resolution



4.1 Introduction

When responding to complaints, staff should act in accordance with our complaint handling procedures as well as any other internal documents providing guidance on the management of complaints.

Staff should also consider any relevant legislation and/or regulations when responding to complaints and feedback.

The five key stages in our complaint management system are set out below.

4.2 Receipt of complaints

We will record the complaint and its supporting information. We will also assign a unique identifier to the complaint file.

The record of the complaint will document:

- the contact information of the person making a complaint
- issues raised by the person making a complaint and the outcome/s they want
- any other relevant and
- any additional support the person making a complaint requires.

4.3 Acknowledgement of complaints

We will acknowledge receipt of each complaint promptly, and preferably within (specify number) of working days.

Consideration will be given to the most appropriate medium (e.g. email, letter) for communicating with the person making a complaint.

4.4 Initial assessment and addressing of complaints

Complaint Handling Policy Template

Initial assessment

After acknowledging receipt of the complaint, we will confirm whether the issue/s raised in the complaint is/are within our control. We will also consider the outcome/s sought by the person making a complaint and, where there is more than one issue raised, determine whether each issue needs to be separately addressed.

When determining how a complaint will be managed, we will consider:

- How serious, complicated or urgent the complaint is
- Whether the complaint raises concerns about people's health and safety
- How the person making the complaint is being affected
- The risks involved if resolution of the complaint is delayed, and
- Whether a resolution requires the involvement of other organisations.

Addressing complaints

After assessing the complaint, we will consider how to manage it. To manage a complaint we may:

- Give the person making a complaint information or an explanation
- Gather information from the product, person or area that the complaint is about, or
- Investigate the claims made in the complaint.

We will keep the person making the complaint up to date on our progress, particularly if there are any delays. We will also communicate the outcome of the complaint using the most appropriate medium. Which actions we decide to take will be tailored to each case and take into account any statutory requirements.

4.5 Providing reasons for decisions

Following consideration of the complaint and any investigation into the issues raised, we will contact the person making the complaint and advise them:

- the outcome of the complaint and any action we took
- the reason/s for our decision
- the remedy or resolution/s that we have proposed or put in place, and
- any options for review that may be available to the complainant, such as an internal review, or external review to the independent Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW (EWON).

4.6 Closing the complaint, record keeping, redress and review

We will keep comprehensive records about:

- How we managed the complaint
- The outcome/s of the complaint including whether it or any aspect of it was substantiated, and recommendations made to address problems identified and any decisions made on those recommendations, and
- Any outstanding actions that need to be followed up.

We will ensure that outcomes are properly implemented, monitored and reported to the complaint handling manager and/or senior management.

Complaint Handling Policy Template

4.7 Right to access the Energy and Water Ombudsman

We will inform people who make complaints to or about us about any internal or external review options available to them, including the Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW (EWON).

All our customers have the right to contact the Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW (EWON) at any time for independent advice and assistance. EWON's contact details are:

Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW

Freecall 1800 246 545

Freefax 1800 812 291

Post Reply Paid 86550, Sydney South NSW 1234

Email omb@ewon.com.au

Website www.ewon.com.au

Complaint Handling Policy Template

5. Accountability and learning

5.1 Analysis and evaluation of complaints

We will ensure that complaints are recorded in a systematic way so that information can be easily retrieved for reporting and analysis.

Regular reports will be run on:

- the number of complaints received
- the outcome of complaints, including matters resolved at the frontline
- issues arising from complaints
- systemic issues identified, and
- the number of requests we receive for internal and/or external review of our complaint handling.

Regular analysis of these reports will be undertaken to monitor trends, measure the quality of our customer service and make improvements.

Both reports and their analysis will be provided to [company's name]'s CEO and senior management for review.

5.2 Monitoring of the complaint management system

We will continually monitor our complaint management system to:

- ensure its effectiveness in responding to and resolving complaints, and
- identify and correct deficiencies in the operation of the system.
- Monitoring may include the use of audits, complaint satisfaction surveys and online listening tools and alerts.

5.3 Continuous improvement

We are committed to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of our complaint management system. To this end, we will:

- support the making and appropriate resolution of complaints
- implement best practices in complaint handling
- recognise and reward exemplary complaint handling by staff
- regularly review the complaints management system and complaint data, and
- implement appropriate system changes arising out of our analysis of complaints data and continual monitoring of the system.

Date approved

Review date



Additional complaint handling resources

AS/NZ 10002:2014 Guidelines for complaint management in organisations

The object of this Standard is to provide guidance on complaint management to organisations, including the planning, design, operation, maintenance and improvement.

These guidelines can be accessed via the Standards Australia website.

<http://www.standards.org.au/SearchandBuyAStandard/Pages/default.aspx>

Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals - Small Business Complaints Toolkit

A practical guide for complaint handling with tips, tools and resources to help you deal with complaints in your business.

<http://socap.org.au/small-business-complaints-toolkit/>

Victorian Ombudsman Good Practice Guide, September 2016

<https://www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au/getattachment/8fd85b3b-1e73-406c-ae7b-162b3381e540/publications/guidelines/complaints-good-practice-guide-for-public-sector-a.aspx>

NSW Ombudsman, Complaint management framework and model policy June 2015

<https://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/news-and-publications/publications/guidelines/state-and-local-government/complaint-management-framework-june-2015>

NSW Ombudsman Effective complaint handling guidelines, 2nd Edition, December 2010

<https://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/news-and-publications/publications/guidelines/state-and-local-government/effective-complaint-handling-guidelines-2nd-edition>

QLD Ombudsman, Guide to developing effective complaints management policy and procedures

<http://www.ombudsman.qld.gov.au/Publicagencies/Resources/EffectiveComplaintsManagement/ComplaintsManagementResources/tabid/93/Default.aspx>

Ombudsman Western Australia Guidelines on complaint handling, November 2010

<http://www.ombudsman.wa.gov.au/Publications/Documents/guidelines/Binder-Complaint-Handling.pdf>

Commonwealth Ombudsman, Better Practice Guide to complaint handling, April 2009

<http://www.ombudsman.gov.au/publications/better-practice-guides>

Documentation for your application

All new member applications must include documentation that clearly demonstrates the applicant has satisfied all of the criteria above. You should send us copies of your policies, screen shots or links to your website with your application, along with confirmation that your staff have received training about telling customers about EWON.



5. Summary of Member Fees 2018/2019

EWON Funding Arrangements

In February each year, EWON commences the process to establish EWON's budget for the next financial year. This takes into account the overall cost of meeting EWON's Charter responsibilities:

- direct case work - complaint receipt, referral, investigation and resolution;
- indirect casework - systemic issue identification and redress, policy and research and EWON awareness and promotion/education about Member IDR processes and industry issues; and
- EWON's support services/fixed costs which include rent, legal, finance and administration.

The Board approves the Total Overall Budget. This is funded by the Annual Current Member Funding, projected bank interest and new Member joining fees.

Member Fees 2018/19

Please note all fees quoted below are excluding GST.

Joining Fee and Annual Fees

Fees Table (excluding case fees) Residential Parks, Exempt Entities and WICA Members from 1 July 2018							
Bandwidths below 5000 customers			Joining Fee	Annual Fixed Fee			Total Fee in First Year
				Base Fee	Customer Number Fee	Total	
Lower	Higher						
1	1	50	\$ 125	\$ 150	\$ 150	\$ 300	\$ 425
2	51	100	\$ 250	\$ 500	\$ 200	\$ 700	\$ 950
3	101	500	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 500	\$ 1,500	\$ 2,500
4	501	2,000	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 3,000	\$ 5,500
5	2,001	5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 3,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 10,000

Annual Variable/Direct and Indirect Casework Fees

In order to align the costs associated with both direct and indirect casework and allocate the correct proportion of variable fees, all complaints received are registered and the minutes spent on receiving, referring, investigating and resolving are recorded against each case.

Each Member's Annual Casework Fee is projected by:

- Using the Member's volume of actual closed complaints for the preceding 12 months as the basis for projecting its complaints volume for 2018/2018;
- Applying an average minute per case for Enquiries, Complaint Enquiries, RHLs, Level 1 & 2 Investigations;
- Applying actual minutes per case for Level 3 Investigations;
- Including, as a proportion of each Member's case numbers, the cost of projected non-Member Enquiries.

The following table illustrates the estimated Casework Fee, excluding GST, for each Case Type for 2018/19:

Case Type	Casework Fee per Case
Enquiries/ Complaint Enquiries	\$196.92
Refer Higher level	\$255.98
Level 1 Investigation	\$493.95
Level 2 Investigation	\$1,334.53
Level 3 Investigation	\$3.77 per minute



Case Type Definitions

- **General Enquiry**
An enquiry about energy or water that is not a complaint, or a complaint about a non-energy or water related matter. These matters are responded to by EWON and closed without further action.
- **Complaint Enquiry**
An enquiry that is a request for information or assistance, can be dealt with fairly quickly and without EWON contacting the Member company. Complaint enquiries generally involve EWON providing information to customers, or referring them back to the Member, and/or referring them to an appropriate agency.
- **Refer to Higher Level (RHL)**
This gives Members a further opportunity to resolve the customers' issues without EWON's involvement, through EWON referrals to the specialised dispute resolution team of the relevant Member. RHLs are discussed with the customer who must agree to this process, and the complaint is referred to the Member by email. An RHL that comes back to EWON (i.e. the customer was not contacted by the Member or was not satisfied with the outcome) would normally then be treated as a Level 1 investigation.
- **Level 1 Investigation**
A Level 1 investigation is a complaint that has been Referred to a Higher Level with the Member and where the customer is not satisfied with the Member's attempts to resolve it, or a complaint that EWON considers is not appropriate to Refer to a Higher Level. A Level 1 investigation may involve several contacts with the customer and the relevant Member. A Level 1 investigation will generally not take more than four hours to complete.
- **Level 2 Investigation**
If an investigation cannot be resolved at Level 1 and there are grounds for further investigation, or the investigation takes more than 4 hours, it is upgraded to Level 2. A Level 2 investigation will generally require detailed investigation by both EWON and the Member.
- **Level 3 Investigation**
If an investigation cannot be resolved at Level 2 and there are grounds for further investigation or the investigation takes more than 8 hours, it is upgraded to Level 3. The Ombudsman may make a binding determination to resolve the matter at this stage.
- **Determination / Binding Decision**
At the completion of an investigation and in the absence of a negotiated/conciliated settlement, the Ombudsman can resolve a complaint by making a determination that directs a Member to take a particular action. Such determinations are binding on a Member.

Costs for case categories 1 to 5 are calculated on average minutes spent multiplied by actual case numbers. Case categories 6 and 7 are calculated on actual minutes spent on each individual case. EWON uses a case management system to capture all activity on each case and uses the minutes recorded against each case to recover costs from the Members.



6. Customer numbers

Under Clause 6 of the EWON Constitution each member agrees to pay all EWON fees and supply EWON with any information required to calculate any fees. As detailed in the Summary of Member Fees and Levies some of EWON's fees are charged to members on the basis of the number of customers the member has.

Under the EWON Constitution the total number of customers each member has is made up of the number of customers in each industry sector, defined in the Constitution as energy retail, energy network, and water, and within this the number of electricity and gas customers a member may have within an industry sector (see the definition of "Customer Number" in the Constitution).

For example:

- If you hold a retail and network exemption for a residential complex with 50 apartments the total customer numbers will be calculated as follows:
 - Retail exemption (R2) = 50 customers
 - Network exemption (NR2) = 50 customers
 - Total customers = 100 customers

- If you hold a retail and network exemption for a two residential parks with 20 sites at each park the total customer numbers will be calculated as follows:
 - Park 1
 - Retail exemption (R4) = 20 customers
 - Network exemption (NR4) = 20 customers
 - Park 2
 - Retail exemption (R4) = 20 customers
 - Network exemption (NR4) = 20 customers
 - Total customers = 80 customers

Please complete the table below which will allow us to appropriately calculate the fees payable. If you have any questions, please contact us.

Regulatory status	Number of Customers
Electricity retail exemption (D2) (R2) (R3) (R4)	
Electricity network exemption (ND2) (NR2) (NR3) (NR4)	
Gas retail exemption (D2) (R2) (R3) (R4)	
Gas network exemption (ND2) (NR2) (NR3) (NR4)	



7. Exemption site addresses

To assist us understand your operations and appropriately process any customer enquiries or complaints we may receive we need to know the site addresses at which you operate. We would also appreciate you advising us of the number of customers at each site.

You can provide this information by completing the table below or in another format that may be more convenient for you.

Exemption class	Site address	Number of customers
<i>For example - R2</i>	<i>4 Five Street Sydney 2000</i>	<i>25</i>



8. Your organisational structure and how energy/water is supplied and billed to customers

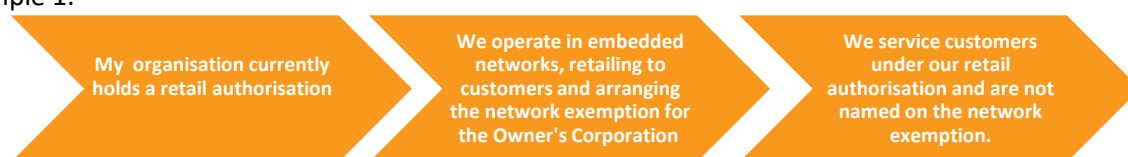
To help us understand how you operate and how you interact with customers we would appreciate some information about your organisational structure and the way you supply and/or bill customers for their energy use.

This information will assist us deal with your membership application. You can provide this information in writing or you can provide us with diagrams showing your structures.

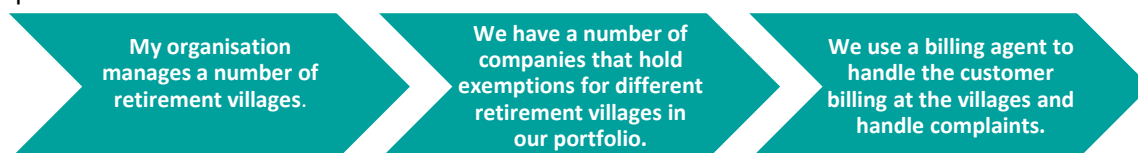
For example:

Corporate structure

Example 1:

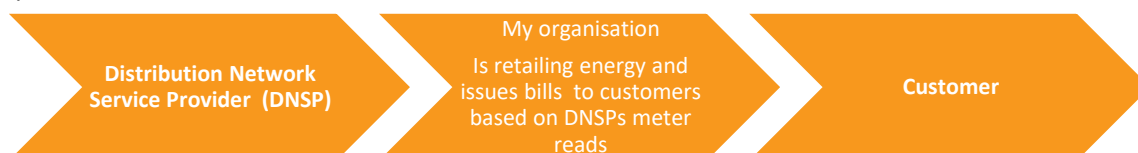


Example 2:

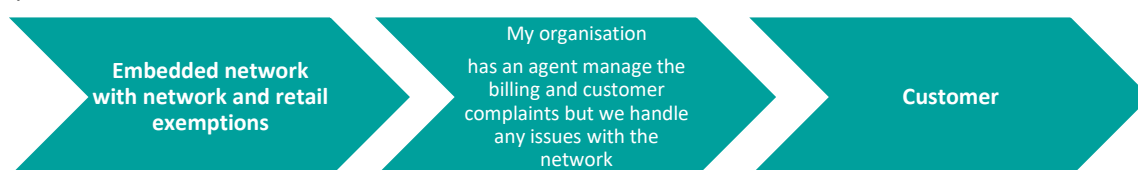


Details of how energy is supplied and/or billed to customers

Example 1:



Example 2:





9. Contact details

To help us ensure our communication gets to the right place in your organisation, please tell us the contact details for the people we should deal with for:

1. Ombudsman contact – The most senior contact in an organisation, most likely the CEO.
2. Senior Operational contact – Management level but less senior than the Ombudsman contact.
3. Investigations initial contact – First point of contact for complaint handling purposes.
4. Investigations escalation contact – Escalated contact for our Investigations Team for complaint handling purposes.
5. Membership administration and AGM contact – For issues about changes in membership details, changes in company structure, AGM and voting entitlements.
6. Systemic issues and policy issues contact – Contact for systemic issues management.
7. Billing contact – Contact for us to send invoices to.
8. Media contact – Contact for media enquiries and contact from our communications team.
9. Agent initial contact – Investigations contact where you have signed an operational agreement with an agent for complaint handling purposes.
10. Agent escalated contact – Investigations contact where you have signed an operational agreement with an agent for complaint handling purposes.

Please provide the name, position, email address and phone number for each contact. The contact person for all areas can be the same person. You can update these contact details at any time.

Ombudsman contact	
Name:	
Position:	
Email address:	
Phone number:	

Senior Operational contact	
Name:	
Position:	
Email address:	
Phone number:	

Investigations initial contact	
Name:	
Position:	
Email address:	
Phone number:	

Investigations escalation contact	
Name:	
Position:	
Email address:	
Phone number:	

**Membership administration and AGM contact**

Name:	
Position:	
Email address:	
Phone number:	

Systemic issues and policy issues contact

Name:	
Position:	
Email address:	
Phone number:	

Billing contact

Name:	
Position:	
Email address:	
Phone number:	

Media contact

Name:	
Position:	
Email address:	
Phone number:	

Agent initial contact

Name:	
Position:	
Email address:	
Phone number:	

Agent escalated contact

Name:	
Position:	
Email address:	
Phone number:	



10. Checklist

Before completing your application ensure you have included all the required information and documentation to support your application.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Completed Membership Application Form.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Completed Membership Agreement – signed by the CEO/MD or equivalent senior executive.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Details of the registration of exemptions – such as the AER reference number and/or date the registration became effective, if available.
<input type="checkbox"/>	A copy of your most recent audited financial statements.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Documentation that demonstrates the information available to customers about EWON and your referral to EWON on your website, including:
<input type="checkbox"/>	○ a copy of your Complaints Handling Policy
<input type="checkbox"/>	○ screen shots or links to the relevant sections of your website
<input type="checkbox"/>	○ confirmation of staff training about EWON
<input type="checkbox"/>	○ details of any other ways in which you will tell customers about EWON.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Details of your customer numbers
<input type="checkbox"/>	Detail of the site addresses in which you operate
<input type="checkbox"/>	Information about your corporate structure.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Information about how energy is supplied and/or billed to customers.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Contact details for relevant staff in your organisation.