

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

## Call the Energy and Water Ombudsman

Revised  
December 2020

The Energy and Water Ombudsman Western Australia is an independent, impartial body that investigates and resolves complaints about electricity, gas and water 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 ask another person to act for you.

### Who can you complain to us about?

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

### When should you complain to us?

You should try to resolve your complaint with your provider first. If your complaint is not resolved or 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).

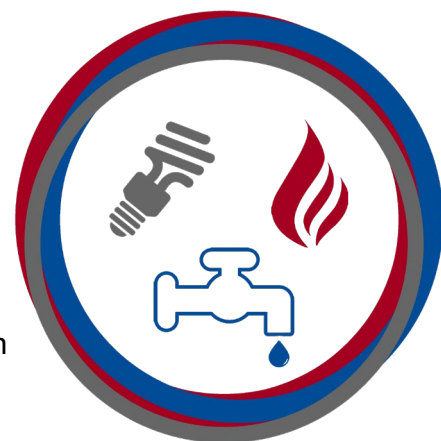
### What can we investigate?

- **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.
- **Marketing** - including gas, electricity or water for sale and transfers between providers.
- **Service standard payments** - for not meeting electricity or water service standards.
- **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?

We will ask you to try to resolve the matter with your provider first. If your complaint remains unresolved, we will investigate and, where appropriate, try to resolve the complaint (see adjacent diagram).

## How long will it take?

The length of time it takes to resolve your complaint can vary. We generally respond to your initial contact the same day or the next working day. For some of the more complex matters, it can take some time for us to collect and consider all the relevant information. Most of these matters are completed within three months.

If your complaint takes longer than usual, we will keep in contact with you to inform you about the progress of our investigation.

## 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 talk to you about your complaint and 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.

## 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.

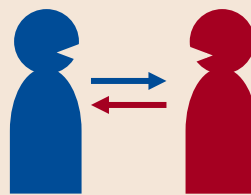
If your provider cannot agree on a resolution with you:

- 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.

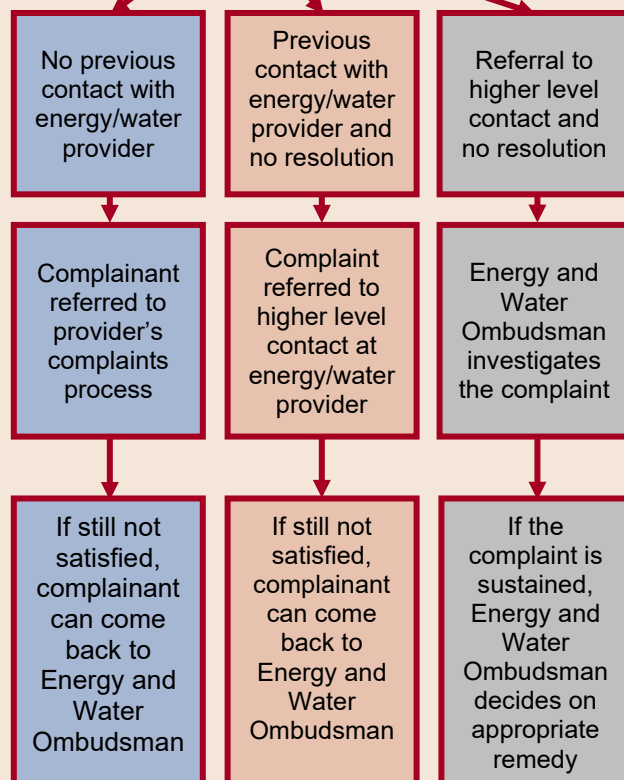
## How to contact us

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 (free from landlines)



Interpreter 131 450



National Relay Service 1800 555 660 (Quote 08 9220 7555)

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

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

