



Energy & Water  
Ombudsman NSW  
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# Media release

Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW

Monday 9 October 2017

**Embargoed until 12am Wednesday 11 October 2017**

## Average complaints to the Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW from Inner Sydney residents the highest in NSW

According to the Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW (EWON) 2016/2017 Annual Report released today, average complaints per 10,000 people in the Inner Sydney region\* were the highest in the State at almost 49, well above the NSW average of 34.

Complaints to EWON from residents in inner Sydney increased by 2% from 2015/2016, making it one of seven NSW regions that experienced complaint increases. Complaints rose between 1% and 10% in the other six regions.

At the same time, complaints from Outer Sydney\*\* residents decreased by 6% and average complaints per 10,000 people were 29, below the NSW average. However, complaints for both areas increased at a similar level towards the end of the financial year.

“EWON received 18% more complaints from Sydney residents as a whole in the fourth quarter 2016/2017 than we did for that period in 2015/2016, despite the overall decrease in complaints from Outer Sydney in the financial year,” Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW, Janine Young explained.

The upward trend in Sydney complaints is consistent with the rest of NSW.

“While our complaints for all of NSW fell marginally overall, they steadily rose throughout 2016/2017 and continue to increase. We received 21% more complaints in the April to June quarter than we did in the same period last financial year, establishing a strong upward trend” Ms Young said.

The 1% decrease in complaints to EWON in 2016/2017 for NSW as a whole is much less pronounced than the 22% fall reported in 2015/2016 and the 19% decrease in 2014/2015.

The top three complaint issues customers raised with EWON in both Sydney regions were about billing, customer service and credit, consistent with NSW overall. Complaints related to affordability issues in Outer Sydney accounted for 25% of all complaints from that area, compared to 15% for Inner Sydney. The NSW average was 21%.

Ms Young is concerned about energy affordability, particularly in light of 1 July 2017 price increases. “Affordability issues, payment difficulties, high bills, increasing debt and disconnection of supply have become the norm for NSW consumers experiencing financial vulnerability.”

“The array of energy offers makes it difficult for customers to find the best deal. Customers on low or fixed incomes in particular, continue to tell us they were not able to take advantage of discounted offers because of compulsory pay-on-time or direct debit conditions. It is promising to see that retailers are now starting to address this,” said Ms Young.

#### Cases received for each region in 2015/2016 and 2016/2017 with percentage increase or decrease

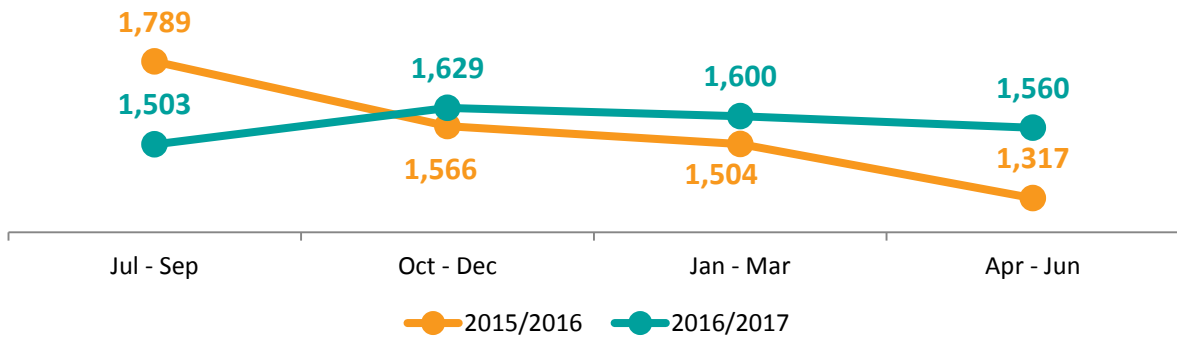
EWON region	Complaints per 10,000 people	2016/2017	2015/2016	% change
Sydney Outer	29	6,917	7,340	-6%
Sydney Inner	49	6,292	6,173	2%
Hunter	35	2,053	1,864	10%
Sydney Surrounds	36	1,702	1,600	6%
Illawarra	31	1,237	1,273	-3%
Mid North Coast	31	894	824	8%
Central West	45	855	944	-9%
South Eastern	38	783	726	8%
Richmond-Tweed	31	685	677	1%
Northern	31	534	509	5%
Murrumbidgee	35	479	543	-12%
Murray	42	466	564	-17%
North Western	38	353	376	-6%
Far West	43	94	94	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	-	<b>23,613</b>	<b>23,760</b>	<b>-1%</b>

*\*EWON’s Inner Sydney reporting region includes the following Local Government Areas: Bayside, Bayside, Burwood, Canada Bay, Canterbury-Bankstown, Georges River, Hunter’s Hill, Inner West, Lane Cove, Mosman, North Sydney, Northern Beaches, Randwick, Strathfield, Sydney, Waverley, Willoughby and Woollahra.*

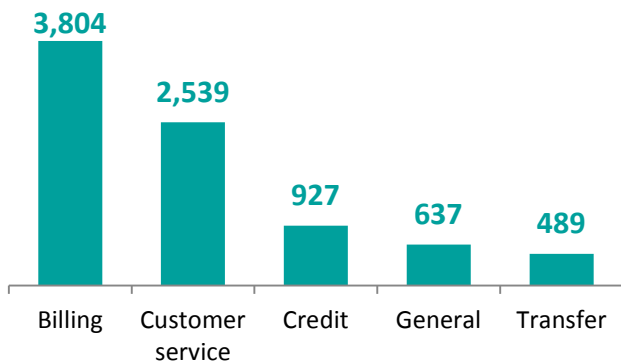
*\*\* EWON’s Outer Sydney reporting region includes the following Local Government Areas: Blacktown, Camden, Campbelltown, Canterbury-Bankstown, Cumberland, Fairfield, Hornsby, Ku-ring-gai, Liverpool, Northern Beaches, Parramatta, Penrith, Ryde, Sutherland Shire and The Hills.*

**To arrange an interview with the Ombudsman or request high resolution images, contact:  
Mia Lauzé, Manager Communications & Outreach - 0408 602 503 / [mial@ewon.com.au](mailto:mial@ewon.com.au).**

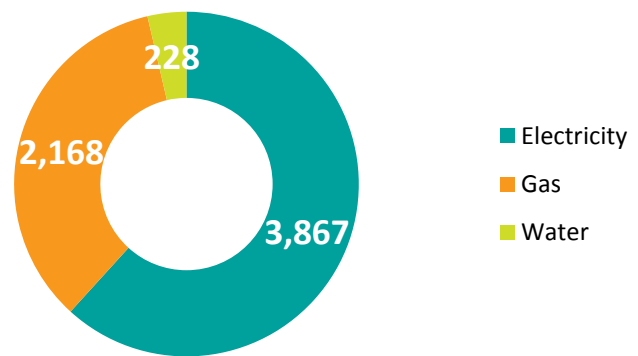
### Complaints by quarter from 2015/2016 to 2016/2017 for Sydney Inner



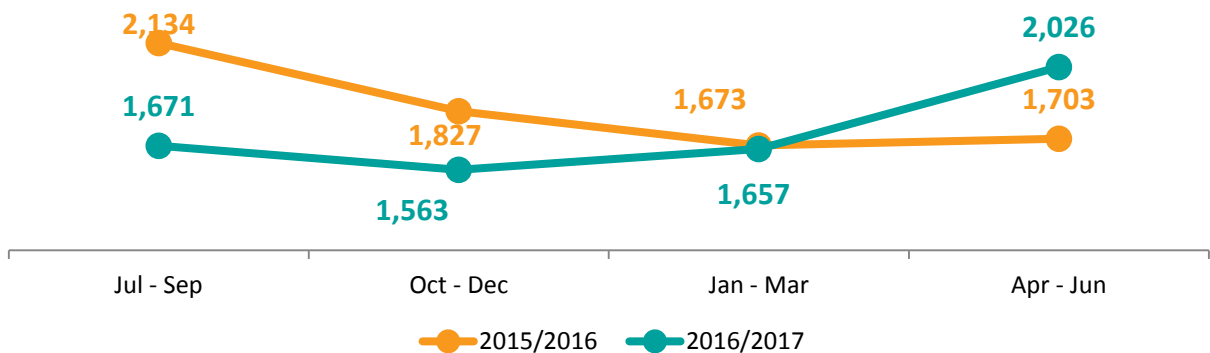
### Top 5 primary issues for Sydney Inner



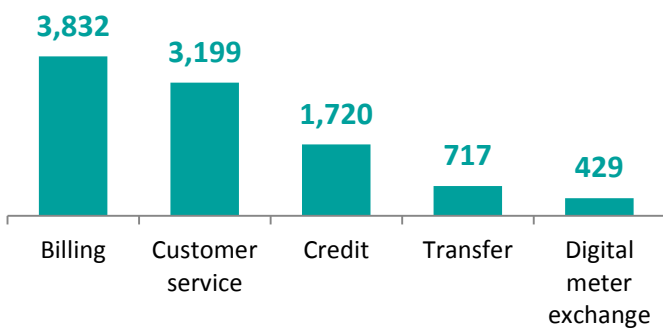
### Complaints by Industry for Sydney Inner



### Complaints by quarter from 2015/2016 to 2016/2017 for Sydney Outer



### Top 5 primary issues for Sydney Outer



### Complaints by Industry for Sydney Outer

