



A message from the Ombudsman

EWON's complaints rose for the third quarter in a row between January and March 2017.

We received 5,904 cases - a 5% increase from the previous quarter. Billing complaints, particularly high bills, continued to dominate, followed by complaints about poor customer service, and we're also seeing a rise in the number of complaints about digital meters.

With the pressure on households to keep on top of their bills, topped off by the return of the cooler weather, it's timely to remind customers how heaters, electric blankets, extra hot showers and more time spent inside staying warm, contributes to an increase in power consumption over winter.

Quarterly billing means that many households won't see how their charges add up for several months. Our new Winter Warmers campaign will help customers make informed decisions about energy use to help them avoid bill shock when their winter bill arrives.

Read on or visit ewon.com.au/winterwarmers for some handy hints to keep the bills down without leaving you cold and uncomfortable.

You can look forward to a detailed overview of EWON's activities in 2016/2017 when our Annual Report comes out in October.

Until then, stay warm.

Janine Young
Ombudsman
Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW

Demystifying energy and water

Energy and water industry terminology can be confusing at times, so we have developed a new glossary of terms to help consumers understand the information they come across. Check it out at ewon.com.au/glossary.

There are many myths circulating about how to efficiently heat your home during winter. Our new Myth Busters section will help you separate fact from fiction - ewon.com.au/mythbusters.

5,904

CASES RECEIVED
JANUARY TO
MARCH
2017

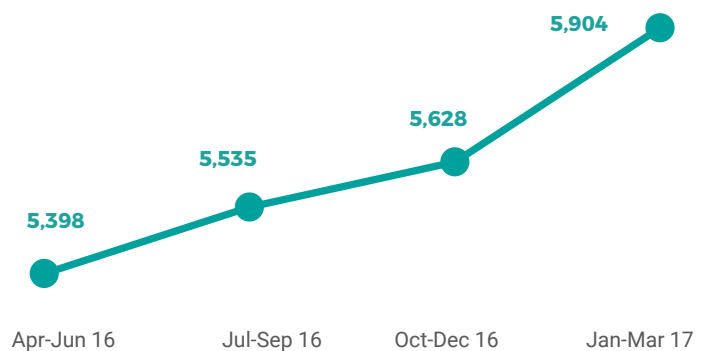
1,309

COMPLAINT
INVESTIGATIONS

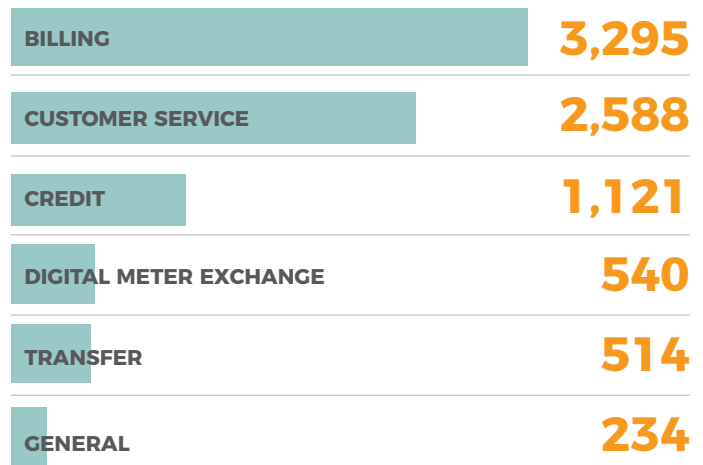
4,595

ENQUIRIES,
COMPLAINTS AND
REFERRALS

COMPLAINTS BY QUARTER

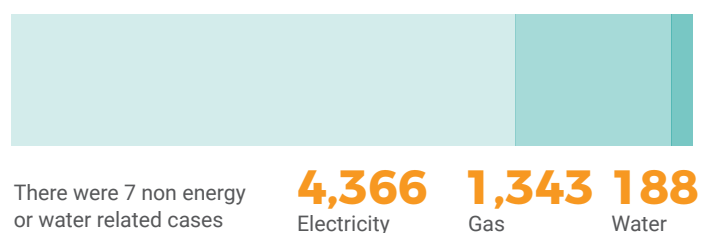


KEY ISSUES



There may be more than 1 issue per complaint.

COMPLAINTS BY INDUSTRY



There were 7 non energy or water related cases

EWON's case data varies in accordance with case progression and figures in this newsletter reflect case status as at 05 June 2017.

Keep the cold out and bills down with EWON's Winter Warmers

Energy saving tips that won't cost your comfort

Using less energy around the home doesn't need to leave you cold and uncomfortable. By making a few small changes, you can start saving power and money today:

- Before you turn your heater on this winter, make sure your home will keep the heat in - around a third of a household's heat can escape through gaps and cracks, so find draughts and block them with door snakes, curtains and other seals.
- An extra layer of clothing and a blanket will keep you comfortable in cooler months. If you turn on the heater, make sure you're using the correct heating system for the space. Visit environment.nsw.gov.au/households/space-heaters.htm for more information.
- Clothes dryers and hot or warm cycles on your washing machine use a lot of energy. You can make significant savings by switching to cold water and nature's own dryer, the outdoors.
- Shorter showers, low flow shower heads and solar hot water are great ways to reduce your water and energy consumption.
- If you use a reverse-cycle air conditioner for heating, set it to 18-21°C in winter. Every degree outside this range can add an extra 10% to your heating bill.
- Keep appliances in good working order by maintaining them. Heaters and hot water systems can use more energy if they're not working properly.

Find more information about the assistance available at ewon.com.au/winterwarmers

Digital meter cases

Complaints related to the rollout of digital meters continue to increase, with installation delays and not having a meter installed the main issues raised by customers. The reasons electricity retailers have given us for the delays include installations taking more time than expected; not enough qualified installers; aged / damaged wiring; asbestos; meter board / box quality; and access issues.

Some retailers are offering credits to customers who are missing out on feed-in tariffs - customers may wish to ask their retailer to consider backdated feed-in tariff credits once their meter is installed.

Digital meter complaint issues

Delays installing new meter	707
New meter not installed	663
Incorrect advice or information	343
Failure to respond	254

There may be more than 1 issue per complaint.

Plan for the bill

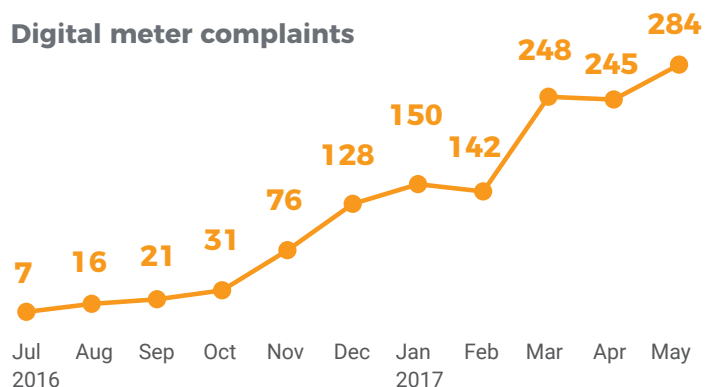
If you are having difficulty paying your bills, seek help early to stop debt building up. Speak to your provider about setting up a manageable payment plan. You can also make use of free assistance such as financial counselling and money management resources to help you get your bills under control. If you can't come to an agreement with your provider, we can help.

Rebates and assistance

Make sure you get all the help you're eligible for:

- NSW Government rebates are available to eligible families, low income households and households running life support and other medical equipment.
- People receiving pensions can apply for the Utilities Allowance to help meet the costs of energy and water bills.
- If you or someone in your household needs specific equipment, such as heating or cooling devices for medical reasons, you may be eligible to receive the Essential Medical Equipment Payment.
- People having trouble paying their electricity or gas bill because of a crisis or emergency situation may be able to get help through the Energy Accounts Payment Assistance (EAPA) scheme.
- Those experiencing financial hardship may be able to get help with their water bill through the Water Payment Assistance Scheme (PAS).
- The No Interest Loan Scheme helps eligible consumers purchase efficient replacement appliances. Visit nils.com.au for more details.

Digital meter complaints



A note about our newsletter

We are now producing shorter newsletters more frequently. To keep the production costs down, we would like to reduce the number of copies we print. If you are happy to receive newsletters electronically, please send your preferred email address to news@ewon.com.au.

Free Call 1800 246 545
Free Fax 1800 821 291
Web ewon.com.au
Email omb@ewon.com.au
ABN 21079718915

