



Energy & Water
Ombudsman NSW

It's time to become a member of the Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW

If you sell or provide energy to residential customers in NSW, your organisation must become a member of the Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW (EWON).

This now includes organisations recognised as exempt entities by the Australian Energy Regulator.



What does EWON do?

We receive, investigate and resolve customer complaints and disputes. Our other responsibilities under the EWON Charter are to provide a whole of organisation approach to consumer issues and complaint reduction.

These include:



Complaints Management



Policy & Influence



Systemic Issues



Stakeholder Management



Promotion & Awareness

Who is EWON?

EWON is the government approved dispute resolution scheme for New South Wales electricity and gas customers, and some water customers. EWON is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee. All residential and small business customers in NSW have a right to lodge a complaint with EWON about their energy provider.

The benefits of EWON membership

Internal dispute resolution

We work with members to ensure they have appropriate processes in place to deal with complaints.

Reporting

We provide regular information about complaint numbers and the issues underpinning them.

Systematic issue identification

We monitor and advise on any systematic complaint issues to help members reduce complaints.

Hosting forums

We provide opportunities for members to gain insights by meeting and engaging with their peers and consumer representatives.

Complaint referrals

We resolve complaints referred to us by members.

Engagement and education

We operate an extensive community outreach and education program and working with vulnerable customers to address problems before they become complaints.

Policy development

We draw on complaints data and outreach and stakeholder engagement to influence government policy for the benefit of members and customers.

Governance

Members play an important role in EWON's governance by participating in the AGM, Consultative Council Meetings, Operational Advisory Group and as Industry Directors on the EWON Board.

Who needs to be a member of EWON?

Anyone selling energy in NSW must hold an authorisation from the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) or be exempt from holding an authorisation.

The Retail Law prohibits any person or business from selling energy to another person for use at a premises unless they hold a current retailer authorisation, or are exempt from having to be authorised. The National Electricity Rules (NER) also require any party that engages in an electricity network activity to either be registered with the Australian Energy Market Operator as a Network Service Provider (NSP) or gain an exemption from the requirement to be a registered NSP from the AER.

Retail and network authorisations are appropriate where a company is selling or supplying energy:

- as the core business of the organisation
- to large numbers of customers, or
- in a number of states and territories.

Businesses that are authorised sellers or distributors must comply with the requirements set out in the National Electricity Law, the National Electricity Rules or the Retail Law, and adhere to the consumer protections established through the National Energy Consumer Framework.

An exemption from retail authorisation, or registration as a network, is appropriate where a company sells or supplies energy 'incidentally' to their main business, as a community service or at cost, or to a defined group of customers at one site. For example, you are likely to require a retail exemption if you are a body corporate for a single residential/retail building with an embedded network, and you only sell energy to occupants of your building.

Exempt retailers and networks servicing residential customers must be a member of an energy Ombudsman scheme.

Exempt retailers and networks have to comply with the requirements of the AER's (Retail) Exempt Selling Guideline and Electricity Network Service Provider Registration Exemption Guideline. These guidelines contain a number of core exemption conditions which provide customers with consumer protections equivalent to the protections granted by the Retail Law and Rules.

The AER guidelines require an exempt entity that sells or supplies energy to residential customers to be a member, and comply with the membership requirements of the energy Ombudsman scheme in the state or territory in which it operates.

This means if you are an exempt seller or network selling or supplying energy to residential customers in NSW, you must join EWON.

Our membership structure, governance framework and funding model have been reviewed to accommodate new members that hold an exemption.

Water provider membership of EWON

Water providers licensed under the Water Industry Competition Act must comply with the licence conditions under the Act and relevant regulations – including conditions relating to providing customers with information and dealing with customer complaints.

The Act also requires licensed water providers to be a member of EWON, and comply with the Ombudsman's decisions.

This means if you are licensed under the Act and providing water services to small customers you must join EWON.

Information about the guidelines and details of the different types of exemptions can be found at aer.com.au



Become a member

Register to become a member or enquire about membership by visiting our website or email our Member Liaison Team.

✉ members@ewon.com.au

🖥 ewon.com.au/members

If you are a member you can access information through our member portal **EWONlink**.