



Energy & Water  
Ombudsman NSW

# What does being a member of EWON mean?



## EWON's Membership Agreement

Your organisation's membership of EWON is subject to the terms of EWON's Membership Agreement.

## EWON's Constitution and Charter

By signing our Membership Agreement, you also agree to be bound by EWON's Constitution, Charter, and our Board approved policies.

### 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 customer outreach and education program and work 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.

### EWON's Constitution

The Constitution sets out EWON's objectives, member obligations and governance arrangements including the Board's composition and responsibilities. The EWON Board ensures the organisation's independence through its composition of community and industry representatives.

### The Charter

The Charter establishes EWON's core responsibilities and describes the central considerations, jurisdiction, procedures and power that EWON applies to investigate and resolve complaints.

EWON's principal responsibilities under the Charter are to:

- handle energy and water complaints independently, fairly, informally, expeditiously and free of charge to the consumer
- promote EWON to consumers and small business
- encourage and provide advice to members about good complaint handling practices to assist in reducing and avoiding complaints.

## How can my organisation participate in the governance of EWON?

### Operational Advisory Group

The Ombudsman established an Operational Advisory Group made up of representatives of exempt entities and small water providers to ensure the smooth entry of this group of members, and to give them a voice within EWON. It will meet quarterly and operate for up to three years, with the Ombudsman updating the Board regularly on the work of the Advisory Group.

### Annual General Meeting (AGM)

EWON convenes an AGM of our members every year. All members are invited to attend.

### Consultative Council Meeting

A Consultative Council is established under the Constitution to provide a biannual forum for EWON to engage and consult with stakeholders including representatives from consumer groups, industry and all members.

### Board Membership

The EWON Board is made up of an Independent Chair, five Industry Directors and five Community Directors. The Independent Chair and Community Directors are appointed by the Board and the Industry Directors are elected by the members.

# What do I have to do as a member of EWON?

## Internal complaint handling service

The Australian Energy Regulator's (AER) Retail Exempt Selling Guideline, and the Electricity Network Service Provider Registration Exemption Guideline and EWON's membership agreement require your organisation to:

- have a set of procedures detailing the processes for handling complaints and disputes
- provide a copy of the procedures to customers
- ensure its complaint handling procedures are consistent with the Australian Standard AS ISO 10002:2014 Guidelines for complaint management in organisations.

The Australian Standard recommends that organisations establish a complaint management policy setting out its commitment to the effective management of complaints.



## Informing customers about your internal complaint handling service and EWON's dispute resolution services

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

The Australian Energy Regulator's Retail Exempt Selling Guideline and the Electricity Network Service Provider Registration Exemption Guideline also require you to provide information about EWON's services to customers at the start of their contract and any time a customer makes a complaint about energy. EWON has templates and suggested wording your organisation can use when providing this information to customers.



## Working with us to resolve complaints

EWON has policies and procedures in place to ensure Investigations staff deal with complaints in a timely, fair, efficient and effective way. Members are expected to participate in our processes by:

- understanding and complying with our case management procedures
- responding to referrals
- facilitating the training and orientation of your organisation's staff about the role and activities of EWON
- complying with any Binding Decision made by the Ombudsman
- agreeing to meet with us to discuss any issues relating to our complaints including complaint volumes and issues, systemic issues, complaint handling processes and contact arrangement, and
- consenting to EWON providing to a relevant government Minister, agency or regulator information concerning your organisation.

## EWON's Funding Policy and Schedule of Member Fees and Levies

Member fees and charges are separated into three categories:

- **Joining Fee.** The fee that a new member must pay at the time of joining EWON
- **Annual Fixed Fees.** An annual base fee and a fee based on each member's customer numbers
- **Annual Variable Fees.** Fees calculated based on the data we record on all complaints received and the recorded minutes spent on receiving, referring, investigating and resolving each case.

EWON's membership agreement also requires your organisation to provide your customer numbers each year.



## Information about your business

It is essential to the effectiveness of our services that our members provide us with information to help us manage your membership and resolve customer complaints, such as:

- briefings and other relevant background information about your organisation and customers, and
- contact details for the people we should deal with for complaint handling, escalated complaint handling, systemic issues, membership management and billing and invoicing.



## More information

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



[members@ewon.com.au](mailto:members@ewon.com.au)



[ewon.com.au/members](http://ewon.com.au/members)

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