



National Health  
Practitioner  
Ombudsman

# Our work in December 2022

# Monthly approaches overview

1 December 2022 to 31 December 2022



National Health  
Practitioner  
Ombudsman

Please note: our data is subject to change due to ongoing investigations and quality assurance activities. If you have a question about our data, please contact us on 1300 795 265 or by email via [complaints@nhpo.gov.au](mailto:complaints@nhpo.gov.au).

136

approaches  
received



Up from 89 in  
December 2021



44

Ombudsman  
complaints received



Down from 52 in  
December 2021



3

FOI matters  
received



Up from 1 in  
December 2021



1

privacy  
complaint received



Up from 0  
in December 2021



87

enquiries  
received



Up from 36 in  
December 2021



Ombudsman complaints  
were made by 38  
individuals (down from  
42 in December 2021)



0

FOI review  
decisions  
published



1

notifiable data  
breach assessed  
(0 in December  
2021)

## Complaints to the Ombudsman

6

early resolution  
transfers made



Down from 8 in  
December 2021



6

preliminary  
inquiries made



Up from 5 in  
December 2021



1

investigations  
launched



Consistent with 1  
in December 2021



41

Ombudsman  
complaints finalised



Up from 34 in December 2021

Stage complaint was finalised

22

assessment

5

preliminary  
inquiry

11

early resolution  
transfer

3

investigation

# Notification-related complaints to the Ombudsman

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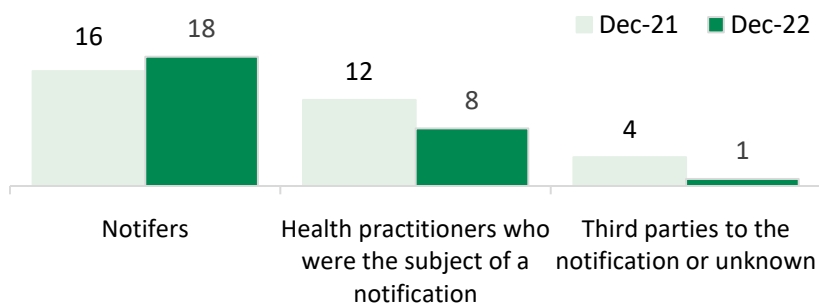
27

notification-related complaints received

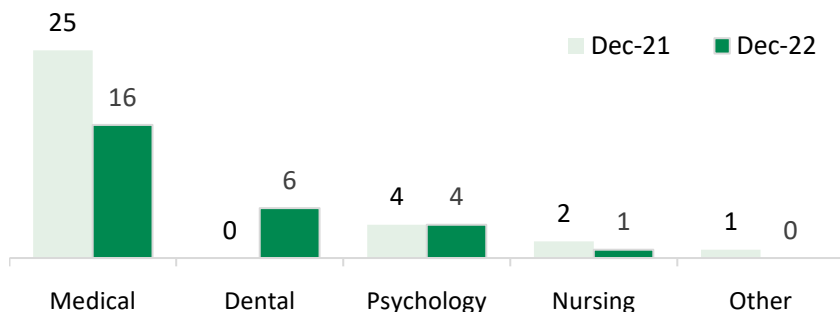


Down from 32 in December 2021

## Who made notification-related complaints



## Professions notification-related complaints were about



## Type of notifications action taken by Ahpra or a Board that most frequently drove notification-related complaints

1. No further action taken at the assessment stage
2. Active notification
3. No further action taken at an unknown stage
4. No further action taken at the investigation stage
5. Immediate action taken

## Stage notification-related complaints were finalised



## Most common outcomes of notification-related complaints

1. Ahpra's response to the complaint was fair and reasonable
2. Investigation was not warranted in the circumstances
3. Investigation declined because the complainant did not provide requested information
4. Investigation declined because the notification was active with Ahpra and a Board
5. Investigation declined because the complaint was about the merits of a Board's decision

# Registration-related complaints to the Ombudsman

1 December 2022 to 31 December 2022



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13

registration-related  
complaints received

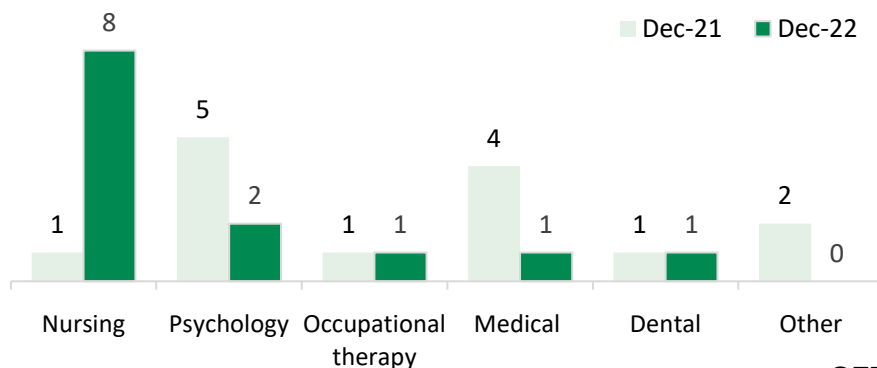


Down from 14 in December 2021

## Types of registration driving registration-related complaints



## Professions registration-related complaints were about



## Registration processes that most frequently drove registration-related complaints

1. Application of the English Language Skills Registration Standard
2. Assessment of an international qualification
3. Information appearing on the National Register
4. Applications for re-entry to practise
5. Application of the Criminal History Registration Standard

## Stage registration-related complaints were finalised



## Most common outcomes of registration-related complaints

1. Investigation was not warranted in the circumstances
2. Investigation declined because the complainant did not provide requested information
3. Investigation declined because matter is being actively monitored as a systemic issue
4. Investigation declined because the matter was active with Ahpra and a Board
5. Investigation concluded with the NHPO providing formal comments or suggestions to Ahpra



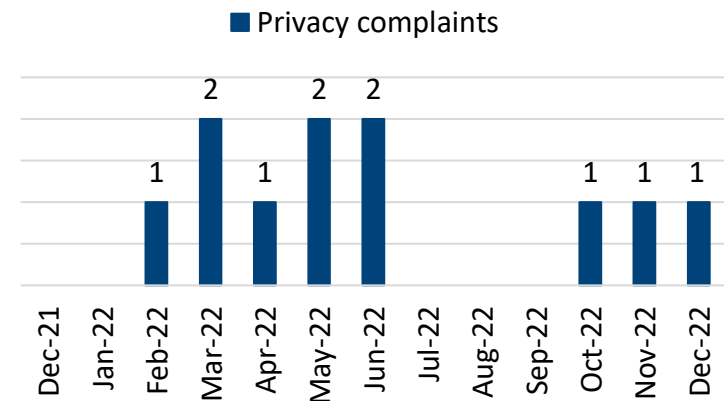
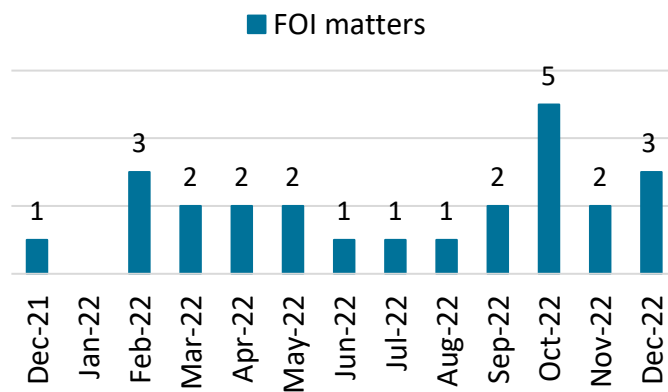
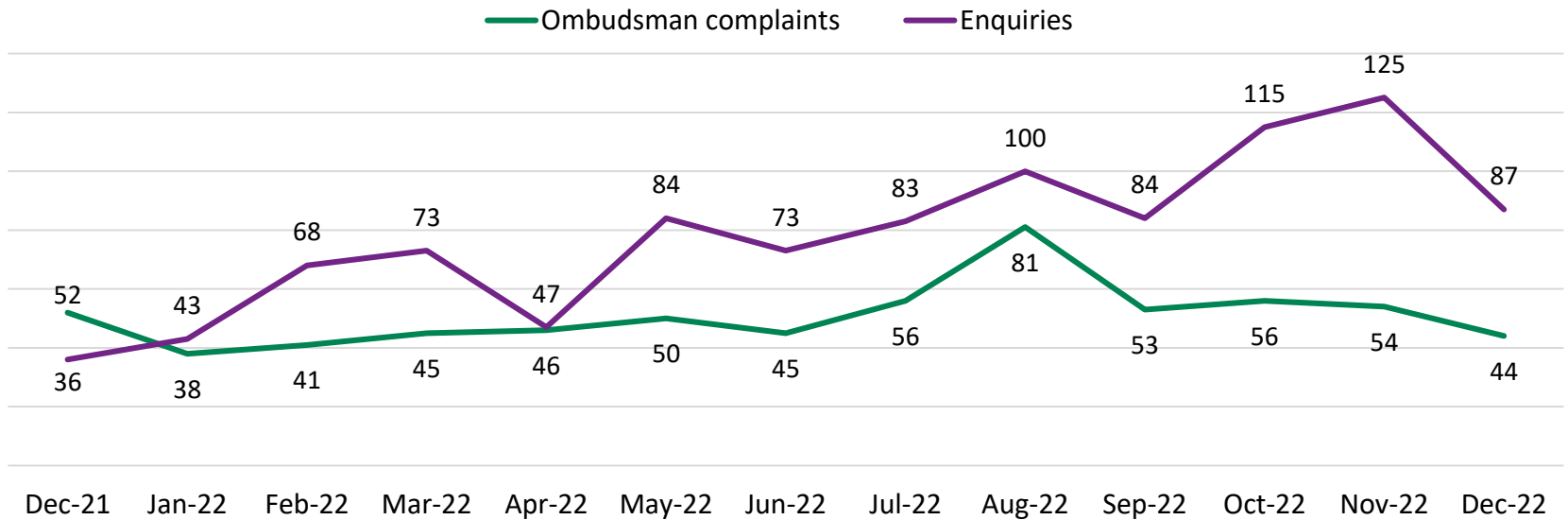
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# Our year to date

1 July 2022 to 31 December 2022

# Approach trends

1 December 2021 to 31 December 2022



# Ombudsman complaints received from 1 July 2022 to 31 December 2022

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## Types of complaints received

**221** ↑ notification  
Up from 163 in the same period last financial year

**83** ↑ registration  
Up from 71 in the same period last financial year

**9** Pandemic policy/ response  
**31** Other types

## Who made complaints

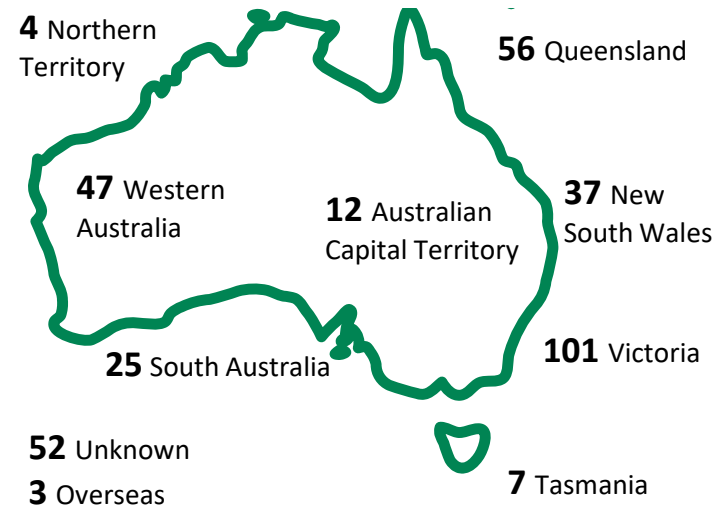
**180** health practitioners  
**164** Non-practitioners

↑ Up from 160 in the same period last financial year  
↓ Down from 398 in the same period last financial year

## Professions most complaints were about

**191** medical (Down from 423 in the same period last financial year)  
**47** Nursing (Up from 38 in the same period last financial year)  
**38** psychology (Up from 31 in the same period last financial year)

## Location the complaints were made from



## Most common notification-related issues that drove complaints

1. Notifier believes the decision to take no further action at the assessment stage is unfair or unreasonable
2. Notifier believes an active notification has been unreasonably delayed
3. Practitioner believes an active notification has been unreasonably delayed

## Most common registration-related issues that drove complaints

1. Practitioner seeking general registration believes the English Language Skills Registration Standard has been applied unfairly
2. Practitioner seeking general registration believes the assessment of an international qualification has been unreasonably delayed
3. Practitioner seeking general registration believes the assessment of an international qualification is unfair or unreasonable

# Resolution of Ombudsman complaints from 1 July 2022 to 31 December 2022

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## Early resolution mechanisms

217 

complaints finalised at the assessment stage

Down from 436 in the same period last financial year



53 

complaints finalised at the preliminary inquiry stage

Up from 51 in the same period last financial year



76 

complaints finalised at the early resolution transfer stage

Up from 56 in the same period last financial year



### Most common outcomes at early resolution stages (assessment, preliminary inquiry and early resolution transfer)

1. Investigation was not warranted in the circumstances
2. Ahpra's response to the complaint was fair and reasonable
3. Matter was active with Ahpra and a Board
4. Complainant did not provide requested information
5. Complaint was about merits of a decision made by Ahpra and a Board

## Investigations

14 

complaints finalised at the investigation stage



Down from 54 in the same period last financial year

### Most common investigation outcomes

1. We provided a further explanation to the complainant
2. We provided feedback to Ahpra
3. We provided positive feedback to Ahpra
4. We provided formal comments and suggestions to Ahpra
5. Ahpra agreed to assess new material provided by the complainant



# Ombudsman and Commissioner's observations

In December 2022 the number of approaches my office received reduced by 25 per cent from the previous month. We also received 19 per cent fewer complaints to the Ombudsman. This is consistent with past trends as my office was closed for the holiday period.

While we received fewer complaints to the Ombudsman in December 2022 than in December 2021, this was not the case for enquiries. We received 142 per cent more enquiries in December 2022 than in December 2021. These enquiries continue to almost exclusively relate to concerns that we cannot consider because they are not within our jurisdiction (99 per cent of enquiries received in December 2022). Most enquiries we received related to concerns about the conduct or performance of registered health practitioners (48 per cent of enquiries). Wherever possible, my office helps people contacting us to identify and provide information about the organisation which is likely best placed to assist with their concerns.

We continued to receive more complaints about the handling of notifications than about registration matters in December 2022. However, notification-related complaints were less frequent in December 2022 than they were in November 2022 and at the same time last financial year (approximately 15 per cent fewer). Comparatively, registration-related complaints remained steady. Registration-related complaints continued to mostly relate to the nursing profession, accounting for 62 per cent of registration-related complaints in December 2022. Most of these complaints were about the application of the English Language Skills Registration Standard and the assessment of international nursing qualifications.

My office finalised 41 complaints to the Ombudsman during December 2022. More than ninety per cent of these complaints were finalised through our early resolution complaint pathways without the need to investigate. We also finalised three investigations of complaints to the Ombudsman in December 2022. Each of these investigations resulted in my making formal comments and suggestions for improvement to Ahpra.