



National Health
Practitioner
Ombudsman

Our work in May 2023

Monthly approaches overview

1 May 2023 to 31 May 2023

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.

133

approaches
received



Down from 139 in
May 2022



46

Ombudsman
complaints received



Down from 50 in
May 2022



1

FOI matters
received



Down from 2 in
May 2022



0

privacy
complaint received



Down from 2 in
May 2022



86

enquiries
received



Up from 85 in May
2022



Ombudsman complaints
were made by 34
individuals (down from
48 in May 2022)



0

FOI review
decisions
published



0

notifiable data
breach assessed
(0 in May 2022)

Complaints to the Ombudsman

19

early resolution
transfers made



Up from 18 in
May 2022



11

preliminary
inquiries made



Down from 12 in
May 2022



1

investigations
launched



Up from 0
in May 2022



62

Ombudsman
complaints finalised

Up from 59 in May 2022



Stage complaint was finalised

34

assessment

11

preliminary
inquiry

13

early resolution
transfer

4

investigation

Notification-related complaints to the Ombudsman

1 May 2023 to 31 May 2023



National Health Practitioner Ombudsman

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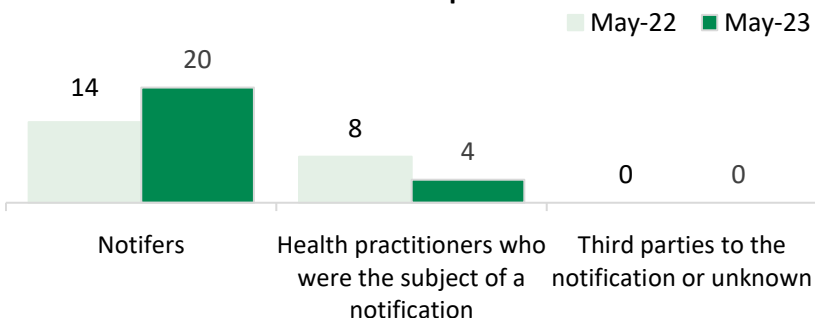
24

notification-related complaints received

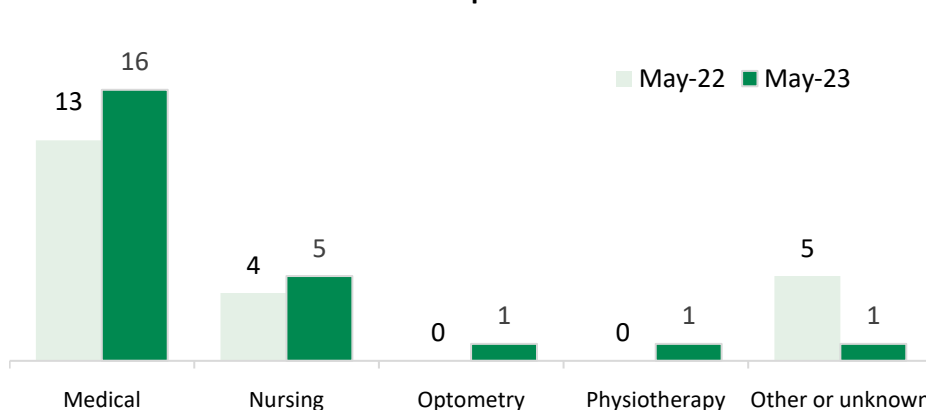


Up from 22 in May 2022

Who made notification-related complaints



Professions notification-related complaints were about



Type of notifications action that most frequently drove notification-related complaints

1. No further action taken where stage is unknown
2. No further action taken at the assessment stage
3. Matter not processed as a notification
4. Action taken to refer a practitioner to Tribunal or Panel following investigation
5. Active notification about a practitioner

Stage notification-related complaints were finalised



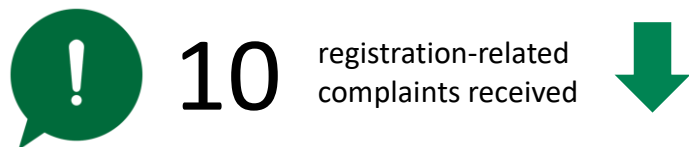
Most common outcomes of notification-related complaints

1. Investigation was not warranted in the circumstances
2. The organisation's response to the complaint was fair and reasonable
3. Concerns relate to merits of the organisation's decision
4. Complainant did not provide information requested by the NHPO
5. Further explanation provided to the complainant by the NHPO following investigation

Registration-related complaints to the Ombudsman

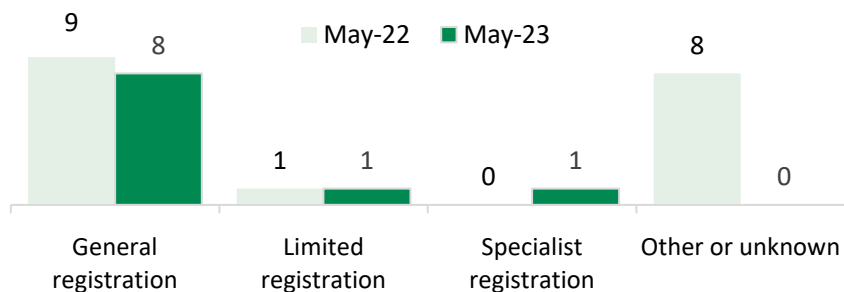
1 May 2023 to 31 May 2023

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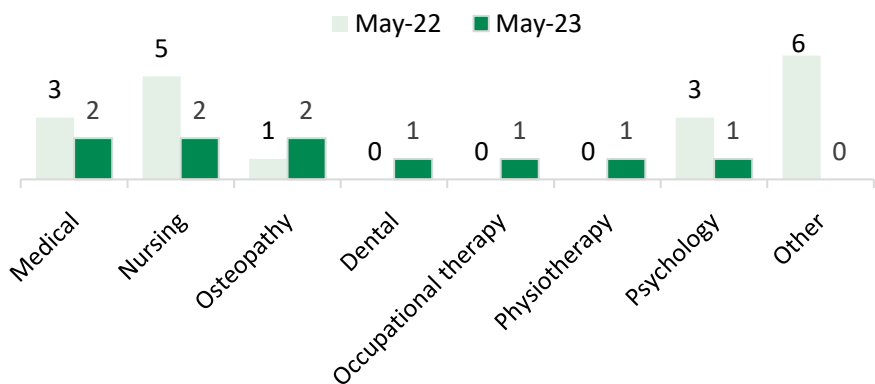


Down from 18 in May 2022

Types of registration driving registration-related complaints



Professions registration-related complaints were about



Registration processes that most frequently drove registration-related complaints

1. Processing of a new application for registration
2. Application of the English Language Skills Registration Standard
3. Application from a practitioner seeking re-entry to practise
4. Restrictions on a practitioner's registration requiring supervision
5. Fees charged for registration in a health profession

Stage registration-related complaints were finalised



Most common outcomes of registration-related complaints

1. The organisation's response to the complaint was fair and reasonable
2. Investigation is not warranted by the circumstances
3. Matter would be more appropriately handled by a Court or Tribunal
4. Complainant did not provide information requested by the NHPO
5. Concerns relate to merits of the organisation's decision



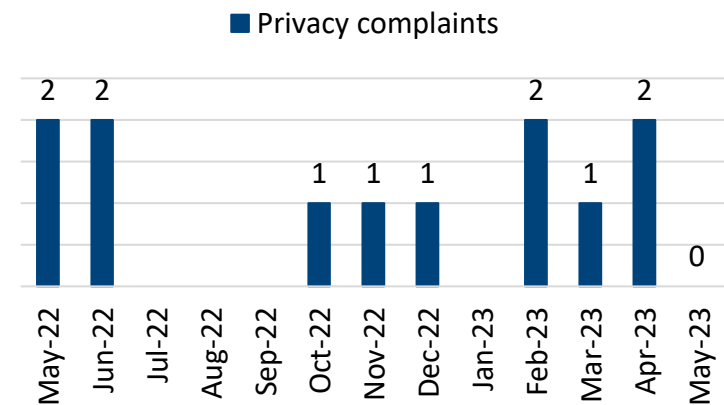
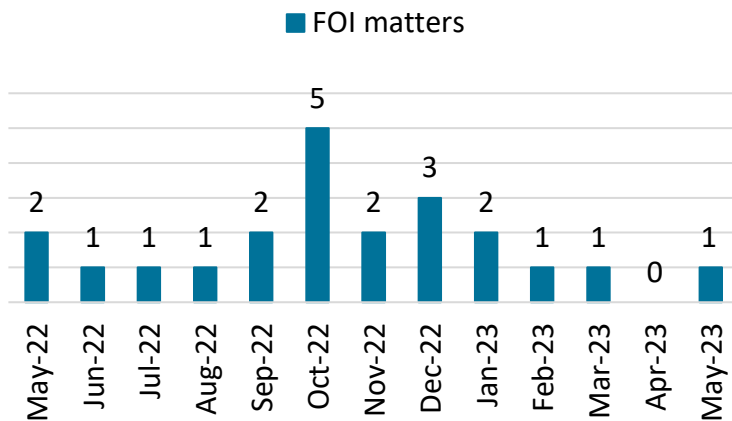
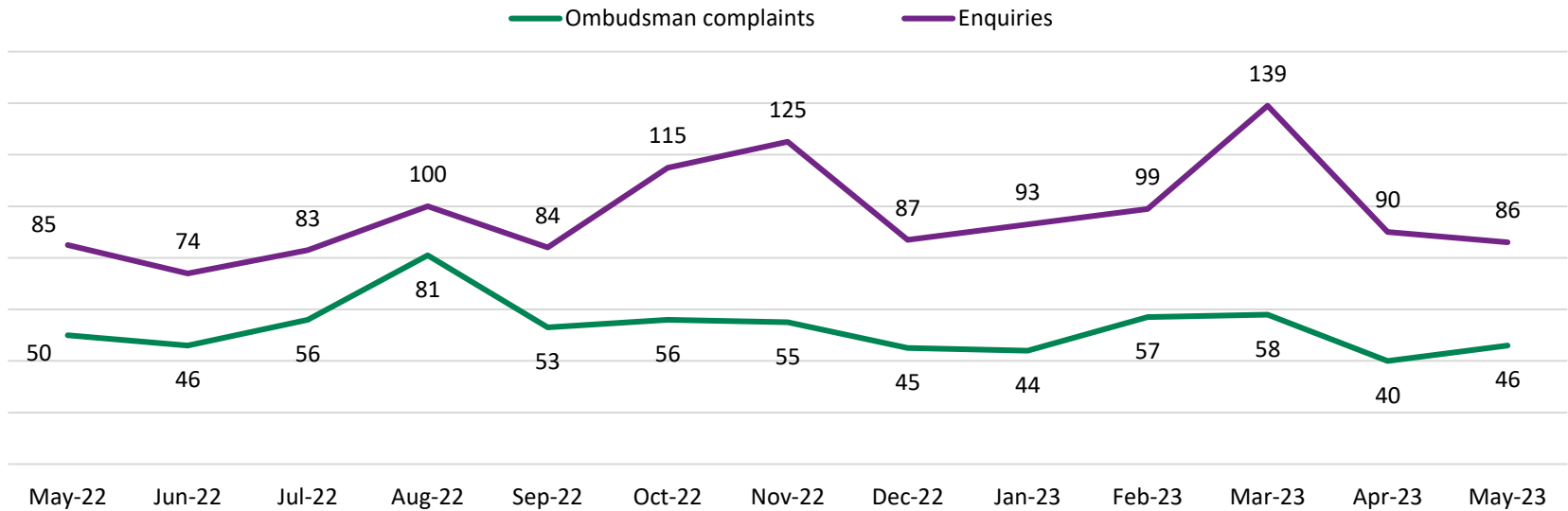
National Health
Practitioner
Ombudsman

Our year to date

1 July 2022 to 31 May 2023

Approach trends

1 July 2022 to 31 May 2023



Ombudsman complaints received from 1 July 2022 to 31 May 2023

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Types of complaints received

376 ↑ notification
Up from 287 in the same period last financial year

142 ↑ registration
Up from 134 in the same period last financial year

12 Pandemic policy/ response
61 Other types

Who made complaints

337 health practitioners
254 Non-practitioners

↑ Up from 271 in the same period last financial year
↓ Down from 509 in the same period last financial year

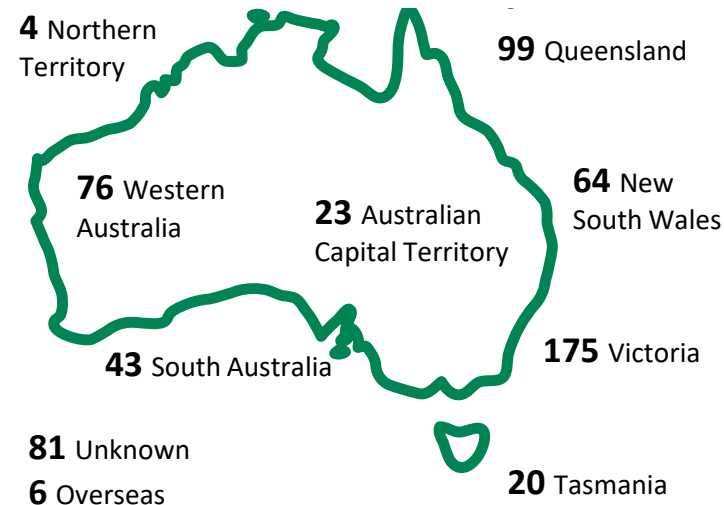
Professions most complaints were about

327 medical
↓ Down from 548 in the same period last financial year

83 Nursing
↑ Up from 74 in the same period last financial year

65 psychology
↑ Up from 55 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 an assessment of whether they meet the English Language Skills Registration Standard is unfair or unreasonable
2. Practitioner seeking general registration believes the process for satisfying the English Language Skills Registration Standard is unfair.
3. Practitioner seeking general registration believes the assessment of their international qualification is unreasonably delayed

Resolution of Ombudsman complaints from 1 July 2022 to 31 May 2023

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Early resolution mechanisms

366 

complaints
finalised at the
assessment stage

Down from
563 in the
same period
last financial
year



90 

complaints finalised
at the preliminary
inquiry stage

Up from 86
in the same
period last
financial
year



121 

complaints finalised
at the early resolution
transfer stage

Up from 98
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. The organisation's response to the complaint was fair and reasonable
3. Matter was still active with the organisation
4. Complainant did not provide requested information
5. Investigation declined as the complaint concerned the merits of the organisation's decision

Investigations

29 

complaints
finalised at the
investigation stage



Down from 91 in the same
period last financial year

Most common investigation outcomes

1. We provided feedback to the organisation
2. We provided a further explanation to the complainant
3. We provided positive feedback to the organisation
4. The organisation agreed to assess new material
5. Apology or acknowledgement was provided by the organisation

Ombudsman and Commissioner's observations

In May 2023 my office received a total of 133 approaches. This is generally consistent with the number of approaches received during the previous month (132) and at the same time last year (139).

The number of enquiries received by my office appears to have stabilised (86 in May 2023) after a sudden increase in March 2023 (139).

We received 46 complaints to the Ombudsman during May 2023. Complaints regarding the handling of a notification about a medical practitioner remain the most common type of concern raised with my office. We have, however, recently recorded fewer contacts from health practitioners compared to earlier in 2023. This reduction appears to involve health practitioners who have had a notification made about them, which suggests that recent changes in Ahpra's triaging and management of notifications has resulted in less dissatisfaction amongst health practitioners.

We finalised 62 complaints to the Ombudsman during May 2023, including four complaints that were being investigated. The investigation outcomes included my office providing a further detailed explanation of a matter to a complainant, acknowledging where Ahpra's handling of a matter had been positive, and providing feedback to Ahpra about possible process improvements that could be made. We also finalised 13 complaints at the early resolution transfer stage and 11 complaints at the preliminary inquiries stage.

Overall, the number of approaches recorded by my office so far this financial year is 17 per cent higher than the same time last year. We look forward to exploring this trend and others in our upcoming annual report.