



National Health
Practitioner
Ombudsman

Our work in August 2023

Monthly approaches overview

1 August 2023 to 31 August 2023



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.

169

approaches
received



Down from 182 in
August 2022



61

Ombudsman
complaints received



Down from 81 in
August 2022



4

FOI matters
received



Up from 1 in
August 2022



2

privacy
complaint received



Up from 0 in August
2022



102

enquiries
received



Up from 100 in
August 2022



Ombudsman complaints
were made by 39
individuals (down from
74 in August 2022)



0

FOI review
decisions
published



0

notifiable data
breach assessed
(Consistent with
0 in August
2022)

Complaints to the Ombudsman

22

early resolution
transfers made



Up from 18 in
August 2022



16

preliminary
inquiries made



Down from 17 in
August 2022



0

investigations
launched



Down from 3
in August 2022



64

Ombudsman
complaints finalised



Down from 75 in August 2022

Stage complaint was finalised

45

assessment

13

early resolution
transfer

5

preliminary
inquiry

1

investigation

Notification-related complaints to the Ombudsman

1 July 2023 to 31 August 2023

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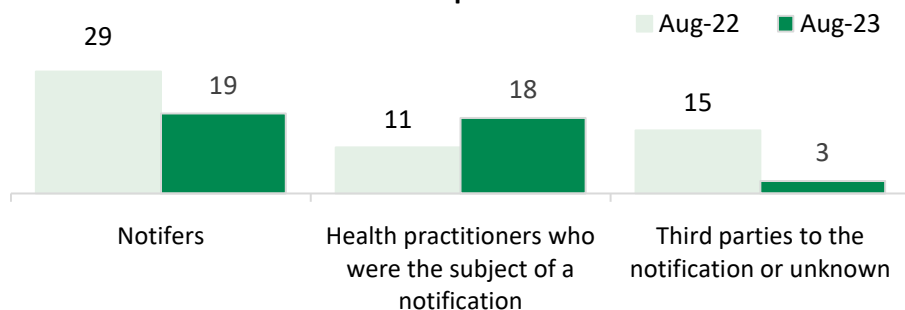
40

notification-related complaints received

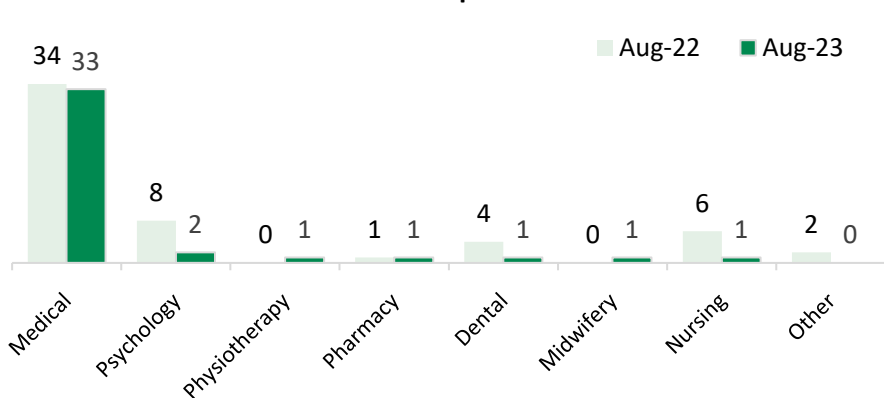


Down from 55 in August 2022

Who made notification-related complaints



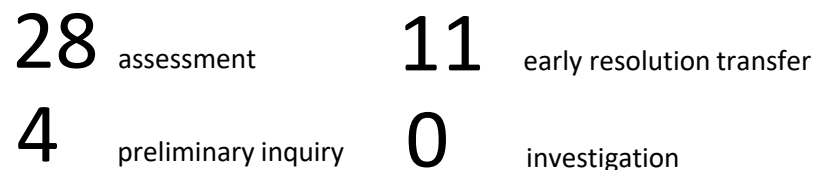
Professions notification-related complaints were about



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

1. No further action taken at the investigation stage
2. No further action taken at an unknown stage
3. Matter not progressed as a notification
4. Active notification about a practitioner
5. Action taken in the form of immediate action

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. Matter declined as it related to the merits of the organisation's decision
4. Matter declined as the NHPO has previously considered the same concerns
5. Complainant became aware of the issue more than 12 months ago

Registration-related complaints to the Ombudsman

1 July 2023 to 31 August 2023



National Health Practitioner Ombudsman

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10 registration-related complaints received

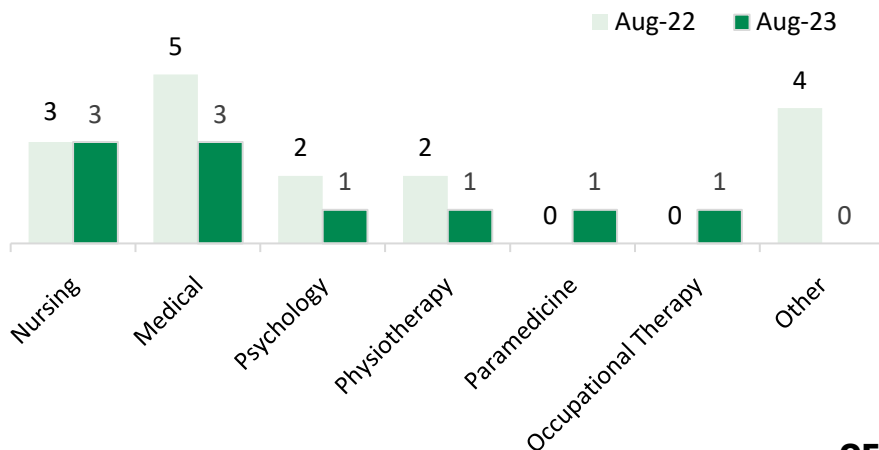


Down from 16 in August 2022

Types of registration driving registration-related complaints



Professions registration-related complaints were about



Registration processes that most frequently drove registration-related complaints

1. Fees charged for a registration application or process
2. Processing of an application for registration renewal
3. Processing of a new application for registration
4. Application of the English Language Skills Registration Standard
5. Assessment of an international qualification

Stage registration-related complaints were finalised

6 assessment **1** early resolution transfer
1 preliminary inquiry **1** investigation

Most common outcomes of registration-related complaints

1. The organisation's response to the complaint was fair and reasonable
2. Investigation was not warranted in the circumstances
3. Matter was withdrawn prior to investigation
4. Formal comments or suggestions were provided following investigation
5. Feedback was provided to the organisation

Accreditation-related complaints to the Ombudsman

1 July 2023 to 31 August 2023



National Health
Practitioner
Ombudsman

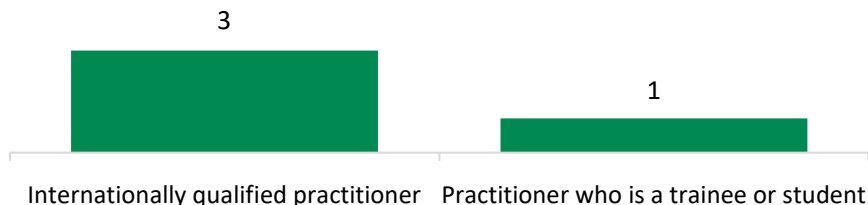
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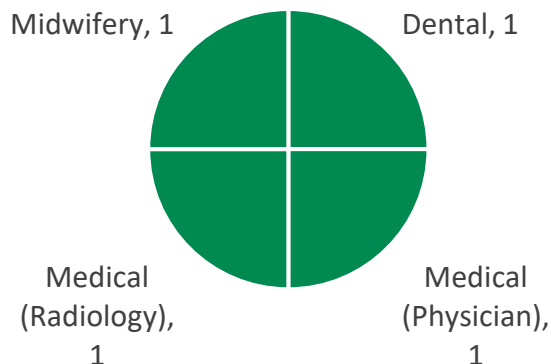
4

accreditation-related
complaints received

Who made accreditation-related complaints



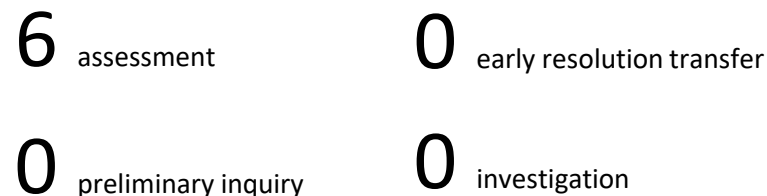
Professions and specialisations that accreditation-related complaints were about



Processes that most frequently drove accreditation-related complaints

1. Processing of an application
2. Other issue relating to an exam
3. Accessing exam results
4. Delivery of an exam
5. Entering a specialist training program

Stage accreditation-related complaints were finalised



Most common outcomes of accreditation-related complaints

1. The complaint was made anonymously and complainant cannot be contacted
2. The organisation's response to the complaint was fair and reasonable
3. The matter remains active with the organisation
4. The complainant has not yet made a complaint directly to the organisation complained about



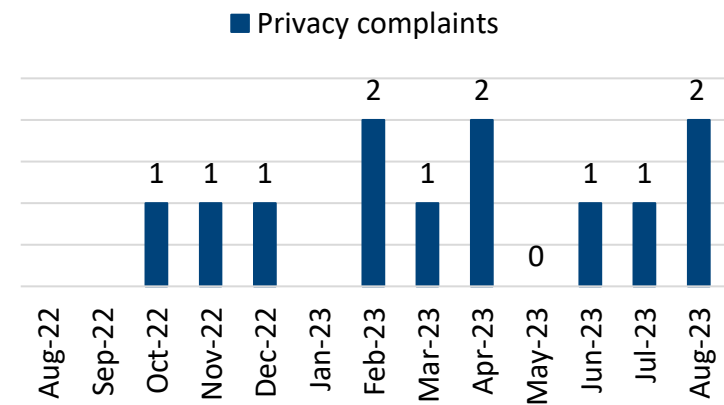
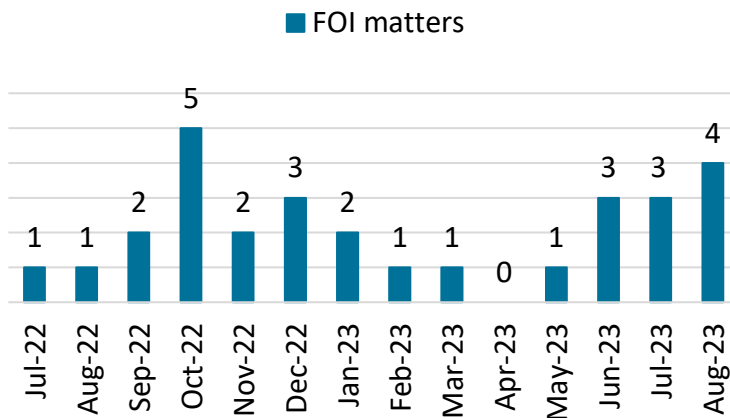
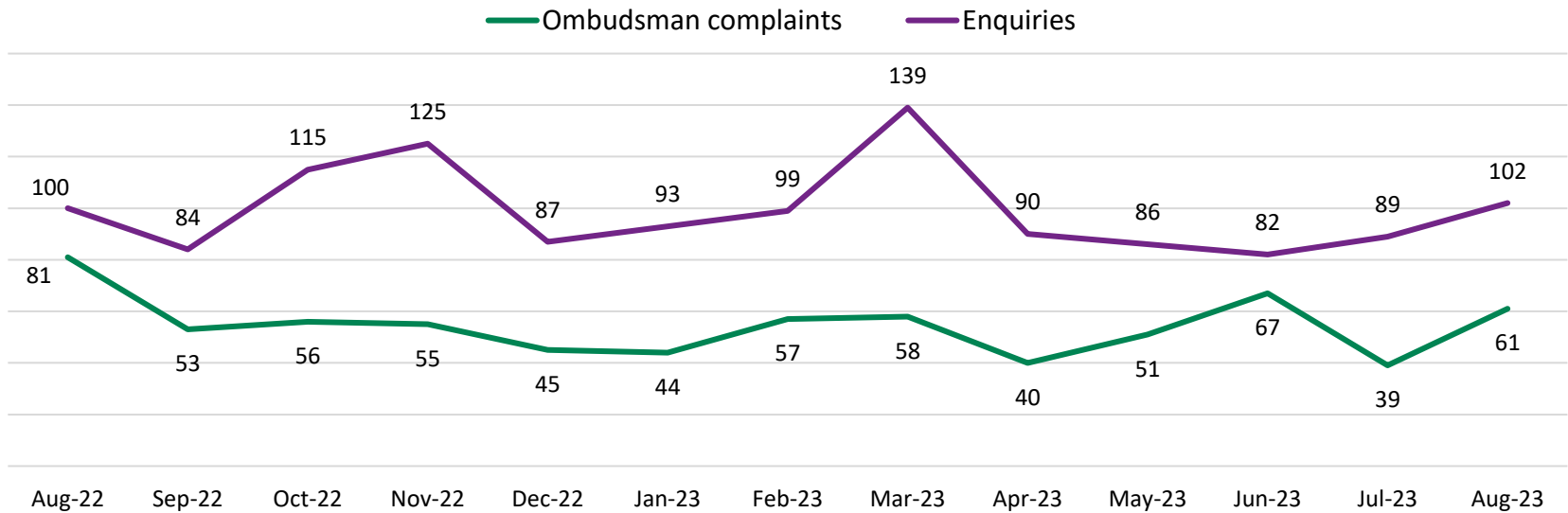
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Our year to date

1 July 2023 to 31 August 2023

Approach trends

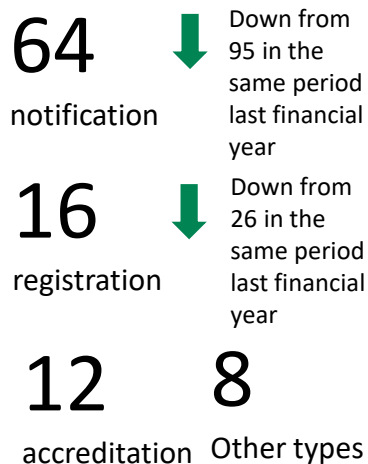
1 July 2022 to 31 August 2023



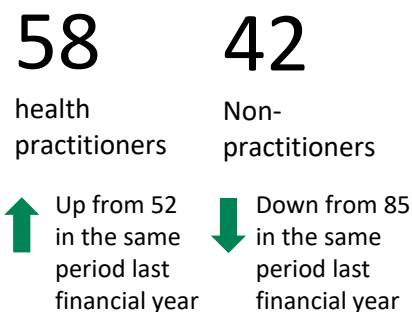
Ombudsman complaints received from 1 July 2023 to 31 August 2023

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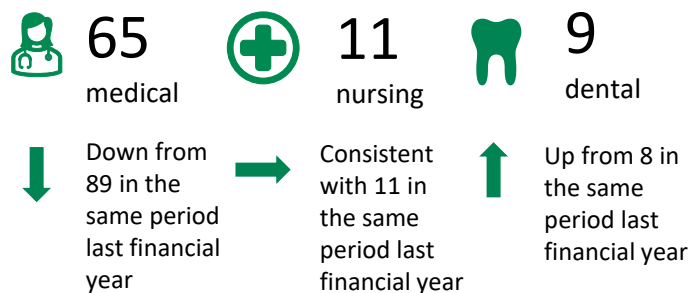
Types of complaints received



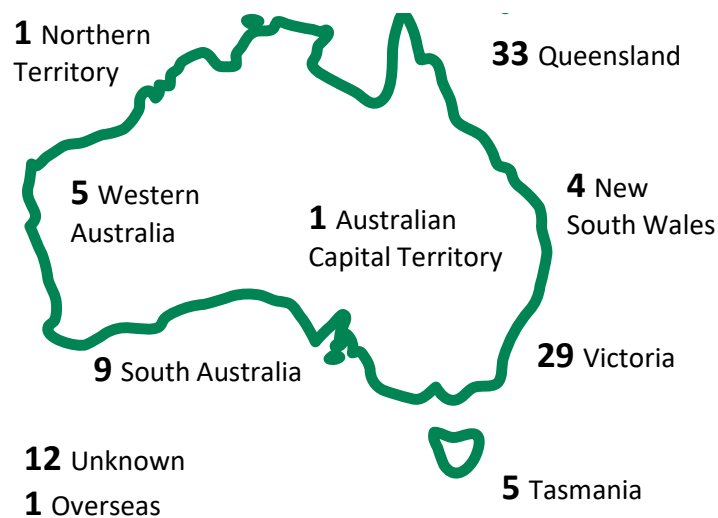
Who made complaints



Professions most complaints were about



Location the complaints were made from



Most common notification-related issues that drove complaints

1. Practitioner believes the vexatious nature of a notification has not been recognised or addressed during an investigation
2. Practitioner who is subject to investigation believes evidence has not been considered
3. Notifier believes the decision to take no further action at the assessment stage is unfair or unreasonable

Most common registration-related issues that drove complaints

1. Practitioner seeking general registration believes the process for assessing their international qualification is unfair
2. Practitioner seeking general registration believes an unfair or unreasonable decision has been made regarding their compliance with a restriction on their registration
3. Practitioner seeking specialist registration believes their application for registration has been unreasonably delayed

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

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Early resolution mechanisms

80



complaints
finalised at the
assessment stage

Up from 75 in
the same
period last
financial year



10



complaints finalised
at the preliminary
inquiry stage

Down from
24 in the
same period
last financial
year



20



complaints finalised
at the early resolution
transfer stage

Down from
24 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. The complainant did not provide information the NHPO had requested
4. The NHPO has previously considered the concerns raised by the complainant
5. Complaint was about merits of the organisation's decision

Investigations

2



complaints
finalised at the
investigation stage



Down from 8 in the same
period last financial year

Most common investigation outcomes

1. We provided feedback to the organisation being complained about
2. Apology or acknowledgement was provided by the organisation being complained about
3. Formal comments or suggestions were provided to the organisation

Ombudsman and Commissioner's observations

My office received 169 approaches during August 2023, which is 13 fewer than we received during August 2022. We continue to receive more enquiries related to issues outside my role as Ombudsman and Commissioner (102 enquiries compared with 89 last month). This was a consistent trend in 2022–23 and appears likely to continue in 2023–24.

Interestingly, my office received four Freedom of Information (FOI) applications to the Commissioner in August 2023, which is the highest monthly total since October 2022.

Although my office received fewer Ombudsman complaints in August 2023 than in August 2022, the number of complaints was significantly more than that received in the previous month (up from 39 in July 2023 to 61 complaints in August 2023). This increase in complaints was primarily driven by my office receiving more notification-related concerns. In particular, we heard more from practitioners who had a notification made about them (18 complaints, up from 5 complaints last month and 11 in August 2022).

Our commitment to resolving concerns without a formal investigation continued in August 2023. We made 22 early resolution transfers, and initiated 16 preliminary inquiries. We did not commence any new investigations.

Across the 64 complaints to the Ombudsman that my office finalised in August 2023, all but one were concluded without a formal investigation. This investigation was finalised after I provided formal comments and suggestions to Ahpra about issues my office identified regarding the delivery of the Objective Structured Clinical Exam for internationally qualified nurses.