



National Health
Practitioner
Ombudsman

Our work in June 2023

Monthly approaches overview

1 June 2023 to 30 June 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.

154

approaches
received



Up from 124 in
June 2022



67

Ombudsman
complaints received



Up from 46 in
June 2022



3

FOI matters
received



Up from 1 in
June 2022



1

privacy
complaint received



Down from 2 in
June 2022



82

enquiries
received



Up from 74 in June
2022



Ombudsman complaints
were made by 42
individuals (down from
44 in June 2022)



0

FOI review
decisions
published



1

notifiable data
breach assessed
(0 in June 2022)

Complaints to the Ombudsman

10

early resolution
transfers made



Down from 15 in
June 2022



5

preliminary
inquiries made



Down from 8 in
June 2022



0

investigations
launched



Consistent with 0
in June 2022



51

Ombudsman
complaints finalised

Up from 43 in June 2022



Stage complaint was finalised

27

assessment

11

early resolution
transfer

11

preliminary
inquiry

2

investigation

Notification-related complaints to the Ombudsman

1 June 2023 to 30 June 2023



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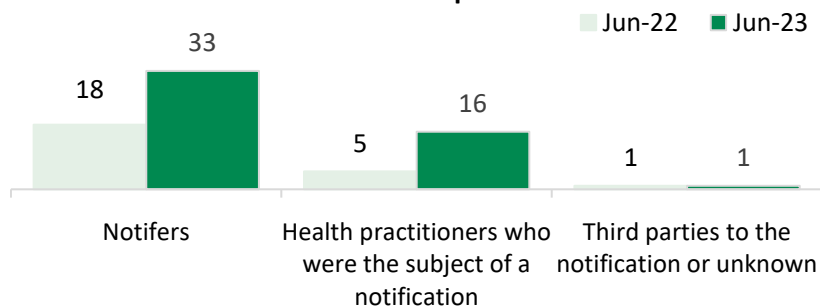
50

notification-related
complaints received

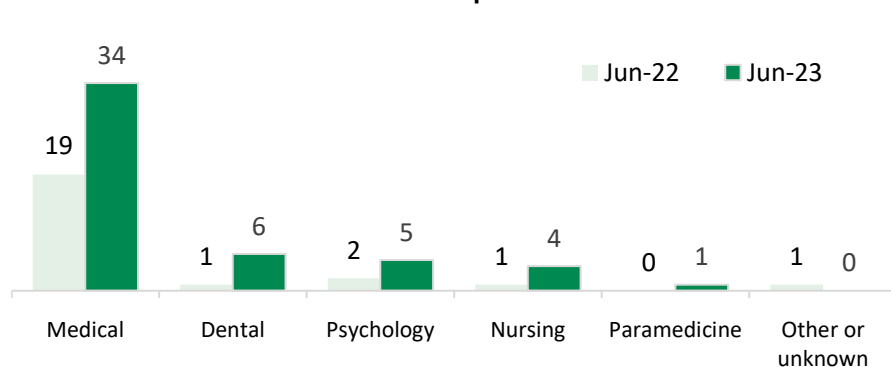


Up from 24 in June 2022

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 assessment stage
2. Active notification about a practitioner
3. No further action taken where stage is unknown
4. Decision and stage of decision are unknown
5. Action taken at the assessment stage

Stage notification-related complaints were finalised

20 assessment 4 early resolution transfer
10 preliminary inquiry 2 investigation

Most common outcomes of notification-related complaints

1. The organisation's response to the complaint was fair and reasonable
2. Matter declined as related to the merits of the organisation's decision
3. Investigation was not warranted in the circumstances
4. Matter is still actively being considered by the organisation that has been complained about
5. Matter complained about is currently before a Court or Tribunal

Registration-related complaints to the Ombudsman

1 June 2023 to 30 June 2023



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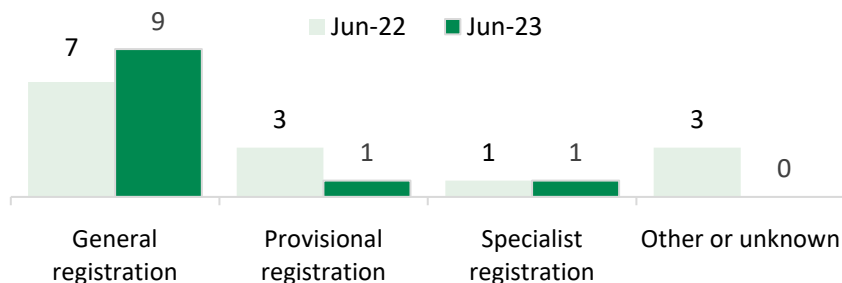
11

registration-related
complaints received

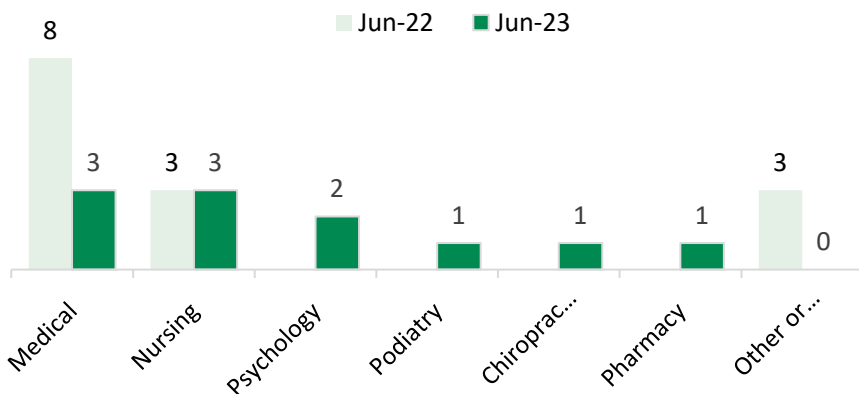


Down from 14 in June 2022

Types of registration driving registration-related complaints



Professions registration-related complaints were about



Registration processes that most frequently drove registration-related complaints

1. Restrictions on a practitioner's registration requiring supervision
2. Application of the English Language Skills Registration Standard
3. Processing of a new application for registration
4. Review of conditions on a practitioner's registration
5. Compliance activity regarding restrictions on a practitioner's registration

Stage registration-related complaints were finalised

4 assessment

5 early resolution transfer

1 preliminary inquiry

0 investigation

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. Complainant did not provide information requested by the NHPO
4. Complainant has an active complaint with the organisation complained about
5. Matter withdrawn by the complainant



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Our year to date

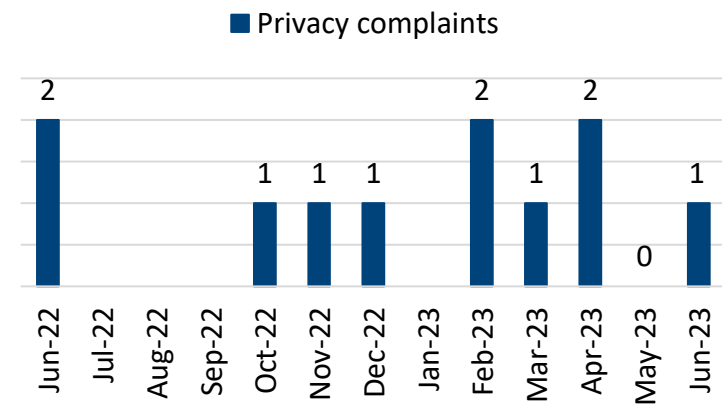
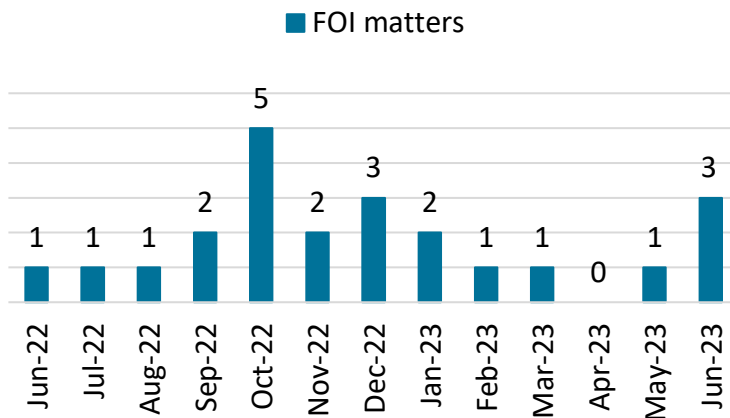
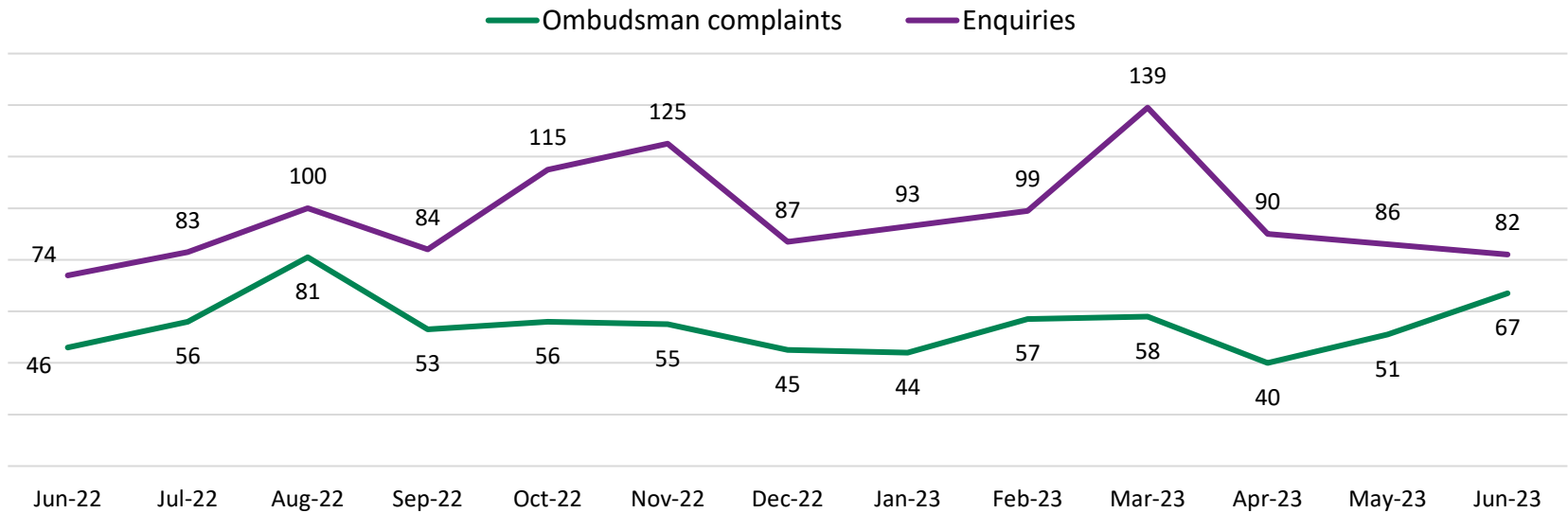
1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023

Approach trends

1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023



National Health
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Ombudsman complaints received from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023

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Types of complaints received

430 ↑ notification
Up from 309 in the same period last financial year

153 ↑ registration
Up from 149 in the same period last financial year

12 Pandemic policy/ response
68 Other types

Who made complaints

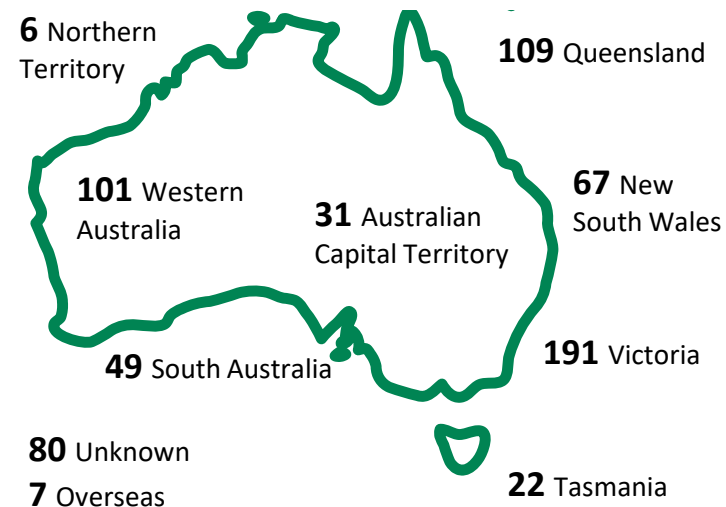
381 health practitioners
282 Non-practitioners

↑ Up from 301 in the same period last financial year
↓ Down from 525 in the same period last financial year

Professions most complaints were about

371 medical (↓ Down from 578 in the same period last financial year)
90 Nursing (↑ Up from 78 in the same period last financial year)
73 psychology (↑ Up from 59 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. Notifier believes the decision to take no further action at the assessment stage has been reached without all evidence being considered

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 processing of new application for registration has been unreasonably delayed

Resolution of Ombudsman complaints from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023

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Early resolution mechanisms

393 

complaints
finalised at the
assessment stage

Down from
590 in the
same period
last financial
year



101 

complaints finalised
at the preliminary
inquiry stage

Up from 92
in the same
period last
financial
year



132 

complaints finalised
at the early resolution
transfer stage

Up from 106
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

31 

complaints
finalised at the
investigation stage



Down from 93 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 June 2023 my office received 154 approaches. This is 16 per cent more approaches than the previous month (133) and 24 per cent more than June 2022 (124).

The increase in approaches was largely driven by a rise in complaints being made to the Ombudsman. We received 67 complaints to the Ombudsman in June 2023, which is the second highest monthly total in 2022–23. The spike in complaints appears to be related to some complainants raising concerns about multiple regulatory matters at once; the 67 Ombudsman complaints were made by 42 people.

Of the 67 complaints made to the Ombudsman, 50 related to the handling of a notification. This is more than double the number of notification-related complaints received in the previous month (24) and in June 2022 (also 24). The growth in notification-related complaints was seen across both complaints from notifiers and complaints from practitioners who were the subject of a notification.

We finalised 51 complaints to the Ombudsman during June 2023, including two complaints that were investigated. The investigation outcomes for these matters included my office providing feedback to Ahpra regarding the clarity of their notifications-related policies and procedures and the need for comprehensive risk assessments. We also obtained an agreement from Ahpra to improve its processes for conflict of interest checks relating to the writers of independent opinion reports.

In addition to the above, my office received three applications for a review of a Freedom of Information decision made by Ahpra, one privacy complaint and notification of one eligible data breach from Ahpra. The number of enquiries we received (82) continued to trend downwards after reaching a peak of 139 in March 2023. June 2023 represented the lowest monthly total for enquiries in 2022–23.