



National Health  
Practitioner  
Ombudsman

# Our work in October 2023

# Monthly approaches overview

1 October 2023 to 31 October 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](mailto:complaints@nhpo.gov.au).

147

approaches  
received



Down from 178 in  
October 2022



60

Ombudsman  
complaints received



Up from 56 in  
October 2022



4

FOI matters  
received



Down from 5 in  
October 2022



0

privacy  
complaint received



Down from 1 in  
October 2022



81

enquiries  
received



Down from 115 in  
October 2022



Ombudsman complaints  
were made by 45  
individuals (down from  
48 in October 2022)



0

FOI review  
decisions  
published



2

notifiable data  
breaches assessed  
(Up from 1 in  
October 2022)

## Complaints to the Ombudsman

22

early resolution  
transfers made



Up from 18 in  
October 2022



17

preliminary  
inquiries made



Up from 4 in  
October 2022



0

investigations  
launched



Down from 2  
in October 2022



49

Ombudsman  
complaints finalised



Down from 70 in October 2022

Stage complaint was finalised

26

assessment

4

early resolution  
transfer

17

preliminary  
inquiry

2

investigation

# Notification-related complaints to the Ombudsman

1 October 2023 to 31 October 2023



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40

notification-related complaints received

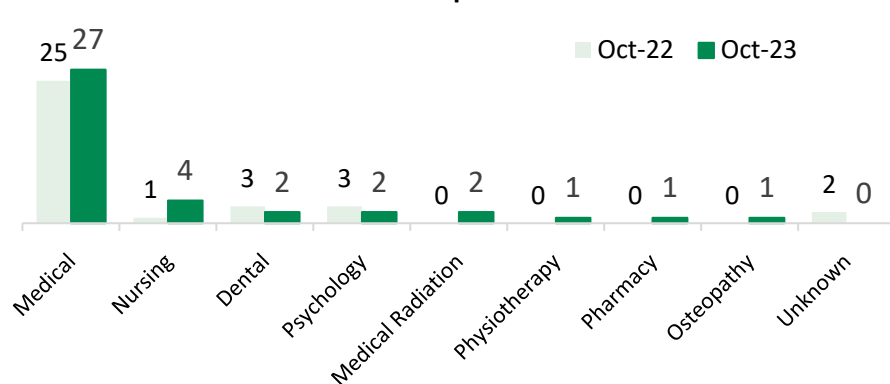


Up from 34 in October 2022

## 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. Notification remains active
3. Immediate action taken while the notification is being investigated
4. Outcome and stage of the notification decision is unknown
5. Matter not progressed as a notification

## Stage notification-related complaints were finalised



## Most common outcomes of notification-related complaints

1. Investigation was not warranted in the circumstance
2. The organisation's response to the complaint was fair and reasonable
3. The matter complained about was still actively being considered by the organisation
4. Matter declined as it related to the merits of the organisation's decision
5. The complainant did not provide the NHPO with requested information

# Registration-related complaints to the Ombudsman

1 October 2023 to 31 October 2023

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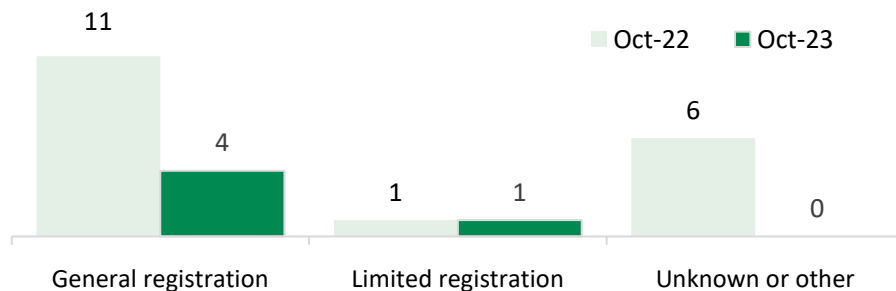
5

registration-related  
complaints received

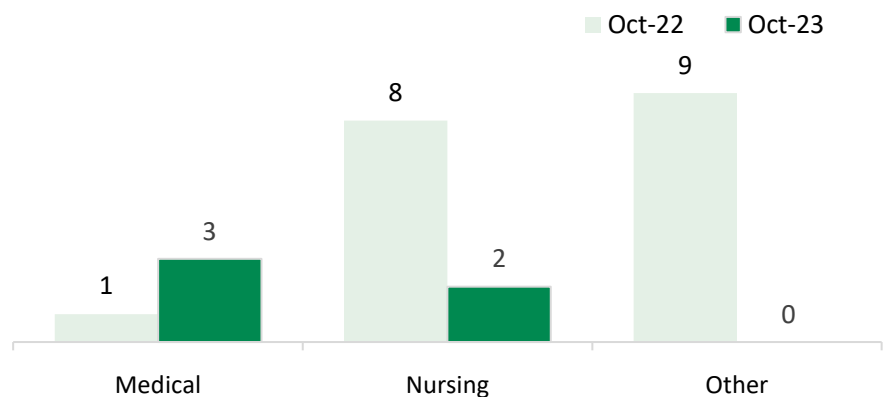


Down from 18 in October 2022

## Types of registration driving registration-related complaints



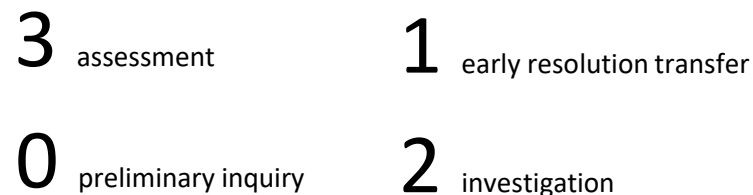
## Professions registration-related complaints were about



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

1. Fees charged for registration
2. Application of the English Language Skills Registration Standard
3. Processing of a new application for registration
4. Transitioning from one registration type to another
5. Restriction on a practitioner's registration prevents a third party from accessing their preferred practitioner

## Stage registration-related complaints were finalised



## Most common outcomes of registration-related complaints

1. Investigation was not warranted in the circumstance
2. The NHPO is monitoring the concern raised as a systemic issue
3. The organisation's response to the complaint was fair and reasonable
4. Matter would be more appropriately handled by a court or tribunal
5. The NHPO provided formal comments or suggestions following investigation

# Accreditation-related complaints to the Ombudsman

1 October 2023 to 31 October 2023



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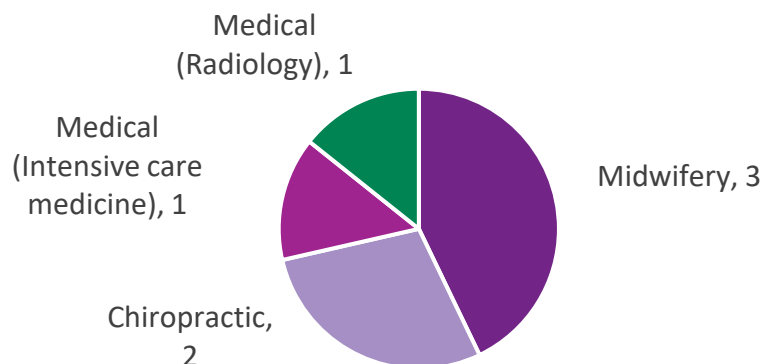
7

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. Delivery of an exam
2. Handling of bullying or harassment concerns at a training site
3. Other issues relating to training sites
4. Entry to a specialist training program

## Stage accreditation-related complaints were finalised



## Most common outcomes of accreditation-related complaints

1. The complainant has an active complaint with the organisation they have complained about
2. Investigation was not warranted in the circumstances
3. The complainant did not provide the NHPO with requested information



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# Our year to date

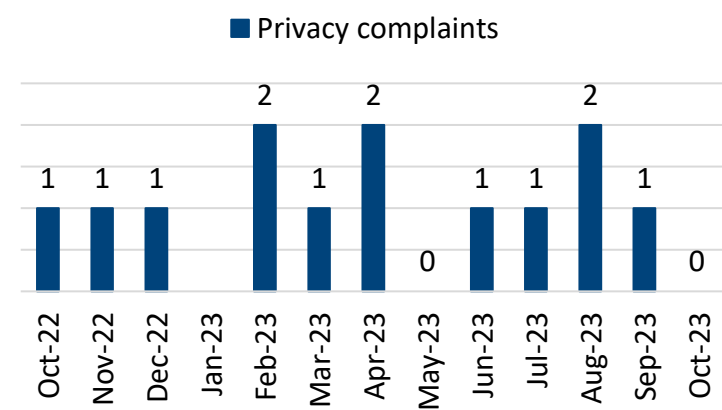
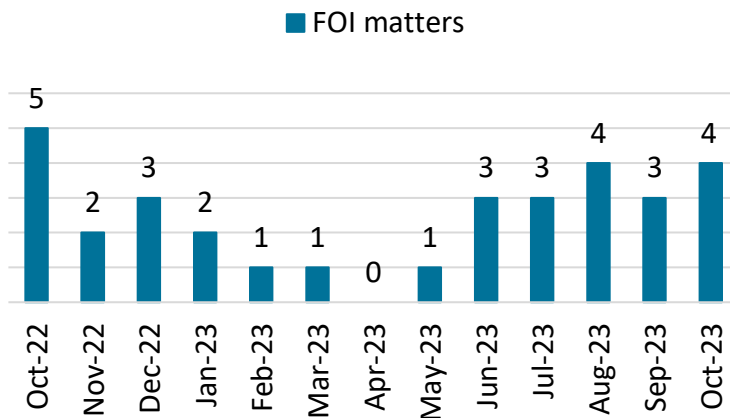
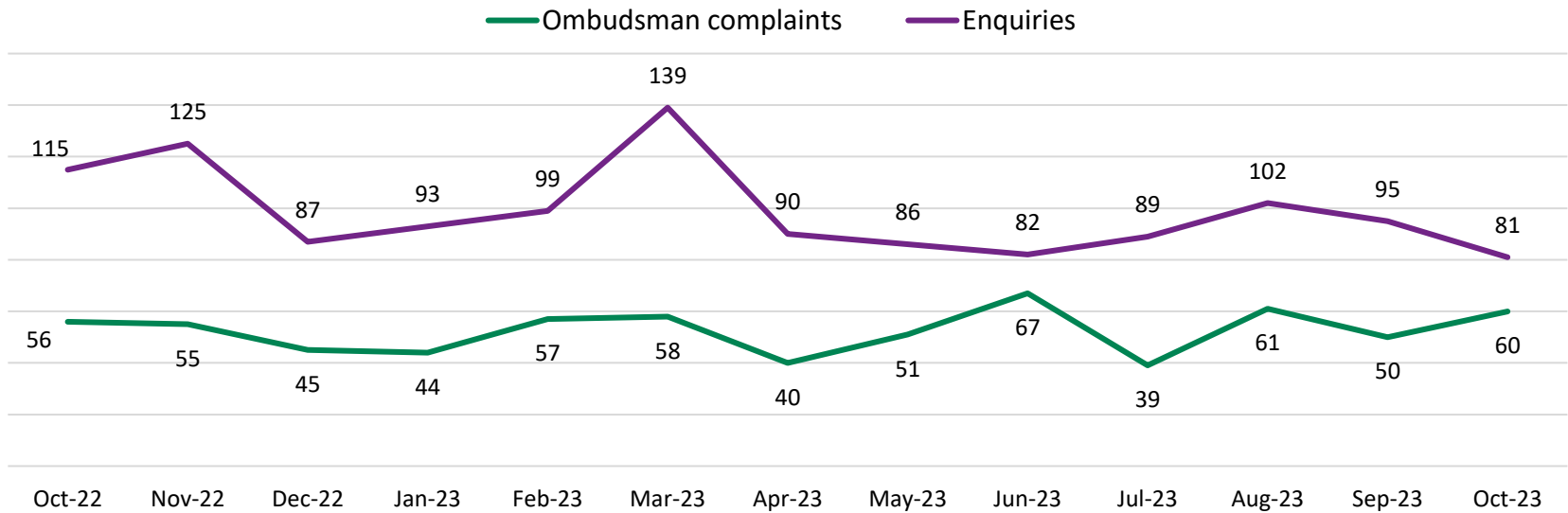
1 July 2023 to 31 October 2023

# Approach trends

1 July 2023 to 31 October 2023



National Health  
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# Ombudsman complaints received from 1 July 2023 to 31 October 2023

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## Types of complaints received

**134** ↓ Down from 163 in the same period last financial year  
notification

**36** ↓ Down from 55 in the same period last financial year  
registration

**21** accreditation  
**19** Other types

## Who made complaints

**121** health practitioners  
**89** Non-practitioners

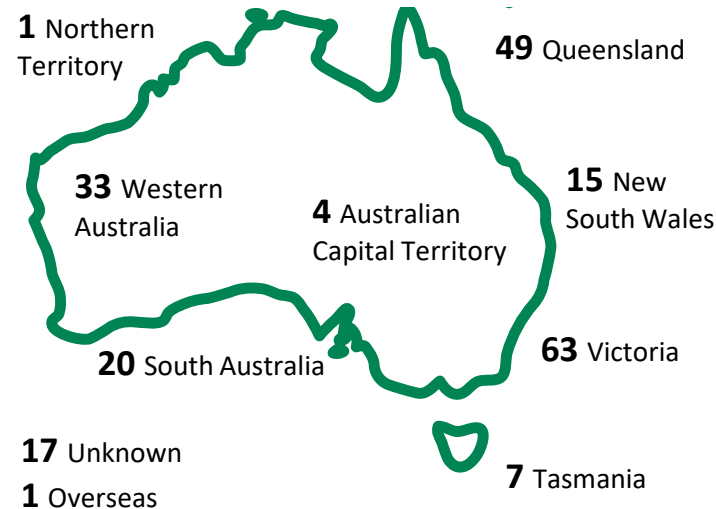
↑ Up from 116 in the same period last financial year  
↓ Down from 130 in the same period last financial year

## Professions most complaints were about

 **133** medical  
 **25** nursing  
 **13** psychology

↓ Down from 146 in the same period last financial year  
↓ Down from 29 in the same period last financial year  
↓ Down from 23 in the same period last financial year

## Location the complaints were made from



## Most common notification-related issues that drove complaints

1. Notifier believes a decision to take no further action at the assessment stage was unfair or unreasonable
2. Notifier believes a decision to take no further action at an unknown stage was unfair or unreasonable
3. Notifier believes inadequate steps were taken before a decision to take no further action was made at the assessment stage

## Most common registration-related issues that drove complaints

1. Practitioner seeking general registration believes the fees they have been charged for registration are unfair or unreasonable
2. Practitioner seeking to transition to general registration from another registration type believes the process for doing so is unfair
3. Practitioner seeking general registration believes application of the English Language Skills Registration Standard has resulted in a decision that is unfair or unreasonable



# Resolution of Ombudsman complaints from 1 July 2022 to 31 October 2023

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## Early resolution mechanisms

132 

complaints  
finalised at the  
assessment stage

Down from  
157 in the  
same period  
last financial  
year



41 

complaints finalised  
at the preliminary  
inquiry stage

Down from  
48 in the  
same period  
last financial  
year



30 

complaints finalised  
at the early resolution  
transfer stage

Down from  
43 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 complaint concerned the merits of the organisation's decision
5. We have previously considered the concerns raised by the Complainant

## Investigations

4 

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. Formal comments or suggestions were provided to the organisation
3. We are monitoring the concern raised as a systemic issue
4. Apology or acknowledgement was provided by the organisation being complained about
5. We provided further explanation to the complainant

# Ombudsman and Commissioner's observations

My office received 147 approaches during October 2023, 17 per cent less than October 2022 (178). The reduction in the number of approaches was linked to a decrease in the number of enquiries received (81, down from 115). The number of Ombudsman complaints received did, however, increase (60, up from 56).

Two-thirds of the Ombudsman complaints recorded during October 2023 raised concerns relating to the notifications process (40). This represents an 18 per cent increase in notification-related complaints compared with October 2022 (34). Consistent with past trends, the majority of notification-related complaints were about the medical profession (27), and a high number of notification-related complaints were made by the notifier (29) rather than the practitioner who was the subject of the notification (8).

A significantly lower number of registration-related complaints were received in October 2023 (five, down from 18 in October 2022). It would appear that this reduction in complaints is most apparent in relation to the nursing profession (two complaints, down from eight in October 2022).

During October 2023 my office initiated 22 early resolution transfers (four more than in October 2022) and made preliminary inquiries 17 times (up from four in October 2022). My office also commenced one investigation into a privacy complaint.

My office finalised 49 Ombudsman complaints in October 2023. The majority of complaints were finalised at the assessment stage (26) or following my office making preliminary inquiries (17). We concluded two investigations of Ombudsman complaints in October 2023, both of which related to registration-related issues. One of these complaints concerned the handling of a registration renewal following the revocation of a suspension. This investigation resulted in my office making formal comments to Ahpra about improved communication regarding registration renewals. The other complaint concerned the assessment of an international practitioner's qualifications, which resulted in my office providing feedback to Ahpra about improving both its internal and public-facing information regarding the assessment process. Both issues considered in the investigations will be subject to ongoing monitoring by our office.