



National Health
Practitioner
Ombudsman

Our work in December 2023

Monthly approaches overview

1 December 2023 to 31 December 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.

137

approaches
received



Consistent with
137 in December
2022

50

Ombudsman
complaints received



Up from 45 in
December 2022



4

FOI matters
received



Up from 3 in
December 2022



0

privacy
complaints received



Down from 1 in
December 2022



83

enquiries
received



Down from 87 in
December 2022



Ombudsman complaints
were made by 40
individuals (Consistent
with 40 in December
2022)



0

FOI review
decisions
published



0

notifiable data
breach assessed
(Down from 1 in
December 2022)

Complaints to the Ombudsman

11



early resolution
transfers made

Up from 6 in
December 2022



5



preliminary
inquiries made

Down from 6 in
December 2022



3



investigations
launched

Up from 1
in December 2022



42

Ombudsman
complaints finalised



Up from 41 in December 2022

Stage complaint was finalised

18

assessment

15

early resolution
transfer

9

preliminary
inquiry

0

investigation

Notification-related complaints to the Ombudsman

1 December 2023 to 31 December 2023



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31

notification-related
complaints received

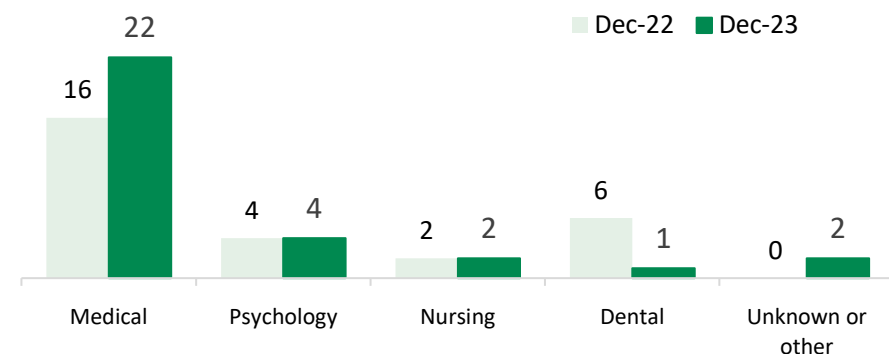


Up from 28 in December 2022

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. Action taken to refer practitioner to Tribunal
3. No further action taken at an unknown stage
4. Notification remains active
5. Matter not processed as a notification

Stage notification-related complaints were finalised

8 assessment

13 early resolution transfer

7 preliminary inquiry

0 investigation

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. The complainant agreed their complaint had been resolved by the organisation's response
4. Matter declined as it related to the merits of the organisation's decision
5. We provided feedback to the organisation being complained about

Registration-related complaints to the Ombudsman

1 December 2023 to 31 December 2023



National Health Practitioner Ombudsman

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11

registration-related complaints received

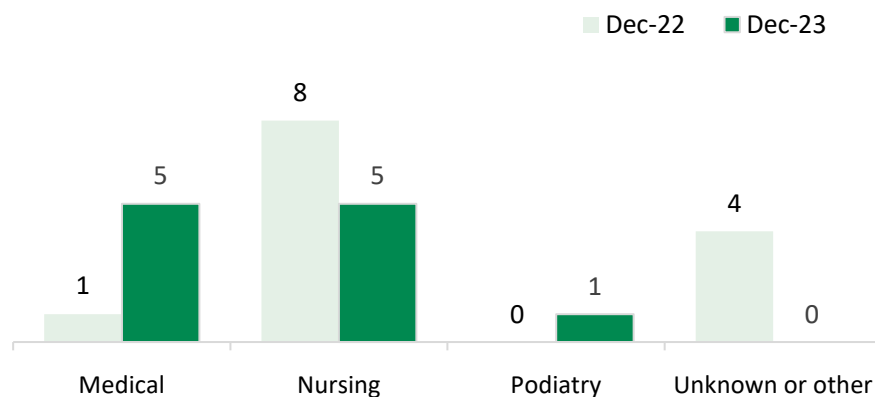


Down from 13 in December 2022

Types of registration driving registration-related complaints



Professions registration-related complaints were about



Registration processes that most frequently drove registration-related complaints

1. Assessment of an international qualification
2. Review of restrictions on a practitioner's registration
3. Application of the English Language Skills Registration Standard
4. Publication of information on the register of practitioners
5. Fees charged for registration

Stage registration-related complaints were finalised

3 assessment	0 early resolution transfer
2 preliminary inquiry	0 investigation

Most common outcomes of registration-related complaints

1. Investigation was not warranted in the circumstances
2. The organisation's response to the complaint was fair and reasonable
3. The underlying matter complained about remains active
4. Our office is monitoring the concern raised as a systemic issue

Accreditation-related complaints to the Ombudsman

1 December 2023 to 31 December 2023



National Health
Practitioner
Ombudsman

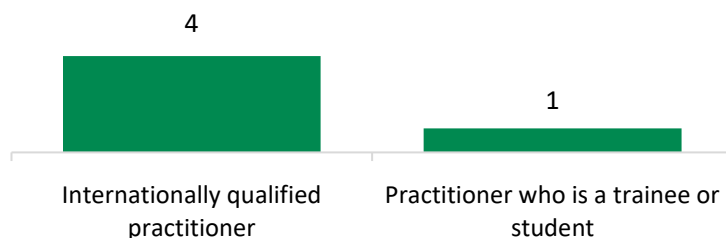
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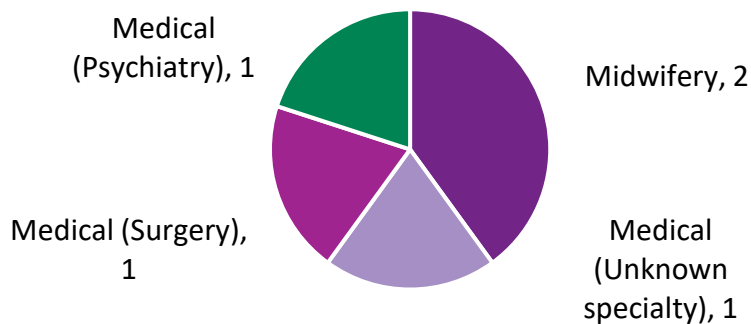
5

accreditation-related
complaints received

Who made accreditation-related complaints



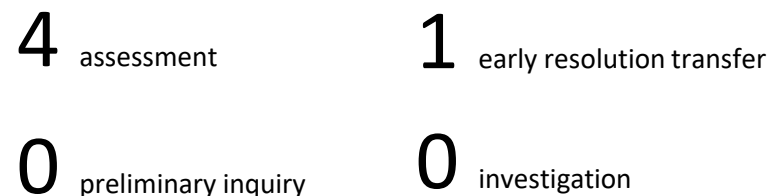
Professions and specialisations that accreditation-related complaints were about



Processes that most frequently drove accreditation-related complaints

1. Removal of a trainee from a training program
2. Delivery of an exam
3. Access to exam results
4. Fees charged by an accreditation organisation
5. Access to the merits review process

Stage accreditation-related complaints were finalised



Most common outcomes of accreditation-related complaints

1. The complainant did not provide our office with requested information
2. Our office is monitoring the concern raised as a systemic issue
3. The organisation's response to the complaint was fair and reasonable
4. The complainant was not directly affected by the concerns they were raising



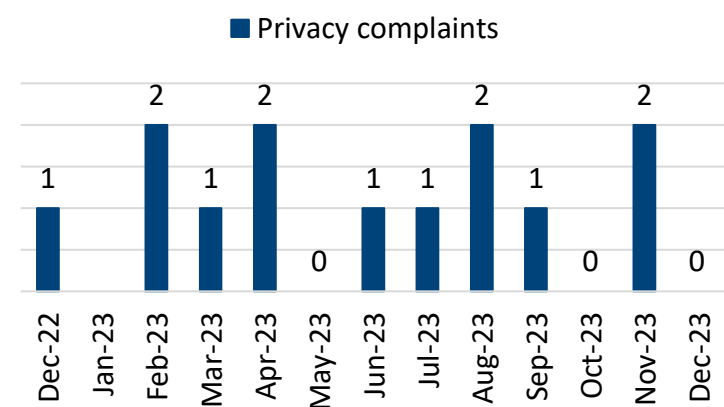
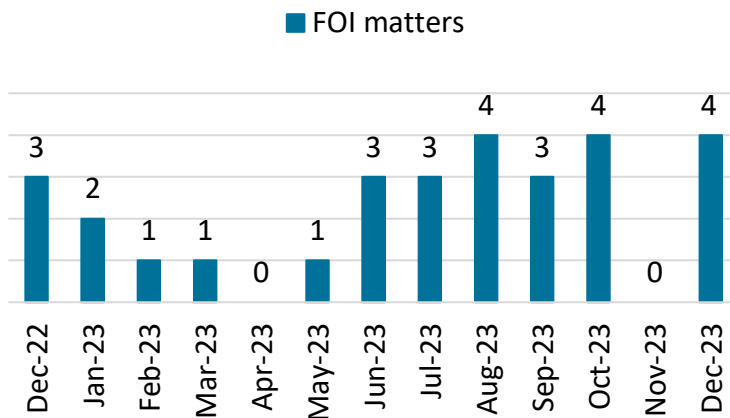
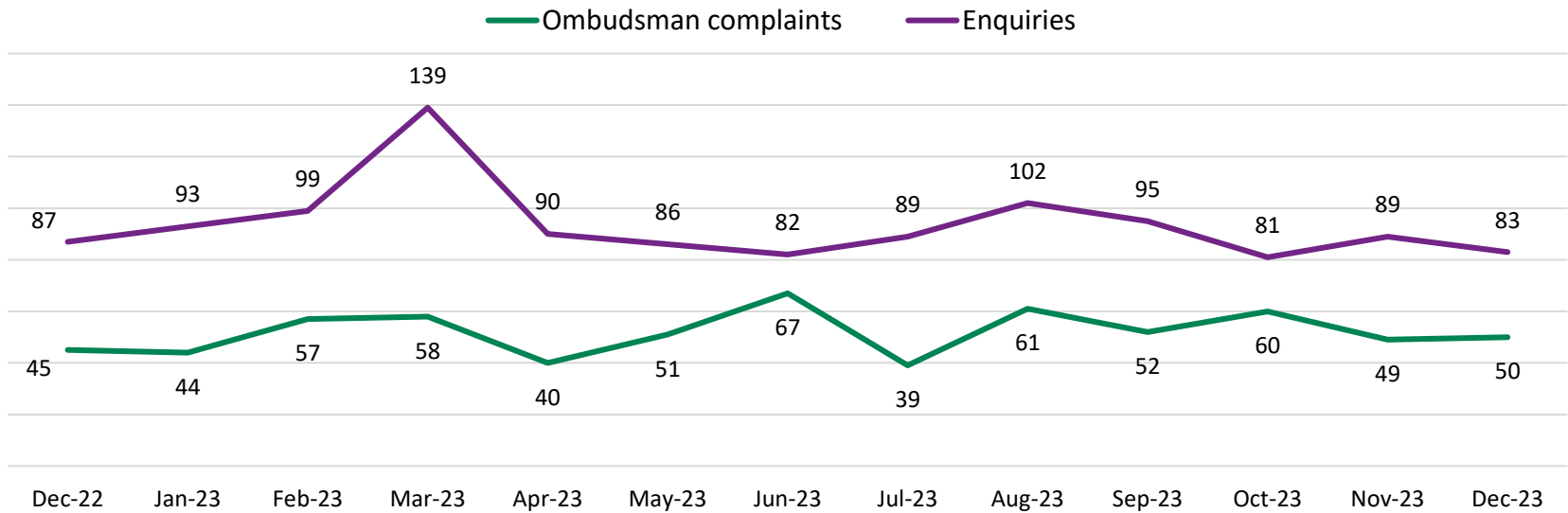
National Health
Practitioner
Ombudsman

Our year to date

1 July 2023 to 31 December 2023

Approach trends

1 July 2023 to 31 December 2023



Ombudsman complaints received from 1 July 2023 to 31 December 2023

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Types of complaints received

197 ↓ Down from 223 in the same period last financial year
notification

55 ↓ Down from 78 in the same period last financial year
registration

27 accreditation
32 Other types

Who made complaints

171 health practitioners
140 Non-practitioners

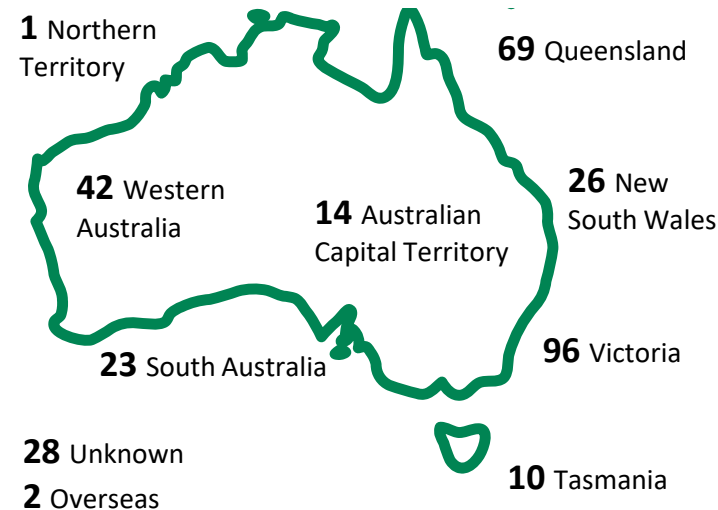
↓ Down from 188 in the same period last financial year

↓ Down from 158 in the same period last financial year

Professions most complaints were about

200 medical ↑ Up from 192 in the same period last financial year
39 nursing ↓ Down from 48 in the same period last financial year
21 psychology ↓ Down from 38 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 the assessment stage was made without all relevant evidence being considered
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 general registration believes application of the English Language Skills Registration Standard has resulted in a decision that is unfair or unreasonable
3. Practitioner seeking general registration believes the process for satisfying the English Language Skills Registration Standard is unfair

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

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Early resolution mechanisms

185



complaints
finalised at the
assessment stage

Down from 216
in the same
period last
financial year



61



complaints finalised
at the preliminary
inquiry stage

Up from 53 in
the same
period last
financial year



56



complaints finalised
at the early resolution
transfer stage

Down from 76
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 our office had requested
4. The complaint concerned the merits of the organisation's decision
5. The underlying matter complained about remains active

Investigations

6



complaints
finalised at the
investigation stage



Down from 14 in the same
period last financial year

Most common investigation outcomes

1. We provided feedback to the organisation being complained about
2. An apology or acknowledgement was provided by the organisation being complained about
3. We provided formal comments or suggestions to the organisation being complained about
4. We provided further explanation to the complainant
5. We are monitoring the concern raised as a systemic issue

Ombudsman and Commissioner's observations

My office received 137 approaches during December 2023. This is mostly consistent with the number of approaches we received in both November 2023 (139) and December 2022 (137). However, complaints to the Ombudsman were slightly higher in December 2023 (50) than they were in both November 2023 (47) and December 2022 (45).

In line with previous complaint trends, most complaints to the Ombudsman recorded in December 2023 related to Ahpra and the Boards' notifications process (31). Most of these complaints related to the medical profession (22) and were made by the person who made the notification (26). However, we saw a slight increase in the number of notification-related complaints we received in December 2023 compared with December 2022 (28 to 31). The increase appears to have been driven by my office receiving more concerns from notifiers (18 to 26 complaints).

My office also received 11 registration-related complaints in December 2023. The number of registration-related complaints was lower than in December 2022 (13), but higher than November 2023 (eight). Most of the complaints received related to the medical profession, with the reduction in complaints from December 2022 largely driven by my office receiving fewer complaints about the psychology and nursing professions.

During December 2023 my office continued to focus on early and efficient resolution of complaints wherever possible. My office initiated 11 early resolution transfers (five more than in December 2022) and made preliminary inquiries five times (one fewer than in December 2022). However, my office also found it necessary to commence three new investigations, all relating to different aspects of the practitioner registration process.

My office finalised 42 complaints to the Ombudsman in December 2023. Most of these complaints were finalised at the assessment stage (18) or following my office facilitating an early resolution transfer (15).