



National Health
Practitioner
Ombudsman

Our work in October 2024

Monthly approaches overview

1 October 2024 to 31 October 2024

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.

201
approaches
received



Up from 147 in
October 2023



77
Ombudsman
complaints received



Up from 60 in
October 2023



2
FOI matters
received



Down from 4 in
October 2023



1
privacy
complaint received



Up from 0 in
October 2023



120
enquiries
received



Up from 81 in
October 2023



Ombudsman complaints
were made by 70
individuals (up from 45
in October 2023)



0 FOI review
determinations
(0 in October
2023)



1 notifiable data
breach assessed (2
in October 2023)

Complaints to the Ombudsman

5
early resolution
transfers made



Down from 22 in
October 2023



5
preliminary
inquiries made



Down from 17 in
October 2023



0
investigations
launched



Consistent with 0
in October 2023



81

Ombudsman
complaints finalised

Up from 49 in
October 2023



Stage complaint was finalised

69 assessment

6 preliminary
inquiry

6 early resolution
transfer

0 investigation

Notification-related complaints to the Ombudsman

1 October 2024 to 31 October 2024

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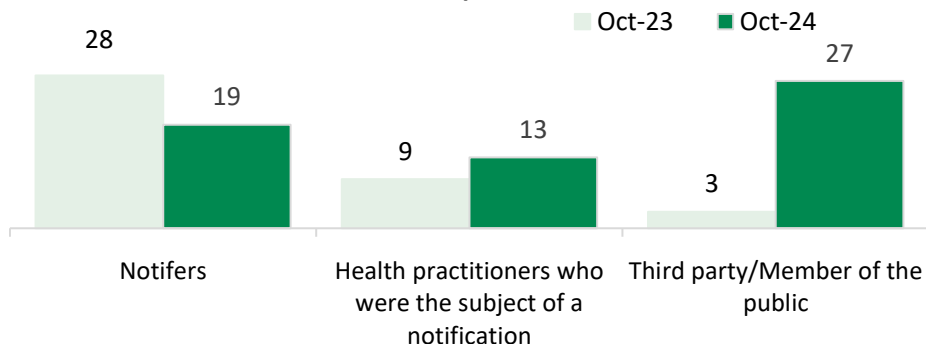
59

notification-related complaints received

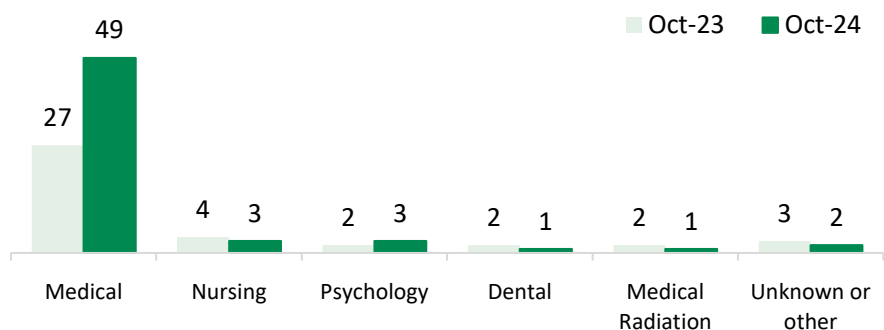


Up from 40 in October 2023

Who made notification-related complaints



Professions notification-related complaints were about



Types of notification actions that most frequently drove notification-related complaints

1. Immediate action taken while a notification is investigated
2. No further action taken at the assessment stage
3. An active notification
4. Action taken following an investigation
5. Action taken to refer a practitioner to a panel or tribunal

Stage notification-related complaints were finalised



Most common outcomes of notification-related complaints

1. The complainant was not directly impacted by the concerns they raised in relation to a third party
2. An investigation was not warranted in the circumstances
3. The complaint could not be progressed because the complainant did not provide information that our office had requested
4. The complaint concerned the merits of the organisation's decision and we do not have the power to review the merits of a decision
5. The organisation's response to the complaint was fair and reasonable

Registration-related complaints to the Ombudsman

1 October 2024 to 31 October 2024



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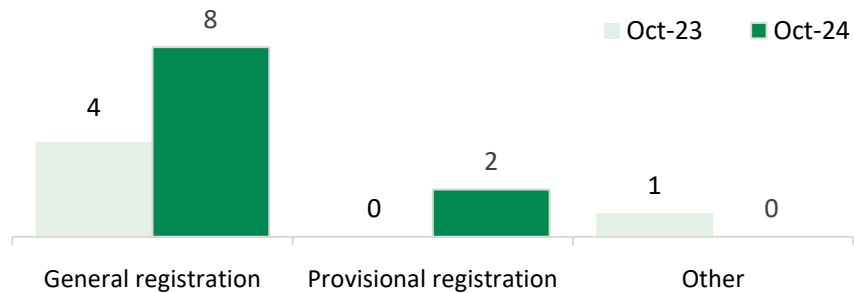
10

registration-related
complaints received

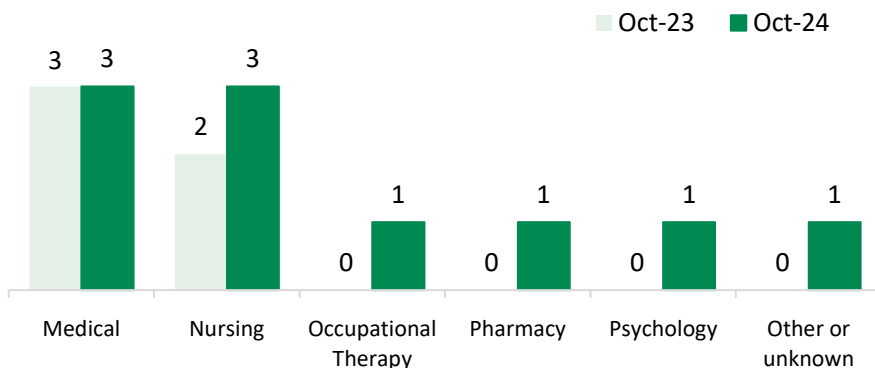


Up from 5 in October 2023

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. Fees charged for registration
3. Imposition of restrictions that require a practitioner to be supervised
4. Application of the Recency of Practice Registration Standard
5. Assessment of an international qualification

Stage registration-related complaints were finalised

7 assessment 3 early resolution transfer
0 preliminary inquiry 0 investigation

Most common outcomes of registration-related complaints

1. The organisation's response to the complaint was fair and reasonable
2. Our office is monitoring the concern as a systemic issue
3. The matter complained about was still actively being considered by the organisation
4. The concerns raised would be more appropriately considered by a court or tribunal
5. The complainant agreed that their complaint had been resolved

OFFICIAL

Accreditation-related complaints to the Ombudsman

1 October 2024 to 31 October 2024



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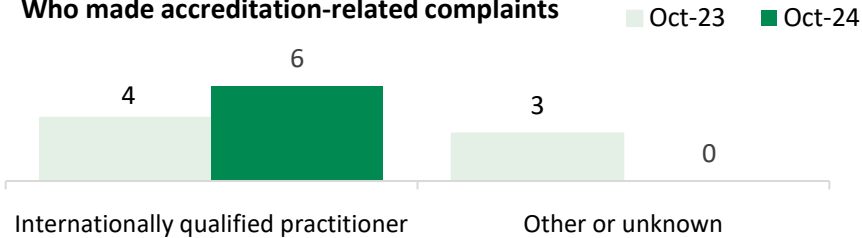
6

accreditation-related
complaints received

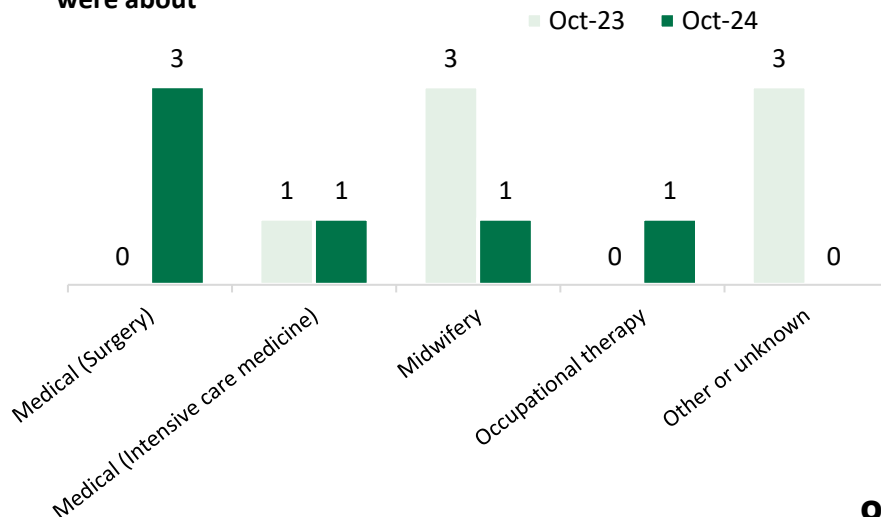


Down from 7 in October 2023

Who made accreditation-related complaints



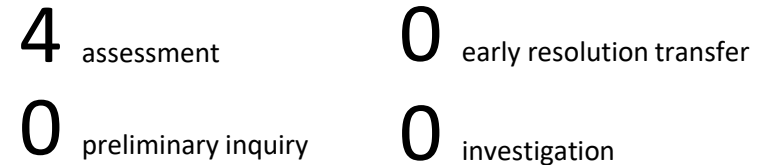
Professions and specialties that accreditation-related complaints were about



Processes that most frequently drove accreditation-related complaints

1. Assessment of an international qualification
2. Merits review processes
3. Delivery of an exam
4. Fairness of an exam

Stage accreditation-related complaints were finalised



Most common outcomes of accreditation-related complaints

1. The matter complained about was still actively being considered by the organisation
2. The complaint concerned the merits of the organisation's decision and we do not have the power to review the merits of a decision
3. The complainant has not yet provided the organisation with an opportunity to consider their concerns
4. The complainant asked to withdraw their complaint



National Health
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Our year to date

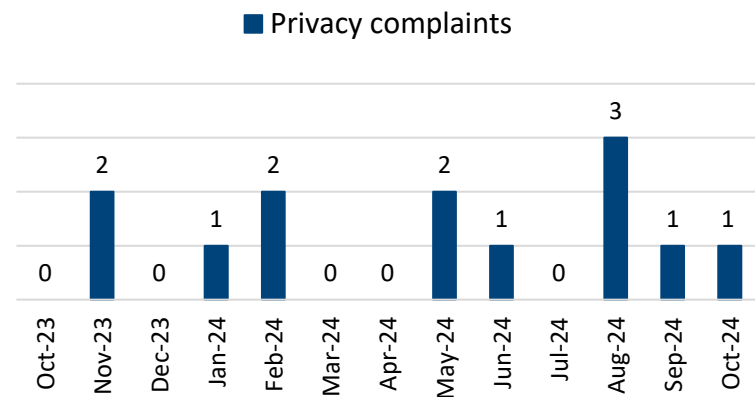
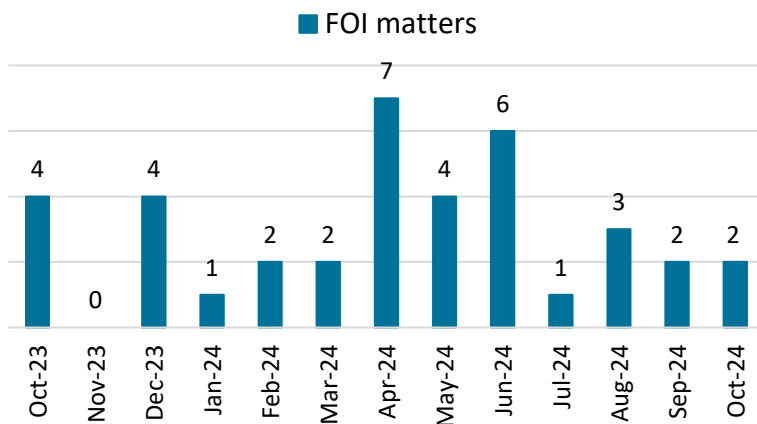
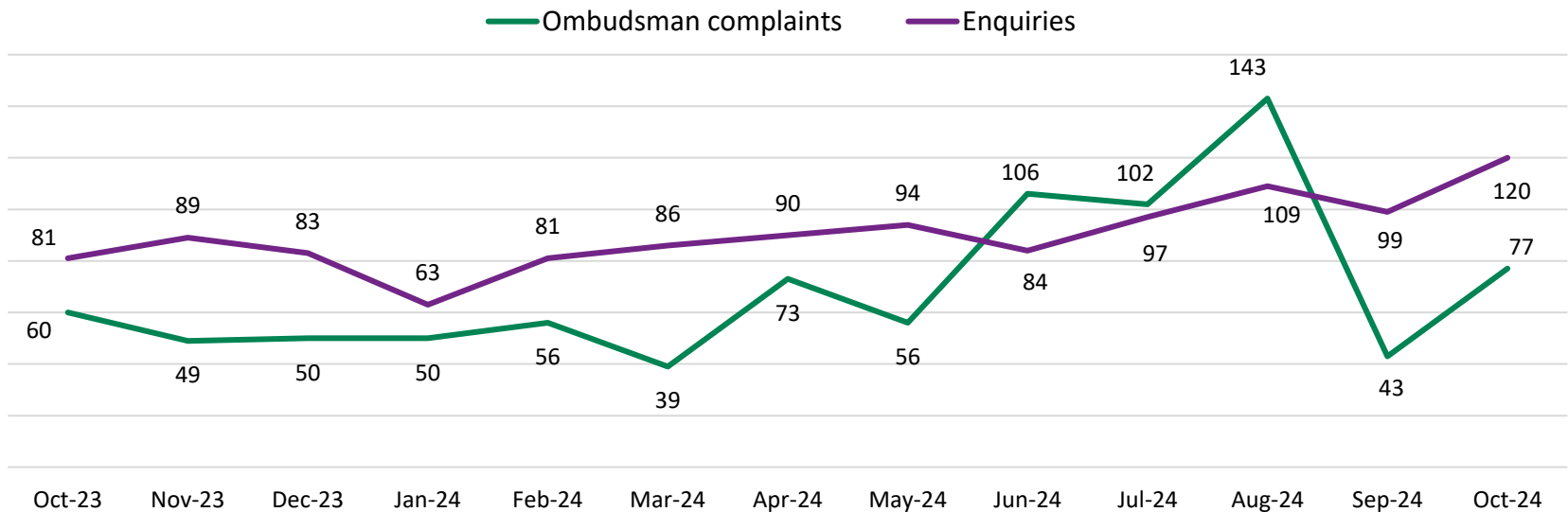
1 July 2024 to 31 October 2024

Approach trends

1 October 2023 to 31 October 2024



National Health
Practitioner
Ombudsman



Ombudsman complaints received from 1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024

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Types of complaints received

200 ↑ notification
Up from 136 in the same period last financial year

115 ↑ registration
Up from 36 in the same period last financial year

30 ↑ accreditation
Up from 21 in the same period last financial year

Who made complaints

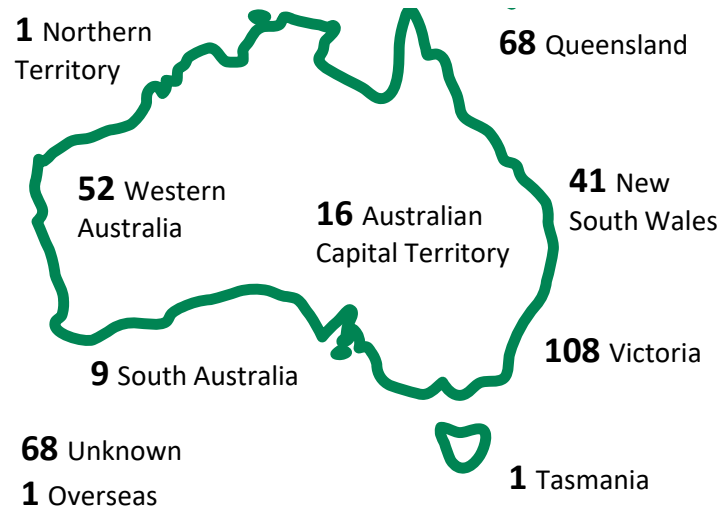
237 health practitioners
128 Non-practitioners

↑ Up from 122 in the same period last financial year
↑ Up from 90 in the same period last financial year

Professions most complaints were about

258 medical ↑ Up from 134 in the same period last financial year
40 nursing ↑ Up from 25 in the same period last financial year
24 psychology ↑ Up from 13 in the same period last financial year

Location 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. Third party to a notification believes a decision to take immediate action against a practitioner is unreasonable
3. Notifier believes inadequate reasons were provided for a decision to take no further action at the assessment stage

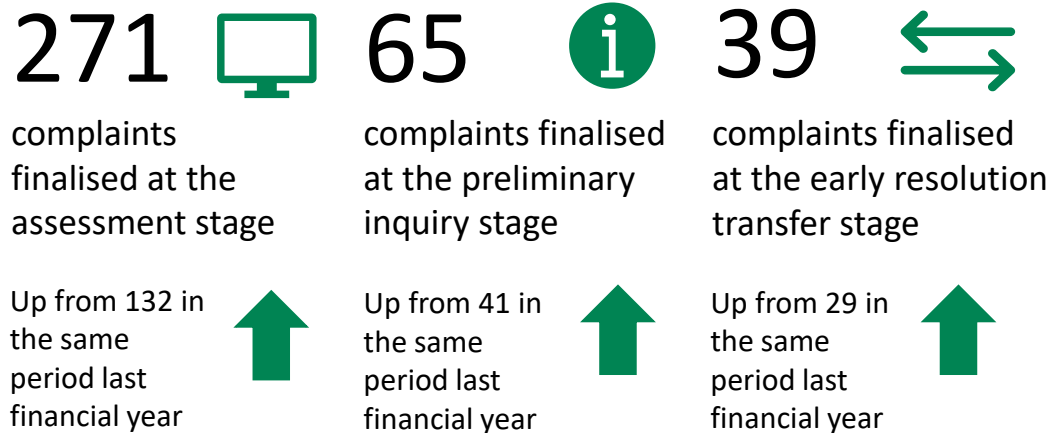
Most common registration-related issues that drove complaints

1. Practitioner believes the fees they were charged for general registration are unfair or unreasonable
2. Member of the public believes that they or their community are without adequate access to a preferred health practitioner as a result of a practitioner's registration being restricted
3. Practitioner with general registration believes an application they made for a review of restrictions on their registration has been unreasonably delayed

Resolution of Ombudsman complaints from 1 July 2024 to 31 October 2024

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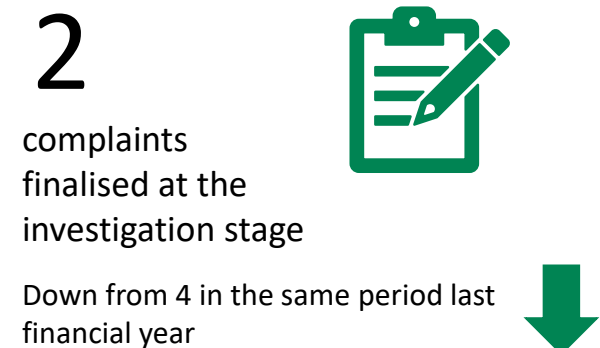
Early resolution mechanisms



Most common outcomes at early resolution stages (assessment, preliminary inquiry and early resolution transfer)

1. An investigation was not warranted in the circumstances
2. The matter complained about was still actively being considered by the organisation
3. The organisation's response to the complaint was fair and reasonable
4. Our office is monitoring the concern as a systemic issue
5. The complaint could not be progressed because the complainant did not provide information that our office had requested

Investigations



Most common investigation outcomes

1. Our office provided feedback to the organisation complained about
2. The complaint was withdrawn by the complainant after we commenced the investigation

Ombudsman and Commissioner's observations

My office received 201 approaches during October 2024, which represents a 37% increase from October 2023 (147 approaches). This growth was the result of both an increase in enquiries (120, up from 81) and an increase in complaints to the Ombudsman (77, up from 60).

We received more enquiries during October 2024 than we have during any month since March 2023 (139 in March 2023). Most of the enquiries we received related to matters outside of our jurisdiction (118). These enquiries concerned a wide range of health services such as medical clinics, pharmacies, mental health services and hospitals (71 enquiries). We provided 71 people with information about how to contact a health complaints entity better suited to addressing their concerns. We most frequently referred people to the New South Wales Health Care Complaints Commission (18 referrals), the Victorian Health Complaints Commissioner (17 referrals) and Queensland's Office of the Health Ombudsman (15 referrals). My staff also provided 16 members of the public with information about how to contact Ahpra to make a notification about a practitioner.

The growth in complaints to the Ombudsman in October 2024 was primarily driven by an increase in notification-related complaints (59, up from 40 complaints in October 2023). Many of these complaints were raised by patients of an individual medical practitioner whose practice had been restricted through immediate action (25 complaints). These patients told us that they were frustrated by the regulatory action which affected their access to the practitioner, including because they felt there were not alternative practitioners they could access in their community. We were not able to progress these complaints as they were made without the authorisation of the impacted practitioner.

Despite the increase in demand during October 2024, my office finalised 81 Ombudsman complaints, 9 FOI review applications, and 2 privacy complaints. We also commenced 2 FOI reviews, transferred 5 Ombudsman complaints and initiated preliminary inquiries 5 times.