



National Health
Practitioner
Ombudsman

Our work in October 2022

Monthly approaches overview

1 October 2022 to 31 October 2022



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.

178

approaches received



Up from 93 in October 2021



56

Ombudsman complaints received



Up from 46 in October 2021



5

FOI matters received



Up from 1 in October 2021



1

privacy complaint received



Consistent with 1 in October 2021



115

enquiries received



Up from 44 in October 2021



Ombudsman complaints were made by 48 individuals (up from 43 in October 2021)



0

FOI review decisions published



1

notifiable data breaches assessed (1 in October 2021)

Complaints to the Ombudsman

18

early resolution transfers made



Up from 13 in October 2021



4

preliminary inquiries made



Down from 9 in October 2021



2

investigations launched



Up from 1 in October 2021



70

Ombudsman complaints finalised

Up from 59 in October 2021



Stage complaint was finalised

46

assessment

13

early resolution transfer

11

preliminary inquiry

0

investigation

Notification-related complaints to the Ombudsman

1 October 2022 to 31 October 2022



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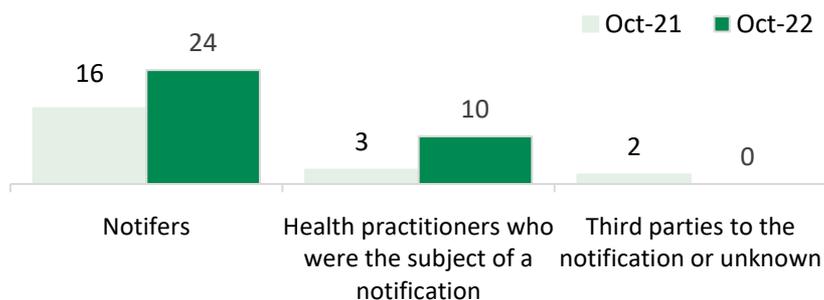
34

notification-related
complaints received

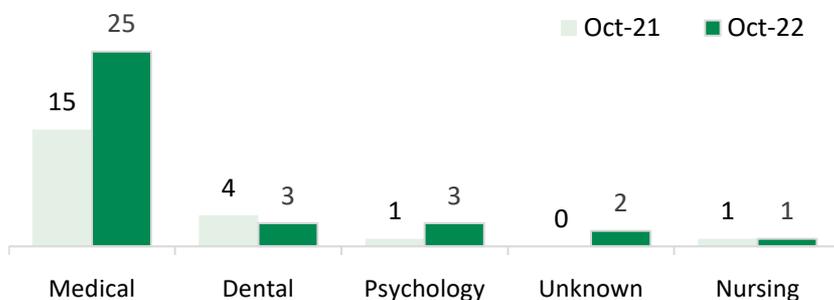


Up from 21 in October 2021

Who made notification-related complaints



Professions notification-related complaints were about



Type of notifications action taken by Ahpra or a Board that most frequently drove notification-related complaints

1. Active notification
2. No further action taken at the assessment stage
3. Immediate action taken
4. Action taken following an investigation
5. Matter not processed as a notification

Stage notification-related complaints were finalised



Most common outcomes of notification-related complaints

1. Investigation declined because the notification was active with Ahpra and a Board
2. Investigation was not warranted in the circumstances
3. Complainant did not provide information as requested
4. Ahpra's response to the complaint was fair and reasonable
5. Complaint was about the merits of a Board's decision

Registration-related complaints to the Ombudsman

1 October 2022 to 31 October 2022



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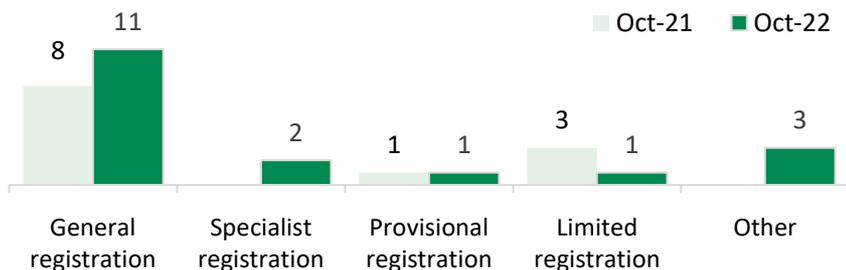
18

registration-related complaints received

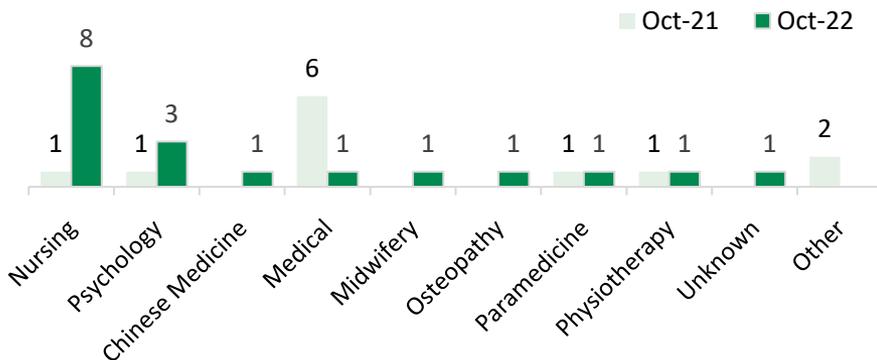


Up from 12 in October 2021

Types of registration driving registration-related complaints



Professions registration-related complaints were about



Registration processes that most frequently drove registration-related complaints

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

Stage registration-related complaints were finalised



Most common outcomes of registration-related complaints

1. Investigation was not warranted in the circumstances
2. Ahpra's response to the complaint was fair and reasonable
3. Feedback provided to Ahpra
4. Complainant did not provide information as requested
5. Investigation declined because the matter was active with Ahpra and a Board



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Our year to date

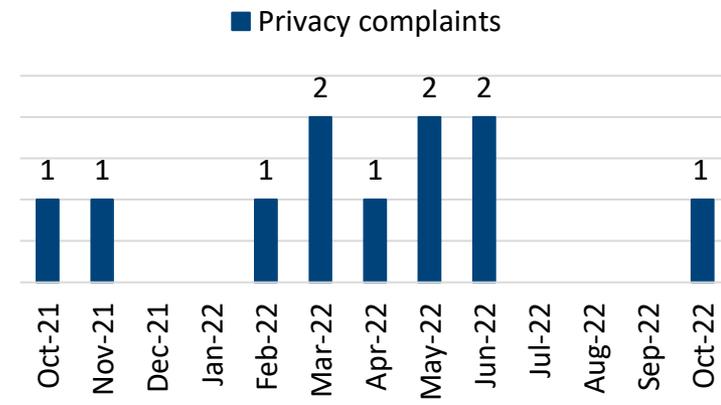
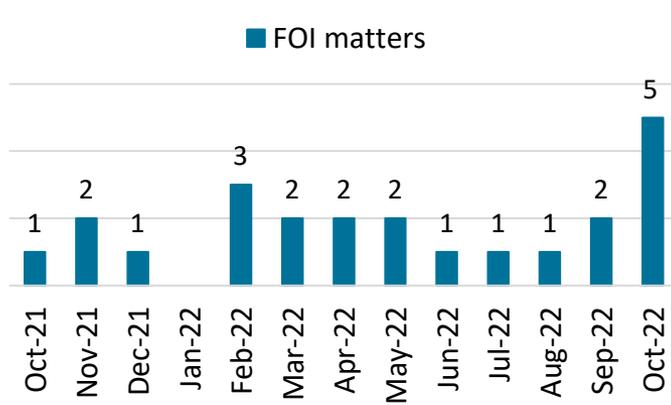
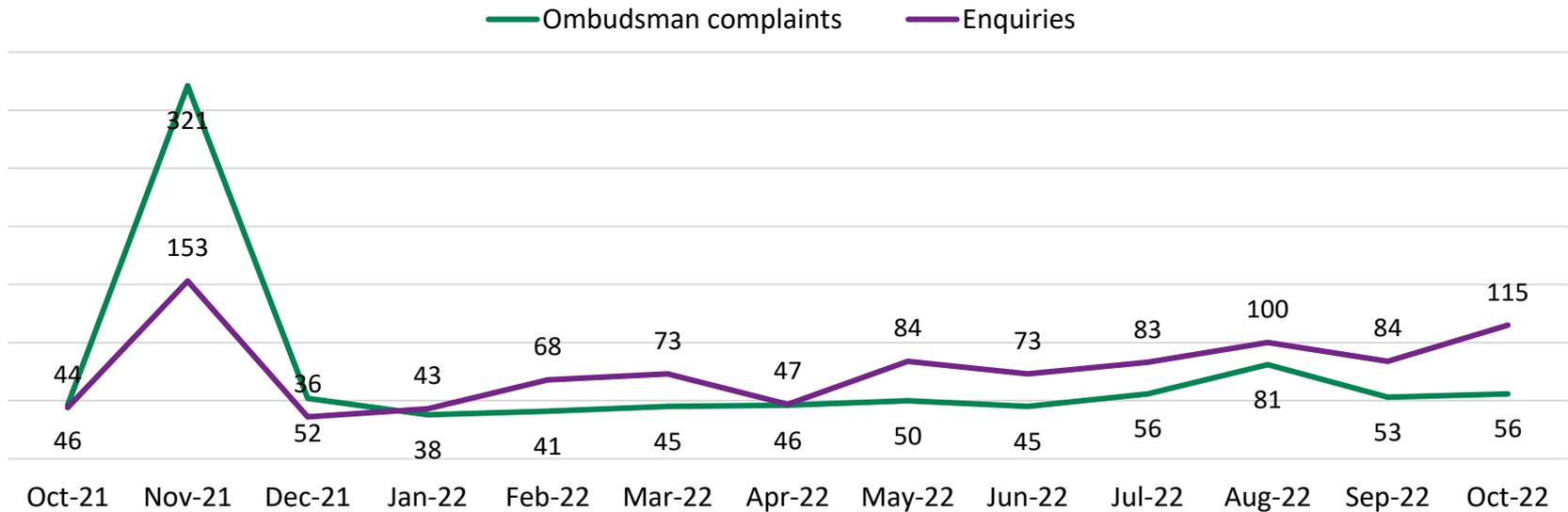
1 July 2022 to October 2022

Approach trends

1 October 2021 to 31 October 2022



National Health
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Ombudsman



Ombudsman complaints received from 1 July 2022 to 31 October 2022

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Types of complaints received

163 ↑ notification
Up from 98 in the same period last financial year

58 ↑ registration
Up from 44 in the same period last financial year

7 Pandemic policy/ response
18 Other types

Who made complaints

116 health practitioners
130 Non-practitioners

↑ Up from 86 in the same period last financial year
↑ Up from 99 in the same period last financial year

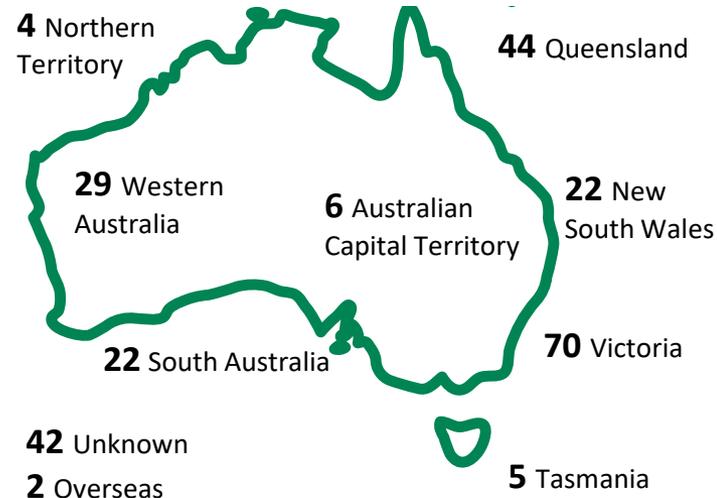
Professions most complaints were about

 **145** medical
↑ Up from 101 in the same period last financial year

 **30** Nursing
↑ Up from 24 in the same period last financial year

 **23** psychology
↑ Up from 22 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. Third party believes action taken against a practitioner following an investigation is unfair or unreasonable

Most common registration-related issues that drove complaints

1. Practitioner seeking general registration believes the English Language Skills Registration Standard has been applied unfairly
2. Practitioner seeking general registration believes the assessment of an international qualification has been unreasonably delayed
3. Practitioner seeking general registration believes the assessment of an international qualification is unfair or unreasonable

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

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Early resolution mechanisms

157 

complaints
finalised at the
assessment stage

Up from 109
in the same
period last
financial year



43 

complaints finalised
at the preliminary
inquiry stage

Up from 33
in the same
period last
financial year



48 

complaints finalised
at the early resolution
transfer stage

Up from 39
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. Ahpra's response to the complaint was fair and reasonable
3. Matter was active with Ahpra and a Board
4. Complainant was not directly impacted by the complaint issue
5. Complainant did not provide requested information

Investigations

8 

complaints
finalised at the
investigation stage



Down from 39 in the same
period last financial year

Most common investigation outcomes

1. We provided feedback to Ahpra
2. We provided a further explanation to the complainant
3. Ahpra agreed to assess new material provided by the complainant
4. We provided positive feedback to Ahpra
5. Ahpra provided an apology or acknowledgement to the complainant

Ombudsman and Commissioner's observations

My office continued to receive a high numbers of approaches in October 2022 (178 approaches). This represents a 26 per cent increase from September 2022 and marked a return to the near-unprecedented number of approaches my office received in August 2022. We've received 642 approaches between July and October 2022, which is an 83 per cent increase in approaches when compared with the same period the preceding year (351).

The significant increase in approaches in October 2022 can be attributed mostly to enquiries that were outside of our jurisdiction to consider. This type of approach was 13 per cent more common in October 2022 than it was in August 2022. Enquiries have predominantly contributed to the growth in approaches between July and October 2022, increasing by 148 per cent when compared with the previous year (154 enquiries to 382 enquires).

Interestingly, my office received more Freedom of Information (FOI) review applications in October 2022 than in previous months. Each of these matters related to a decision by Ahpra to refuse access to documents requested via FOI.

In October 2022, complaints to the Ombudsman mostly related to the handling of notifications (61 per cent) and half of all complaints received related to the medical profession. Between July and October 2022, complaints related to the regulation of the medical profession have increased by 44 per cent when compared with the same period last financial year (from 101 to 145).

My office is committed to pursuing quick and informal resolutions of complaints where possible. We finalised 187 approaches during October 2022, including 70 complaints to the Ombudsman. Most of these complaints were finalised at the assessment stage (66 per cent). Between July and October 2022, we have finalised 256 complaints to the Ombudsman, 97 per cent of which were finalised without formal investigation (248 complaints).

We initiated 18 early resolution transfers and made preliminary inquiries 4 times into complaints to the Ombudsman in October 2022. We also commenced two new investigations. These investigations were initiated after informal methods of resolution were not successful. Every complaint is important to us, and we continue to work towards addressing individual concerns and systemic issues.