



National Health
Practitioner
Ombudsman

Our work in January 2023

Monthly approaches overview

1 January 2023 to 31 January 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.

136

approaches
received



Up from 82 in
January 2022



43

Ombudsman
complaints received



Up from 38 in
January 2022



1

FOI matters
received



Up from 0 in
January 2022



0

privacy
complaint received



Consistent with 0 in
January 2022



91

enquiries
received



Up from 43 in
January 2022



Ombudsman complaints
were made by 41
individuals (up from 36
in January 2022)



0

FOI review
decisions
published



1

notifiable data
breach assessed
(1 in January
2022)

Complaints to the Ombudsman

6

early resolution
transfers made



Down from 7 in
January 2022



14

preliminary
inquiries made



Down from 17 in
January 2022



0

investigations
launched



Down from 1
in January 2022



46

Ombudsman
complaints finalised

Up from 43 in January 2022



Stage complaint was finalised

30

assessment

7

preliminary
inquiry

6

early resolution
transfer

3

investigation

Notification-related complaints to the Ombudsman

1 January 2023 to 31 January 2023



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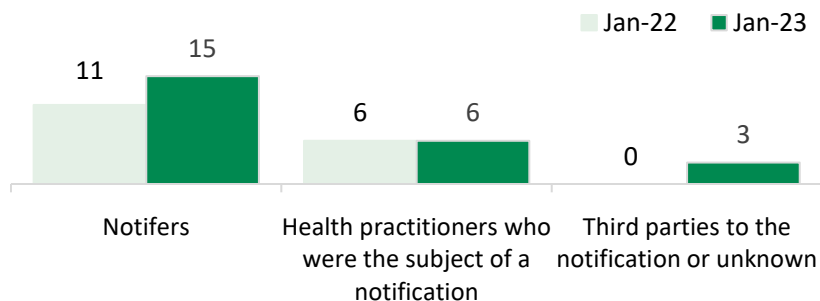
24

notification-related
complaints received

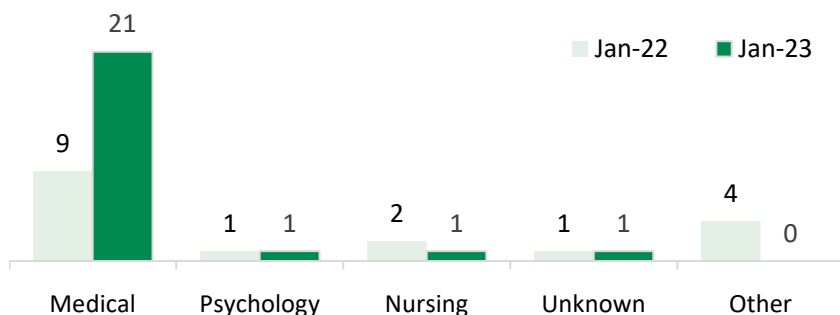


Up from 17 in January 2022

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. Action taken at the investigation stage
4. Matter not processed as a notification
5. No further action at an unknown stage

Stage notification-related complaints were finalised



Most common outcomes of notification-related complaints

1. Investigation was not warranted in the circumstances
2. Investigation declined because the complainant did not provide requested information
3. Ahpra's response to the complaint was fair and reasonable
4. We provided feedback to Ahpra
5. Investigation declined because the complaint was about the merits of a Board's decision

Registration-related complaints to the Ombudsman

1 January 2023 to 31 January 2023



National Health Practitioner Ombudsman

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16

registration-related complaints received

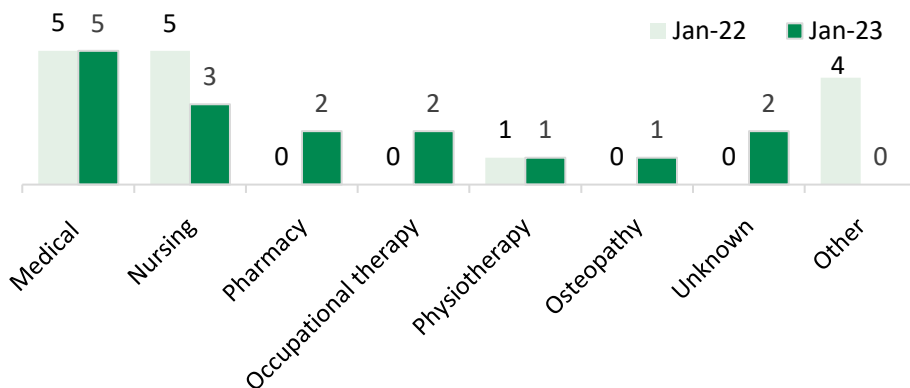


Up from 15 in January 2022

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

Stage registration-related complaints were finalised



Most common outcomes of registration-related complaints

1. Investigation declined as NHPO could not contact anonymous complainant
2. Investigation was not warranted in the circumstances
3. Ahpra's response to the complaint was fair and reasonable
4. Investigation declined as complainant was not directly impacted by the issues raised
5. Investigation declined as matter was still active with Ahpra and a Board



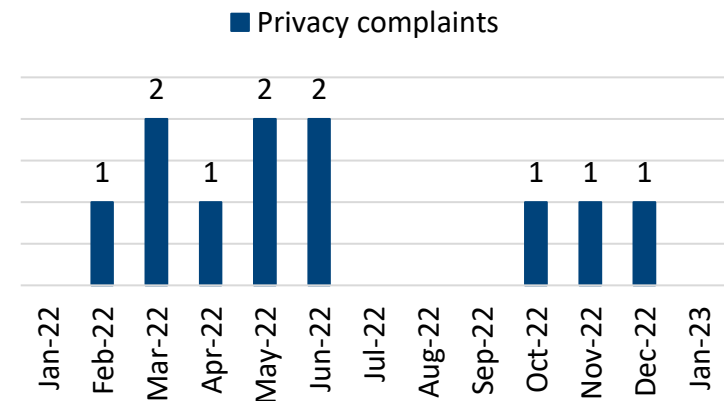
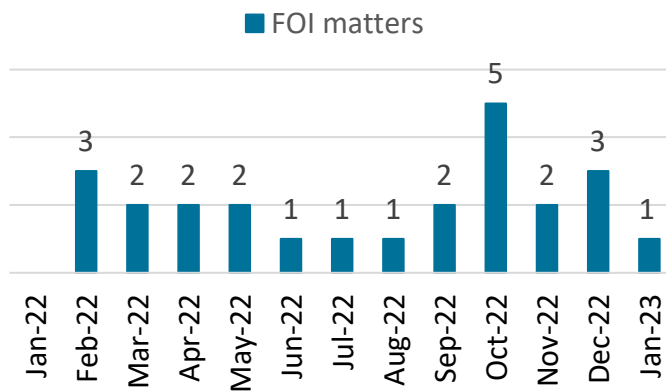
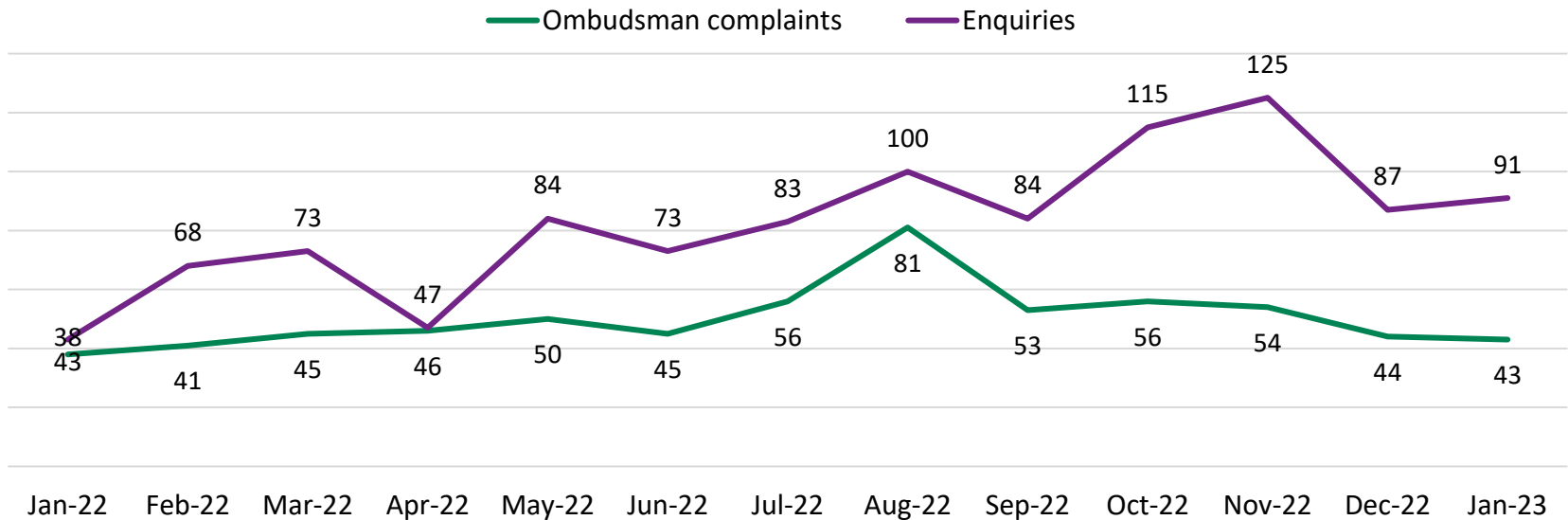
National Health
Practitioner
Ombudsman

Our year to date

1 July 2022 to 31 January 2023

Approach trends

1 July 2022 to 31 January 2023



Ombudsman complaints received from 1 July 2022 to 31 January 2023

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Types of complaints received

245 ↑ notification
Up from 180 in the same period last financial year

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

9 Pandemic policy/ response
34 Other types

Who made complaints

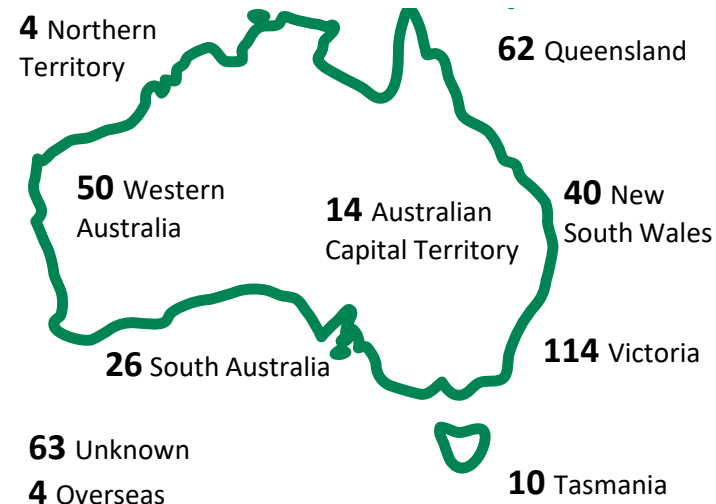
215 health practitioners
172 Non-practitioners

↑ Up from 184 in the same period last financial year
↓ Down from 412 in the same period last financial year

Professions most complaints were about

219 medical (Down from 440 in the same period last financial year)
52 Nursing (Up from 46 in the same period last financial year)
39 psychology (Up from 33 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. Practitioner believes an active notification has been unreasonably delayed

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 January 2023

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Early resolution mechanisms

247 

complaints
finalised at the
assessment stage

Down from
458 in the
same period
last financial
year



60 

complaints finalised
at the preliminary
inquiry stage

Up from 53
in the same
period last
financial year



82 

complaints finalised
at the early resolution
transfer stage

Up from 61
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 still active with Ahpra and a Board
4. Complainant did not provide requested information
5. Investigation declined as complainant was not directly impacted by the issues raised

Investigations

17 

complaints
finalised at the
investigation stage



Down from 68 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. We are actively monitoring the concerns raised as a systemic issue
4. We provided formal comments and suggestions to Ahpra
5. We provided positive feedback to Ahpra

Ombudsman and Commissioner's observations

The number of approaches received by my office in January 2023 was the same as in December 2022 (136). Despite this recent stability, the total number of approaches received so far this financial year is higher than the previous year, largely due to a 77 per cent increase in enquiries.

While the number of Ombudsman complaints received by my office is currently tracking lower than the previous year, this is due to a significant decrease in concerns being raised in relation to a pandemic policy or response. Complaints related to the Ahpra and the Boards' core regulatory work have, however, increased; notification-related complaints are up by 36 per cent, while registration-related complaints have increased by 15 per cent. Concern about unreasonably delay has been a strong driver of complaints.

Over December 2022 and January 2023 my office placed an increased emphasis on finalising complex investigations. We have finalised six Ombudsman complaint investigations, which represents 35 per cent of all investigations completed this financial year. We have also maintained our focus on quick and informal complaint resolutions, with 93 per cent of all Ombudsman complaints closed in January 2023 without an investigation.

My office has recently directed considerable efforts towards preparing for our expanded complaint-handling function in relation to accreditation organisations, which came into effect on 27 January 2023. These efforts have included updating our internal systems and revising information about our role across all our communications channels. We have also developed materials to support accreditation organisations as they transition to having an oversight body. We are excited to start learning more about, and sharing the information we gather from, these new types of complaints.