



National Health
Practitioner
Ombudsman

Our work in February 2023

Monthly approaches overview

1 February 2023 to 28 February 2023

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.

158

approaches
received



Up from 114 in
February 2022



56

Ombudsman
complaints received



Up from 41 in
February 2022



1

FOI matters
received



Down from 3 in
February 2022



2

privacy
complaint received



Up from 1 in
February 2022



99

enquiries
received



Up from 68 in
February 2022



Ombudsman complaints
were made by 48
individuals (up from 36
in February 2022)



0

FOI review
decisions
published



0

notifiable data
breach assessed
(1 in February
2022)

Complaints to the Ombudsman

15

early resolution
transfers made



Up from 12 in
February 2022



6

preliminary
inquiries made



Up from 4 in
February 2022



4

investigations
launched



Down from 6
in February 2022



38

Ombudsman
complaints finalised



Down from 46 in February 2022

Stage complaint was finalised

31

assessment

4

preliminary
inquiry

1

early resolution
transfer

2

investigation

Notification-related complaints to the Ombudsman

1 February 2023 to 28 February 2023



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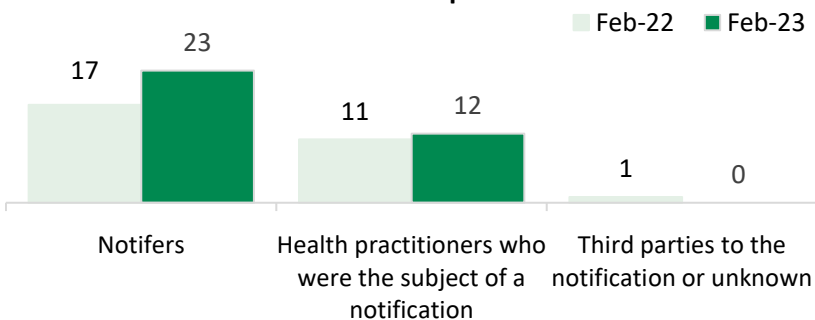
35

notification-related
complaints received

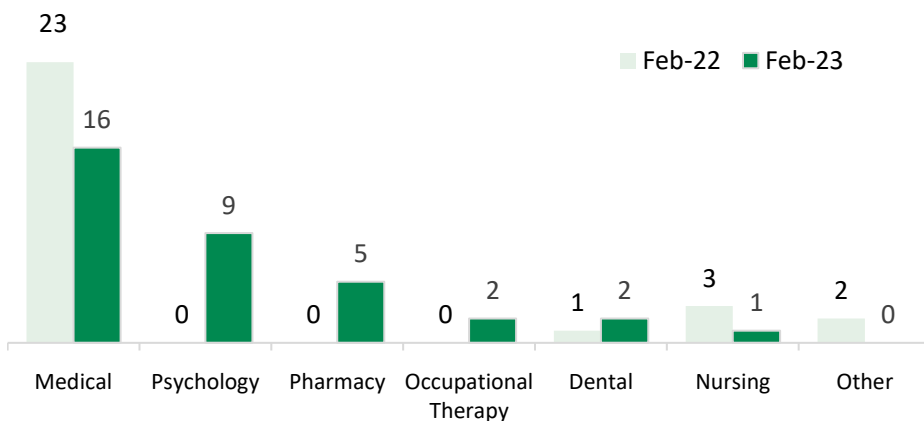


Up from 29 in February 2022

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. Active notification
3. Matter not processed as a notification
4. Matter referred to Tribunal
5. Action taken at the investigation stage

Stage notification-related complaints were finalised



Most common outcomes of notification-related complaints

1. Matter was withdrawn by the complainant
2. Investigation was not warranted in the circumstances
3. Investigation declined because the complainant did not provide requested information
4. The organisation's response to the complaint was fair and reasonable
5. Investigation declined because the complaint was about the merits of the organisation's decision

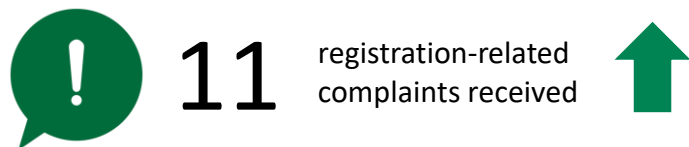
Registration-related complaints to the Ombudsman

1 February 2023 to 28 February 2023



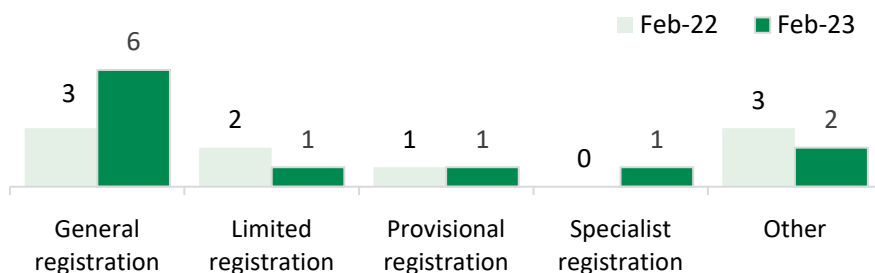
National Health Practitioner Ombudsman

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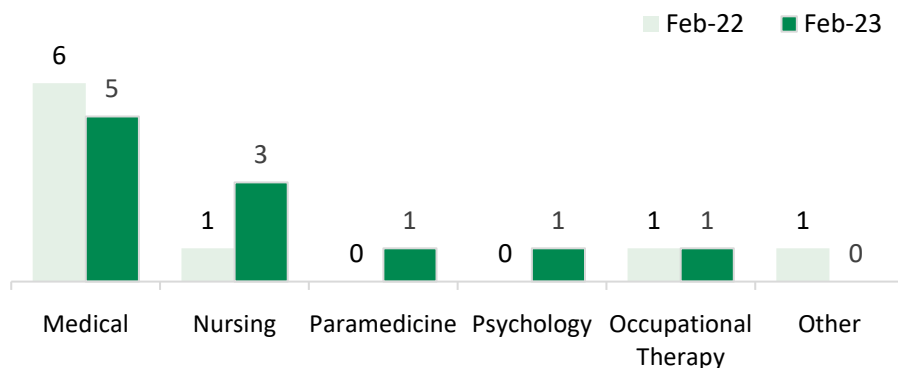


Up from 9 in February 2022

Types of registration driving registration-related complaints



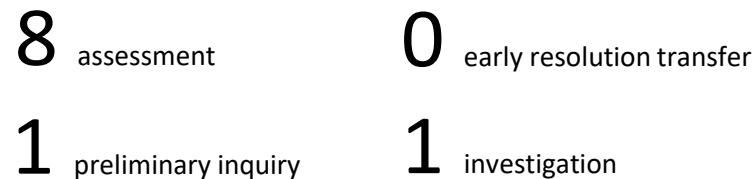
Professions registration-related complaints were about



Registration processes that most frequently drove registration-related complaints

1. Application of the English Language Skills Registration Standard
2. Processing of a registration renewal application
3. Third party unable to access their preferred practitioner due to registration issue
4. Processing of a registration application made by a graduate
5. Review of conditions on a practitioner's registration

Stage registration-related complaints were finalised



Most common outcomes of registration-related complaints

1. Investigation was not warranted in the circumstances
2. Investigation declined as complaint related merits of the organisation's decision
3. The organisation's response to the complaint was fair and reasonable
4. Investigation declined because complainant not directly impacted by the issues raised
5. We provided feedback to the organisation



National Health
Practitioner
Ombudsman

Our year to date

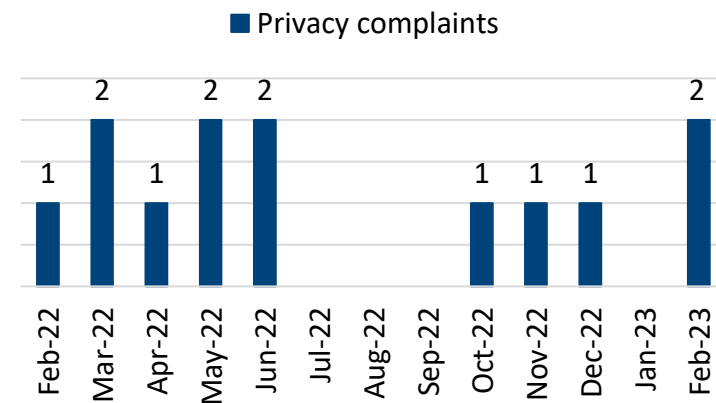
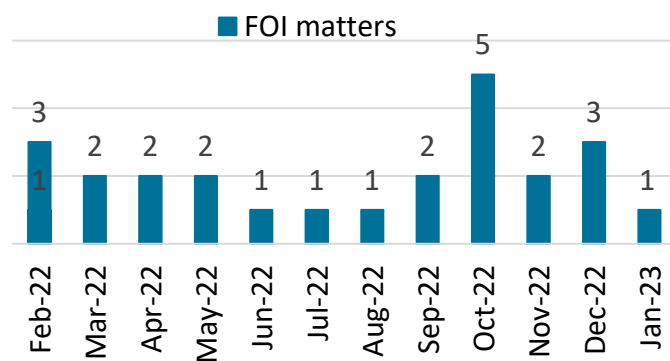
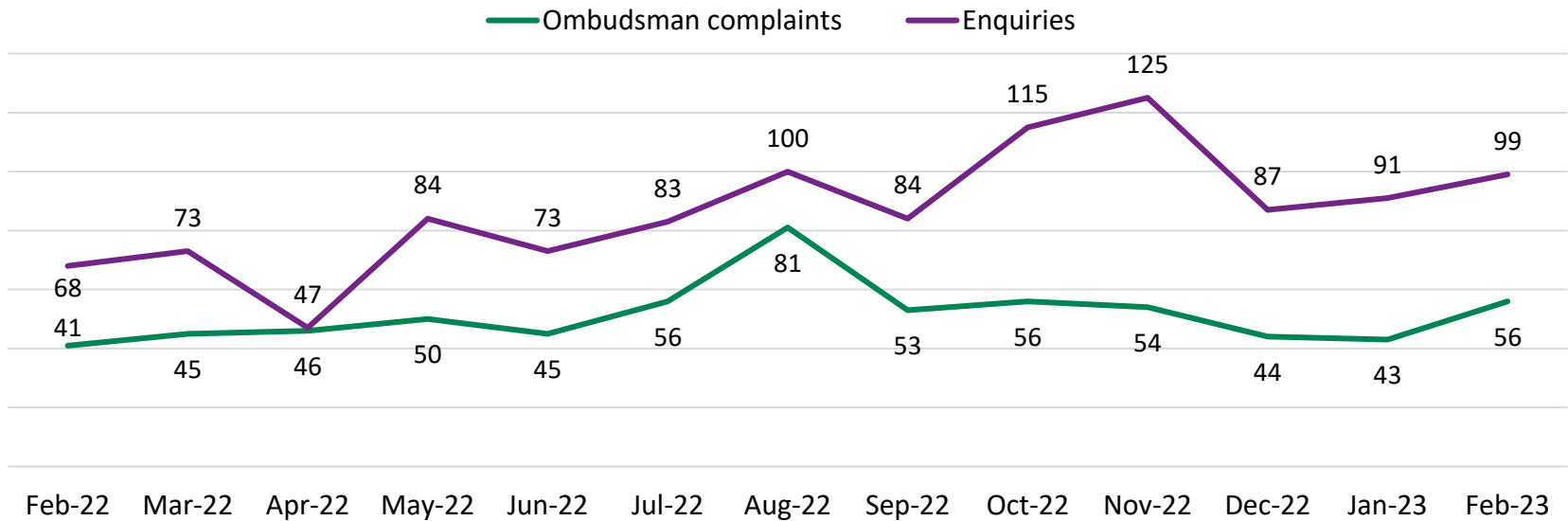
1 July 2022 to 28 February 2023

Approach trends

1 July 2022 to 28 February 2023



National Health
Practitioner
Ombudsman



Ombudsman complaints received from 1 July 2022 to 28 February 2023

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Types of complaints received

280 ↑ notification
Up from 209 in the same period last financial year

109 ↑ registration
Up from 95 in the same period last financial year

11 Pandemic policy/ response
43 Other types

Who made complaints

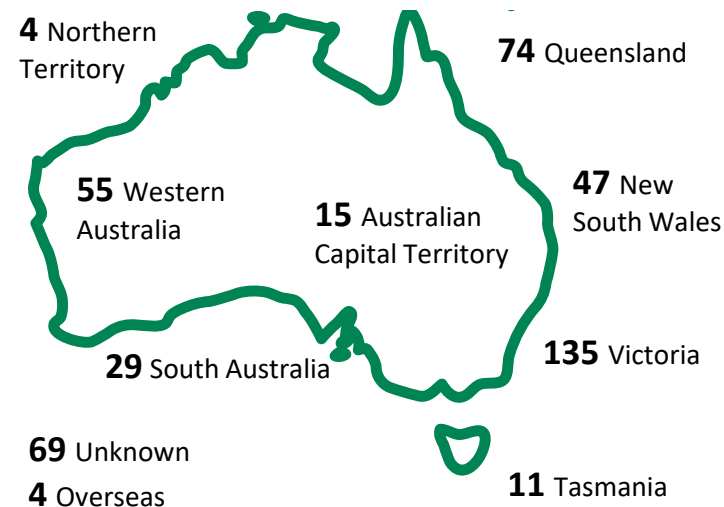
251 health practitioners
192 Non-practitioners

↑ Up from 203 in the same period last financial year
↓ Down from 434 in the same period last financial year

Professions most complaints were about

246 medical (↓ Down from 471 in the same period last financial year)
57 Nursing (↑ Up from 50 in the same period last financial year)
50 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 28 February 2023

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Early resolution mechanisms

277 

complaints
finalised at the
assessment stage

Down from
481 in the
same period
last financial
year



64 

complaints finalised
at the preliminary
inquiry stage

Up from 60
in the same
period last
financial
year



83 

complaints finalised
at the early resolution
transfer stage

Up from 65
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. Matter was still active with the organisation
4. Complainant did not provide requested information
5. Investigation declined because the complaint was about the merits of the organisation's decision

Investigations

19 

complaints
finalised at the
investigation stage



Down from 80 in the same
period last financial year

Most common investigation outcomes

1. We provided feedback to the organisation
2. We provided a further explanation to the complainant
3. We are actively monitoring the concerns raised as a systemic issue
4. The organisation agreed to assess new material
5. Apology or acknowledgement was provided by the organisation

Ombudsman and Commissioner's observations

February 2023 was a busy month for my office in spite of it being the shortest month of the year. This is reflected in the 30 per cent increase in complaints to the Ombudsman and a 16 per cent increase in approaches when compared to January 2023. Similar increases are also seen when comparing February 2023 with February 2022.

In particular, notification-related complaints to the Ombudsman increased by 46 per cent between January 2023 and February 2023. During this period, complaints from dissatisfied notifiers increased by 53 per cent, and complaints from practitioners who were the subject of notifications doubled. We also saw a considerable increase in concerns related to the handling of notifications within the psychology profession.

More broadly, complaints to the Ombudsman about notification and registration-related matters have increased by 34 per cent and 15 per cent respectively when compared with the same period during last financial year. We are continuing to see a trend of my office receiving considerably more complaints from health practitioners than from other members of the public. So far in 2022–23 the number of notification-related complaints from non-practitioners has decreased, while the number of notification-related complaints from practitioners has increased and become the most common type of contact with my office. This maybe the result of changes in Ahpra's internal notification management and that practitioners are more aware that they can make a complaint to my office.

The influx of new approaches to my office this month affected my team's workload as we responded to increasing demand for our services. Despite this, my team initiated 15 early resolution transfers, commenced six preliminary inquires and launched four new investigations. We continue to deliver on our commitment to providing timely and informal resolutions wherever possible.