



National Health
Practitioner
Ombudsman

Our work in February 2024

Monthly approaches overview

1 February 2024 to 29 February 2024



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.

141

approaches
received



Down from 159 in
February 2023



56

Ombudsman
complaints received



Down from 57 in
February 2023



2

FOI matters
received



Up from 1 in
February 2023



2

privacy
complaints received



Consistent with 2 in
February 2023

81

enquiries
received



Down from 99 in
February 2023



Ombudsman complaints
were made by 38
individuals (Down from
49 in February 2023)



1

FOI review
decision
published



0

notifiable data
breaches assessed
(Consistent with 0
in February 2023)

Complaints to the Ombudsman

6

early resolution
transfers made



Down from 15 in
February 2023



13

preliminary
inquiries made



Up from 6 in
February 2023



14

investigations
launched



Up from 4
in February 2023



39

Ombudsman
complaints finalised



Up from 38 in February 2023

Stage complaint was finalised

27

assessment

5

early resolution
transfer

6

preliminary
inquiry

1

investigation

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Notification-related complaints to the Ombudsman

1 February 2024 to 29 February 2024



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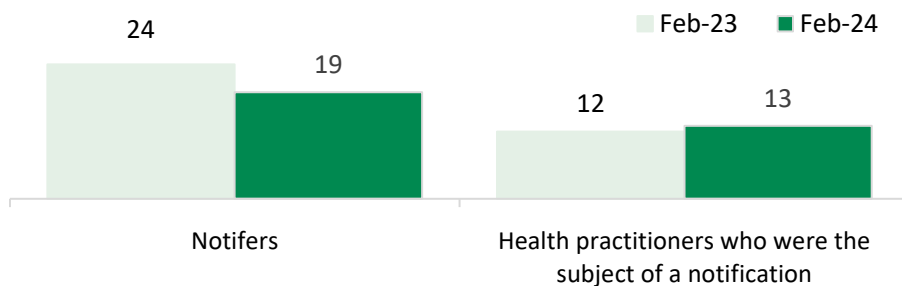
32

notification-related
complaints received

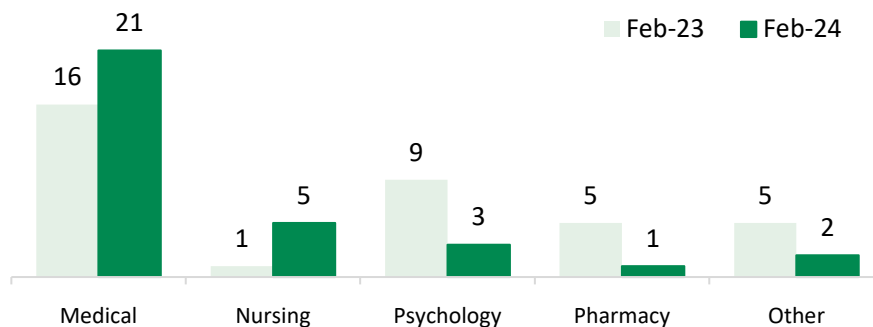


Down from 36 in February 2023

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. No further action taken at the investigation stage
3. Action taken at the investigation stage
4. Action taken to refer a practitioner to the relevant tribunal
5. Notification remains active

Stage notification-related complaints were finalised

18	assessment	5	early resolution transfer
3	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 matter complained about was still active and the organisation should be given an opportunity to finalise it
4. The complainant did not provide our office with requested information
5. The complaint concerned the merits of the organisation's decision and we do not have the power to review the merits of a decision

Registration-related complaints to the Ombudsman

1 February 2024 to 29 February 2024



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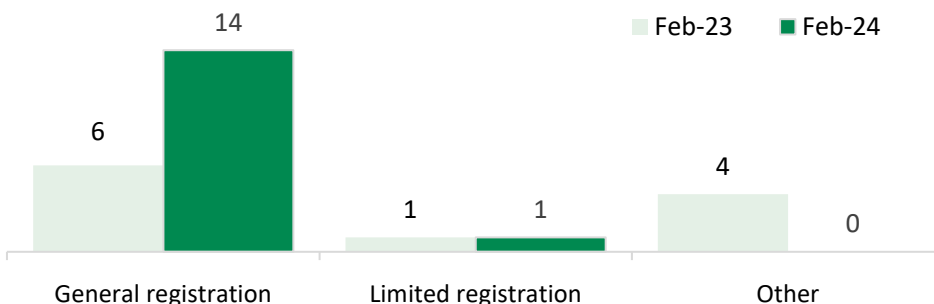
15

registration-related
complaints received

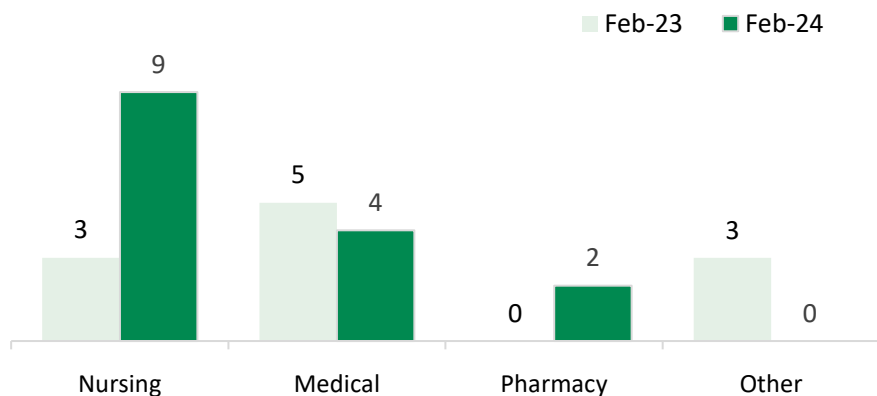


Up from 11 in February 2023

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. Application of the English Language Skills Registration Standard
3. Assessment of an international qualification
4. Compliance activity related to restrictions on a practitioner's registration
5. Information published on the National Register

Stage registration-related complaints were finalised

5 assessment 0 early resolution transfer
1 preliminary inquiry 1 investigation

Most common outcomes of registration-related complaints

1. Investigation was not warranted in the circumstances
2. Our office is monitoring the concern raised as a systemic issue
3. The complainant did not provide our office with requested information
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 complainant was not directly impacted by the concerns raised

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Accreditation-related complaints to the Ombudsman

1 February 2024 to 29 February 2024



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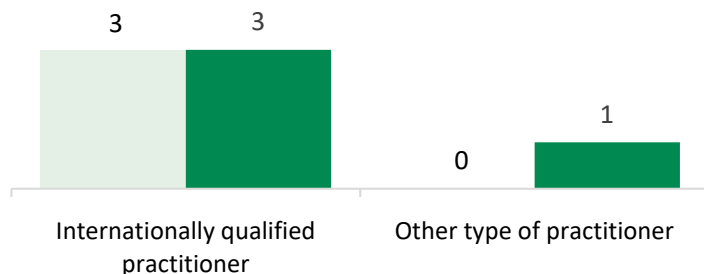
4

accreditation-related
complaints received

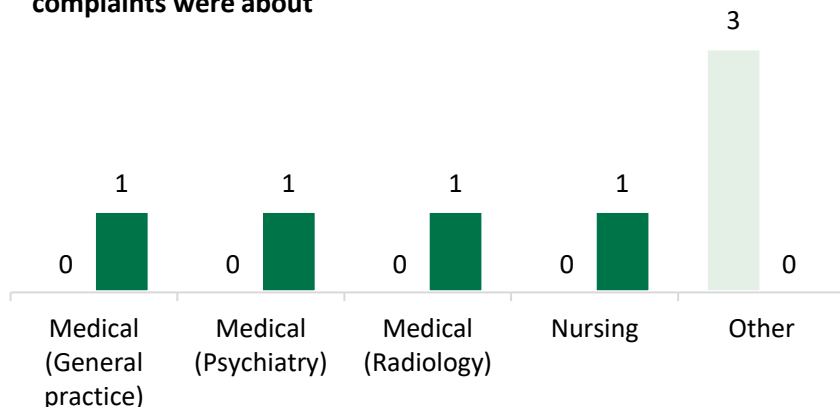


Up from 3 in February 2023

Who made accreditation-related complaints



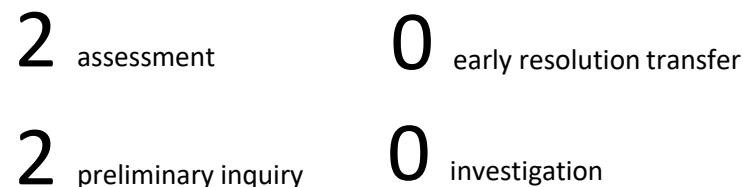
Professions and specialisations that accreditation-related complaints were about



Processes that most frequently drove accreditation-related complaints

1. Assessment of an international qualification
2. Delivery of an exam
3. Merits review processes
4. Change in assessment pathway for an internationally qualified practitioner
5. Delivery of a specialist medical training program

Stage accreditation-related complaints were finalised



Most common outcomes of accreditation-related complaints

1. The organisation's response to the complaint was fair and reasonable
2. The organisation being complained about is actively considering the concerns raised and should be given an opportunity to respond
3. Feedback was provided to the organisation being complained about
4. An investigation was not warranted in the circumstances
5. The matter complained about was still active and the organisation should be given an opportunity to finalise it

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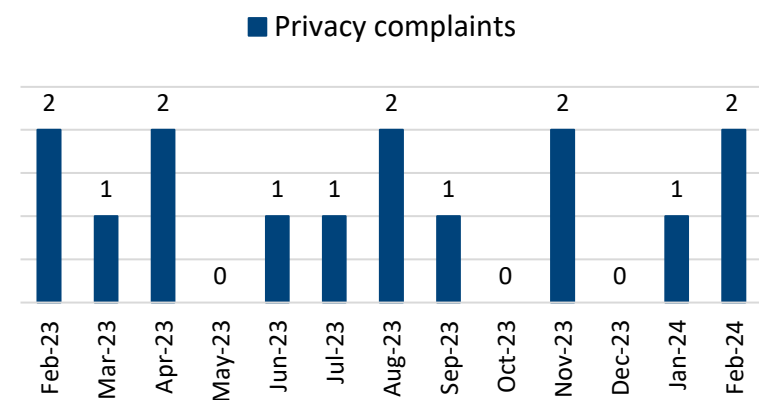
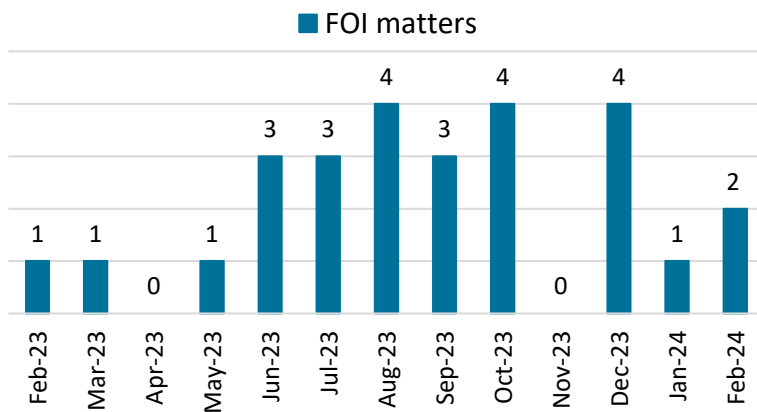
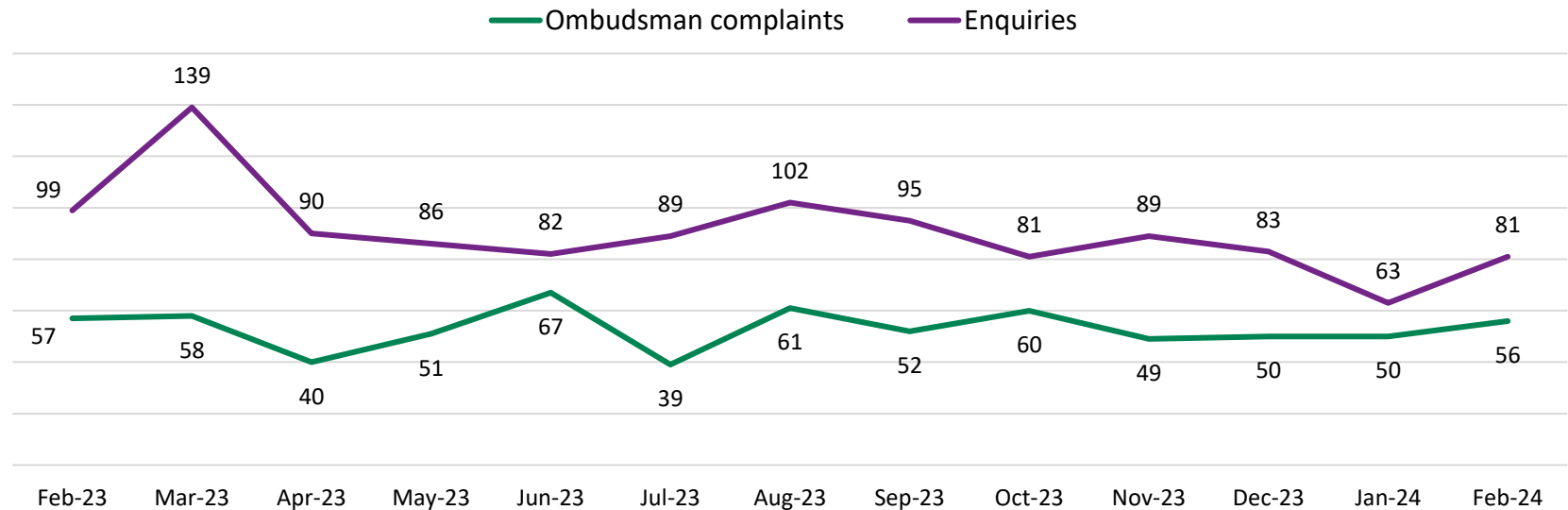
National Health
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Our year to date

1 July 2023 to 29 February 2024

Approach trends

1 February 2023 to 29 February 2024



Ombudsman complaints received from 1 July 2023 to 29 February 2024

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Types of complaints received

268 ↓ Down from 284 in the same period last financial year
notification

75 ↓ Down from 105 in the same period last financial year
registration

36 accreditation
38 Other types

Who made complaints

244 health practitioners
173 Non-practitioners

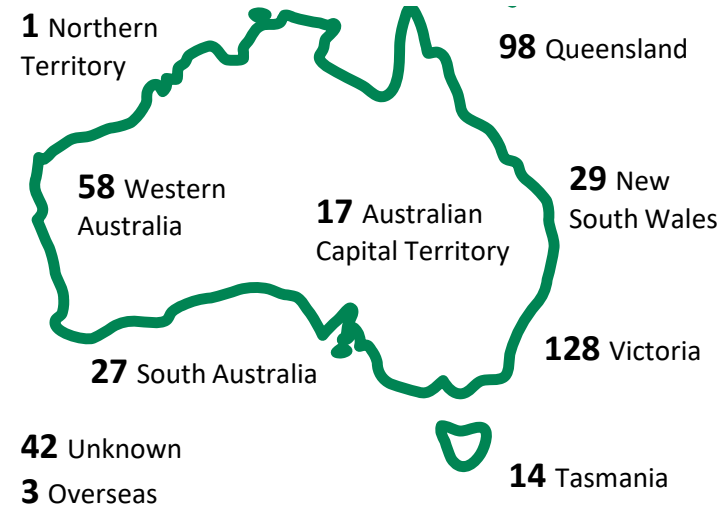
↓ Down from 252 in the same period last financial year

↓ Down from 195 in the same period last financial year

Professions most complaints were about

257 medical ↑ Up from 248 in the same period last financial year
59 nursing ↑ Up from 58 in the same period last financial year
33 psychology ↓ Down from 50 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 information being considered
3. Notifier believes inadequate steps were taken before a decision was made to take no further action at the assessment stage

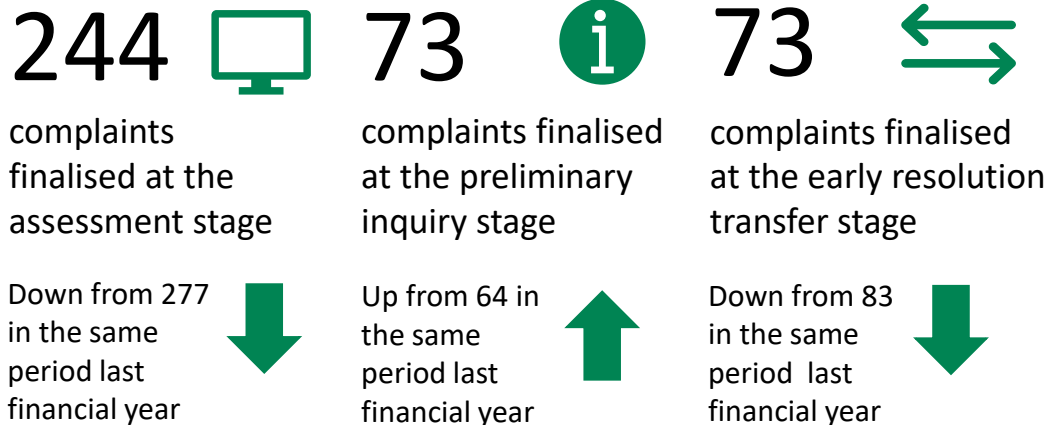
Most common registration-related issues that drove complaints

1. Practitioner seeking general registration believes the process for satisfying the English Language Skills Registration Standard is unfair
2. Practitioner seeking general registration believes the 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 fees they have been charged for registration are unfair or unreasonable

Resolution of Ombudsman complaints from 1 July 2022 to 29 February 2024

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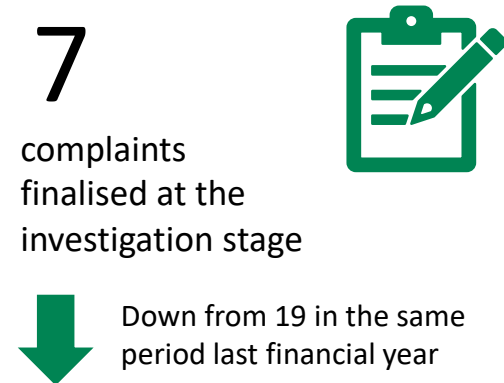
Early resolution mechanisms



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 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 and we do not have the power to review the merits of a decision
5. The underlying matter complained about remains active and the organisation should be given an opportunity to finalise it

Investigations



Most common investigation outcomes

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

Ombudsman and Commissioner's observations

My office received 141 approaches in February 2024. This represents a reduction in approaches compared with February 2023 (159), but an increase from January 2024 (115). The largest increase from January 2024 was in relation to enquiries (81, up from 63). Consistent with past trends, most enquiries related to matters that my office could not consider further (78 enquiries). This most commonly included concerns about the performance of health practitioners or health services.

We recorded 56 complaints to the Ombudsman during February 2024. This is generally consistent with the number of complaints we received in February 2023 (57). However, complaints about registration-related concerns increased (15, up from 11), while notification-related concerns reduced (32, down from 36). Compared with January 2024, the increase in registration-related complaints was even more significant (from 5 to 15 complaints).

The increase in registration-related complaints can mostly be attributed to concerns about the handling of matters in relation to the nursing profession. We received 9 registration-related complaints regarding the nursing profession in February 2024, up from 3 in both February 2023 and January 2024. Many of these complaints involved internationally qualified nurses seeking registration in Australia and concerns about the application of the English Language Skills Registration Standard.

My office continues to resolve complaints without formal investigation wherever possible. However, during February 2024 my office commenced 14 new investigations. These investigations related to 14 complaints made to my office by 4 complainants, including one complainant who made complaints about the handling of multiple notifications. Alongside these new investigations, my office made 6 early resolution transfers and initiated preliminary inquiries on 13 occasions.

We successfully closed 39 complaints to the Ombudsman in February 2024 (up from 38 in February 2023).