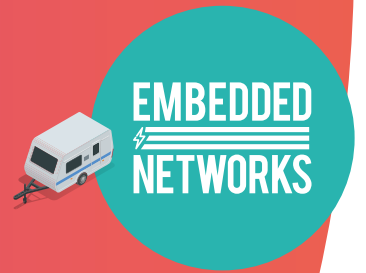


Welcome to EWOQ

Information for exempt sellers

March 2023



Our service is free,
fair and independent.



EMBEDDED
NETWORKS



Energy & Water
Ombudsman
Queensland

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We acknowledge the Traditional Owners and their custodianship of the lands, seas and waters of Queensland. We pay our respects to First Nations Elders past and present, and their future leaders, who continue cultural and spiritual connections to Country. We recognise and respect their valuable contributions to Australia and global society.

ABOUT US

Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland (EWOQ) is a fair and independent dispute resolution service. We help residents and small business customers across Queensland who have a problem with their electricity or gas providers, and those in South East Queensland with water issues too.

From 28 February 2022, we can also help residential electricity embedded network customers who have a complaint about their electricity bill or power supply.

What we do

Resolving disputes between energy and water companies and their customers is our primary role.

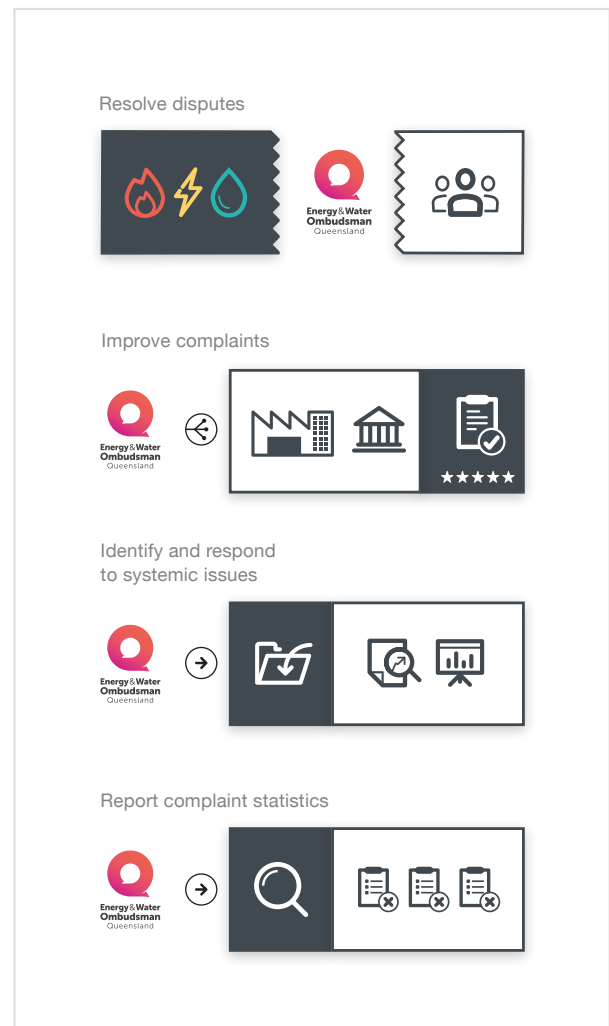
We also:

- » work with industry, government, regulators, consumer groups and other Ombudsmen to encourage improvements to prevent complaints
- » report our complaint statistics on the types of complaints we've received and how many we've resolved
- » identify and respond to systemic issues that arise from complaints to us.

How we work

A number of acts, regulations, codes and rules govern Queensland's energy and water industries. We are governed by the:

- » *Energy and Water Ombudsman Act 2006*
- » Energy and Water Ombudsman Regulation 2022



Information for exempt sellers

What's changed?

On 28 February 2022, an amendment to the regulation came into effect providing residential electricity embedded network customers access to our services.

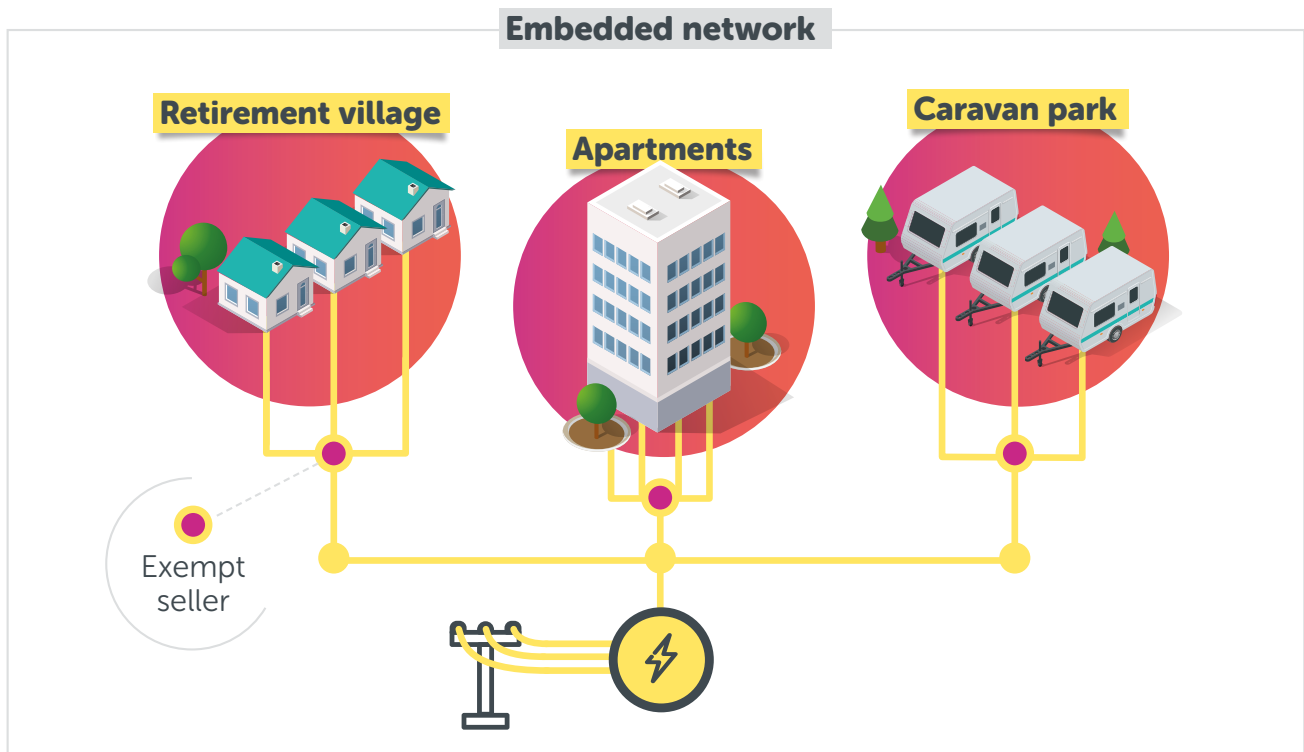
Embedded network owners and operators in Queensland must now become a member of EWOQ. This includes embedded network owners and operators with a class D2, D6, R2, R3, R4, ND2, ND6, NR2, NR3, NR4 or individual exemption as described in the Australian Energy Regulator's (Retail) Exempt Selling Guideline and Network Service Provider Registration Exemption Guideline.

Exempt sellers with more than 2,000 customers must pay an annual membership fee. See page 8 for more information about membership fees.

Exempt sellers will not be charged case management fees for us to handle complaints from their customers at this time.

Visit our website for more information about:

- » Our principles and history – including our vision, commitments and values that support how we operate and how we've evolved since 2007.
- » Our relationships with other organisations to assist Queenslanders.
- » The laws and codes that support our operations.



CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS TO YOU

Good complaint management can help prevent your customers complaining about you to EWOQ. All embedded networks need a procedure for managing complaints internally.

Your complaint handling obligations

As an embedded network operator in Queensland, by law, you must:

- » tell customers who they can contact at your company if they have a complaint
- » have a procedure for handling customer complaints and disputes internally
- » handle complaints according to your procedure
- » publish your procedure on your website (if you have one)
- » give customers a copy of your procedure if they ask for it.

Once you've considered a customer's complaint, you must tell them:

- » the outcome
- » the reasons for the outcome
- » that they can raise their complaint with EWOQ if they're not satisfied with the outcome.

More information

- » Use our **complaint handling guidelines** to help you meet your complaint handling obligations. You can use it to create your own internal complaint handling policy, if you don't already have one.
- » Review your complaint handling obligations under the **Australian Energy Regulator (Retail) Exempt Selling Guideline**.

Preventing complaints to EWOQ

Before accepting a complaint, we check that the customer has first raised the issue with you and that you have attempted to resolve their concerns. When complaints are handled well internally, customers are less likely to complain to EWOQ.

Telling your customers about EWOQ

You must tell your customers about EWOQ and provide our contact details:

- » when telling them about the outcome of a complaint you handled internally
- » when telling them about the outcome of a billing review
- » in disconnection warning notices
- » on your website (if you have one)
- » as part of the information you disclose to them when asked.

We suggest the following wording to advise your customers of EWOQ's services:

We have an accessible complaints process in place should something go wrong. Please contact us directly if you have any issues with your electricity.

If you're not satisfied with how we've handled your complaint or if you need independent advice and information, you can contact the Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland (EWOQ) at any time for independent advice and assistance.

EWOQ is a free service that resolves disputes between Queenslanders and their energy and water companies.

Phone 1800 662 837

(if calling from a mobile, ask EWOQ to call you back)

Email embedded@ewoq.com.au

Website www.ewoq.com.au

Post PO Box 3640, South Brisbane BC Qld 4101

CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS TO EWOQ

When a customer can't resolve a complaint with you directly, they have the right to raise their complaint with us.

What customers can complain to us about

We expect most complaints from embedded network customers will be about:

- » high bills and disputed accounts
- » credit issues, including default listings
- » access to payment plans, rebates and concessions
- » disconnection of supply
- » connection issues
- » poor customer service
- » privacy breaches of an individual by an exempt seller.

Our case types

When a customer contacts us, we categorise the complaint depending on the nature of the issue.

The case types are:

Enquiry

A customer is seeking generic information not specific to a scheme participant or another service that we can't assist with.

Referral to other agency

If the matter raised is not within our jurisdiction, we will refer it to another agency.

Referral back to supplier

We will refer a customer back to you if they have not contacted you about the issue or provided you with a reasonable opportunity to resolve the complaint with them directly.

If the customer has already tried to resolve the complaint with you, we may commence an investigation.

Investigation

Our team will investigate the complaint and try to facilitate a resolution between you and your customer.

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How we investigate complaints

We investigate the circumstances of a complaint and assist you and your customer to agree on a fair and reasonable resolution. What is 'fair and reasonable' will depend on the circumstances of each case. In determining this, we will gather information from you and your customer and consider:

- » laws and regulations
- » your company policies
- » the wider industry practice.

Investigate complaint escalation process

If we are investigating a complaint and escalation is required, we will follow the following process:

- » If an officer is unable to resolve a complaint to the satisfaction of you and the customer, the complaint is escalated to the Manager – Dispute Resolution for negotiation and a resolution.
- » If the complaint is still unable to be resolved, it is referred to the General Manager – Assessment, Investigation and Resolution for negotiation and a satisfactory resolve by both parties.
- » If the dispute cannot be resolved through negotiation, the Energy and Water Ombudsman may decide to make, or refuse to make a final order against the supplier to resolve the dispute.

Visit our website for more information about:

- » Our complaints process
- » A list of complaints we can help with.

WORKING WITH US

Member portal

We have a member portal where you can:

- » manage your company details and contacts
- » view case data reports.

A user guide for this system is available in the member portal.

Your legal and regulatory obligations

It's important for you to be aware of your legal and regulatory obligations, which we will consider when handling any complaints from your customers. These are:

- » *Energy and Water Ombudsman Act 2006*
- » Energy and Water Ombudsman Regulation 2022
- » Australian Energy Regulator (Retail) Exempt Selling Guideline
- » Australian Energy Regulator Electricity Network Service Provider – Registration Exemption Guideline
- » National Energy Retail Law (Queensland).

FEES AND CHARGES

When an embedded network customer contacts us about a complaint, their embedded network provider will not be charged case management fees at this time.

Annual membership fees may apply for residential exempt sellers and authorised on-supply retailers:

- » Exempt sellers with 2,000 or fewer customers will not pay an annual membership fee
- » Exempt sellers with more than 2,000 customers will pay a \$5,000 annual membership fee
- » Authorised retailers who on-supply electricity will pay \$5,000 per year for the first authorisation and \$10,000 per year for more than one authorisation.

CONTACT US

Call us

1800 662 837

Calling from a mobile? We can call you back.

Email us

embedded@ewoq.com.au

Chat with us

Talk with us in real time during business hours through the chat function at **www.ewoq.com.au**

Write to us

PO Box 3640, South Brisbane BC Qld 4101

Follow us    



Call **133 677** if you have a hearing or speech impairment.



Call **131 450** for the Translating and Interpreting Service.