

OUR ENGAGEMENT CHARTER

Our Engagement Charter outlines our expectations about how people using our service will engage with us and each other during our complaint resolution process. It also describes the service standards others can expect from us.

This is a living document that may change from time to time in response to the ever-changing landscape we are working in.

ABOUT US

The Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland (EWOQ) is a free, fair and independent dispute resolution service for people who can't resolve a complaint with electricity, gas and water companies.

We provide this service for residential and small business energy customers across Queensland, and water customers in South East Queensland. We work directly with them to investigate and resolve complaints.

We work within the *Energy and Water Ombudsman Act 2006*, and our actions are consistent with our vision for Reconciliation.

OUR ROLE

Under the *Energy and Water Ombudsman Act 2006*, our role is to:

- receive and investigate energy complaints in Queensland and water complaints in South East Queensland
- manage dispute resolution between customers and energy and water companies
- promote our services
- identify systemic energy and water issues.

What you can expect from us



How we will work with you

We will be easy to work with, prompt, courteous and professional. We act with honesty and integrity to all those who engage with us. We follow through on what we say we will do and are consistent in our actions.

We promote a culture of respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and will be responsive to individual, cultural and special needs. The person you are dealing with will give you their name. We strive to be the best we can be and will value your feedback and use it to improve our services.



Reliable advice and information

We will provide you with reliable and correct advice and information. We will help you to get in touch with the right people for your needs, whether inside our organisation or with another complaint body. We will be well-trained and competent. We encourage each other and seek opportunities to learn and share our knowledge and ideas to continuously improve ourselves and our service.



Confidentiality

We will treat all information about you as private and confidential and keep it secure. We will only use or disclose it in accordance with the 11 information privacy principles (IPPs) in the *Information Privacy Act 2009*.



Consistency and equity

We live our values. We are fair, independent and impartial. We are honest, respectful and treat parties with dignity. We are open and accountable for what we do.

All our team members are located in Queensland and we are proactive in our approach with a focus on listening and understanding the needs of the diverse Queensland communities. We provide extra help to those who may need it or are vulnerable.



Your right to question us

We work hard to provide excellent service and access for everyone, and will take all complaints about our decisions and actions seriously. We will make it easy for you to question the information, advice and service we give you.

We will inform you about options available if you disagree with us, and we will work with you to reach an outcome quickly and simply. You can [provide feedback about EWOQ](#) at any time.



Ensuring a fair process and outcome

We are here to help ensure a fair outcome is achieved in dispute resolution. This happens when all those involved focus on working together to bring the complaint to an outcome.

Working together

Our customers

Individuals, small businesses and their informal authorised representatives including friends and family being voluntary users of the scheme and our customers.



Ombudsman

The Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland in our capacity as the operator of this service.



Scheme participants

The participants of EWOQ's scheme whose conduct must reflect their licence and other professional obligations.

What we expect from you

Expectations for scheme participants

In their engagement with EWOQ and their customers (complainants) we expect the scheme participants to meet the EWOQ scheme obligations and:

- Deal with complaints fairly and promptly and respond without unnecessary delay.
- Provide all information to EWOQ relevant to the complaint within set timeframes.
- Proactively participate in the complaint resolution process and reasonably co-operate with EWOQ.

Expectations for customers (complainants) and representatives

EWOQ provides a free service for people to complain about their energy and water issues. Complainants may withdraw their EWOQ complaint at any time. Those who wish to use EWOQ do so subject to the expectations in this Charter.

EWOQ expectations are that complainants and representatives:

- actively participate in the dispute resolution process
- co-operate with our investigations including providing all relevant information within requested timeframes and where not possible let us know that you need more time
- tell us if you have specific communication needs so we can arrange assistance via an interpreter, National Relay Service or a family member or friend
- for representatives – act in the best interests of the complainant always.

We will not tolerate unreasonable behaviour

EWOQ must provide a safe environment for our team members to resolve complaints and to ensure a fair process in the resolution of complaints.

We will not tolerate conduct that puts our people or parties at risk for physical or mental harm including behaviour that is:

- Threatening.
- Intimidating.
- Abusive.
- Bullying.
- Discriminatory.
- Unreasonable.

We expect you to treat our team members and one another with courtesy and respect and do what is requested and required of you to facilitate a timely and fair outcome. If we think you are not meeting the standards set out in this Charter, we will raise that with you.

We may limit the communications options available to you to ensure we can remain focused on resolving your complaint without conflict.

In exceptional circumstance, we may close the complaint.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

For this Charter to work effectively, we rely on our customers and scheme participants to engage with each other and EWOQ in a way that is:



Respectful and fair



Transparent and honest



In good faith



Efficient and effective