

Survey for financial counsellors views on EWOV

The Energy and Water Ombudsman of Victoria (EWOV) is currently undergoing an independent review. Consumer Action Law Centre (Consumer Action), the Financial and Consumer Rights Council (FCRC), the Victorian Council of Social Services (VCOSS), and the Consumer Utilities Advocacy Centre (CUAC) have jointly decided to prepare a consumer submission to the review.

The purpose of this questionnaire is to learn more about the experience Financial Counsellors have with EWOV, to ensure that these views are represented in the submission.

We would appreciate your input by Wednesday 19 February 2014.

As well as your answers to this survey we want to hear your stories and case examples. If you want to provide more detail, contact Cathy Thwaite at Consumer Action (03 8554 6912) or cathy@consumeraction.org.au.

1. How long have you worked as a financial counsellor?

- Less than 2 years
- 2-5 years
- 5-10 years
- more than 10 years

2. How often do you deal with EWOV?

- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- I've never dealt with EWOV

3. How often do your clients deal with EWOV?

- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

4. Do you consider that EWOV deals with problems that retailers should be able to resolve internally?

- Yes
- No

5. All things considered - how would you rate EWOV's performance resolving disputes involving your clients?

Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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6. Have you or your client ever used information provided by EWOV on its website to assist with making a complaint, or getting information about a particular subject?

- Yes
- No

7. If you or your client has used information from EWOV's website, was it helpful for you?

- Yes - Very helpful
- Yes - Somewhat helpful
- No - Not very helpful
- No - Not at all helpful

8. EWOV has held community road shows aimed at community organisations that work with vulnerable and disadvantaged consumers. If you attended these, how would you rate them?

- Very Helpful
- Helpful
- Not very helpful
- Not at all helpful
- Did not attend

9. Awareness of EWOV: Do you think that energy retailers are making clients aware of EWOV?

- Yes - Definitely
- Yes - Somewhat
- No - Not really
- No - Not at all

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10. In 2012 EWOV made significant changes to its complaint handling processes.

Here is a summary of the key changes.

Assisted referral - Where EWOV refers complaints to a designated higher level within the utility company. The policy is that it gives the company another opportunity to engage with the consumer to resolve the complaint and it gives the consumer confidence that their utility provider will resolve any future problems. The EWOV annual report stated that most cases (60%) are resolved through this process.

Real Time Resolution - Where EWOV deals with failed Assisted Referrals quickly by involving one of their conciliators. This occurs when a consumer/financial counsellor contacts EWOV to inform them that the assisted referral process did not resolve the complaint. Real time resolution refers to a speedy resolution to the matter. Just under 10% of cases were resolved under the Real Time Resolution category according to the EWOV annual report.

Investigated Complaint - Where EWOV undertakes a full investigation of the complaint taking into consideration what is fair and reasonable and in accordance with law, codes and good industry practice. Just over 13% of cases were resolved through this process according to the recent EWOV report.

Were you aware of these changes?

- Yes
- No

11. Have you ever highlighted to EWOV that a particular issue was affecting a lot of clients?

- Yes
- No

12. If so, describe what happened. Did EWOV address the systemic issue that you raised?

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13. Decision Making: Have you had problems with decisions made by EWOV in cases you have worked on?

- Yes - frequently
- Yes - sometimes
- Yes - but only rarely
- No - never had a problem with EWOV decision making

Add comments or examples if you like

14. Timeliness: Have you had problems with how long it took EWOV to handle a complaint?

- Yes - frequently
- Yes - occasionally
- Yes - but only rarely
- No - I've never had a problem with timeliness

Add comments or examples if you like

15. Have you had clients who were excluded from EWOV, or dropped out of making a claim to EWOV, because of the following?

- EWOV's response to the client's initial enquiry
- EWOV referred the client back to the business the client was complaining about
- The client had problems lodging the complaint
- The client was unable / failed to comply with EWOV's requests (for example, EWOV's requests for information or evidence)
- The client was unable / failed to understand EWOV's correspondence
- The client didn't understand EWOV's process
- The client lost faith in EWOV's ability to handle their dispute
- The process took too long

Give details of any other reason a client dropped out, or case examples

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16. Have you ever made a complaint to EWOV about the way they handled your client's matter?

- Yes
- No

17. If you have complained about the way EWOV handled you or your client's issue, were you satisfied with the way EWOV handled this?

- Yes - Very satisfied
- Yes - Somewhat satisfied
- No - I wasn't very satisfied
- No - EWOV handled it badly.

18. Have you or your client ever complained to EWOV about a wrongful disconnection?

- Yes
- No

19. If you have complained about a wrongful disconnection to EWOV, describe how EWOV dealt with this.

20. In your experience dealing with EWOV, are the outcomes for clients fair and appropriate?

Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

21. Do you have any other comments, stories or examples about EWOV, either good or bad?

Thanks for responding. Please contact us if you want to provide more inform...

Specific examples about your experience with EWOV will help us make a better submission to the EWOV review. We need your stories.

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If you are able to provide more information, please contact Cathy Thwaite at Consumer Action Law Centre on 03 8554 6912 or by email cathy@consumeraction.org.au.