

Performance report for the period 14 September 2015 to 31 December 2017

Summary of complaints

COMPLAINTS			
781	755	54%	80.5%
RECEIVED	COMPLETED	COMPLETED WITHIN 30 DAYS	COMPLAINANT OUTCOME ACHIEVED

\$463,062 OF FEES REFUNDED/REIMBURSED/WAIVED

FORMAL ENQUIRIES		OTHER	
152	151	22,353+	1,455+
RECEIVED	COMPLETED	WEB HITS	STAKEHOLDERS ATTENDED PRESENTATIONS

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1 Introduction

The Office of the Queensland Training Ombudsman (OQTO) commenced operation on 14 September 2015 and was established by the Queensland Government as part of its plan for reinvigorating the vocational education and training (VET) sector in Queensland.

The OQTO provides a free, confidential, and independent service to review and resolve enquiries and complaints from apprentices, trainees, students, employers and other parties about the VET system.

The OQTO helps clients navigate the VET sector and finds the best way to address their concerns. The office provides free advice about rights and responsibilities within the VET sector and aims to address complaints impartially and quickly.

The Queensland Training Ombudsman will look at the client's circumstances and assist them to resolve issues appropriately by:

- reviewing the issue and recommending the most appropriate action to take;
- referring the complaint to another agency if they are best suited to assist;
- mediating between parties to come to a mutually beneficial solution; and
- advocating solutions for key issues in the VET sector.

The OQTO started receiving complaints and enquiries from the first week of operation and all are integrated in the data in this report. This document contains performance data for the period of 14 September 2015 to 31 December 2017.

Data in this report is correct as at 31 December 2017.

1.1 The First 27 Months

Mr Geoff Favell commenced as Interim Training Ombudsman on 14 September 2015. Legislation to formally establish the position under the *Further Education and Training Act 2014* was proclaimed on 22 April 2016 and Mr Favell was appointed the Queensland Training Ombudsman on 29 September 2016.

Since September 2015, the Queensland Training Ombudsman has held numerous meetings with various stakeholders including:

- South Australian Training Advocate;
- Queensland Health Ombudsman;
- Australian Department of Education and Training;
- Queensland Department of Education and Training (DET);
- Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET);
- Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA);
- Office of Fair Trading (OFT);
- Queensland Ombudsman;

- Overseas Students Ombudsman;
- Group Training Queensland and Northern Territory Inc (GTAQNT);
- Queensland Building and Construction Commission;
- Construction Skills Queensland (CSQ);
- TAFE Queensland;
- Commonwealth VET Student Loans Ombudsman;
- Commissioner for Electrical Safety;
- Electrical Safety Office;
- Energy Skills Queensland;
- Registered Training Organisations; and
- Unions and employer associations.

The Queensland Training Ombudsman has delivered presentations on the role and functions of the QTO to over 1,455 people across Queensland, including:

- Regional Training Reference Groups;
- Construction Skills Queensland Board;
- Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union Apprentice Conference;
- VET Industry Advisory Organisation;
- Resources Industry Skills Association Advisory Group;
- Queensland Association of Independent Legal Services Inc;
- Electrical Trades Union Apprentice Conference;
- VET Industry Group;
- ACPET Queensland Learning Summit;
- TAFE Queensland SkillsTech Teacher Orientation Program; and
- Apprentice Employment Network Meeting.

Memoranda of Understanding have been signed with GTAQNT, ACPET, CSQ, ASQA, TAFE Queensland, DET and an Information Sharing Agreement has been entered into with OFT.

The Queensland Training Ombudsman website has received over 22,353 hits between 14 September 2015 and 31 December 2017. New branding was completed and the development of a full Queensland Training Ombudsman website went live in early April 2017.

1.2 Complaints Summary

In the period 14 September 2015 to 31 December 2017, the Queensland Training Ombudsman received and assessed 933 complaints and enquiries. As expected, the majority of complainants, over 76%, were apprentices, trainees and students. Over half of the complainants were female and over 46% of complainants reside in the Metropolitan or North Coast Region of Queensland.

Over 23% of complaints relate to the community services sector, followed by business with over 16%. Enrolment and refund issues appear to be a predominant area of concern along with Registered Training Organisation (RTO) behaviour.

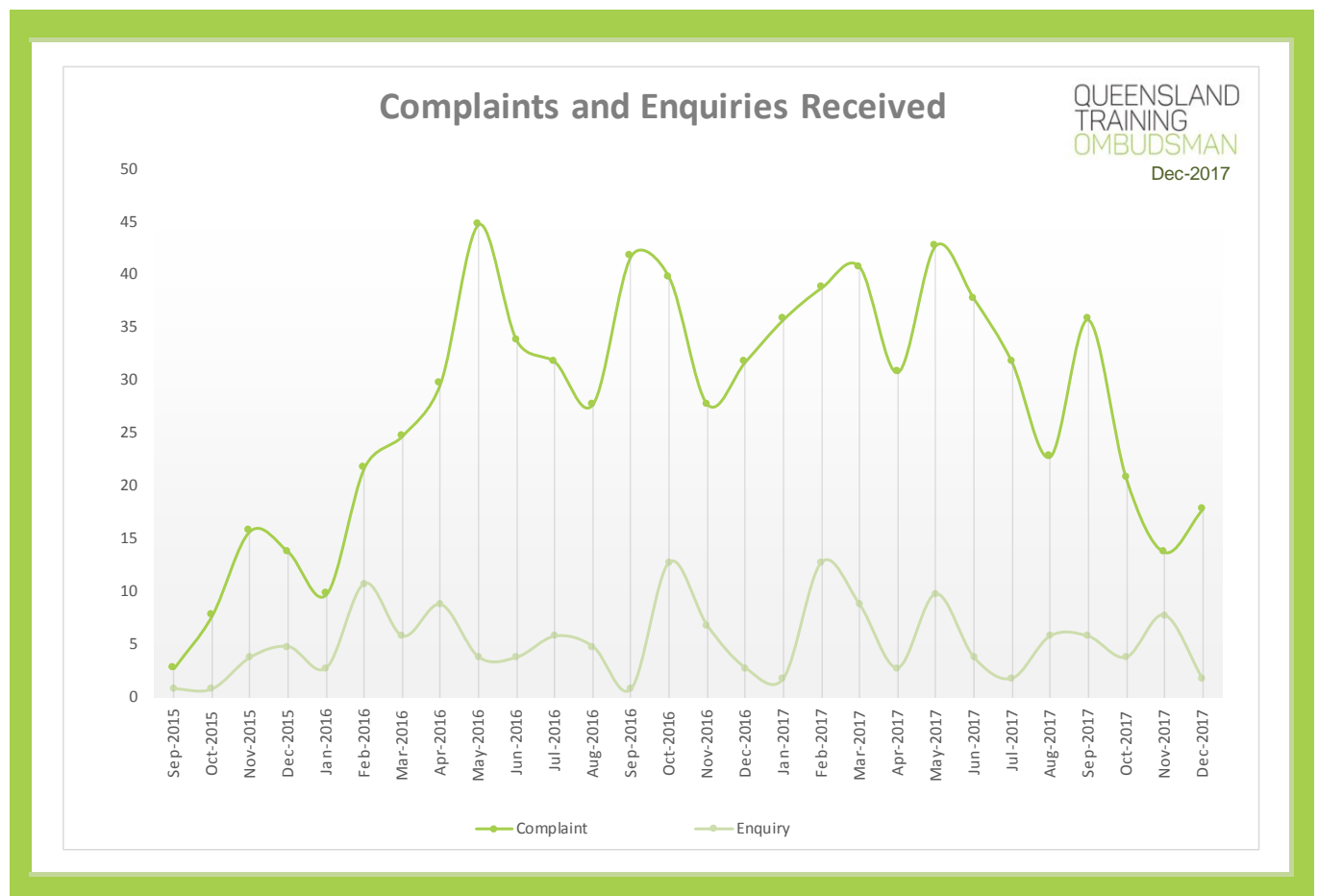
Of particular note, the Queensland Training Ombudsman has:

- achieved the complainants preferred outcome in 80.5% of completed investigations;
- effected resolution of 107 cases regarding course fees to both parties' satisfaction and involving a refund or waiver of approximately \$463,062;
- referred 32 matters to DET, 26 to the VET Student Loans Ombudsman, four to the Office of Industrial Relations, two to ASQA, one to the Commonwealth DET and one to the Fair Work Ombudsman for further investigation; and
- provided information to DET on behalf of complainants which was considered by DET and resulted in the termination of Pre-qualified Supplier agreements and changes to subsidy arrangements.

2 Summary of Complaints/Enquiries

2.1 Number of Complaints/Enquiries Received

14 September 2015 to 31 December 2017






	Complaints	Enquiries	Total
Total complaints/enquiries for 2015/16	207	48	255
Total complaints/enquiries for 2016/17	430	76	506
Total complaints/enquiries for 2017/18	144	28	172
Total complaints/enquiries since commencement	781	152	933

2.2 Complaints/Enquiries by Gender

14 September 2015 to 31 December 2017

Gender summary of complaints/enquiries

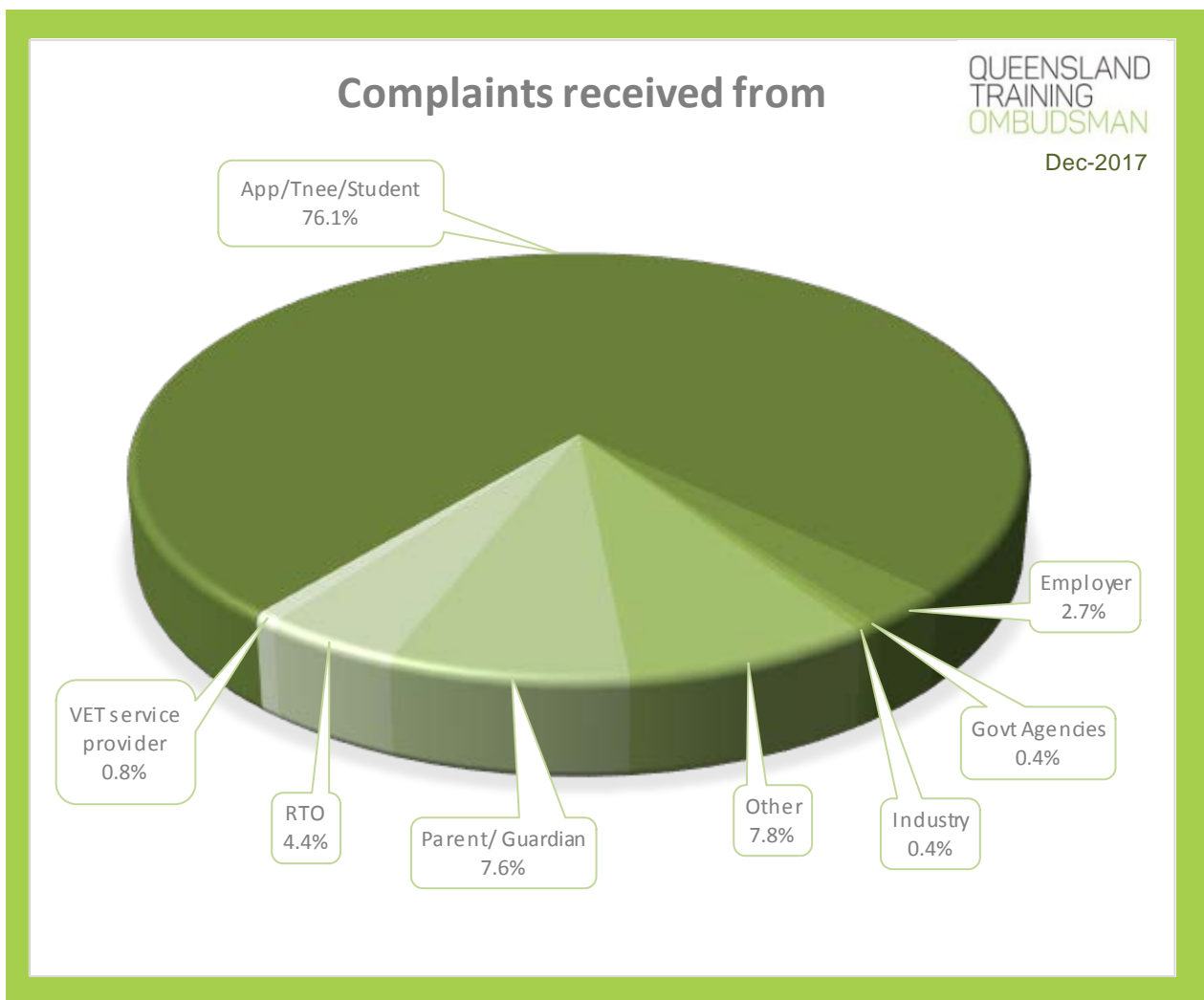
546	375	12	933
			Total
FEMALE	MALE	ANONYMOUS	
58.5%	40.2%	1.3%	100%

3 Complaint Profile

The following profile and demographic data is based on complaints only – including those completed and closed and those still under investigation. Enquiries are excluded from this data.

3.1 Complaints Received From

14 September 2015 to 31 December 2017



3.2 Complaints by Industry Sector

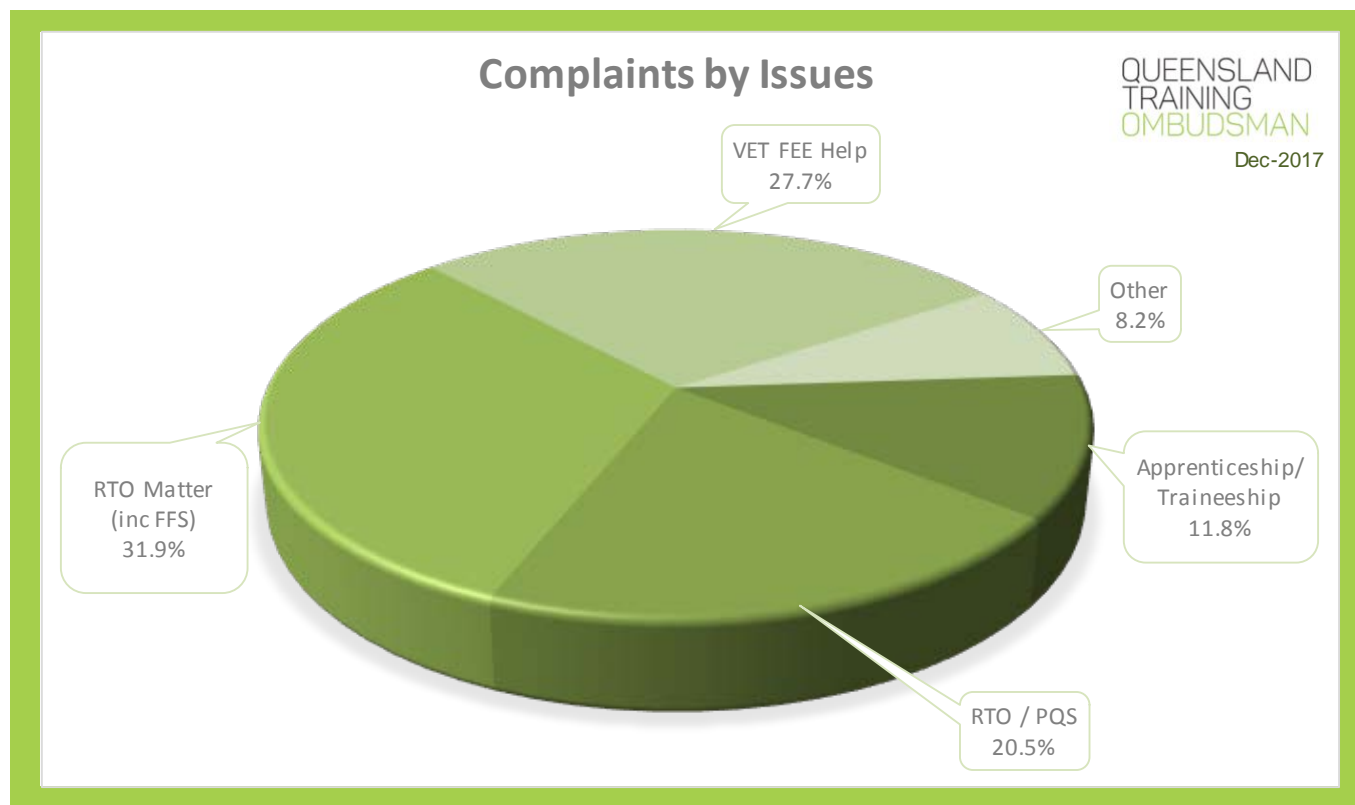
14 September 2015 to 31 December 2017

Complaints by Industry Sector

32	ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT	4.1%	10	AUTOMOTIVE	1.3%
125	BUSINESS	16.0%	28	COMMUNICATIONS	3.6%
184	COMMUNITY SERVICES	23.6%	42	CONSTRUCTION	5.4%
24	ENGINEERING	3.1%	6	FOOD PROCESSING	0.8%
4	FURNISHING	0.5%	30	EDUCATION & TRAINING	3.8
3	GOVERNMENT	0.4%	74	HEALTH	9.5%
19	HOSPITALITY	2.4%	15	MINING	1.9%
27	MULTIPLE	3.5%	28	NOT SPECIFIED	3.6%
19	PRIMARY INDUSTRIES	2.4%	41	RETAIL	5.3%
16	SPORT & RECREATION	2.1%	30	TRANSPORT & DISTRIBUTION	3.8%
24	UTILITIES	3.1%			

3.3 Main Issues Raised

14 September 2015 to 31 December 2017



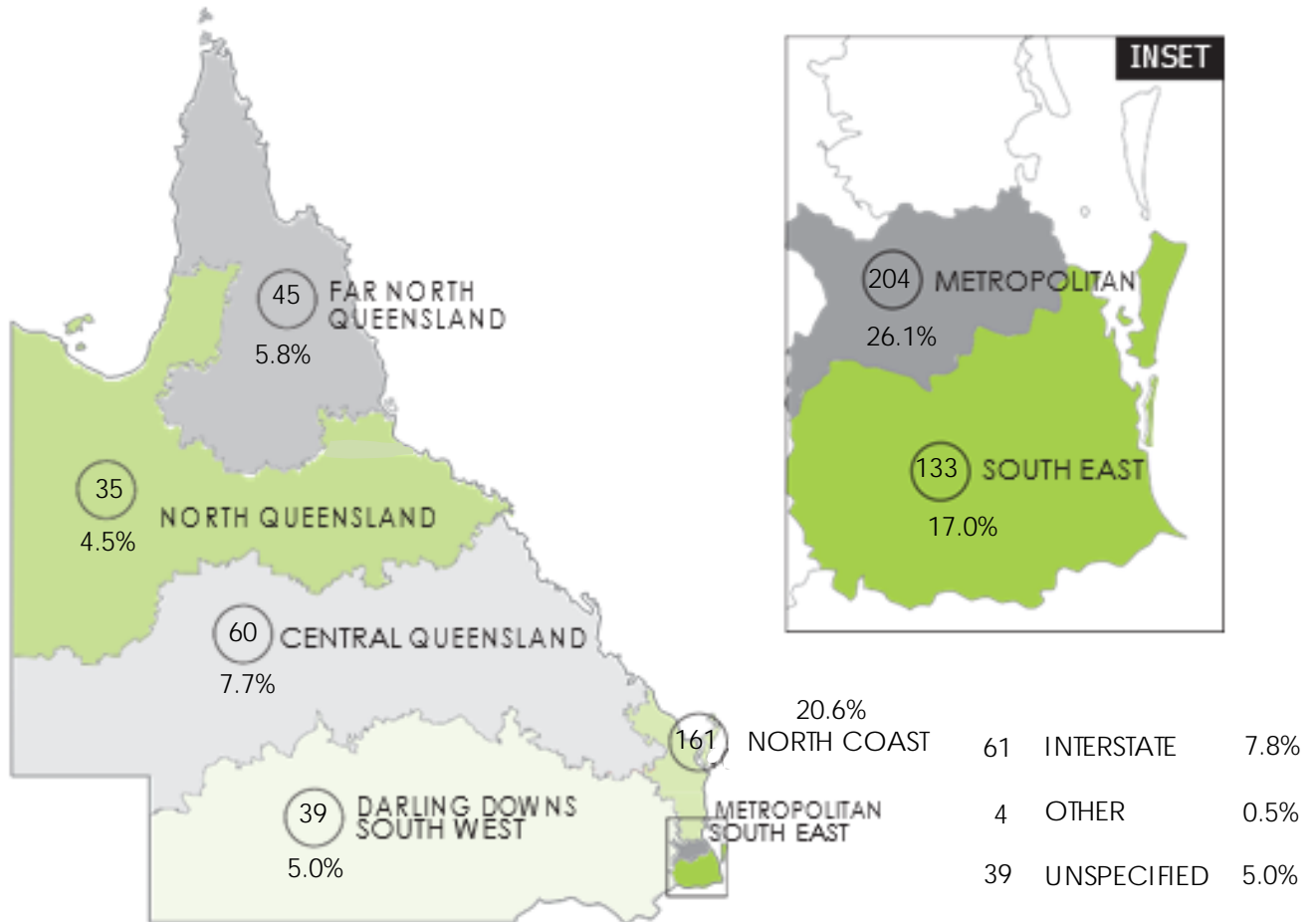
Issue	Number	Percentage
<i>Apprenticeships/Traineeships</i>		
- Current Govt Policy (4)		
- Duration (1)		
- Employer Behaviour (18)		
- Enrolment/ Refund (1)		
- Fees (5)		
- Incentives (5)		
- No Tg/Emp Provided (7)		
- Not Specified (4)		
- Other Stakeholder Behaviour (5)		
- Quality (1)		
- Recruit/ Market/ Assess (0)		
- RTO Behaviour (33)		
	92	11.8%

Issue	Number	Percentage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SATs (8) - VETiS (0) 		
<p><i>RTO/PQS</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Current Govt Policy (7) - Duration (0) - Employer Behaviour (1) - Enrolment/ Refund (17) - Fees (6) - Incentives (0) - No Tg/Emp Provided (1) - Not Specified (0) - Other Stakeholder Behaviour (1) - Quality (12) - Recruit/ Market/ Assess (8) - RTO Behaviour (105) - SATs (0) - VETiS (2) 	160	20.5%
<p><i>VET FEE HELP</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Current Govt Policy (1) - Duration (0) - Employer Behaviour (0) - Enrolment/ Refund (144) - Fees (6) - Incentives (0) - No Tg/Emp Provided (0) - Not Specified (0) - Other Stakeholder Behaviour (2) - Quality (12) - Recruit/ Market/ Assess (1) - RTO Behaviour (50) - SATs (0) - VETiS (0) 	216	27.7%
<p><i>RTO Matter (including Fee for Service)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Current Govt Policy (3) - Duration (2) - Employer Behaviour (0) - Enrolment/ Refund (125) - Fees (17) 	249	31.9%

Issue	Number	Percentage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Incentives (0) - No Tg/Emp Provided (2) - Not Specified (0) - Other Stakeholder Behaviour (1) - Quality (3) - Recruit/ Market/ Assess (2) - RTO Behaviour (94) - SATs (0) - VETiS (0) 		
<p><i>Other</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Current Govt Policy (11) - Duration (0) - Employer Behaviour (2) - Enrolment/ Refund (16) - Fees (1) - Incentives (0) - No Tg/Emp Provided (0) - Not Specified (4) - Other Stakeholder Behaviour (19) - Quality (1) - Recruit/ Market/ Assess (3) - RTO Behaviour (7) - SATs (0) - VETiS (0) 	64	8.2%
Total	781	100.0%

3.4 Complaints by Location

14 September 2015 to 31 December 2017



4 Complaint Outcomes

14 September 2015 to 31 December 2017

Decisions	Number	Percentage of completed complaints
Completed - complainant outcome achieved	595	80.5%
Completed – complainant outcome not achieved	125	16.9%
Completed – no further action and formally withdrawn	19	2.6%
Total	739	100.0%
Complaint Refused	16	
Total completed	755	

As at 31 December 2017, 739 complaints have been completed and finalised. 595 (80.5%) achieved the complainant's desired outcome, including 107 cases of fee refund or waivers which totalled approximately \$463,062.

125 cases did not achieve the complainant's desired outcome. These cases included unsuccessful attempts by students to partially recover course fees, and complaints which were closed without investigation due to the complainant not responding despite multiple attempts by the OQTO to contact them for further information.

19 complaints were formally withdrawn as the complainant had settled the matter directly, and in some cases decided to continue with their studies.

16 complaints were refused for investigation due to the nature of the complaint.

As at 31 December 2017, 26 complaints are still under investigation.

4.1 Formal Referrals to Other Agencies

14 September 2015 to 31 December 2017

Referrals	Number
ASQA	2
Commonwealth DET	1
Queensland DET	32
Fair Work Ombudsman	1
Office of Industrial Relations	4
VET Student Loans Ombudsman	26
Total	66

While there have been 66 formal referrals from the Queensland Training Ombudsman to other agencies, there have been other instances where verbal advice has been given to complainants suggesting other bodies who could also assist with their issue.

The QQTO strives to provide complainants with the full wrap-around support service and advice to help students and VET stakeholders as much as possible, even going so far as to assist complainants to draft correspondence and emails to support their case.

4.2 Timeframe to Close Complaints

14 September 2015 to 31 December 2017

Timeframe data below relates to all closed complaints, including withdrawn and refused complaints.

TIMEFRAMES TO CLOSE COMPLAINTS		
RESOLVED/ CLOSED UNDER 30 DAYS	RESOLVED/ CLOSED OVER 30 DAYS	TOTAL
424	357	781
54%	46%	100%

5. Enquiry Outcomes

152 enquiries have been received by QQTO between 14 September 2015 to 31 December 2017 and 151 of these have been satisfactorily answered.