

## Performance report for the period 14 September 2015 to 31 March 2018

### Summary of complaints

COMPLAINTS			
847	806	54%	80.4%
RECEIVED	COMPLETED	COMPLETED WITHIN 30 DAYS	COMPLAINANT OUTCOME ACHIEVED

**\$471,760** OF FEES REFUNDED/REIMBURSED/WAIVED

FORMAL ENQUIRIES		OTHER	
170	170	25,976	1,760+
RECEIVED	COMPLETED	WEB HITS	STAKEHOLDERS ATTENDED PRESENTATIONS

**For more information contact:**

Office of the Queensland Training Ombudsman  
PO Box 15090 City East, Brisbane Qld 4002  
Email: [info@trainingombudsman.qld.gov.au](mailto:info@trainingombudsman.qld.gov.au)  
Telephone: 1800 773 048

Ref: 18/178441

## Table of Contents

<b>1 Introduction.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.1 The First 30 Months.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.2 Complaints Summary.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2 Summary of Complaints/Enquiries.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2.1 Number of Complaints/Enquiries Received.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2.2 Complaints/Enquiries by Gender.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>3 Complaint Profile.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>3.1 Complaints Received From.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>3.2 Complaints by Industry Sector.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>3.3 Main Issues Raised.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>3.4 Complaints by Location.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>4 Complaint Outcomes.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>4.1 Formal Referrals to Other Agencies.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>4.2 Timeframes to Close Complaints.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>5 Enquiry Outcomes.....</b>	<b>14</b>

## 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 March 2018.

Data in this report is correct as at 31 March 2018.

### 1.1 The First 30 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 Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT) - formerly 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 OQTO to over 1,760+ people across Queensland, including:

- Regional Training Reference Groups;
- Construction Skills Queensland Board;
- Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union Apprentice Conference;
- VET Industry Advisory Organisation;
- 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 25,976 hits between 14 September 2015 and 31 March 2018. 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 March 2018, the Queensland Training Ombudsman received and assessed 1,017 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 22% 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.

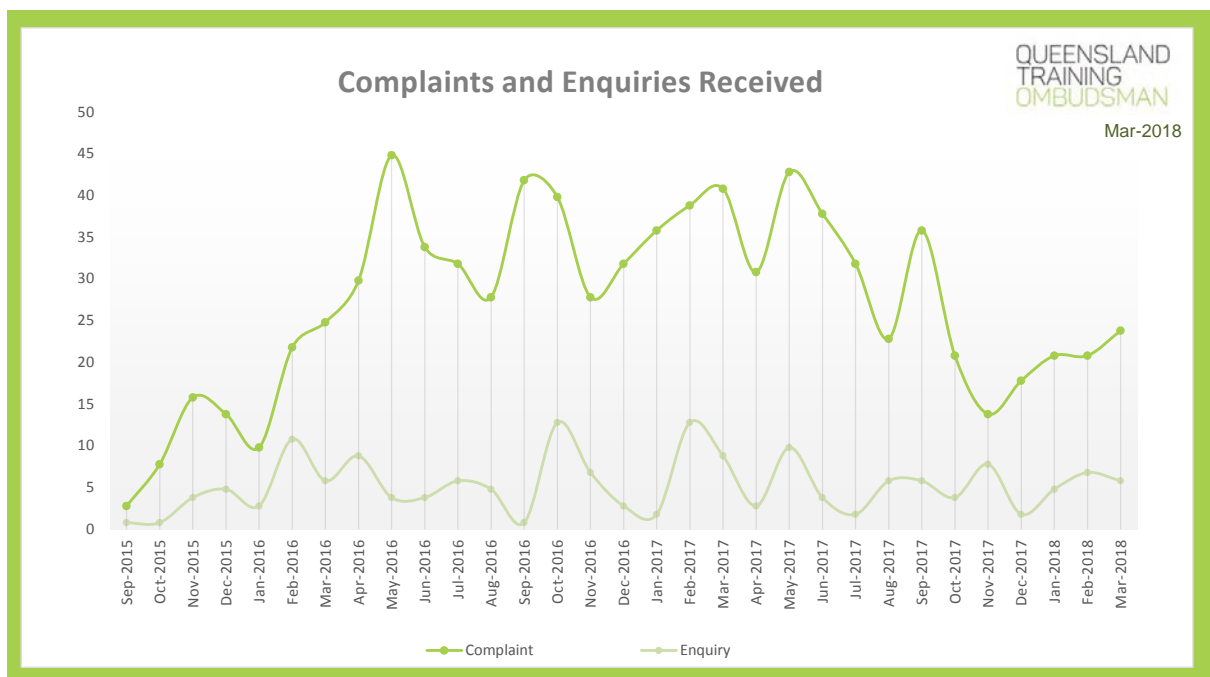
Of particular note, the Queensland Training Ombudsman has:

- achieved the complainants preferred outcome in 80.4% of completed investigations;
- effected resolution of 113 cases regarding course fees to both parties' satisfaction and involving a refund or waiver of approximately \$471,760;
- referred 32 matters to DET, 30 to the VET Student Loans Ombudsman, four to the Office of Industrial Relations, three to ASQA, one to the Commonwealth DET, one to the Workplace Health and Safety, one to DESBT 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 March 2018






	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	210	46	256
<b>Total complaints/enquiries since commencement</b>	<b>847</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>1017</b>

## 2.2 Complaints/Enquiries by Gender

14 September 2015 to 31 March 2018

### Gender summary of complaints/enquiries

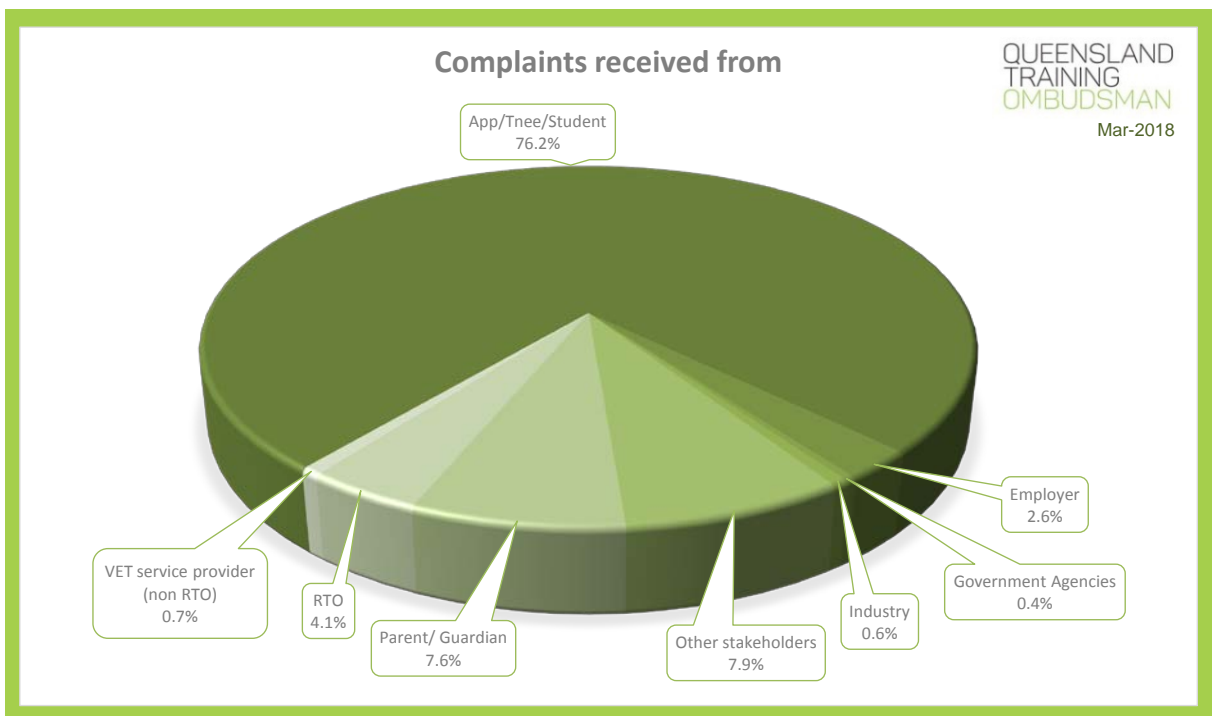
<b>599</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1017</b>
			<b>Total</b>
FEMALE	MALE	ANONYMOUS	
<b>58.9%</b>	<b>39.8%</b>	<b>1.3%</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 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

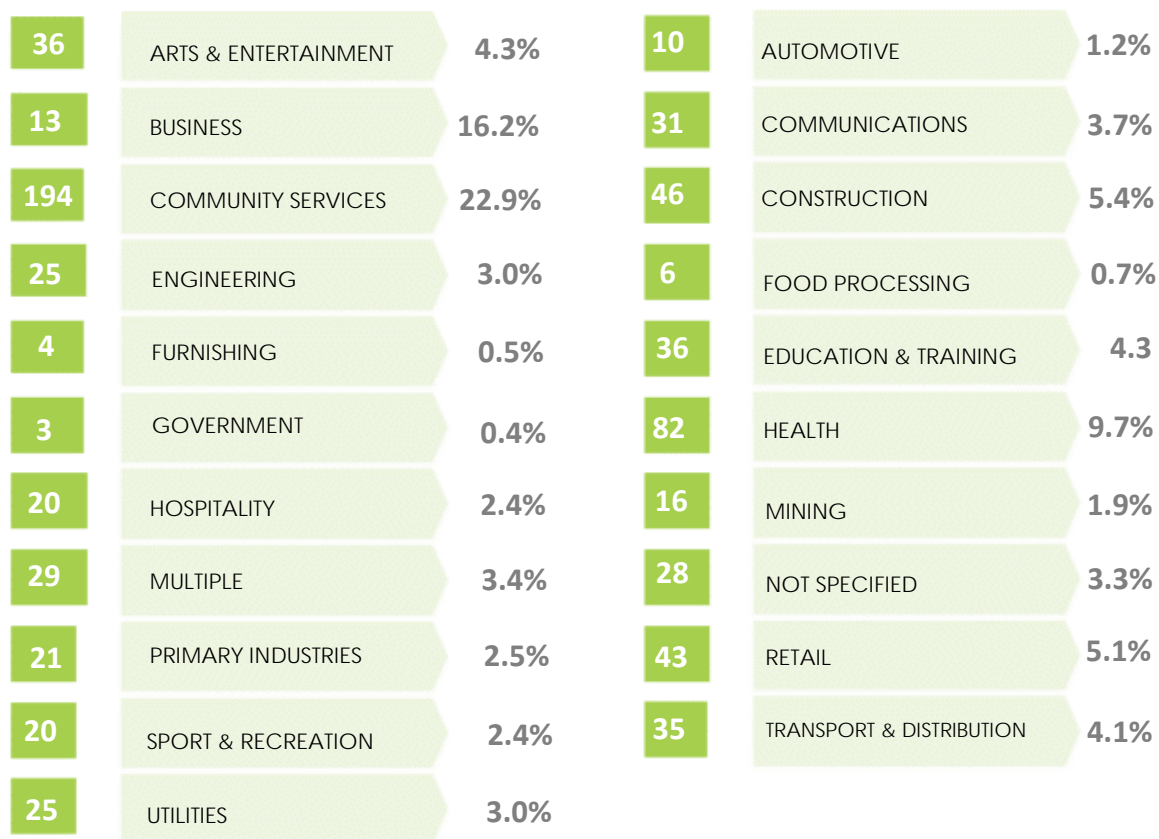
14 September 2015 to 31 March 2018



## 3.2 Complaints by Industry Sector

14 September 2015 to 31 March 2018

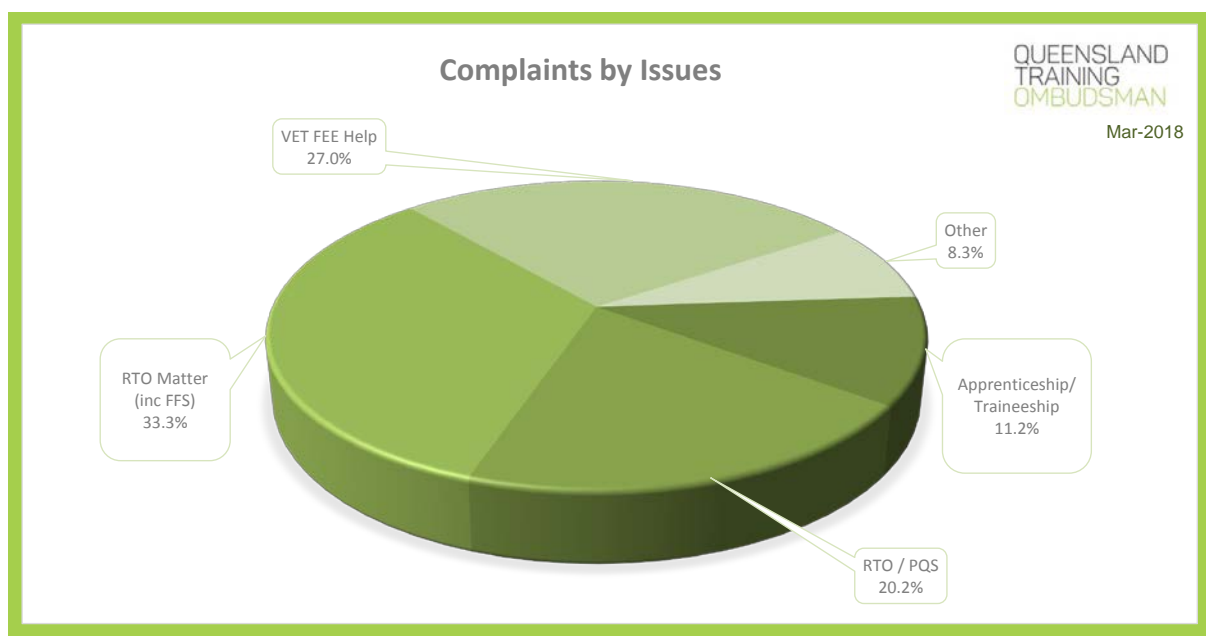
### Complaints by Industry Sector





### 3.3 Main Issues Raised

14 September 2015 to 31 March 2018



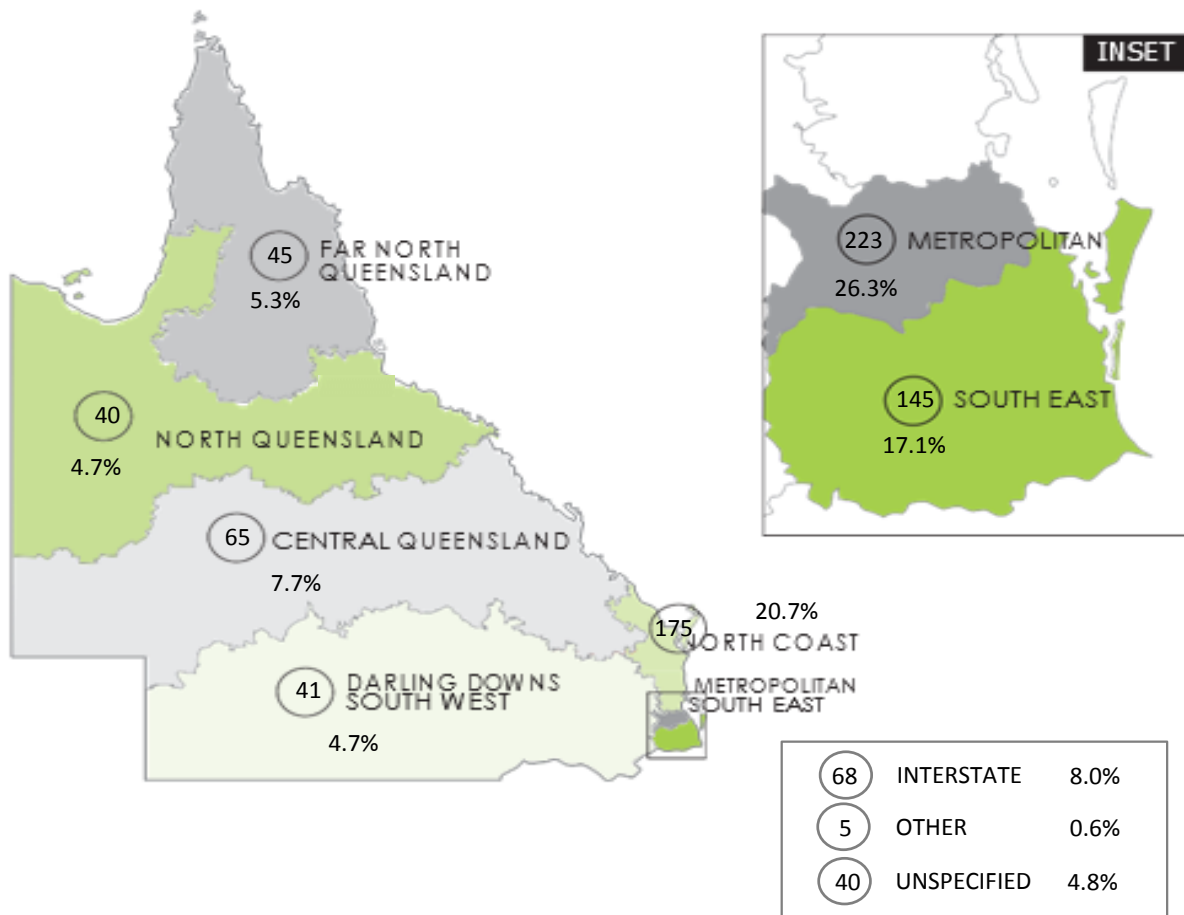
Issue	Number	Percentage
<b>Apprenticeships/Traineeships</b>		
- Current Govt Policy (5)		
- Duration (1)		
- Employer Behaviour (18)		
- Enrolment/ Refund (1)		
- Fees (5)		
- Incentives (5)		
- No Tg/Emp Provided (7)		
- Not Specified (4)		
- Other Stakeholder Behaviour (5)		
- Quality (2)		
- Recruit/ Market/ Assess (0)		
- RTO Behaviour (33)		
- SATs (9)		
- VETiS (0)		
	95	11.2

Issue	Number	Percentage
<b>RTO / PQS</b> - Current Govt Policy (7) - Duration (0) - Employer Behaviour (1) - Enrolment/ Refund (17) - Fees (7) - Incentives (0) - No Tg/Emp Provided (1) - Not Specified (0) - Other Stakeholder Behaviour (1) - Quality (13) - Recruit/ Market/ Assess (9) - RTO Behaviour (113) - SATs (0) - VETiS (2)	171	20.2
<b>VET FEE HELP</b> - Current Govt Policy (1) - Duration (0) - Employer Behaviour (0) - Enrolment/ Refund (153) - Fees (6) - Incentives (0) - No Tg/Emp Provided (0) - Not Specified (0) - Other Stakeholder Behaviour (2) - Quality (12) - Recruit/ Market/ Assess (1) - RTO Behaviour (54) - SATs (0) - VETiS (0)	229	27.0
<b>RTO Matter (including Fee for Service)</b> - Current Govt Policy (3) - Duration (2) - Employer Behaviour (0) - Enrolment/ Refund (148) - Fees (17) - Incentives (0) - No Tg/Emp Provided (2) - Not Specified (0) - Other Stakeholder Behaviour (1) - Quality (3) - Recruit/ Market/ Assess (3) - RTO Behaviour (103) - SATs (0) - VETiS (0)	282	33.3

Issue	Number	Percentage
<i>Other</i>		
- Current Govt Policy (12)		
- Duration (0)		
- Employer Behaviour (3)		
- Enrolment/ Refund (16)		
- Fees (1)		
- Incentives (0)		
- No Tg/Emp Provided (0)	70	8.3
- Not Specified (4)		
- Other Stakeholder Behaviour (22)		
- Quality (1)		
- Recruit/ Market/ Assess (3)		
- RTO Behaviour (7)		
- SATs (0)		
- VETiS (1)		
<b>Total</b>	<b>847</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### 3.4 Complaints by Location

14 September 2015 to 31 March 2018



## 4 Complaint Outcomes

14 September 2015 to 31 March 2018

### Complaint Decisions

Decisions	Number	% of completed complaints
Completed - complainant outcome achieved	634	80.4
Completed – complainant outcome not achieved	134	17.0
Completed – no further action and formally withdrawn	21	2.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>789</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Complaint Refused	17	
<b>Total Completed</b>	<b>806</b>	

As at 31 March 2018, 789 complaints have been completed and finalised. 634 (80.4%) achieved the complainant's desired outcome, including 113 cases of fee refund or waivers which totalled approximately \$471,760.

134 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.

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

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

As at 31 March 2018, 41 complaints are still under investigation.

### 4.1 Formal Referrals to Other Agencies

14 September 2015 to 31 March 2018

Referrals	Number
ASQA	3
Commonwealth DET	1
DESBT	1
Queensland DET	32
Fair Work Ombudsman	1
Office of Industrial Relations	4
VET Student Loans Ombudsman	30
Workplace Health and Safety	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>

While there have been 73 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 OQTO 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 Timeframes to Close Complaints

### 14 September 2015 to 31 March 2018

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
460	387	847
54%	46%	100%

## 5 Enquiry Outcomes

170 enquiries have been received by OQTO between 14 September 2015 to 31 March 2018 and 170 of these have been satisfactorily answered.