



EMBARGOED UNTIL 11AM WEDNESDAY 23 OCTOBER (AEDT)

CONSUMER COMPLAINTS TO TELCO OMBUDSMAN AT A FIVE-YEAR LOW

Consumer complaints to the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (TIO) reached a five-year low in 2012-13, according to the TIO annual report released today.

The TIO received 158,652 new complaints about landline, mobile and internet issues in the 2012-13 financial year – an 18.1 decrease on the previous year.

There was a 25.6 decrease in the number of complaints received about mobile phones – or more than 31,000 fewer complaints. Mobile phone complaints accounted for 57 per cent of new TIO complaints.

Landline complaints decreased 9.3 per cent to 33,940, while internet complaints increased marginally (1.9 per cent) to 31,431. Billing and payment issues, customer service complaints and overall fault concerns all reduced in 2012-13.

“This is the second successive year we have seen telco complaints decrease, and complaints to the TIO are at their lowest since 2008-09,” Ombudsman Simon Cohen said. “A clear commitment from telcos to do better by their customers, an improved industry code and a focus on compliance are paying dividends.”

The decrease in complaints was also recorded despite a 58 per cent increase in consumer awareness of the TIO. Aided awareness of the Ombudsman’s office had increased from 36 per cent in 2008 to 57 per cent in 2012.

In a note of caution, the Ombudsman reported that more than half of the complaints made to the TIO in 2012-13 included customer service issues, and the vast majority of these were resolved quickly by referral to senior complaints handlers within service providers.

“The high number of simple complaints resolved by TIO referral demonstrates ongoing opportunities for telcos to improve how they deal with customer complaints,” said Mr Cohen.

Coverage-related concerns – about reduced or no reception, poor voice quality and dropped calls – remained the main reasons consumers complained about their mobile services. In 2012-13, 25,770 consumers made a complaint about these issues, a 13.5 per cent decrease when compared to 2011-12. Coverage was an issue in 28.2 per cent of new complaints about mobile services.

Against the overall trend of reduced disputes, extreme weather events contributed to more complaints about:

- internet faults, up 18.3 per cent to 18,963
- landline faults, 19.1 per cent to 9,553
- delays in new internet connections, up 58 per cent to 4,710 and
- delays in new landline connections, up 40 per cent to 3,743.



Complaints by state

State	Total complaints	Complaints per 1,000 residents
Vic	41,542	7.8
SA	11,861	7.4
NSW	49,238	7.1
ACT	2,278	6.4
Qld	26,116	6
WA	11,517	5.1
Tas	2,146	4.3
NT	770	3.6
National rate of complaints per 1,000 residents		6.8

Top 10 complaints postcodes in Australia

Postcode	Total complaints	Complaints per 1,000	Top issue
2150 Parramatta	520	21	Mobile coverage
3000 Melbourne	430	20.8	Mobile coverage
2000 Sydney	390	17.1	Mobile coverage
3754 Doreen	283	15.9	Mobile coverage
2015 Alexandria	131	15.5	Mobile coverage
2190 Greenacre	377	15.3	Mobile coverage
2205 Gosford	183	14.2	Mobile coverage
2161 Guilford	402	14.2	Mobile coverage
3029 Hoppers Crossing	900	13.2	Mobile coverage
2200 Bankstown	533	13.1	Mobile coverage

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