



EMBARGOED UNTIL 11AM AEDT MONDAY 29 OCTOBER

South Australians take almost 16,000 complaints to telco Ombudsman

South Australians made among the highest number of telco complaints per capita of any Australian state or territory, the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (TIO) Annual Report reports today.

The Ombudsman received 15,936 new complaints from South Australians, or 9.9 complaints per 1,000 people. Only Victorians made more complaints at 10.6 per 1,000 residents.

Across Australia, the TIO received a total of 193,702 new complaints in 2011-12, a decrease of two per cent on the previous year. Ombudsman Simon Cohen reported positive signs of improvement in the telco industry late in the 2011-12 financial year. "There has been a significant trend, since April 2012, of reduced complaints, with the last quarter being our quietest for almost two years," Mr Cohen said. "This is a positive sign that reflects the focus by a number of telcos on improving their customer service."

Against this overall result, complaints about mobile phones increased nationally by 9.3 per cent in 2011-12, with 122,834 new complaints about mobiles to the TIO last year, an increase from 112,376 the previous year.

Mr Cohen said two out of three complaints made to the TIO were about mobile phones, reflecting the rising use of smartphones. Poor coverage, billing disputes and the quality of information given to consumers at the point of sale were common issues among South Australians. Mr Cohen said the complaints made by South Australians reflected those made by consumers across Australia.

The biggest increases in mobile issues across Australia were:

- financial overcommitment due to inadequate spend management tools (15,752 issues – double the number of the previous year)
- disputes over the total amount of a bill (13,943 issues – 33 per cent increase)
- disputed internet usage charges (10,556 issues – 150 per cent increase)
- disputed roaming charges (4,186 issues – 69 per cent increase).

"Complaints about mobile phone services continue to rise and it's very concerning that so many consumers who contact the TIO face unexpectedly high bills," Mr Cohen said.

Residents in Adelaide City (postcode 5,000) made the third highest number of complaints per capita of any Australian city/suburb with 21.9 complaints per 1,000 residents.

<p>Media invitation: Ombudsman Simon Cohen will launch the TIO's Annual Report, <i>Preparing for the Future</i>. Monday 29 October 2012 10am for 10.15am level 3, 595 Collins Street, Melbourne</p>	<p>Please confirm your attendance on (03) 8600 8701</p> <p>The media launch will be webcast live. To register for the webcast, go to http://viostre.am/TIO/2012</p> <p>The annual report: www.tio.com.au/annualreport</p>
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Contact: TIO's Communications Manager, Mirjana Jovetic, on (03) 8600 8378 or 0428 023 536.



Top Ten complaint postcodes in South Australia

The issues most commonly raised by South Australians residents were about poor customer service, for example incorrect/inadequate advice, and about service providers not actioning their undertakings once the consumers had made a complaint. Underlying these were the issues in the table below.

Postcode	Location(s)	Complaints per 1,000 pop	Top complaint issues
5000	Adelaide City	21.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Point of sale advice Unexpectedly high bill/adequacy of spend management tools
5007	Hindmarsh and surrounds	18.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Point of sale advice Coverage
5115	Munno Para and surrounds	17.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coverage
5031	Mile End and surrounds	14.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coverage Disputed usage charges, total bill
5110	Bolivar and surrounds	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coverage
5114	Blakeview and surrounds	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coverage
5067	Norwood and surrounds	13.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coverage Point of sale advice
5096	Para Hills and surrounds	12.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coverage Disputed usage charges, total bill
5039	Melrose Park	12.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coverage Disputed usage charges, total bill
5019	Semaphore and surrounds	12.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coverage Disputed usage charges, total bill

Complaints by state			Top 10 complaint postcodes in Australia		
State	Complaints	Complaints (per 1,000 pop)	Postcode	Location(s)	Complaints (per 1,000 pop)
VIC	56,785	10.6	3000	Melbourne City	24.4
SA	15,936	9.9	3008	Docklands	22.2
ACT	3,202	8.9	5000	Adelaide City	21.9
NSW	60,398	8.7	2150	Parramatta	21.5
QLD	34,077	7.8	2000	Sydney City	20
WA	15,832	7	2015	Alexandria	19.6
TAS	2,833	5.8	2045	Haberfield	19.4
NT	1,169	5.5	3754	Doreen	19.2
			3182	St Kilda	19.1
			3061	Campbellfield	18.8

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