



EMBARGOED UNTIL 11AM AEDT MONDAY 29 OCTOBER

West Australians take almost 16,000 telco complaints to Ombudsman

West Australians took 15,832 complaints about telephone and internet services to the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (TIO) in 2011-12, according to the TIO's annual report released today.

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 about 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.

Poor coverage, disputes about the total amount of bills and the quality of information given to consumers at the point of sale were common among WA residents who made complaints to the TIO last year. Mr Cohen said the complaints made in WA reflected those made by consumers across Australia.

Mr Cohen said two out of three of all 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.

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.

Perth City residents made more telco complaints per capita than any other suburb in Western Australia last year with 18.7 complaints per 1,000 people. This was followed by Butler with 11.9 complaints per 1,000 residents, Baldivis (10.5) and The Vines and surrounds (10).

<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: Mirjana Jovetic, Communications Manager, on (03) 8600 8378 or 0428 023 536.



Top 10 complaint postcodes in Western Australia

The issues most commonly raised by Western Australian 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.

Postcodes	Location(s)	Complaints per 1,000 pop*	Top complaint issues
6000	Perth City	18.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unexpectedly high bill/adequacy of spend management tools • Disputed usage charges, total bill
6036	Butler	11.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coverage • Point of sale advice, product and terms
6171	Baldivis	10.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coverage • Disputed usage charges, internet usage charges
6069	The Vines and surrounds	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coverage • Disputed usage charges, total bill
6053	Bayswater	9.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coverage • Point of sale advice, product and terms
6101	East Victoria Park	9.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coverage • Disputed usage charges, internet usage charges
6061	Mirrabooka and surrounds	9.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coverage • Disputed usage charges, total bill
6051	Maylands	9.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disputed usage charges, total bill • Unexpectedly high bill/adequacy of spend management tools
6065	Wanneroo and surrounds	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coverage • Unexpectedly high bill/adequacy of spend management tools
6030	Clarkson and surrounds	8.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coverage • Unexpectedly high bill/adequacy of spend management tools

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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