



**EMBARGOED UNTIL 11AM AEDT MONDAY 29 OCTOBER**

### **Territorians make less telco complaints than rest of Australia**

Consumers in the Northern Territory made the least number of complaints about telephone and internet services per capita last year than any other state or territory, according to the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (TIO) annual report released today.

Territorians made 5.5 complaints per 1,000 residents compared to Victoria, which topped the complaints list, with 10.6 complaints per 1,000 residents. Territorians took 1,169 complaints to the TIO in 2011-12.

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 Northern Territory residents who made complaints to the TIO last year. Mr Cohen said the complaints made in NT 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.

<p><b>Media invitation:</b> <b>Ombudsman Simon Cohen will launch the TIO's Annual Report, <i>Preparing for the Future</i>.</b> <b>Monday 22 October 2012</b> <b>10am for 10.15am</b> <b>level 3, 595 Collins Street, Melbourne</b></p>	<p><b>Please confirm your attendance on (03) 8600 8701</b></p> <p><b>The media launch will be webcast live. To register for the webcast, go to <a href="http://viostre.am/TIO/2012">http://viostre.am/TIO/2012</a></b></p> <p>The annual report: <a href="http://www.tio.com.au/annualreport">www.tio.com.au/annualreport</a></p>
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**Contact: Mirjana Jovetic, Communications Manager, on (03) 8600 8378 or 0428 023 536.**



## Top complaint postcodes in NT

The issues most commonly raised by Territorians 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.

NT	Location(s)	Complaints per 1,000 pop	Top complaint issues
0830	Palmerston and surrounds	8.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coverage</li> </ul>
0820	Stuart Park and surrounds	6.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coverage</li> <li>Disputed usage charges, total bill</li> </ul>
0810	Coconut Grove and surrounds	6.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disputed usage charges, total bill</li> <li>Point of sale advice</li> </ul>
0870	Alice Springs and surrounds	5.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disputed usage charges, total bill</li> <li>Unexpectedly high bill/adequacy of spend management tools</li> </ul>

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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