

## The **connect.resolve** campaign

### Objectives

**The Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman is committed to working with the telecommunications industry to address a continuing high level of complaints about poor customer service and complaint handling practices in the industry.**

A well-functioning industry relies on customers being able to contact their service providers to obtain assistance and advice about the service or product they have purchased. This process depends on service providers having accessible and effective customer service and internal complaint handling mechanisms.

Over the past three years, statistics collected and analysed by the TIO show consistently high volumes of complaints about poor customer service and inadequate complaint handling practices within the telecommunications industry.

Customer complaints often involve basic matters. They can be about having to wait for a long time to speak with company representatives or getting the run-around between departments. Or they can be about providers not actioning straightforward requests, for example to change an address or cancel a service. Increasing complaints about such experiences from consumers indicate a real need for improvement in the fundamental areas of customer service and complaint handling.

The **connect.resolve** campaign signals the start of a collaborative approach to addressing customers' concerns about their customer service experiences. **connect.resolve** has the support of the Federal Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, Senator Stephen Conroy, who will launch the campaign in November 2008.

**connect.resolve** will run until June 2009. The objectives of the campaign are:

1. To create awareness of increases in complaints about customer service and complaint handling.
2. To encourage the telecommunications industry to focus on improving its customer service and complaint handling processes and systems as a priority.
3. To promote a collaborative response from all stakeholders – the TIO's member organisations, industry groups, consumer groups, the regulators and the TIO – which leads to:
  - an improvement in customer service and complaint handling, and
  - a sustainable decrease in the rate of growth of complaints about customer service and complaint handling, and in the number of such complaints, to the TIO.

## Our contribution

During the campaign, we will:

- examine trends in customer service and complaint handling complaints and produce a concise analysis of such complaints
- work with service providers and industry to encourage the development of initiatives to address these trends
- produce guidelines for improving customer service and complaint handling, and
- provide feedback on progress to our largest member organisations via monthly trend analysis including the following key information:
  - numbers of complaints and complaint issues
  - numbers of customer service and complaint handling complaint issues, and
  - a breakdown of the main drivers for these issues.

At the end of the campaign, we will publish our analysis of TIO complaint statistics recorded for our largest member organisations and the industry over the duration of the campaign. This report will present the outcomes of the campaign, measured against the objectives set out above.

## Outcomes

Our goal in the short term is to see a decrease in the rate of growth and in the number of complaints about customer service and complaint handling in the telecommunications industry.

Over the medium to longer term, we hope to see a reduction in the number of complaints in other categories recorded by the TIO.

Our ultimate vision is to see all service providers **connect** with their customers and **resolve** their concerns fairly and efficiently.