



Wednesday, 4 May 2005

## **TIO calls on industry to improve telemarketing call practices**

Repeated telemarketing calls from the same telecommunications companies are becoming a more frequent source of complaint to the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman.

“Some consumers have claimed that they have had as many as 10 calls in a period of two weeks,” said Ombudsman John Pinnock.

“Either some telecommunications companies are not properly flagging their telemarketing systems when consumers indicate they are not interested, or they are calling back repeatedly thinking it will win them new business,” Mr Pinnock said.

“Such practices may well fit the criteria of nuisance or unwelcome calls.”

The TIO cannot investigate the general practice of telemarketing. However, it can investigate complaints where telemarketing calls might be considered “unwelcome calls.”

“The TIO expects providers to have policies for the handling of unwelcome or nuisance calls. If consumers have asked a telemarketer to stop calling but they do not desist, it is the TIO’s view that telephone companies should handle these complaints as they would any other sort of unwelcome call complaint.”

The TIO is also concerned that some telecommunications companies do not have proper processes in place to ensure that consumers’ details are removed from telemarketing lists on request.

“Some consumers have said they have repeatedly requested that their details be removed from telemarketing lists, but continue to receive telemarketing calls from these same companies,” Mr Pinnock said.

“Failure to action such a request is certainly not consistent with privacy legislation. Phone companies and their agents need to ensure that they have adequate processes in place to ensure that consumers are protected from repeated or intrusive telemarketing calls.

“The TIO does not discourage telecommunications companies from telemarketing, but it believes that it is important that the reputation of the industry may be tainted by a less than professional approach by some providers. This is particularly important given the growing complexity of the industry and its products.”

*"providing independent, just, informal, speedy resolution of complaints."*

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The TIO can investigate the conduct of telemarketers of mobile, phone and internet services where a consumer has taken steps to resolve the matter with the provider concerned and where the provider is a member of the TIO.

Consumers may wish to register their details on the Australian Direct Marketing Association's Do Not Call Service. This is a **FREE** consumer service of the 500-members of the Australian Direct Marketing Association.

The TIO is a free and independent alternative dispute resolution scheme for small business and residential consumers in Australia who have a complaint about their telephone or internet service.

For more information, please call Phillip Money on **(03) 8600 8738** or **0403 601 532**

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