



Wednesday 1 July 2009

Ombudsman welcomes measures to protect mobile premium service consumers

Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman Deirdre O'Donnell has welcomed the *Mobile Premium Services Code*, which takes effect from today (Wednesday 1 July).

The code was developed by the telecommunications industry and was registered by the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) in May. It is part of a package of measures taken by ACMA to protect the consumers of mobile premium services.

Mobile premium services, such as ring tones, music, games, competitions, sports scores and horoscopes, are delivered to a mobile phone for a higher cost than regular short message services (SMS).

'The new code addresses one of the key concerns about mobile premium services – the fact that many consumers claim that they did not knowingly subscribe to a service,' Ms O'Donnell said.

'A fundamental principle of any fair transaction between a customer and a service provider is for the consumer to understand the nature of the contract they have entered.

'Under the new code, consumers will need to give two independent confirmations of a request – “a double opt-in” - before they can subscribe to an ongoing premium SMS service.

'It also outlines strict rules about how advertisements and charges are displayed and by July next year – under the measures outlined by ACMA - all providers must allow consumers to bar access to these services.'

Ms O'Donnell commended the telecommunications service providers who had already embraced measures outlined by ACMA, including the double opt-in requirement and the barring of premium SMS services.

The TIO received 3 960 complaints about mobile premium services in the March quarter, a slight increase on the 3 789 complaints received in the December quarter, but a significant drop from the 5 125 received in the June 2008 quarter.

more follows

“providing independent, just, informal and speedy resolution of complaints”

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In the March quarter, overall complaints to the TIO rose to 63 889 from 55 518 in the December quarter.

A complete breakdown of the TIO March quarter complaint statistics is provided in the winter edition of *TIO Talks*, which is available on request or at www.tio.com.au/publications.

For further information, please call TIO Public Affairs on **03 8600 8738** or **0403 601 532**.

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