

Glossary

3G mobile networks

Designed to provide both voice and data services to end-users, 3G mobile networks differ from **GSM** and **CDMA** networks operating in Australia in that they provide higher bandwidth data services, allowing customers access to a new range of content and applications.

These 3G networks can provide access to data and the internet through:

- a mobile handset
- a mobile handset functioning as a modem for a laptop or personal computer (plugged in to the laptop or PC)
- a data card that is inserted into a laptop or PC.

See also **Next G**.

ACCC

Australian Competition and Consumer Commission. Commonwealth regulatory authority with responsibilities under the *Trade Practices Act 1974* (Cwlth), including responsibility for regulation of competition in the communications industry.

ACMA

Australian Communications and Media Authority. The authority responsible for the regulation of broadcasting, radiocommunications, telecommunications and online content (www.acma.gov.au).

alternative dispute resolution (ADR)

Any means of settling disputes outside of the courtroom. The TIO is an ADR body.

ADSL

Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line. A type of xDSL service, ADSL is technology that allows for internet and voice to be used simultaneously via an ordinary phone line (a copper pair).

ADSL2

ADSL2 increases data rates available through ADSL as well as extending the reach from the exchange to the subscriber. It is theoretically capable of providing maximum data rates of 12 Mbit/s downstream and 3.5 Mbit/s upstream.

ADSL2+

Extended-bandwidth ADSL2. The technology provides three times better performance than traditional ADSL technology. ADSL2+ services are theoretically capable of download speeds up to 24 Mbit/s.

AMTA

Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association. The national body representing the mobile telecommunications industry in Australia.

Board

The TIO **scheme**, a company limited by guarantee, is accountable to its Board of directors. The Board has corporate governance responsibilities, including risk management, financial management of the scheme, strategic affairs, budgeting and ensuring compliance with the TIO's *Memorandum and Articles of Association* and its *Constitution*.

broadband

A term encompassing high-speed connections such as cable, **ADSL** and satellite. For broadband services, internet access is not time-based as it is an "always on" connection, the exception being the uplink for satellite.

carrier

An organisation that holds a carrier licence as defined by the *Telecommunications Act 1997* (Cwth). In very general terms, a carrier provides the physical infrastructure used to supply carriage services to the public.

CDMA

Code Division Multiple Access. A type of digital mobile service that differs from GSM digital. CDMA replaced the analogue service.

churn

The process of transferring customer accounts between service providers.

CND

Calling number display. A service that allows a caller's number to be viewed by the person receiving the call.

codes

Performance standards set by the Communications Alliance (formerly ACIF) and the telecommunications industry. While compliance with codes is voluntary, once a company is a signatory to a code it is bound by the standards set in that code. ACMA has the power to direct a provider to comply with a registered code even if the company is not a signatory to the code. The TIO gathers data on code compliance for the Communications Alliance and **ACMA**. Codes are listed at <http://commsalliance.com.au/documents/codes>

complaint

An expression (to the TIO) of dissatisfaction or grievance with a telecommunications service or product.

complaint levels

A system for classifying **complaints** (to the TIO) based on complexity or severity. Level 1 complaints are the simplest, Levels 3 and 4 the most complex.

Constitution

The TIO Constitution outlines the roles, responsibilities and powers of the Board, Council and members and the Ombudsman. The Constitution may be changed with the approval of the TIO Council and Board after consultation with the federal ministers responsible for communications and consumer affairs.

Council

The TIO Council is comprised of an independent chairman and an equal number of representatives from TIO members and consumer interest groups. Council provides advice to the Ombudsman on policy and procedural matters and ensures that **complaint** handling procedures are effective.

Customer Service Guarantee (CSG)

A set of performance requirements placed by *ACMA* on providers of the standard telephone service. The CSG sets time limits and other standards for rectification of faults, connections and appointments. It entitles customers to a set scale of compensation payments if the standards are not met.

CSP

Carriage service provider. A person supplying or proposing to supply certain carriage services, including a commercial entity acquiring telecommunications capacity or services from a carrier for resale to a third party. Internet and pay TV service providers are CSPs as defined by the *Telecommunications Act 1997* (Cwlth).

Department of Communications Information Technology and the Arts (DCITA)

DCITA provides strategic advice to the Federal Government on the development of policies and programs for enhancing Australia's cultural, communications and information technology sectors and to ensure the efficient and effective implementation of department programs (www.dcita.gov.au).

determination/direction

Where a complaint to the TIO cannot be conciliated so that a fair and reasonable outcome is achieved, the TIO may make a "determination" or give a "direction". Decisions involving amounts up to \$10,000 are legally binding on members. Where the amount involved is greater than \$10,000, the TIO can issue a "recommendation" up to a maximum of \$50,000.

Department of Industry Science and Tourism benchmarks

In 1997 the Department of Industry Science and Tourism produced benchmarks for industry-based customer dispute resolution schemes. These benchmarks were developed in consultation with industry dispute resolution schemes, consumer organisations, government and regulators. The purpose of the benchmarks was to guide industry in developing and improving industry *ADR* schemes. They were developed to apply primarily to nationally based schemes set up under the auspices of an industry. Most industry *ADR* schemes operate in accordance with the Benchmarks for Industry-Based Customer Dispute Resolution Schemes. This benchmark sets out key *ADR* practices within the principles of accessibility, independence, fairness, accountability, efficiency and effectiveness.

DSLAM

Digital subscriber line access multiplexer. A DSLAM is a piece of infrastructure at the exchange that allows for ADSL and a standard phone service to be provided on the same line.

dumping

The process by which, as a result of clicking on a link or downloading certain software from a website, an internet user's modem is disconnected from the local ISP without their knowledge and directly connected to an international or premium-rate number.

enquiry officer

TIO staff member who handles Level 1 *complaints*, both written and oral.

GSM

Global system for mobiles. A digital mobile phone system.

investigation officer

TIO staff member who handles written and oral enquires and Level 1 *complaints* in addition to investigating and resolving higher level complaints.

ISP

Internet service provider. A company that provides internet access services to the public. All ISPs are required to be members of the TIO. ISPs represent by far the largest group of TIO members.

issue

The matter about which a complainant has contacted the TIO. A single *complaint* may involve several issues. While the TIO charges its members by number of complaints, it reports on the basis of number of issues raised. The TIO groups similar issues into categories such as billing, faults and privacy.

member

A telecommunications service provider that is a member of the TIO *scheme*. The *Telecommunications Act 1997* (Cwlth) requires all carriers and eligible carriage service providers to be members of the TIO.

Memorandum and Articles of Association

Document outlining the rules and principles governing the TIO and its members. It is broader and more comprehensive than the *Constitution*, and covers areas such as administration and funding. This document may be amended with the approval of two-thirds of TIO members in attendance at an annual general meeting.

MNP

Mobile number portability. Introduced in Australia on 25 September 2001, MNP allows mobile customers to keep their existing mobile telephone number when they change service providers.

Next G

Telstra operates two separate *3G* mobile networks: the network it owns jointly with Hutchison and its Next G network. Telstra launched its Next G network in October 2006. The network initially provided coverage to 98 per cent of the Australian population, and Telstra claims that coverage now encompasses 1.9 million square kilometres, reaching 98.8 per cent of the population. In April 2007, Telstra claimed that its Next G network was capable of providing network speeds of up to 14.4 Mbit/s in the downlink and 1.9 Mbit/s in the uplink. Telstra is not currently offering wholesale services to other *CSPs* over the Next G network.

pair gain

Digital technology that allows a single phone line to be split into two or more lines at the exchange. Also known as "RIM" technology.

porting

The process by which a customer's telephone number is transferred to another carrier's network.

resolution

The fair and reasonable settlement of a **complaint** between a customer and a provider with the assistance of the TIO.

roaming (global)

Using a mobile phone on another network for a short period while still being billed by the original provider. The mobile phone number remains the same while roaming. When you are roaming on another network the temporary mobile phone company will bill your usual mobile phone company for calls you make while roaming on their network.

scheme (TIO)

The TIO scheme is a company limited by guarantee and is accountable to its Board of directors.

SFOA

Standard Form of Agreement. A document setting out the terms and conditions of the supply of telecommunications goods and/or services where an individual contract has not been agreed between the customer and the **CSP**.

spam

Unsolicited marketing e-mail and SMS messages to mobile phones.

standard telephone service (STS)

A telephone service providing two-way voice communication for local, long-distance and international calls, commonly provided by landline but in certain circumstances provided by a mobile or satellite service.

universal service obligation (USO)

The obligation placed on universal service providers to ensure that **standard telephone services**, payphones and prescribed carriage services are reasonably accessible to all people in Australia on an equitable basis, wherever they reside or carry on business. No carriage services have been prescribed to date. Telstra is currently the sole universal service provider, but additional universal service providers may be declared in the future. As the universal service provider, Telstra is obliged to have a policy statement and marketing plan approved by **ACMA**. The policy statement and marketing plan outline how Telstra intends to fulfil its obligations as universal service provider, including fulfilling its obligations to people with a disability, people with special needs and eligible priority customers.

How to make a complaint

Before lodging a complaint with the TIO you should:

- try to solve the problem with your telephone company or Internet service provider
- try to get the name of the person you spoke to at the company
- gather any papers relevant to the complaint, such as contracts, bills or copies of correspondence (please do not send original documents to the TIO).

The TIO recommends that complainants:

- pay any undisputed portions of bills
- keep copies of any payment transactions relating to the complaint
- be prepared to write to the TIO with details of the complaint.

Achieving a resolution to a complaint may require compromise on one or both sides of the argument. However, a resolution found this way is almost always less expensive and speedier than one found in the courts. Complainants may take their dispute to court if they are not satisfied with the outcome reached by the TIO.

Bankers

Commonwealth Bank of Australia

Solicitors

Corrs Chambers Westgarth

Auditors

RSM Bird Cameron



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