



 **Telecommunications**
Industry Ombudsman

Understanding Phone and Internet Issues in Australia



Introduction

The Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman undertook a comprehensive survey of Australians in each state and territory to understand their experience of their phone and internet services.

The aim of the survey was to support the complaint data received by the Telecommunication Industry Ombudsman.

Additionally, the survey offered the opportunity to widen understanding of the issues experienced by residential consumers and small businesses in receiving phone and internet services, and the challenges telecommunications providers experience in delivering services.

The survey was the most comprehensive undertaken by the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman. Nearly 3000 Australians across all demographic groups were surveyed.

Groups were classed as residential consumers or small businesses because the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman has jurisdiction to manage complaints about phone and internet providers for these groups.

Survey respondents were asked how many phone or internet issues they have experienced, and what problems these issues involved. Respondents were also asked about their experience of the management of their complaints.

Methodology

Format

Platform Online

Duration 15 minutes

Fieldwork dates 18-31 October 2017

Independent research agency

Kantar TNS

Sample

Target Residential consumers (general public), including culturally or linguistically diverse consumers (CALD)

Small businesses with fewer than 20 employees

Location National

Gender Male and female

Age 16-80

Key findings

1

One in two Australians had experienced an issue with their phone or internet service in the last 12 months.

2

21 per cent of residential consumers had more than one phone or internet issue over the last year.

3

Almost 60 per cent of small businesses identified a phone or internet issue affecting their business.

4

More than half of Australians who reported an issue considered their phone or internet service problem as serious or very serious.

5

One in four phone or internet issues experienced by residential consumers were not resolved after four months.

6

Consumers want to deal with a trustworthy and competent organisation to resolve their complaint.

Who answered the survey?*



Sample

Residential consumers (including culturally and linguistically diverse consumers n=456)	n=2215
Small businesses fewer than 20 employees	n=504
Total	n=2719



Gender

Male	49%
Female	51%



Age

16-30	27%
31-40	18%
41-50	18%
51-60	17%
61-80	21%



Location

NSW + ACT	34%
VIC + TAS	28%
QLD	20%
SA	7%
WA	11%
NT	1%
Metro	67%
Regional	32%



Culturally and linguistically diverse

CALD consumer	20%
Including speak another language than English	13%
Including have lived in Australia for less than 20 years	14%

*Quotas and weighting are based on ABS data:

- Consumers: 2016 Census (tables: AGEP, SEXP, GCCSA (UR), INCP Total Personal Income)
- Small and Medium Businesses: 8165.0 Counts of Australian Businesses, including Entries and Exits, Jun 2012 to Jun 2016

Residential consumers - phone and internet issues

Summary



One in two Australians had phone and internet issues in the past year.

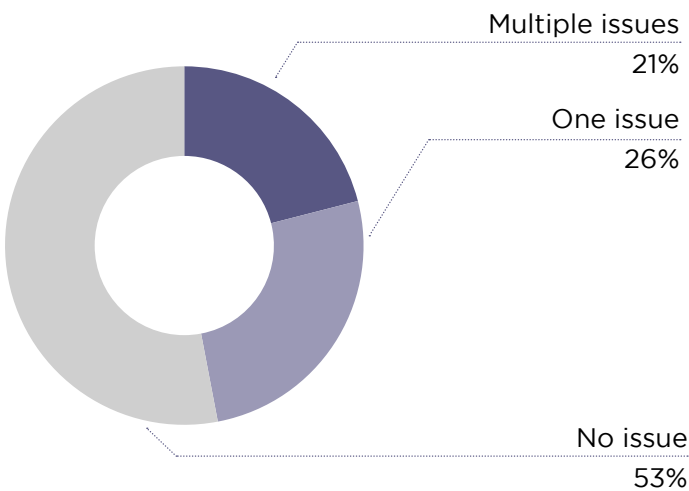


21% of residential consumers had more than one phone or internet issue over the last year.

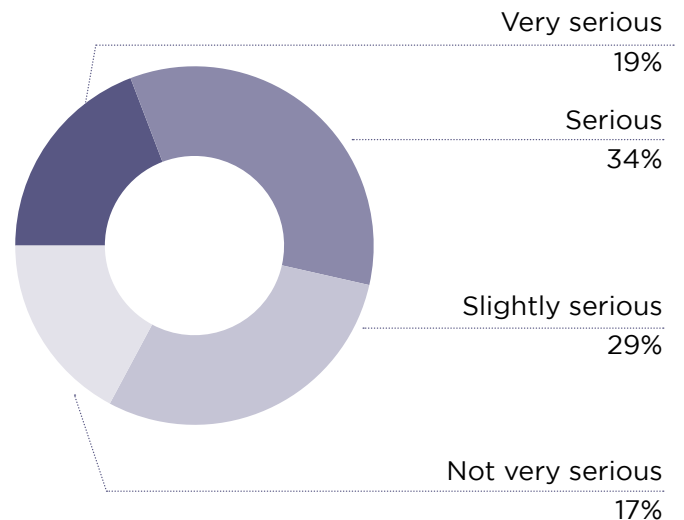


More than half of Australians who reported an issue considered their phone or internet service problem as serious or very serious.

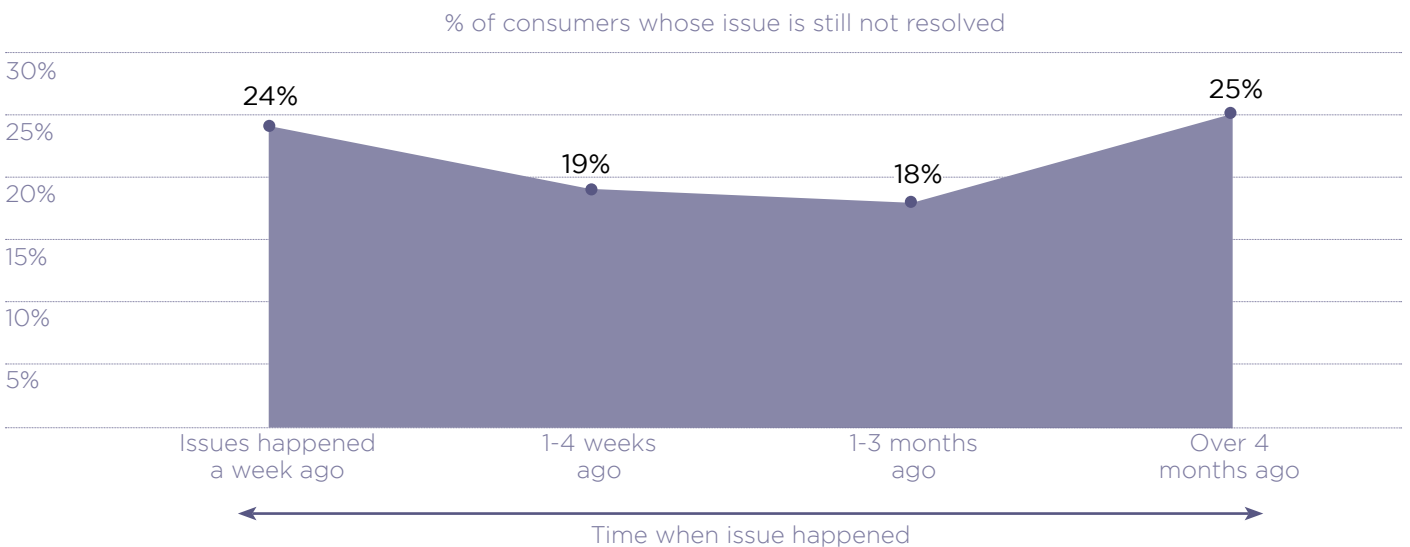
Phone or internet issues experienced in the last 12 months

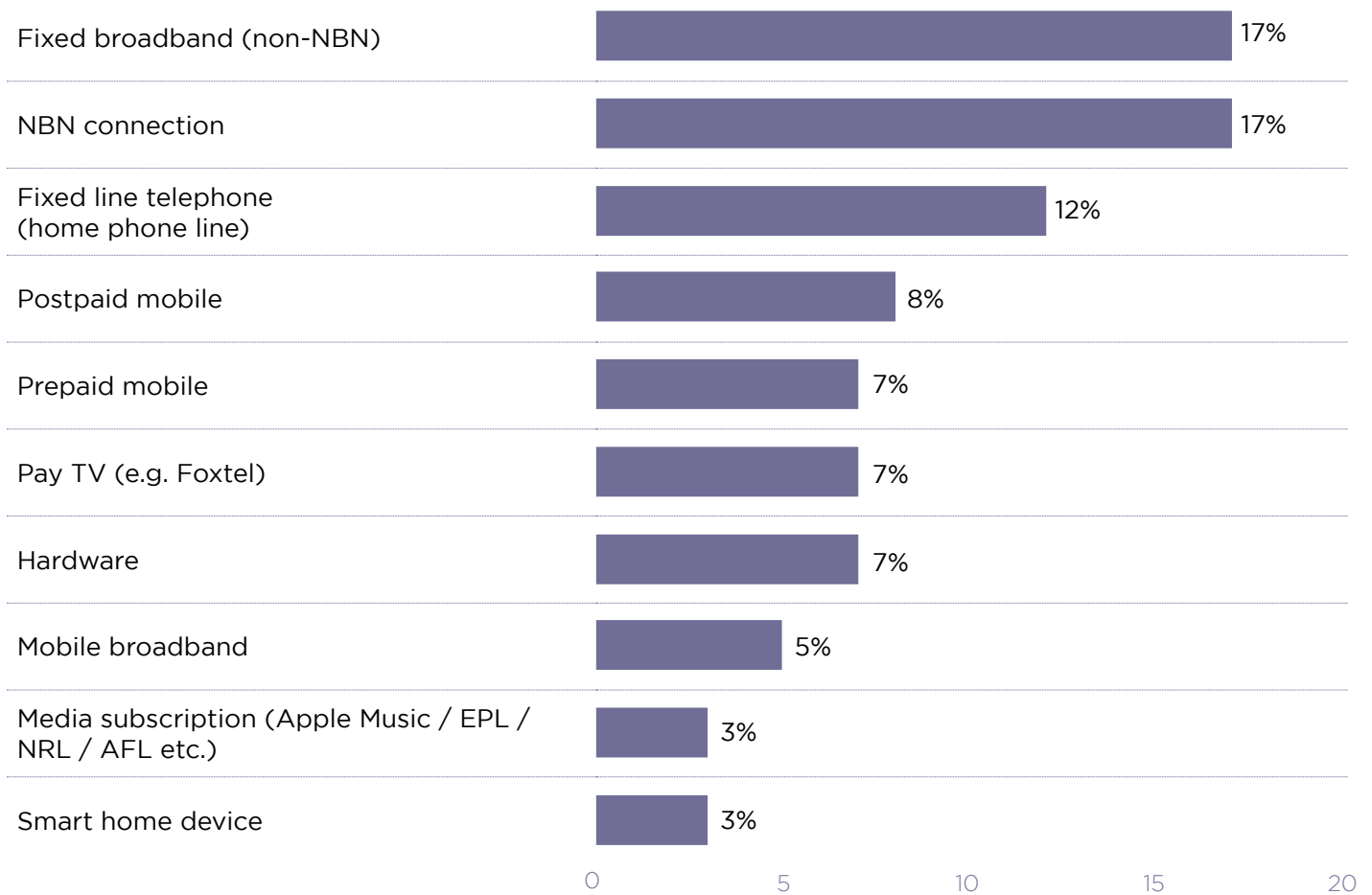
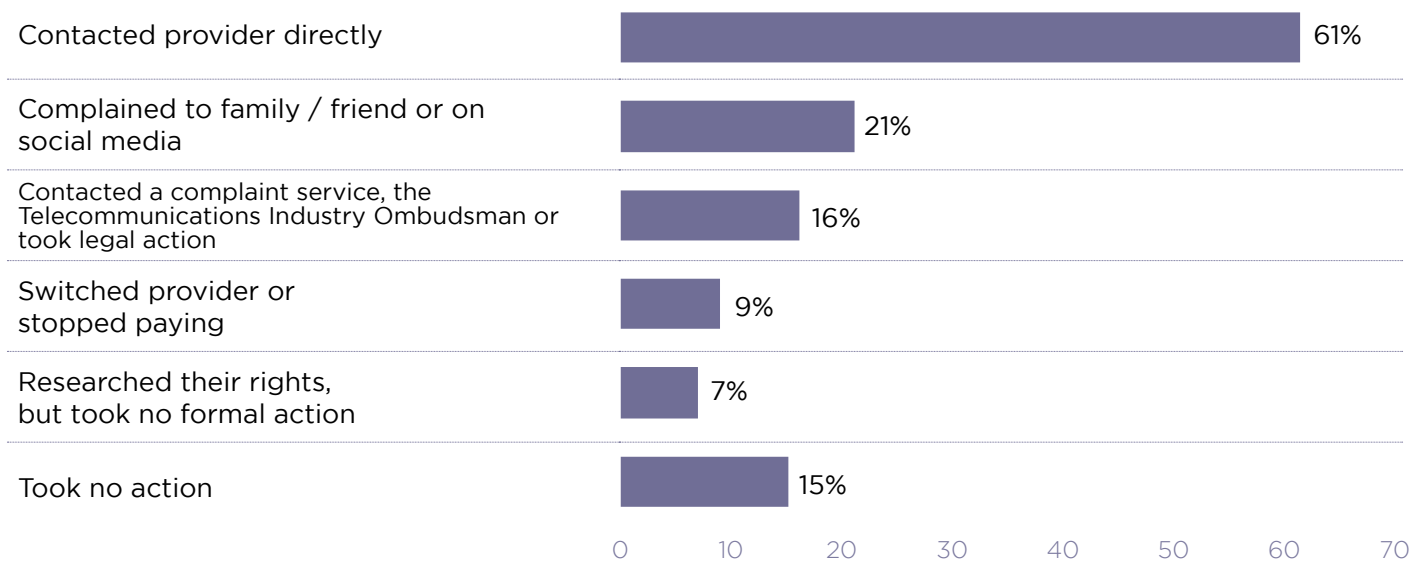


The severity of issues experienced



How long it takes for residential consumers to resolve issues with their phone or internet services



Type of issues experienced most often***How residential consumers addressed their phone or internet issue***

Small businesses are more likely than consumers to contact their phone or internet service provider directly (79%). Culturally and linguistically diverse communities are less likely to complain to a family member or friend, or complain on social media (11%). Small businesses are less likely to switch provider or stop paying (4%), or take no action (9%) than residential consumers.

*Respondents could select more than one answer.

Most important quality when contacting an organisation to resolve a phone or internet issue*

Small business - phone and internet issues

Summary



59%
of small businesses had phone or internet issues in the past year.

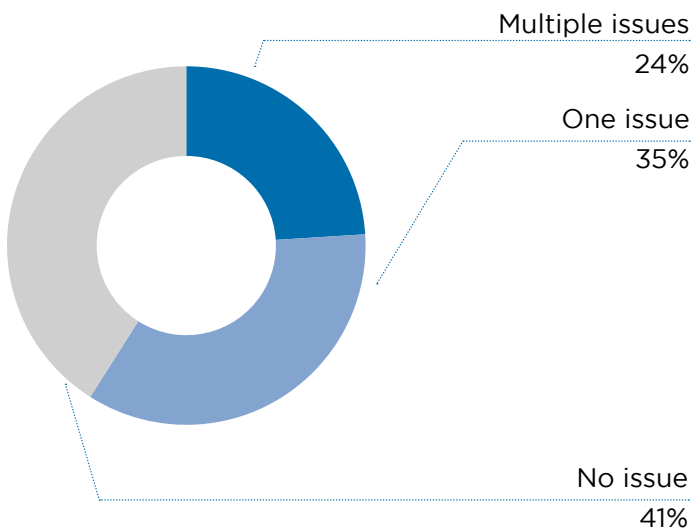


24%
of small businesses had more than one phone or internet issue in the past year.

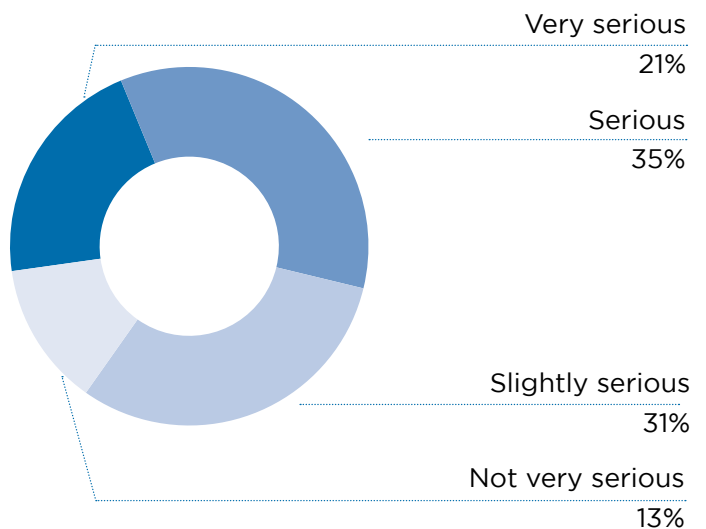


56%
of small businesses who reported an issue considered their phone or internet service problem as serious or very serious.

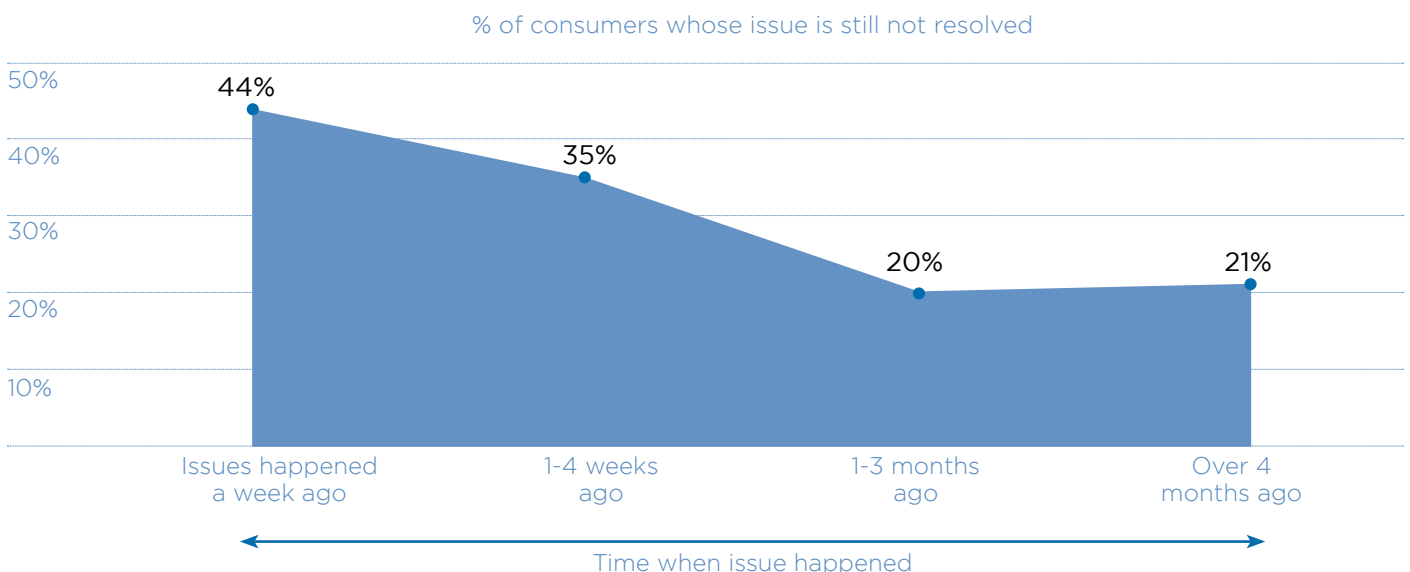
Phone or internet issues experienced in the last 12 months



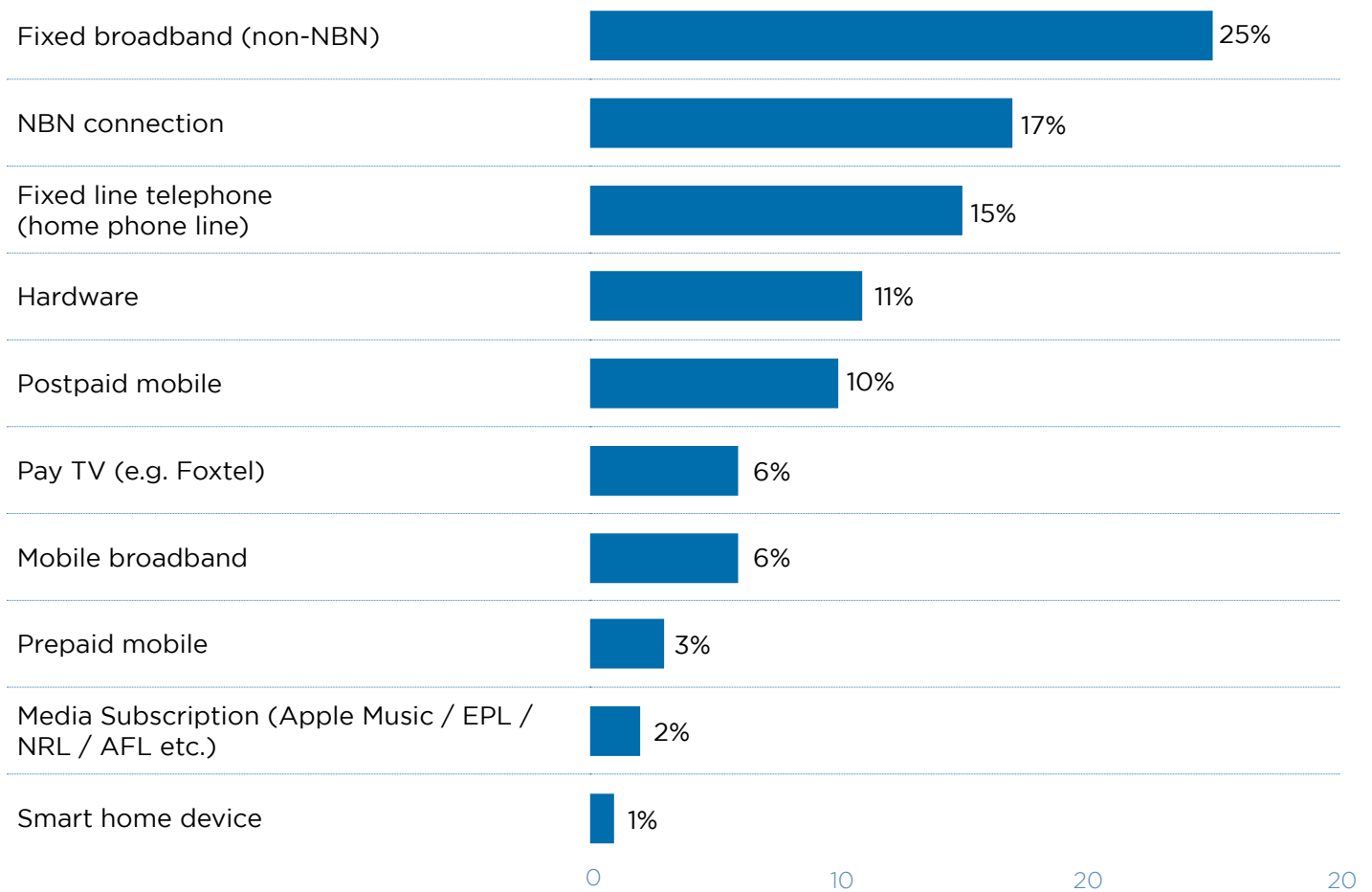
The severity of issues experienced



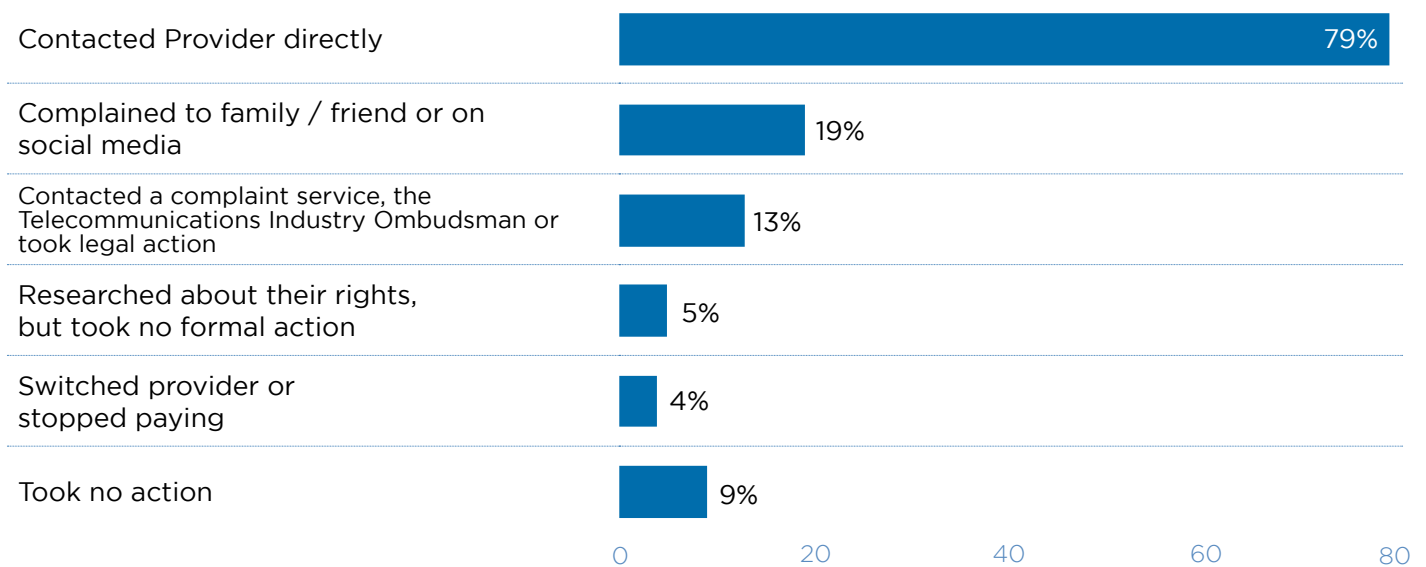
How long it takes for small businesses to resolve issues with their phone or internet services



Type of issues experienced most often*



How small businesses addressed their phone or internet issue*



*Respondents could select more than one answer.

The Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman

The Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman provides a free and independent dispute resolution service for residential consumers and small businesses who have an unresolved complaint about their phone or internet service in Australia.

ABOUT

The Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman Ltd was established in 1993, and is a company limited by guarantee. The Telecommunications (Consumer Protection and Service Standards) Act 1999 requires telecommunications providers to be members of the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman and to comply with the decisions of the Ombudsman.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICE PROVIDERS

Telecommunications service providers are businesses or individuals who are carriers or provide carriage services.

Carriers – persons who own a telecommunications network unit to supply carriage services to the public. The carrier must be licensed through the Australian Communications and Media Authority.

Carriage service providers (CSP) – those who supply standard telephone services, public mobile telecommunications services, or carriage services that enable end-users to access the internet, including carriage service intermediaries who arrange for the supply of such services.

SCOPE OF SERVICE

Dispute resolution services include:

- Dealing with individual and systemic complaints.
- Promoting fair and effective resolution of complaints.
- Providing information and analysis to community, government and members.

THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY SECTOR

The telecommunications industry regulators are the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) www.acma.gov.au and the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) www.accc.gov.au.

Government and the regulators set policy and regulations for the telecommunications sector.

Communications Alliance is the peak body for the Australian communications industry www.commsalliance.com.au.

The Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) is Australia's peak communications consumer organisation representing individuals, small businesses and not-for-profit groups as consumers of communications products and services www.accan.org.au.

How to make a complaint

1

Residential consumers and small businesses should first try to resolve their complaint with their phone or internet provider.

2

If the complaint remains unresolved, the residential consumer or small business can contact the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman by visiting www.tio.com.au or calling 1800 062 058.

3

The Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman determines whether it can deal with the complaint.

4

The Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman works with the parties to resolve the complaint.

5

The Ombudsman has the power to decide the resolution of the complaint.

Contact us

By Phone	1800 062 058*
Online	www.tio.com.au
By fax	1800 630 614
By post	PO Box 276 Collins St West VIC 8007

If you need an interpreter, please contact us through the Translator and Interpreter Service (TIS): 131 450

The Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman's Privacy Policy explains how we collect, use and handle your personal information. Ask us for a copy or find it at <http://www.tio.com.au/privacy>

*Free from landlines. If you are calling from a mobile, you can ask us to call you back.