



2016–2017 ANNUAL REPORT



**Telecommunications**  
Industry Ombudsman

The Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman acknowledges the Traditional Owners, the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation, on whose land we meet, share and work. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and extend our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from all nations of this land.

# Contents

Chair's Message	4
Ombudsman's Message	6
The Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman Board of Directors	8
The Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman	9
How To Make a Complaint	11
<b>STRATEGY AND STRATEGIC GOALS</b>	<b>12</b>
Our Purpose	14
Our Goals	15
<b>COMPLAINTS</b>	<b>26</b>
Complaints to the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman	28
Complaints about services delivered over the national broadband network	30
Complaints from the Australian Capital Territory	32
Complaints from New South Wales	34
Complaints from the Northern Territory	36
Complaints from Queensland	38
Complaints from South Australia	40
Complaints from Tasmania	42
Complaints from Victoria	44
Complaints from Western Australia	46
Complaints from Small Businesses	48
Complaints about phone and internet providers	50
Case Outcomes	56
Land Access Objections	57
<b>FINANCIAL REPORT</b>	<b>58</b>
Financial Report for the year ended 30 June 2017	60





## Patricia Faulkner AO, Chair

In 2016-17, the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman developed a new strategy. This clear plan with four focused goals reaffirms the Board's commitment to the Benchmarks for Industry-based Customer Dispute Resolution. For residential consumers, small businesses and telecommunications providers, this means the Ombudsman focuses on providing an efficient and effective service, whilst remaining independent, accessible, fair and accountable.

The past year has seen a significant increase in the number of complaints, after five years of decline. The Ombudsman has responded to this with an increase in staff numbers and changes to the structure of the organisation.

The Board and the Ombudsman have further developed engagement with stakeholders, acknowledging the interest in our data and our insights into the causes of complaints. We are also focusing on ensuring those who need assistance are aware of the services offered, and that our service is easily accessible.

We made good progress in two key projects. We have continued our review of the funding model, and expect to be able to share the results of this work with stakeholders later in 2017. The Ombudsman moved to new offices in November 2016. The modern, light and flexible workspace supports the goal of developing a sustainable and resilient organisation and infrastructure.

In March 2017, we reduced the size of the Board from 11 to nine directors. In the nine roles, we have expertise from industry, consumer, and non-governmental sectors, as well as technical knowledge, giving us a balanced direction in the delivery of our strategy.

In February, the Board said farewell to Teresa Corbin, Iain Falshaw, Brad Kitschke and Philippa Smith. We thank them for their considerable service and commitment to our Board, especially through a year of change and development. We were very pleased to welcome John Lindsay and Michael Lavarch AO as the newest members of the Board. John brings a career strongly based in the telecommunications industry with roles ranging from working with small providers to government agencies. Michael is a Director with not-for-profit governance experience and expertise from numerous senior roles in government and not-for-profit entities, including serving as Australia's Attorney-General.

In closing, I thank my fellow directors for their focus and support of the work of the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman. And I thank the Ombudsman and her staff for responding to the challenges of the year.



### Patricia Faulkner AO





### Judi Jones, Ombudsman

The telecommunications industry in Australia is undergoing unprecedented change. Given this environment, it is not surprising complaints to the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman have increased 41 per cent to 158,016. Australians are relying more than ever before on technology to stay connected, to be informed, and to do business, so it is critical that consumers are able to rely on the services they sign up for.

While it is necessary to acknowledge the role of the national broadband network in driving significant change in Australian telecommunications, complaints have increased across the board.

Complaints about services delivered over the national broadband network have more than doubled. This includes an increase in complaints about connection delays and reliability issues such as faults. The increase is somewhat to be expected given the accelerating rollout of the NBN, but is still a concerning trend. The supply chain for the NBN is complex, and complaints about services delivered over the NBN can be multi-faceted. Problems can arise with retailers, with other intermediaries, and sometimes the problem can be with the residential consumer's or small businesses' equipment. We are increasingly working with all the relevant parties in the supply chain to navigate these complexities and get the problem fixed.

The vast majority of complaints (90.8 per cent) were resolved by the residential consumer or small business and their phone or internet provider working directly together to solve the issues. Our large team of dedicated enquiry officers worked with residential consumers and small businesses to make sure the complaint received the attention of the right team within the phone or internet provider to quickly resolve the complaint.

In the remaining 9.2 per cent of cases, where the residential consumer or small business is unable to resolve their case directly with the provider, our dispute resolution officers worked with the residential consumer or small business and their phone or internet provider to understand the issues and find fair and reasonable solutions. Sometimes the solution is getting a service connected or reconnected, or a fault fixed. In other cases, the solution can be a correction to a bill or an early release from a contract.

This year we have again used our systemic investigation powers to raise important issues we have observed during our complaint resolution work. This includes working with providers to ensure the problem is fixed for the broader customer base, not just for the consumers who complained about a particular issue.

We have also drawn on our complaint handling experience to contribute to public debate on policy issues. We are in a unique position to inform Government and regulators about emerging telecommunications issues. Our work in this area contributes to reducing complaints and to improvement in the telecommunications sector more generally.

We remain clearly focused on our purpose – that of providing a fair, independent, and accessible dispute resolution service. In line with the Government's Benchmarks for Industry-based Customer Dispute Resolution, we strive to balance fairness, independence and accessibility with efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability.

In carrying out my duties as Ombudsman, I owe thanks to several groups of people. To phone and internet providers who work with my office to resolve complaints from their customers. To the consumer organisations that work with us to ensure consumers know our service is available.

To the Board, especially the Chair, Patricia Faulkner, for their confidence, support, and challenge.

And finally to our staff – thank you for your commitment, focus, and responsiveness in dealing with this year's high volume of complaints.

We are fortunate to have a strong and dedicated team of people who are committed to making a difference for residential consumers, small businesses and the telecommunications industry.

Finally, it seems likely the ongoing changes in the telecommunications industry will continue to drive up complaints. It is important all members of the industry continue working to improve the customer experience so consumers have reliable services and complaints are resolved quickly when they arise.

**Judi Jones**

## The Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman Board of Directors

To ensure our independence, the Board is chaired by an independent Director and contains a balanced mix of Directors with industry and consumer experience, and two independent Directors with governance experience.

The Board governs the business affairs and property of Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman Limited in accordance with the Company Constitution and Terms of Reference.

### INDEPENDENT CHAIR

Patricia Faulkner AO BA, Dip Ed, MBA, FIPAA

### DIRECTORS WITH CONSUMER EXPERIENCE

Paul Harrison PhD, GAICD, MAM

Catriona Lowe LLB

Gordon Renouf BA, LLB

### DIRECTORS WITH INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

David Epstein, BA, AMP, GAICD

John Lindsay GAICD, MACS

Jules Scarlett BA, LLB (Hons)

### INDEPENDENT DIRECTORS WITH COMMERCIAL GOVERNANCE EXPERIENCE

Geoff Nicholson BEc, MBA, FCA, GAICD, CSEP

### INDEPENDENT DIRECTOR WITH NOT-FOR-PROFIT GOVERNANCE EXPERIENCE

Professor The Hon. Michael Lavarch AO, LLB

### BOARD ACTIVITIES IN 2016-17

In 2016-17, the Board met 10 times (excluding meetings of Board committees). In addition to approving the annual budget, the Board's activities focused on developing the new strategy, continuing work on the funding model review, and supporting the organisation's response to the increasing number of complaints.



# 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 telephone or internet service in Australia.

## 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

## ABOUT THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY OMBUDSMAN

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.

## THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY SECTOR

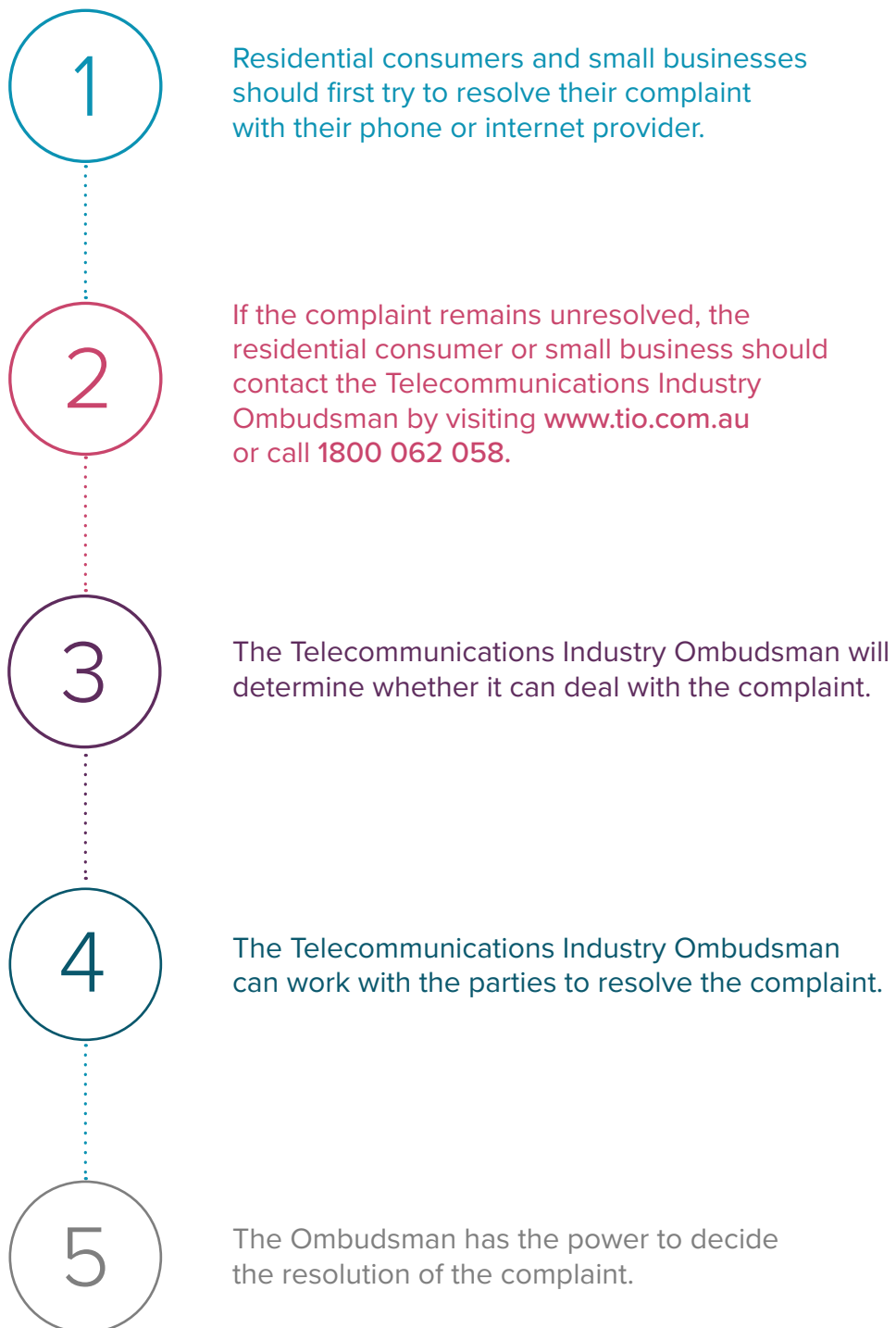
The Telecommunications industry regulators are the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) [www.acma.gov.au](http://www.acma.gov.au) and the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) [www.accc.gov.au](http://www.accc.gov.au)

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

The Communications Alliance is the peak body for the Australian communications industry. [www.commsalliance.com.au](http://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](http://www.accan.org.au)

## How to make a complaint











---

# STRATEGY AND STRATEGIC GOALS



## Our Purpose

To provide a fair, independent and accessible dispute resolution service for consumers and the telecommunications industry that complies with Benchmarks for Industry-based Customer Dispute Resolution.

The Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman's purpose is clear – fairness, independence in everything it does and openness and transparency with residential consumers, small businesses, and with phone and internet providers. The Ombudsman's purpose was developed based on the Government's six Benchmarks for Industry-based Customer Dispute Resolution – accessibility, independence, fairness, accountability, efficiency and effectiveness. This means an approach that is practical and responsive, and follows industry best practice and excellence in dispute resolution and complaint handling.

### Four goals lead the Telecommunication Industry Ombudsman's work:

---

- ① Providing an efficient and effective dispute resolution service, without compromising integrity
- ② Collaborating, informing, and educating stakeholders to reduce complaints and improve telecommunication services
- ③ Being known, respected and accessible
- ④ Building a resilient and sustainable organisation and infrastructure

# 1. Providing an efficient and effective dispute resolution service, without compromising integrity

Maintaining independence and integrity is a vital aspect of our dispute resolution work. And we have to ensure we focus on being efficient and effective. All parties – residential consumers and small businesses, and their phone and internet providers expect us to use our resources wisely, and to focus on resolving complaints effectively and independently.

## HIGHLIGHTS

2016/17 highlights include:

**158,016**

complaints received

**90.8%**

of complaints resolved by referral to the phone or internet provider higher level complaints team

**14,556**

complaints resolved by conciliation

**138,816 (87.8%)**

complaints from residential consumers

**18,789 (11.9%)**

complaints from small business

**215,550**

calls and 98,341 emails – an average of 1,200 calls or emails every day

**447**

phone and internet providers have complaints raised against them

**43**

systemic issues identified and investigated including unauthorised transfers, potentially misleading contracts and consumer privacy concerns

**2,612**

complaints from the Australian Capital Territory

**50,537**

complaints from New South Wales

**1,043**

complaints from the Northern Territory

**28,988**

complaints from Queensland

**12,526**

complaints from South Australia

**2,964**

complaints from Tasmania

**43,565**

complaints from Victoria

**13,623**

complaints from Western Australia

## CASE STUDY

### WENDY JAMES\*

#### Serious consequences of breach of privacy

Wendy completed a Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman online complaint form about her mobile phone provider AAA Telco\*. Wendy felt AAA Telco did not protect her personal information from her ex-partner. Wendy was seeking compensation for distress, as well as the financial expenses she had incurred because of the privacy breach.

Wendy explained she had moved multiple times to escape a long-term violent relationship. She purchased new mobile services for herself and her son. She specifically told the AAA Telco representative her ex-partner was not to have access to any of her numbers or new address.

Despite Wendy's instruction, AAA Telco sent an email confirming the details of Wendy's new services, including numbers and address, to her ex-partner's email address. Wendy said after AAA Telco disclosed her personal information, her ex-partner contacted her and she was harassed by him. Wendy also said her ex-partner interfered with her account information.

The Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman led the discussions during conciliation. This included how the disclosure occurred and the potential compensation package. The settlement between Wendy and AAA Telco included release from contracts without penalty, waiving all charges and a payment to cover re-location costs. When the settlement was formalised, the case was closed.



\*Name of individuals, organisations and companies have been changed.



## 2. Collaborating, informing, and educating stakeholders to reduce complaints and improve telecommunications services

A key objective of the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman continues to be reducing complaints and providing feedback to improve telecommunications services. We provide regular reports to phone and internet providers about their complaints. Information and analysis is also provided to Government and regulators, highlighting systemic issues and trends to inform policy development.

### HIGHLIGHTS

2016/17 highlights include:

#### THE ANNUAL REPORT

A comprehensive overview of phone and internet complaints over twelve months.

#### SIX MONTH UPDATE

A new report introduced in 2016/17, offering a summary of six months of complaint data.

#### MONTHLY REPORTING

to key government, telecommunications and consumer bodies.

#### DAILY COMPLAINT HANDLING DATA

available to each phone and internet provider through a secure online portal.

#### MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

Member Services team working with around 1,500 phone and internet providers as members. This year, 172 service providers joined the Ombudsman Scheme and 210 left the scheme.

#### M NEWS

The Ombudsman's email newsletter was sent each month to over 3,378 recipients working for phone and internet service providers.

#### MEMBER INFORMATION

New and existing members have access to an online training portal on dispute resolution best practice as well as information on how the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman deals with complaints.

#### MEMBER SURVEY

An engagement needs survey shaping communication channels and opportunities between phone and internet providers and the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman.

## CASE STUDY

### **CREATIVE OFFICE DESIGNS PTY LTD \***

#### **A small business and a new start**

After a period under voluntary administration, the management of Creative Office Designs Pty Ltd was handed back to its original directors under a deed of company arrangement. Creative Office Designs Pty Ltd could not afford their telecommunications bill of \$17,000 per month. Creative Office Designs Pty Ltd's telecommunications provider, Go Fast Telco\*, suggested they create a new account with reduced services and monthly costs. The new account had to be in a different name because Creative Office Designs Pty Ltd had only recently come out of administration.

For two years, Creative Designs Pty Ltd complained to Go Fast Telco about the charges on the Creative Office Designs Pty Ltd account, which they wanted closed. Creative Office Designs Pty Ltd lodged a complaint with the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman against Go Fast Telco holding them liable for \$70,000 in accrued charges. They said the problem continued for so long because of differences between Go Fast Telco's regional manager and head office.

By lodging the complaint with the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman, the issue was referred to senior complaint handlers within Go Fast Telco. During conciliation by the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman there was an analysis of Creative Office Design Pty Ltd's account history and its communication with Go Fast Telco. The Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman led negotiations between the Creative Office Design Pty Ltd and Go Fast Telco which involved offers and counter offers. The dispute was eventually resolved when Creative Office Designs Pty Ltd agreed to pay around \$20,000 in business directory charges and Go Fast Telco agreed to waive accrued charges in the order of \$50,000.



\*Name of individuals, organisations and companies have been changed.

### 3. Being known, respected and accessible

Engagement with residential consumers and small businesses, telecommunications companies, representative bodies and government ensures the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman reaches its stakeholders appropriately and effectively. The Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman engages through a mix of integrated channels to create awareness of its role, its independence and accessibility for all communities. Data on the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman's complaints is highly sought after to provide valuable insight into the telecommunications sector and the experience of consumers in Australia.

The Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman regularly informs the debate on the development of policies and regulation of the telecommunications sector.

#### HIGHLIGHTS

2016/17 highlights include:

#### SEVEN SUBMISSIONS

The Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman made seven submissions. These included the Productivity Commission's Inquiry into the future direction of the Universal Service Obligation (USO); the Review of the Australian Communications and Media Authority; the review of section 593 of the *Telecommunications Act 1997*; Australian Consumer Law Review Interim Report; and the Joint Standing Committee Inquiry into the national broadband network

Full details can be found in the Submissions section of the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman's website.

#### KEY RELATIONSHIPS

The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) is a major stakeholder as the regulator of the telecommunications sector. The Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman shares information with the ACMA about complaint trends and reports non-compliance in the telecommunications sector. In 2016-17, three providers were referred to the ACMA for not complying with an Ombudsman decision. A further nine providers were referred for not becoming members. Of the nine providers referred to the ACMA, six subsequently became members, one was granted an exemption, with two still under investigation by the ACMA.

The Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman worked regularly with stakeholders across the telecommunications, consumer and ombudsman sectors on planning, policy development, service improvement, and information provision. Stakeholders include the Minister for Communications and the Arts, Department of Communications and the Arts, Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN), Communications Alliance, Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) and the Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman.

The Ombudsman, Judi Jones, is a member of the peak body for Ombudsman in Australia and New Zealand. The Australian and New Zealand Ombudsman Association (ANZOA) is a professional body for ombudsman and provides opportunities for sharing best practice, discussing challenges, and leading the development of ombudsman offices. Judi Jones is the chair of ANZOA.

#### SMALL PROVIDER FORUMS

The Ombudsman and Board members hosted a series of Small Provider Forums across the country. 2016/17's forums were held in Canberra, Sydney, Melbourne and Perth, and offered an opportunity to hear directly from small providers on the issues and challenges they face.

## CASE STUDY

### **SIMON YAUN\***

#### **Landline connection in a remote location**

Simon and his wife purchased a property in a remote rural location with poor mobile phone coverage and a satellite internet service. Simon had a contract with Green Phones\* to connect a new landline service which would also be used for his business. The new landline service required preparatory digging, trenching and cabling works at Simon's property.

Simon lodged an online complaint with the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman when the service was still not installed four months after the scheduled start date. Simon said he was frustrated dealing with Green Phones because of their staff's lack of knowledge about the works to be completed, their lack of accountability and the difficulty he had communicating with them.

The complaint was not resolved, so the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman started conciliation. The aim of conciliation was to progress the installation of the landline service as quickly as possible and for Green Phones to establish an interim service.

The Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman's Dispute Resolution Officer sought information to explain why the trenching work had not started and who was responsible for this work. Green Phones provided information about the costs of possible solutions, a satellite voice service and installation of a copper extension. The most viable solution was a copper extension. Green Phones offered Simon an interim service but despite requests from the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman's Dispute Resolution Officer to fast track this, the solar satellite interim service was not installed. Simon's frustration was compounded further when technicians twice failed to meet appointments, leading to the postponement of business meetings in Sydney.

The case progressed to an investigation by the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman about the continued delays. During the investigation, Green Phones undertook parallel processes of arranging the landline installation and the supply of the interim service. The Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman's Dispute Resolution Officer worked directly with Simon and Green Phones to clarify misunderstandings about the interim service. Green Phones said Simon had declined an interim service. Simon responded by saying the two options offered to him would not work.

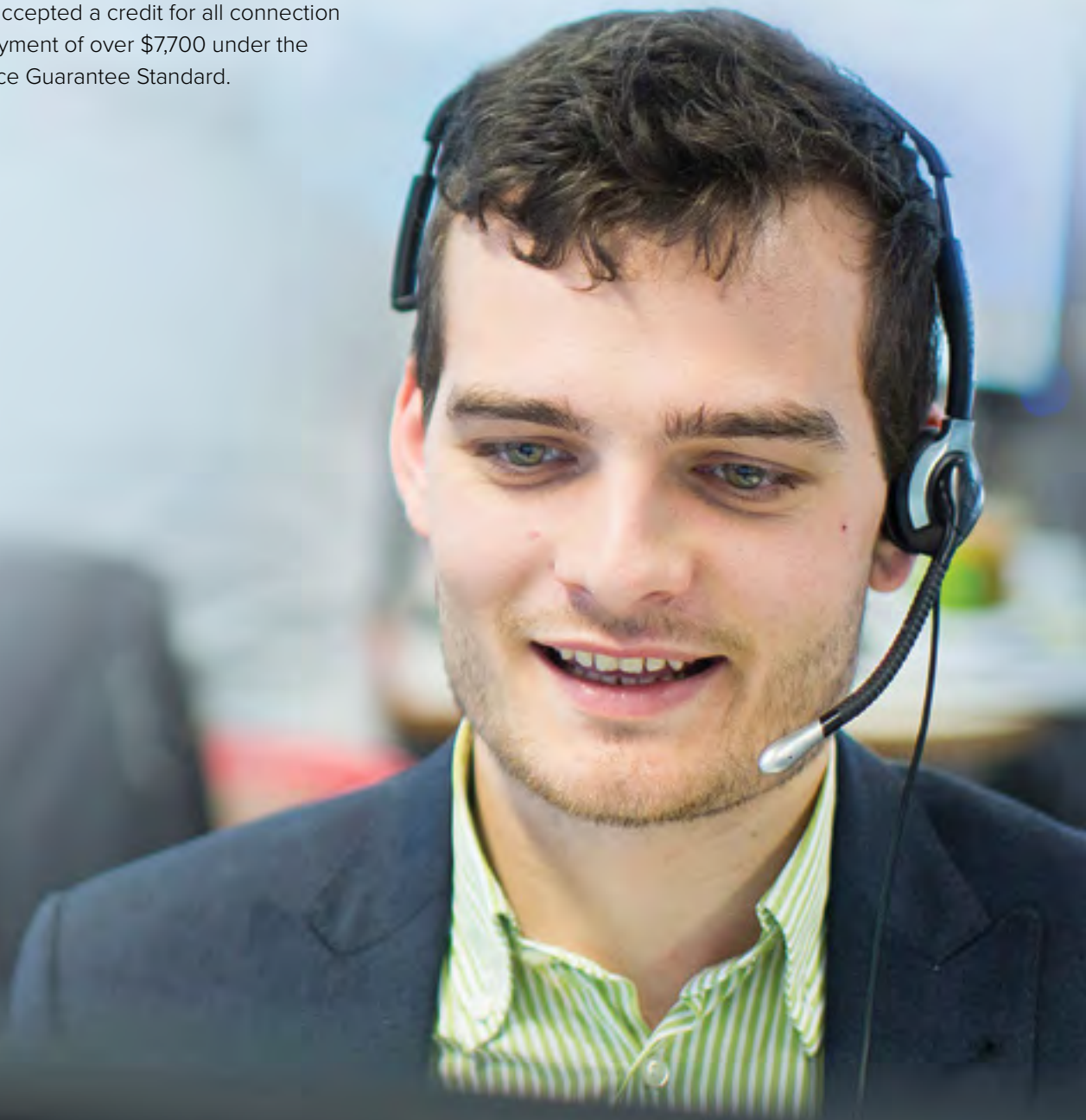
Offering and providing an interim service impacted directly on Simon's entitlement to a payment under the Customer Service Guarantee Standard.

---

\*Name of individuals, organisations and companies have been changed.



Green Phones explained the two appointments to install the solar satellite interim service were postponed when the technician discovered that parts needed to complete the work were missing. Ultimately, Green Phones successfully installed Simon's landline service before the interim service was ever delivered. The landline was connected at Simon's property nine months after the order was placed. Simon accepted a credit for all connection charges and payment of over \$7,700 under the Customer Service Guarantee Standard.



## CASE STUDY

### ANDREA EDDY\*

#### Repayment arrangement and debt collection

In 2014, Andrea fell into financial difficulty and her phone and internet services were cancelled. She entered into a fortnightly payment arrangement to repay the outstanding debt of \$4,500.

Andrea called the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman about the issue. She wanted her telecommunications provider, Future Mobiles\*, to acknowledge the regular payments she had made to them. She also wanted their debt collector to stop sending letters and calling her to demand repayment of the full amount.

Future Mobiles maintained there was never a repayment arrangement in place. At conciliation, the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman's Dispute Resolution Officer asked Future Mobiles to provide information from its customer records and the payment history for Andrea's account.

The information showed there was a repayment arrangement and Andrea consistently made payments. Future Mobiles agreed with this and said it cancelled the arrangement because the payments were overdue. Andrea explained her payments coincided with her pension payment and normally she always paid her bill. In this case it was a couple of days late.

The Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman's Dispute Resolution Officer discussed the issue further with Future Mobiles and Andrea and outlined possible options to resolve the complaint.

Future Mobiles said it would consider a new payment arrangement if Andrea was in financial hardship. Andrea provided a statement of financial position and the parties agreed on a new repayment arrangement with repayment dates matching her pension payments.

During the conciliation, Andrea complained that Future Mobiles continued to send her default notices. Once alerted to this, they agreed to stop sending the notices.

Andrea then discovered that Future Mobiles had listed a default in payment at the time the complaint was being conciliated. When Andrea complained again, the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman's Dispute Resolution Officer noted Future Mobiles' actions were in breach of the law and industry codes.

The *Privacy Act 1988*, Part IIIA, the Privacy (Credit Reporting) Code and the Telecommunications Consumer Protection Code protect a consumer from credit management when a repayment arrangement is in place and when a complaint is being considered by a recognised external dispute resolution scheme, such as the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman.

After the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman outlined Future Mobiles' obligations under the law and industry codes, Future Mobiles agreed to remove the default listing. Future Mobiles also agreed to waive the remaining balance of over \$1,000 as compensation payable under the *Privacy Act 1988* for injury to feelings and humiliation. Andrea accepted the resolution.



\*Name of individuals, organisations and companies have been changed.

## 4. Building a resilient and sustainable organisation and infrastructure

When achieving goals, it is vital to have an organisation that is efficient, adaptive to challenges and well managed. The Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman wants to attract the best people, invest in their training and development, and see their success in the services it provides. The organisation constantly assesses and improves its operational processes and systems for efficiency and responsiveness to a fast changing telecommunications sector.

### HIGHLIGHTS

2016/17 highlights include:

#### NEW ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

A new organisational structure focused on dispute resolution and complaint handling with three groups, Dispute Resolution, the Ombudsman's Office, and Shared Services.

#### A NEW PEOPLE TEAM

The People Team was restructured and new team members recruited. Over the year the team has introduced improved processes for recruitment and employee professional development, and worked to ensure the office remains a welcoming place to work.

#### NEW RECRUITMENT APPROACH

A streamlined recruitment process was introduced to improve the quality of employees entering the organisation and help stabilise recruitment costs.

#### EMPLOYEE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

There was a continued focus on professional development for dispute resolution staff through the Graduate Certificate in Dispute Resolution, the in-house qualification delivered in partnership with Box Hill Institute.

#### LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The foundations were laid for the launch of major leadership development programs scheduled to commence in the new financial year.

#### GENDER EQUALITY

The Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman is committed to gender equality in the workplace. Last year, 44% of management roles were performed by women (compared to a 38% national average), 45% of board positions held by women (double the national rate) and the overall workforce comprising 49% women and 51% men.

#### WELLBEING

Staff are entitled to 16 weeks of employer funded paid parental leave (maternity or adoption), higher than the national average of 10 weeks.

The Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman also funds paid parental leave for partners (one week plus additional 10 weeks if they are the primary carer) and provides equal access to flexible work options for men and women. Additionally over the last year, the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman has supported the design of an open and engaging office, a staff social committee and a program of wellbeing activities.

## VALUING DIVERSITY

Recognising diverse cultures and communities is fundamental to the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman as an independent and accessible dispute resolution service. In the last year, cultural events and traditions have been celebrated, such as Harmony Day, Reconciliation Action Week, and NAIDOC Week. The cross-organisation Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Group has also made inroads in recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

## FLEXIBLE TECHNOLOGY

ICT services have moved from on premise infrastructure to cloud technology, improving cost effectiveness and better supporting fluctuations in demand for service.

## PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

Telecommunications services were upgraded to support newer technology and multi-channel communications such as SMSchat, Webchat, video calls, 3-way conferencing and social media integration for the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman's future plans.

## EARLY RESOLUTION RESOURCE IMPROVEMENTS

Teams were cross-skilled to better leverage technology developments and improve the delivery of work. This has resulted in reduced wait times across phone calls and online complaints for residential consumers, small business and telecommunications organisations.



## CASE STUDY

### STARTER COMMUNICATIONS\*

#### Land access objection

Carrier Starter Communications\* issued a Land Access and Activity Notice to Sarah Kendall\*. Sarah was the owner of a narrow strip of land where Starter Communications wanted to install a cable for telecommunications services to be supplied to Sarah's neighbourhood.

The Notice included a summary of Schedule 3 of the *Telecommunications Act 1997*. This included information about Sarah's right to seek compensation for any financial loss or damage suffered as a result of Starter Communications' activities, the purpose of the activity and the objection process.

Sarah objected to the proposed work on the basis it was not a low-impact facility within the meaning of the Telecommunications (Low Impact Facilities) Determination 1997 as her land was an area of environmental significance.

Starter Communications and Sarah were unable to resolve the objection during the consultation process, and the objection was referred to the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman.

The Ombudsman's decision found the activity was not a low impact activity and it could not proceed.

The decision included an examination of the Notice to ensure it met with legislative requirements, which it did. The decision then examined the arguments put by Starter Communications and Sarah against the provisions of Schedule 3.

Sarah said the land was of environmental significance as it is protected from significant disturbance by being within a protected conservation zone under a local council interim development order.

Starter Communications argued the land was not an area of environmental significance because extensive development is allowed on the land. It also argued that as it was exercising its carrier powers under Schedule 3, the proposed cabling was exempt from any planning laws.

The Ombudsman concluded that the land was an area of environmental significance on the basis of the zoning under the local council order. The local council order was a law of the State under the Telecommunications (Low Impact Facilities) Determination 1997 and protected the land from significant environmental disturbance. This meant the proposed activity was not a low-impact facility and could not proceed.

\*Name of individuals, organisations and companies have been changed.







---

COMPLAINTS

## Complaints to the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman

Complaints about landline phone, mobile phone and internet services all increased in 2016/17.

# 158,016

total complaints received in 2016/17

# 41.1%

increase in complaints

# 138,816

complaints from residential consumers

# 18,789

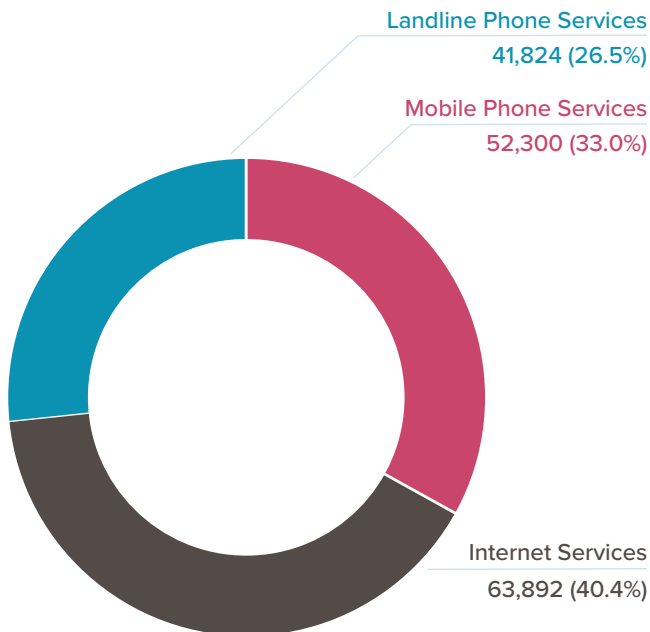
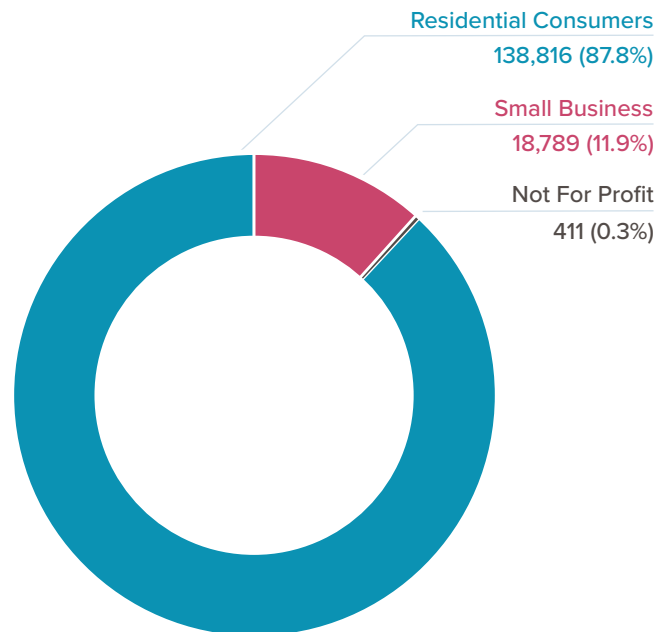
complaints from small businesses

### COMPLAINT NUMBERS VS PREVIOUS YEARS

Complaints, enquiries and conciliations





COMPLAINTS ABOUT LANDLINE PHONES,  
MOBILE PHONES AND INTERNET SERVICESWHO COMPLAINED TO THE  
TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY OMBUDSMAN

## TOP COMPLAINT ISSUES

ISSUE	FINANCIAL YEAR	
	2016/17	2016/17 (%)*
Customer service	76,932	48.7%
Billing and payments	66,142	41.9%
Faults	57,723	36.5%
Complaint handling	49,268	31.2%
Contracts	30,731	19.4%
Connection	25,604	16.2%
Credit management	15,619	9.9%
Transfer	3,608	2.3%
Privacy	2,598	1.6%
Property	666	0.4%

## TOP 10 POSTCODES FOR COMPLAINTS

			FINANCIAL YEAR	
SUBURB	STATE		2016/17	
2560 Campbelltown	NSW		769	
4350 Toowoomba	QLD		768	
3029 Hoppers Crossing	VIC		752	
3030 Werribee	VIC		739	
3064 Craigieburn	VIC		737	
2250 Gosford	NSW		707	
2170 Liverpool	NSW		680	
3977 Cranbourne	VIC		675	
2259 Hamlyn Terrace	NSW		643	
4870 Cairns	QLD		607	

\*Column one shows the number of complaints involving each issue. Column two shows the percentage of all complaints involving the issue. Complaints may involve multiple issues.

## Complaints about services delivered over the national broadband network

As the national broadband network rollout widens, complaints about landline phones and internet services across the network have grown.

nbn co limited (nbn or the company) was established in 2009 to design, build and operate Australia's new high-speed, wholesale local access broadband network. Retail service providers contract with nbn to access the national broadband network and sell broadband internet access to end users. The national broadband network at 2017, uses both wired (copper, optical fibre and hybrid fibre-coaxial), and wireless (satellite and fixed wireless) communication networks.

### How the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman records complaints about services delivered over the national broadband network

The Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman receives complaints about services delivered over the national broadband network and about nbn, the company rolling out the network.

The Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman started recording and reporting complaints about services delivered over the national broadband network from financial year 2013/14.

Complaints about services delivered over the national broadband network include:

- cases lodged against service providers where the residential consumer or small business tells the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman the complaint is about a service, and
- cases lodged against the nbn, where the complaint is about damage to property or access required to a property for the purposes of installing or repairing the network.

# 27,195

total complaints received about services delivered over the national broadband network

# 16,221

total fault complaints about services delivered over the national broadband network

# 6.7

fault complaints per 1,000 total premises activated

# 11,224

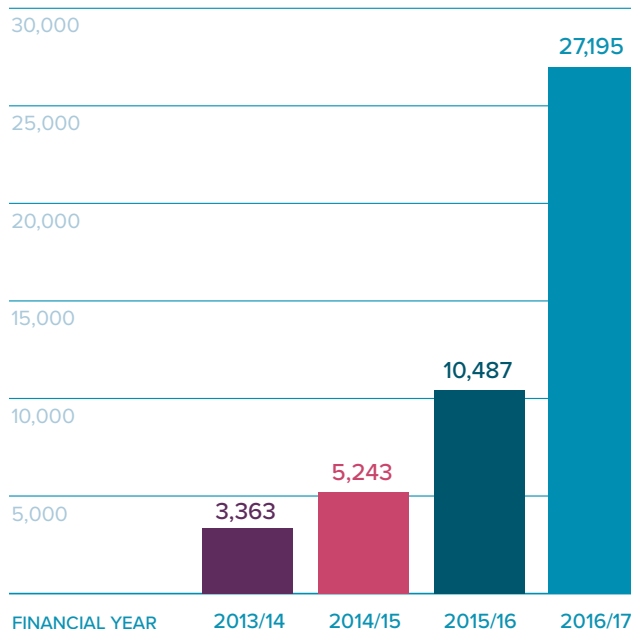
complaints about delays in connection to the national broadband network

# 8.3

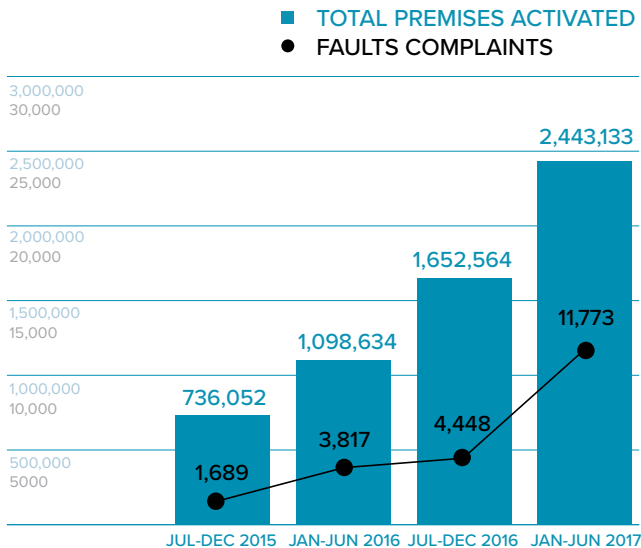
connection delay complaints per 1,000 premises activated

### COMPLAINT NUMBERS VS PREVIOUS YEARS

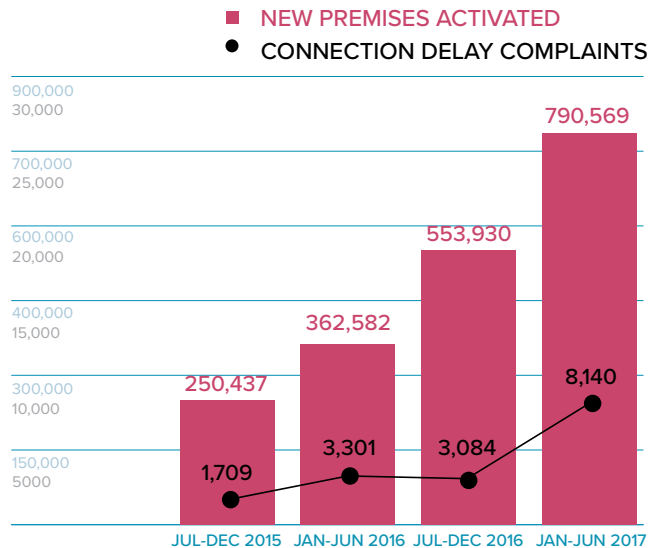
Complaints Year over year change: 159.3%



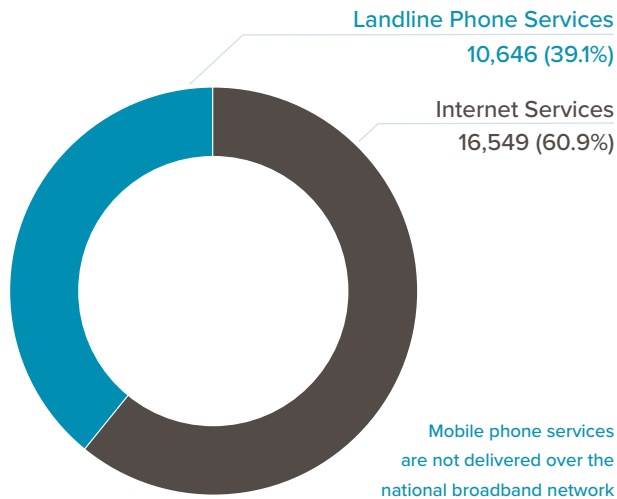
### FAULT COMPLAINTS AGAINST TOTAL NUMBER OF PREMISES CONNECTED



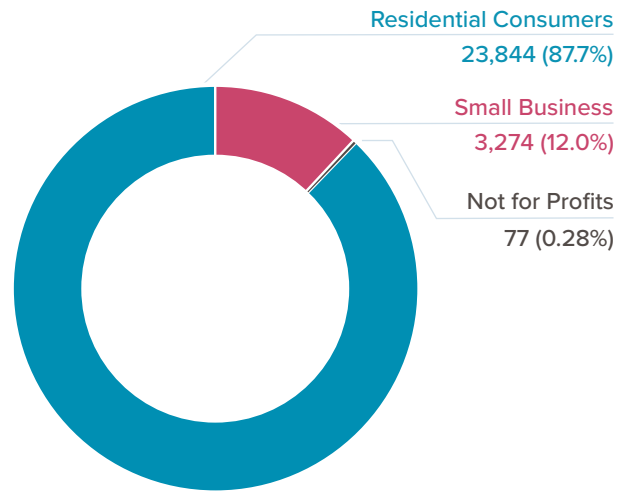
### CONNECTION DELAY COMPLAINTS AGAINST TOTAL NUMBER OF PREMISES BEING CONNECTED



### COMPLAINTS ABOUT TYPE OF SERVICE DELIVERED OVER THE NATIONAL BROADBAND NETWORK



### WHO COMPLAINED ABOUT SERVICES DELIVERED OVER THE NATIONAL BROADBAND NETWORK



### TOP COMPLAINT ISSUES ABOUT SERVICES DELIVERED OVER THE NATIONAL BROADBAND NETWORK

ISSUE	NO. OF COMPLAINTS
New internet connection delay	7,035
Fully unusable internet service	4,816
Fully unusable landline service	4,140
New landline connection delay	3,936
Slow internet data speed	3,917

Complaints may involve multiple issues.



## Australian Capital Territory

**2,612**

total complaints received from the  
Australian Capital Territory in 2016/17

**42.3%**

increase in complaints since 2015/16

**1.7%**

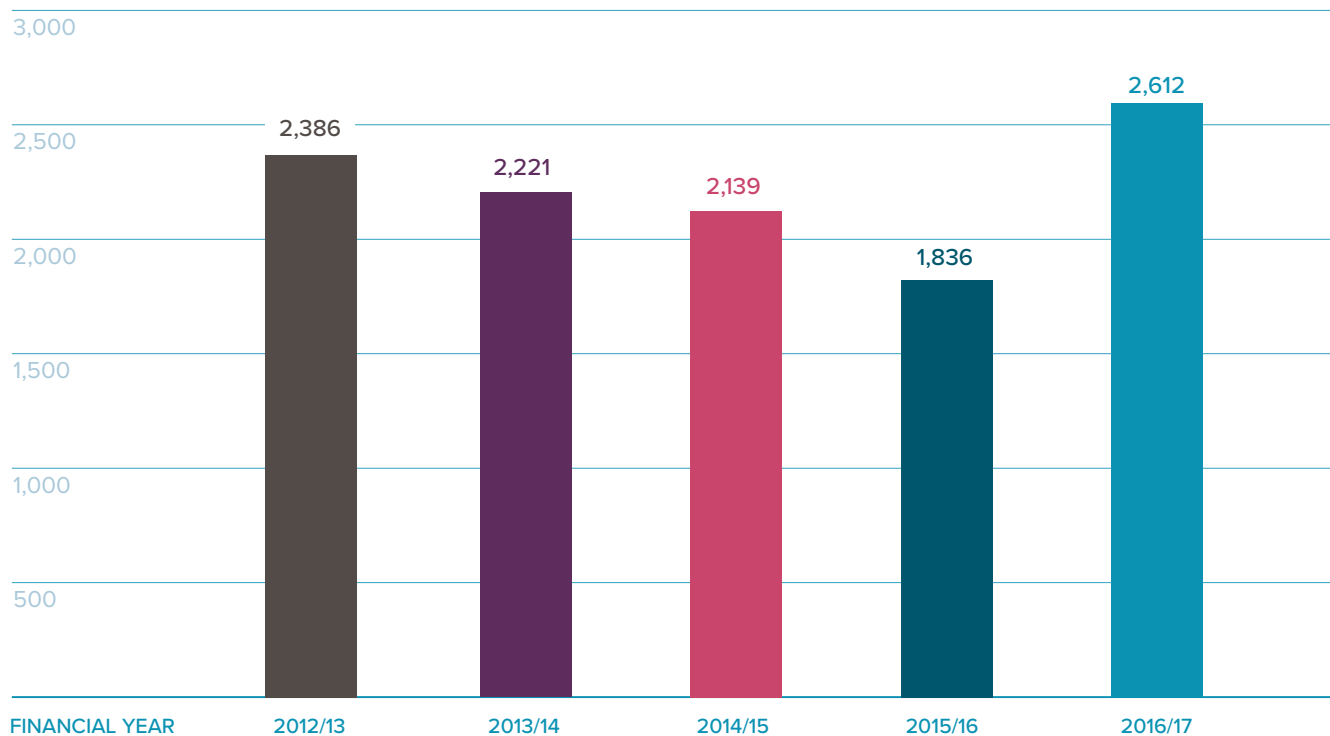
of national complaint numbers

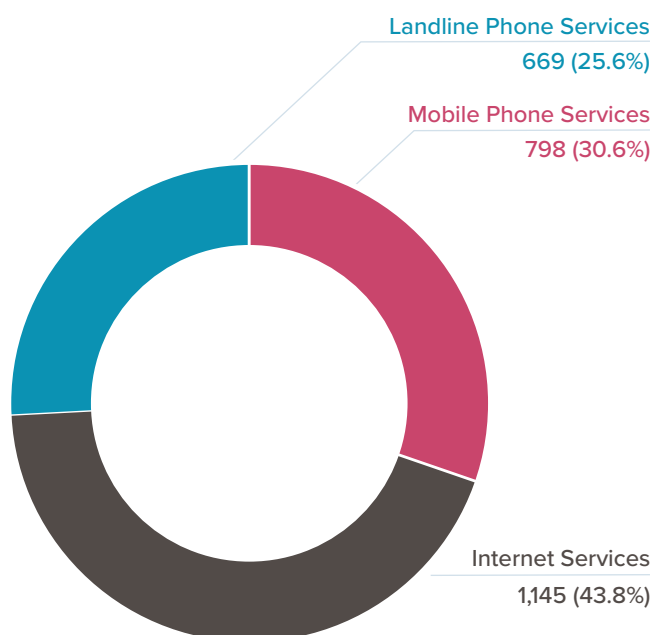
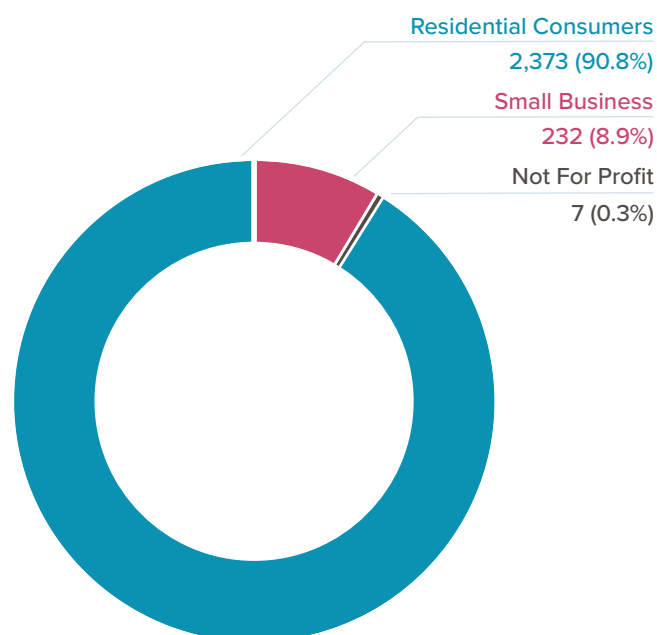


### COMPLAINT NUMBERS VS PREVIOUS YEARS

Complaints

Year over year change: 42.3%



COMPLAINTS ABOUT LANDLINE PHONES,  
MOBILE PHONES AND INTERNET SERVICESWHO COMPLAINED TO THE  
TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY OMBUDSMAN

## TOP COMPLAINT ISSUES

ISSUE	FINANCIAL YEAR	
	2016/17	2016/17 (%)*
Customer service	1,319	50.5%
Billing and payments	1,138	43.6%
Faults	934	35.8%
Complaint handling	802	30.7%
Contracts	472	18.1%
Connection	387	14.8%
Credit management	219	8.4%
Transfer	79	3.0%
Privacy	47	1.8%
Property	16	0.6%

## TOP 10 POSTCODES FOR COMPLAINTS

POSTCODE	SUBURB	FINANCIAL YEAR
		2016/17
2615	MacGregor	256
2602	Lyneham	221
2913	Casey	205
2617	Bruce	190
2905	Bonython	183
2914	Harrison	177
2611	Stromlo	174
2614	Hawker	108
2612	Reid	102
2906	Gordon	93

\*Column one shows the number of complaints involving each issue. Column two shows the percentage of all complaints involving the issue. Complaints may involve multiple issues.

## New South Wales

**50,537**

total complaints received from  
New South Wales in 2016/17

**43.6%**

increase in complaints since 2015/16

**32.0%**

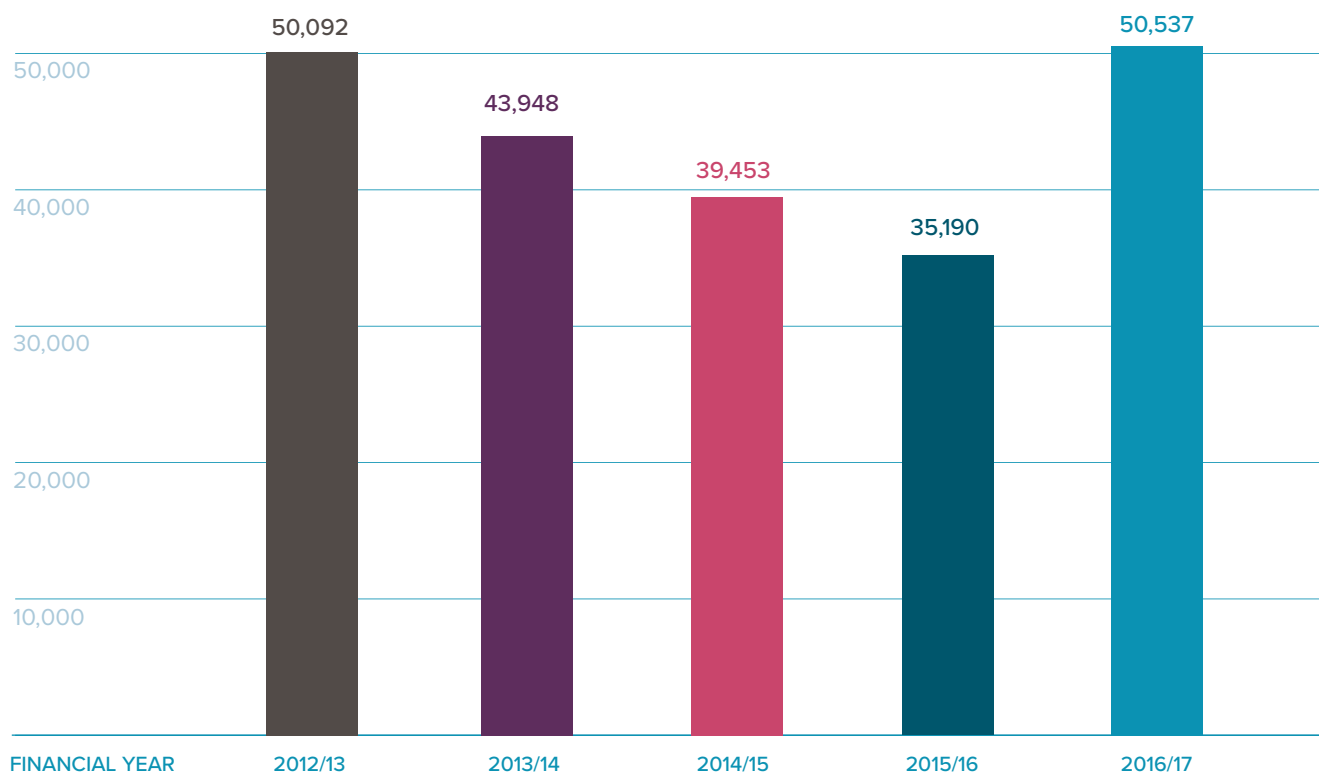
of national complaint numbers



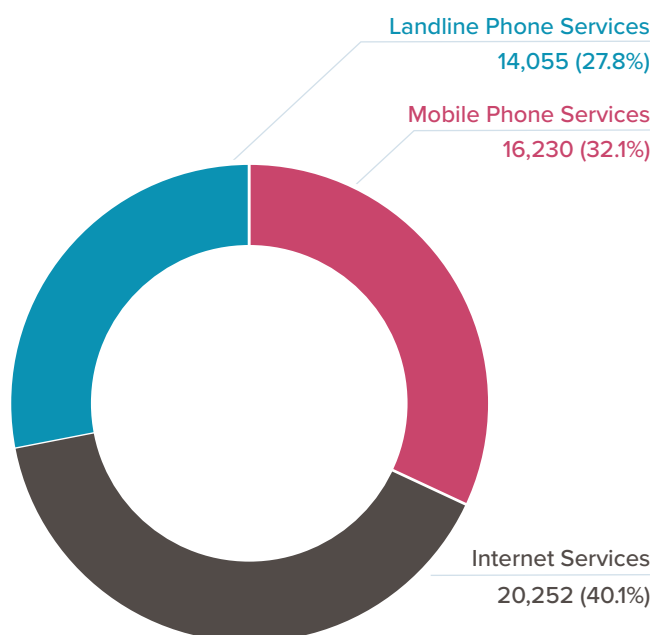
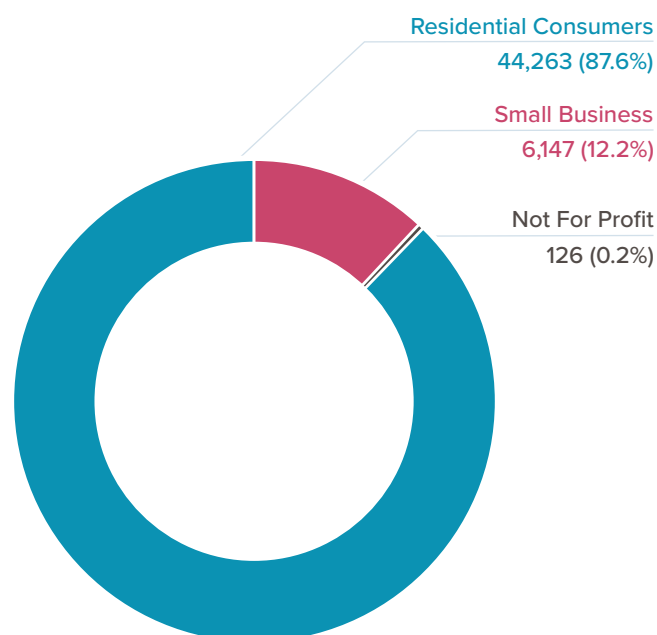
### COMPLAINT NUMBERS VS PREVIOUS YEARS

Complaints

Year over year change: 43.6%





COMPLAINTS ABOUT LANDLINE PHONES,  
MOBILE PHONES AND INTERNET SERVICESWHO COMPLAINED TO THE  
TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY OMBUDSMAN

## TOP COMPLAINT ISSUES

ISSUE	FINANCIAL YEAR	
	2016/17	2016/17 (%)*
Customer service	24,693	48.9%
Billing and payments	20,405	40.4%
Faults	19,706	39.0%
Complaint handling	15,722	31.1%
Contracts	9,473	18.7%
Connection	8,339	16.5%
Credit management	4,492	8.9%
Transfer	1,222	2.4%
Privacy	889	1.8%
Property	205	0.4%

## TOP 10 POSTCODES FOR COMPLAINTS

POSTCODE	SUBURB	FINANCIAL YEAR	
		2016/17	
2560	Campbelltown	769	
2250	Gosford	707	
2170	Liverpool	680	
2259	Hamlyn Terrace	643	
2155	Rouse Hill	522	
2148	Blacktown	437	
2145	Westmead	436	
2261	The Entrance	399	
2770	Mount Druitt	328	
2200	Bankstown	260	

\*Column one shows the number of complaints involving each issue. Column two shows the percentage of all complaints involving the issue. Complaints may involve multiple issues.

## Northern Territory

# 1,043

total complaints received from  
the Northern Territory in 2016/17

# 29.7%

increase in complaints since 2015/16

# 0.7%

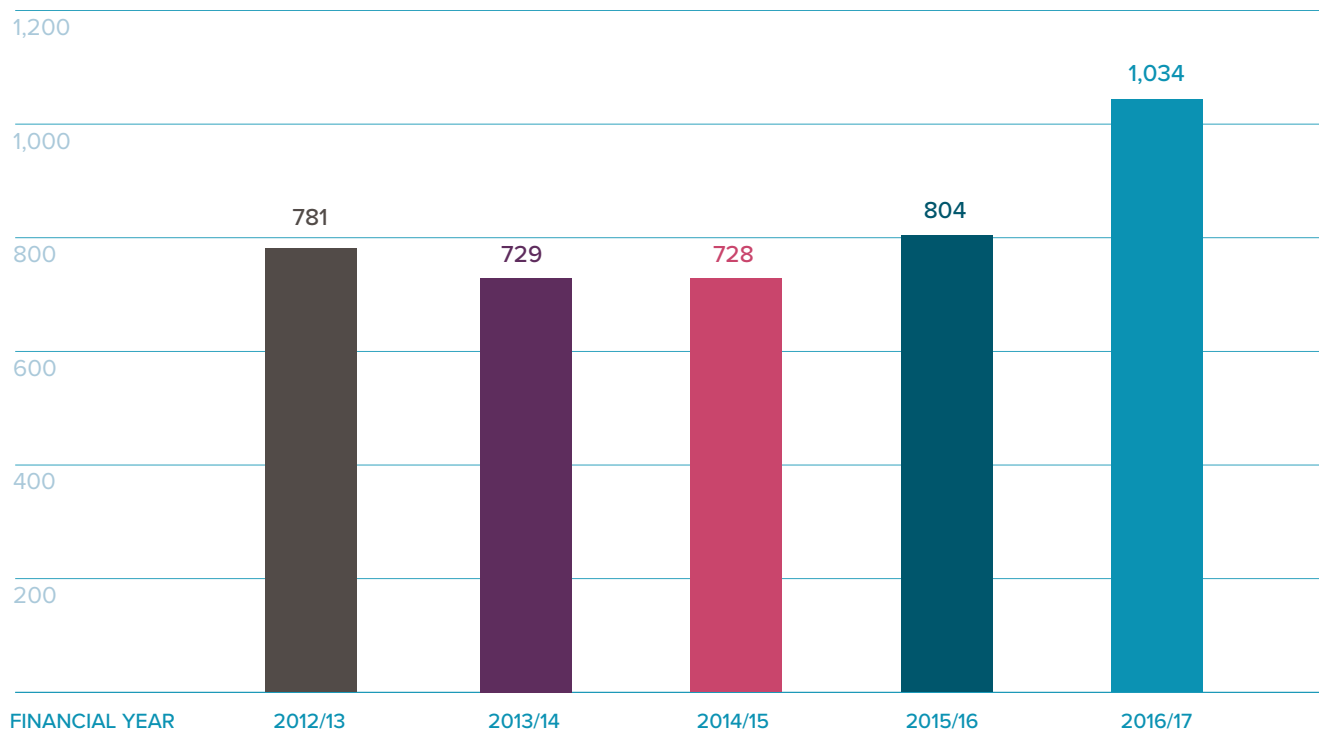
of national complaint numbers

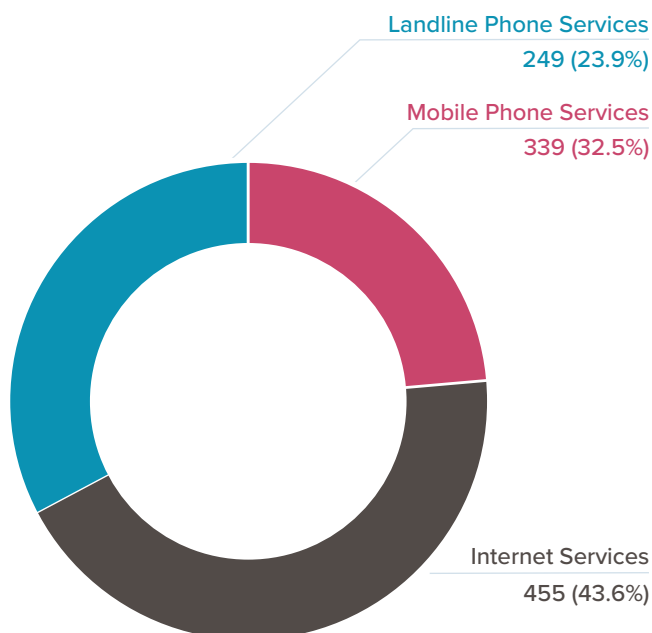
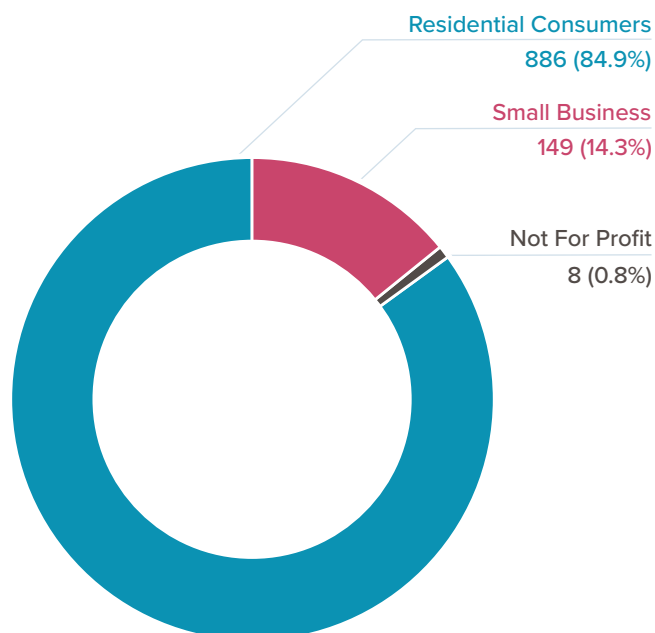


### COMPLAINT NUMBERS VS PREVIOUS YEARS

Complaints

Year over year change: 29.7%



COMPLAINTS ABOUT LANDLINE PHONES,  
MOBILE PHONES AND INTERNET SERVICESWHO COMPLAINED TO THE  
TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY OMBUDSMAN

## TOP COMPLAINT ISSUES

ISSUE	FINANCIAL YEAR	
	2016/17	2016/17 (%)*
Customer service	496	47.6%
Billing and payments	445	42.7%
Faults	372	35.7%
Complaint handling	353	33.8%
Contracts	200	19.2%
Connection	199	19.1%
Credit management	104	10.0%
Transfer	23	2.2%
Privacy	18	1.7%
Directories	4	0.4%

## TOP 10 POSTCODES FOR COMPLAINTS

POSTCODE	SUBURB	FINANCIAL YEAR
		2016/17
0870	Alice Springs	211
0810	Rapid Creek	132
0820	The Gardens	112
0830	Palmerston	99
0812	Leanyer	77
0832	Rosebery	65
0836	Humpty Doo	54
0800	Darwin	51
0822	Angurugu	47
0850	Katherine	33

\*Column one shows the number of complaints involving each issue. Column two shows the percentage of all complaints involving the issue. Complaints may involve multiple issues.



## Queensland

# 28,988

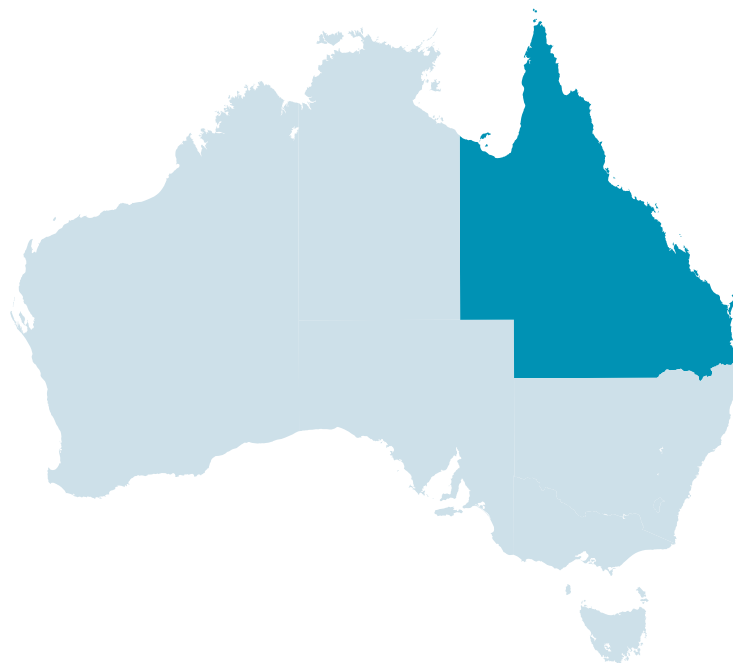
total complaints received from  
Queensland in 2016/17

# 42.7%

increase in complaints since 2015/16

# 18.3%

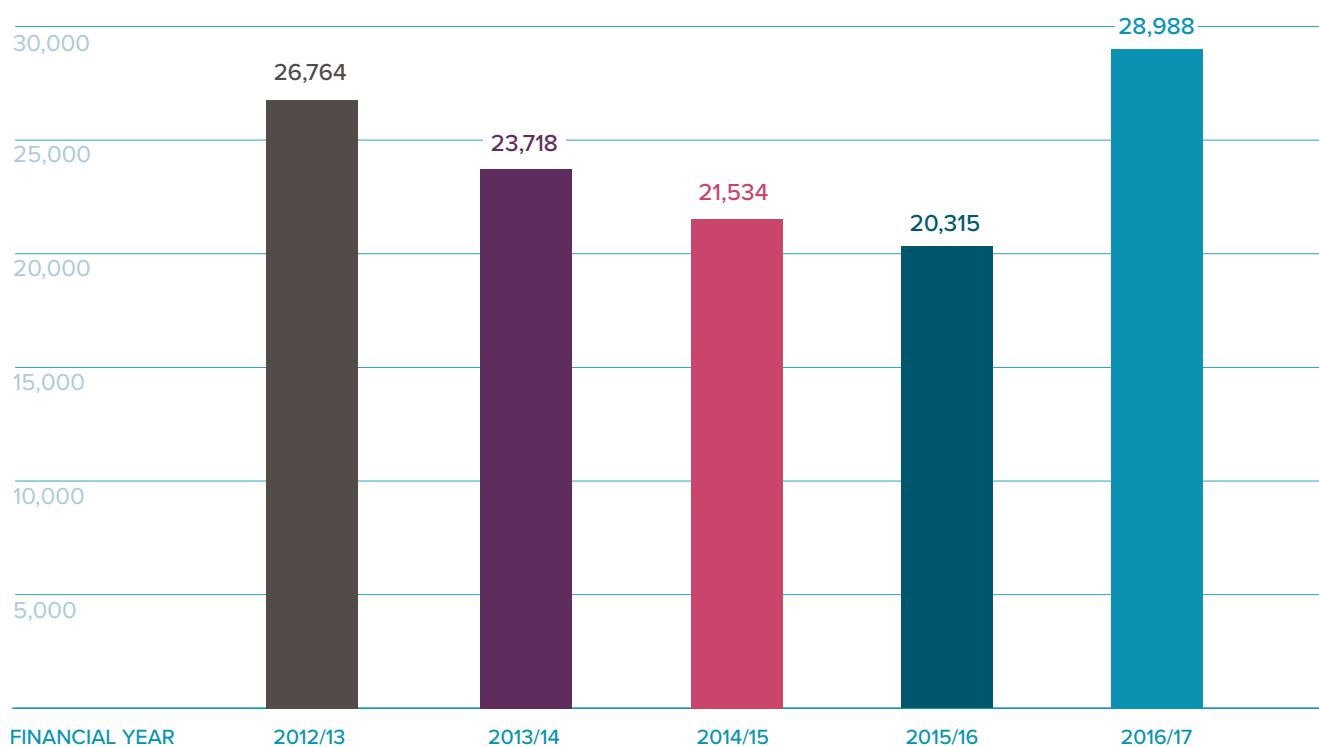
of national complaint numbers

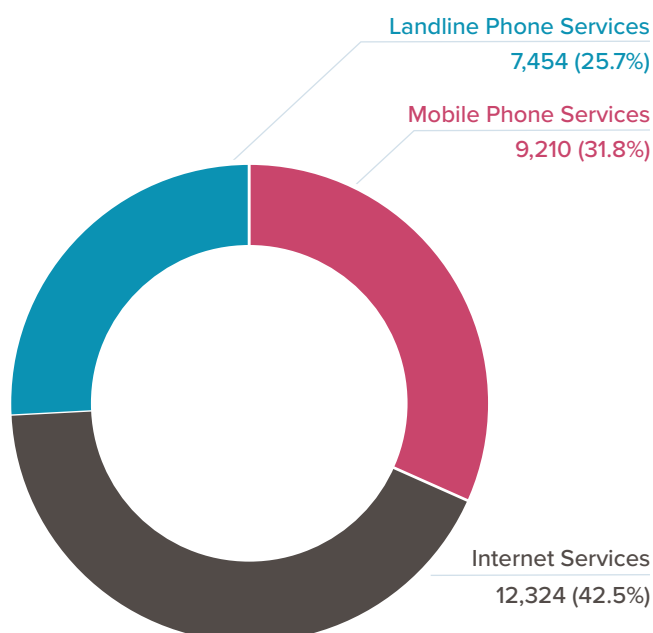
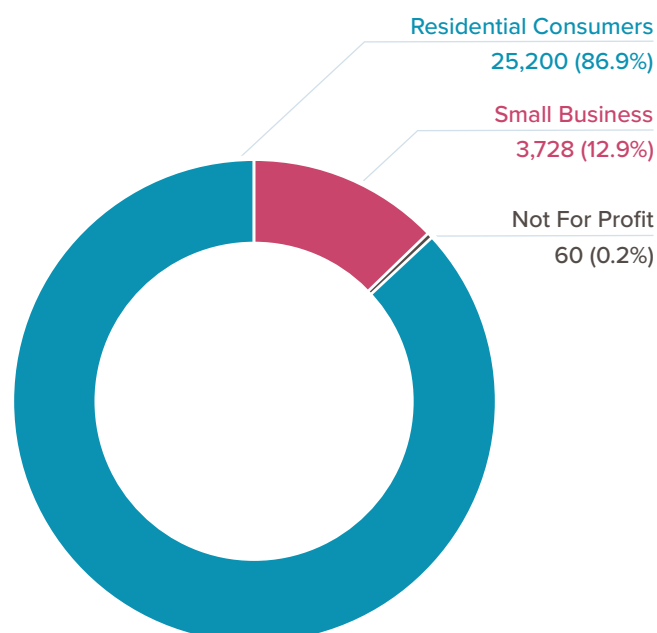


### COMPLAINT NUMBERS VS PREVIOUS YEARS

Complaints

Year over year change: 42.7%



COMPLAINTS ABOUT LANDLINE PHONES,  
MOBILE PHONES AND INTERNET SERVICESWHO COMPLAINED TO THE  
TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY OMBUDSMAN

## TOP COMPLAINT ISSUES

ISSUE	FINANCIAL YEAR	
	2016/17	2016/17 (%)*
Customer service	14,083	48.6%
Billing and payments	12,514	43.2%
Faults	10,394	35.9%
Complaint handling	9,257	31.9%
Contracts	5,747	19.8%
Connection	4,753	16.4%
Credit management	2,891	10.0%
Transfer	649	2.2%
Privacy	415	1.4%
Property	130	0.4%

## TOP 10 POSTCODES FOR COMPLAINTS

POSTCODE	SUBURB	FINANCIAL YEAR
		2016/17
4350	Toowoomba	768
4870	Cairns	607
4670	Bundaberg	562
4510	Caboolture	473
4655	Hervey Bay	432
4209	Upper Coomera	429
4207	Greater Logan Area	383
4740	Mackay	380
4215	Southport	366
4211	Nerang	351

\*Column one shows the number of complaints involving each issue. Column two shows the percentage of all complaints involving the issue. Complaints may involve multiple issues.

## South Australia

12,526

total complaints received from  
South Australia in 2016/17

51%

increase in complaints since 2015/16

7.9%

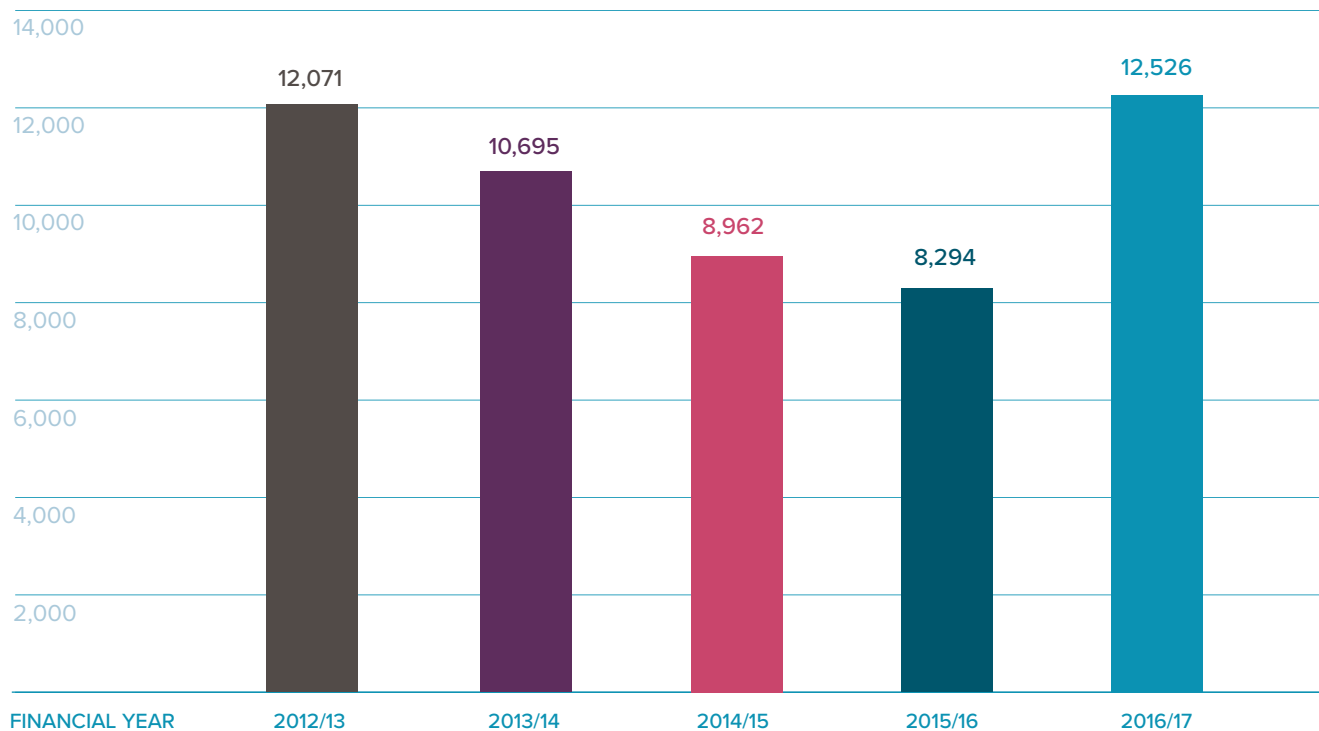
of national complaint numbers



### COMPLAINT NUMBERS VS PREVIOUS YEARS

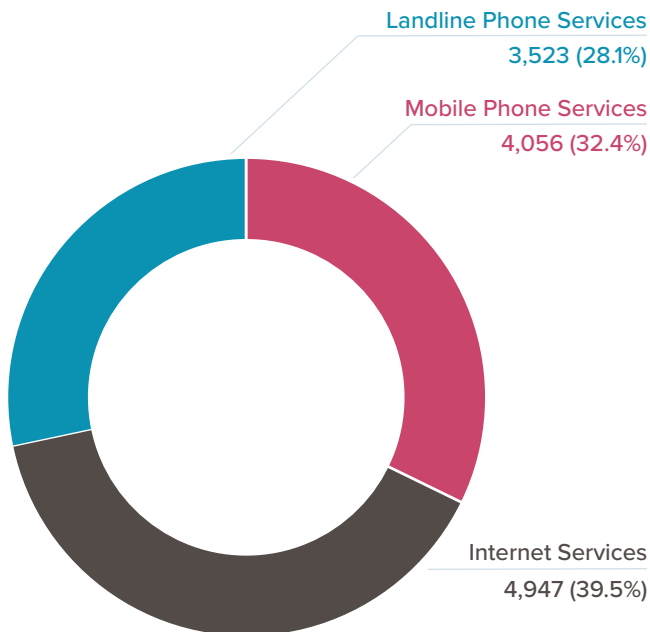
Complaints

Year over year change: 51%

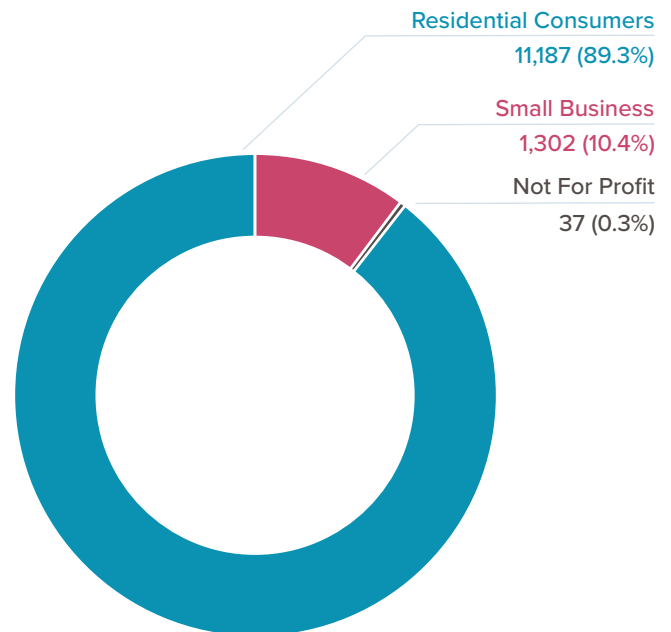




### COMPLAINTS ABOUT LANDLINE PHONES, MOBILE PHONES AND INTERNET SERVICES



### WHO COMPLAINED TO THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY OMBUDSMAN



### TOP COMPLAINT ISSUES

ISSUE	FINANCIAL YEAR	
	2016/17	2016/17 (%)*
Customer service	6,083	48.6%
Billing and payments	5,051	40.3%
Faults	4,633	37.0%
Complaint handling	3,804	30.4%
Contracts	2,363	18.9%
Connection	2,074	16.6%
Credit management	1,261	10.1%
Transfer	264	2.1%
Privacy	194	1.5%
Property	50	0.4%

### TOP 10 POSTCODES FOR COMPLAINTS

POSTCODE	SUBURB	FINANCIAL YEAR
		2016/17
5108	Paralowie	304
5159	Aberfoyle Park	260
5158	Hallett Cove	249
5162	Morphett Vale	230
5114	Andrews Farm	227
5043	Mitchell Park	207
5109	Salisbury East	202
5113	Davoren Park	189
5112	Elizabeth Vale	143
5000	Adelaide BC	142

\*Column one shows the number of complaints involving each issue. Column two shows the percentage of all complaints involving the issue. Complaints may involve multiple issues.

## Tasmania

2,964

total complaints received from  
Tasmania in 2016/17

38.4%

increase in complaints since 2015/16

1.9%

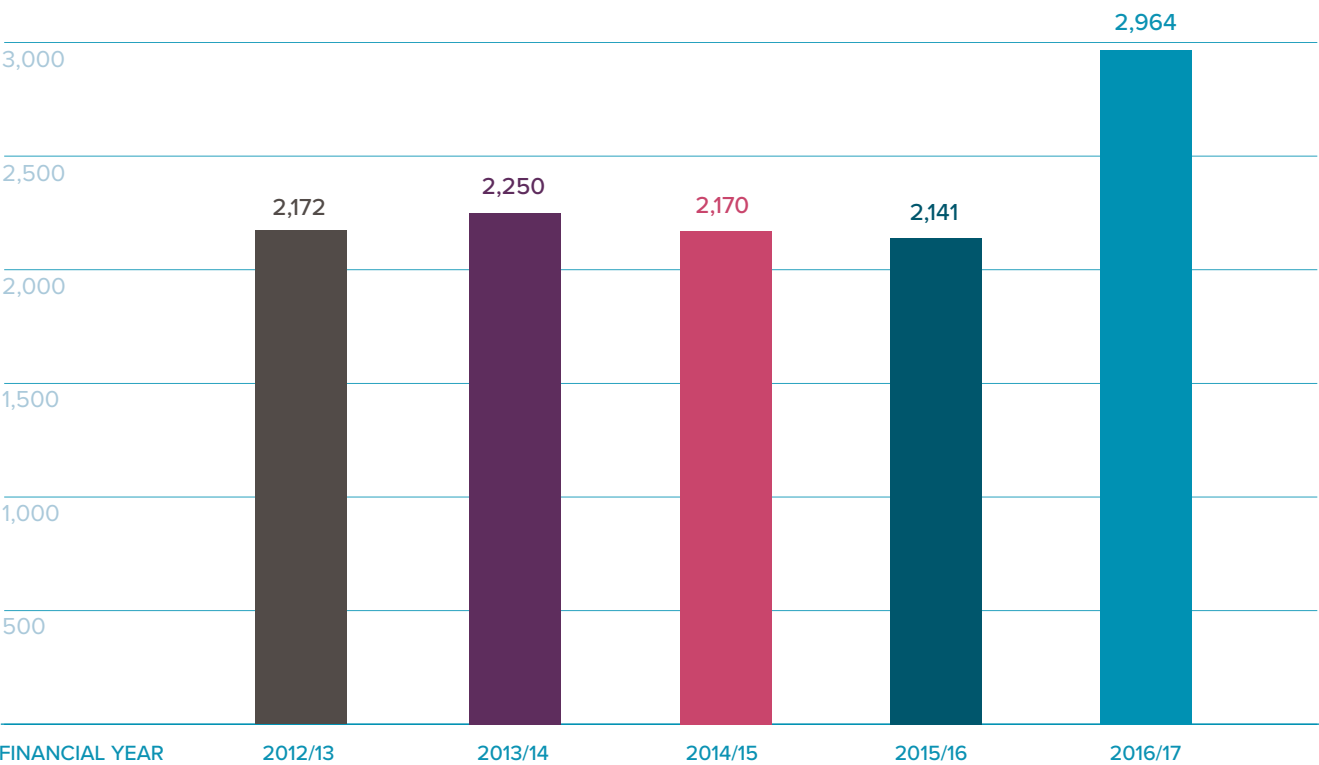
of national complaint numbers



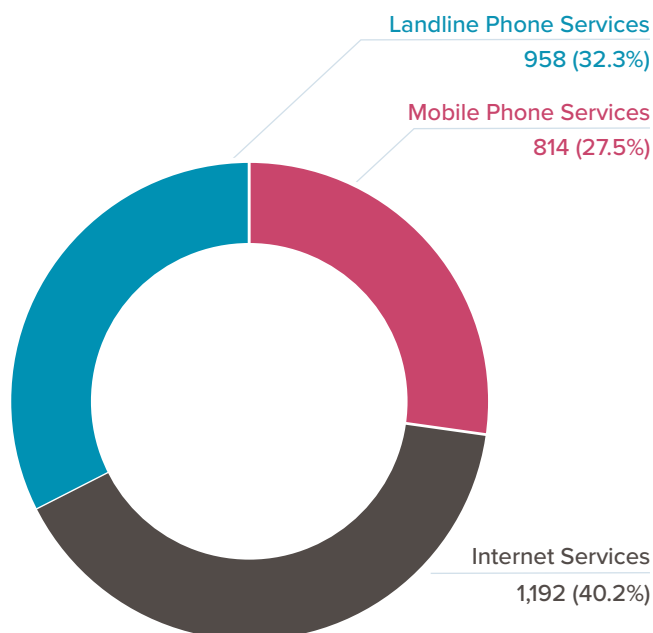
### COMPLAINT NUMBERS VS PREVIOUS YEARS

Complaints

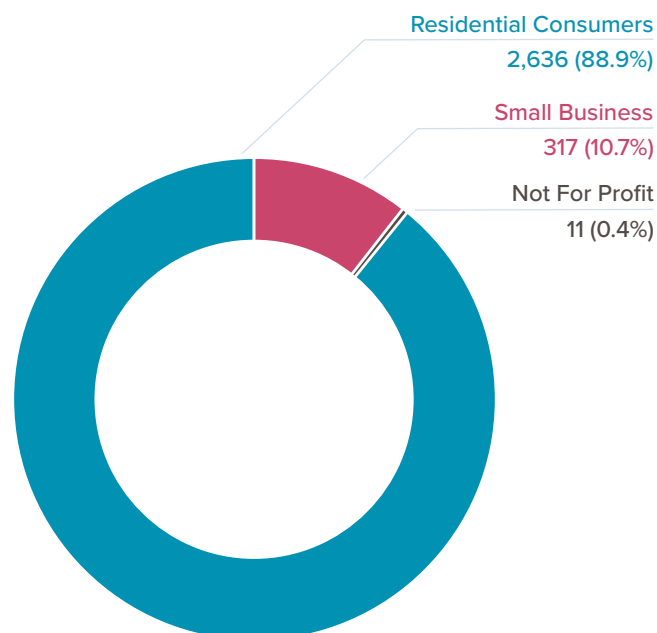
Year over year change: 38.4%



### COMPLAINTS ABOUT LANDLINE PHONES, MOBILE PHONES AND INTERNET SERVICES



### WHO COMPLAINED TO THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY OMBUDSMAN



### TOP COMPLAINT ISSUES

ISSUE	FINANCIAL YEAR	
	2016/17	2016/17 (%)*
Customer service	1,463	49.4%
Billing and payments	1,139	38.4%
Faults	1,051	35.5%
Complaint handling	978	33.0%
Connection	596	20.1%
Contracts	505	17.0%
Credit management	260	8.8%
Transfer	66	2.2%
Privacy	57	1.9%
Directories	24	0.8%

### TOP 10 POSTCODES FOR COMPLAINTS

POSTCODE	SUBURB	FINANCIAL YEAR
		2016/17
7250	Launceston	185
7018	Bellerive	169
7310	Devonport	157
7010	Glenorchy	138
7000	Hobart	134
7011	Claremont	125
7009	Moonah	115
7030	Mangalore	103
7008	New Town	94
7050	Kingston	67

\*Column one shows the number of complaints involving each issue. Column two shows the percentage of all complaints involving the issue. Complaints may involve multiple issues.



## Victoria

**43,565**

total complaints received from  
Victoria in 2016/17

**41.1%**

increase in complaints since 2015/16

**27.6%**

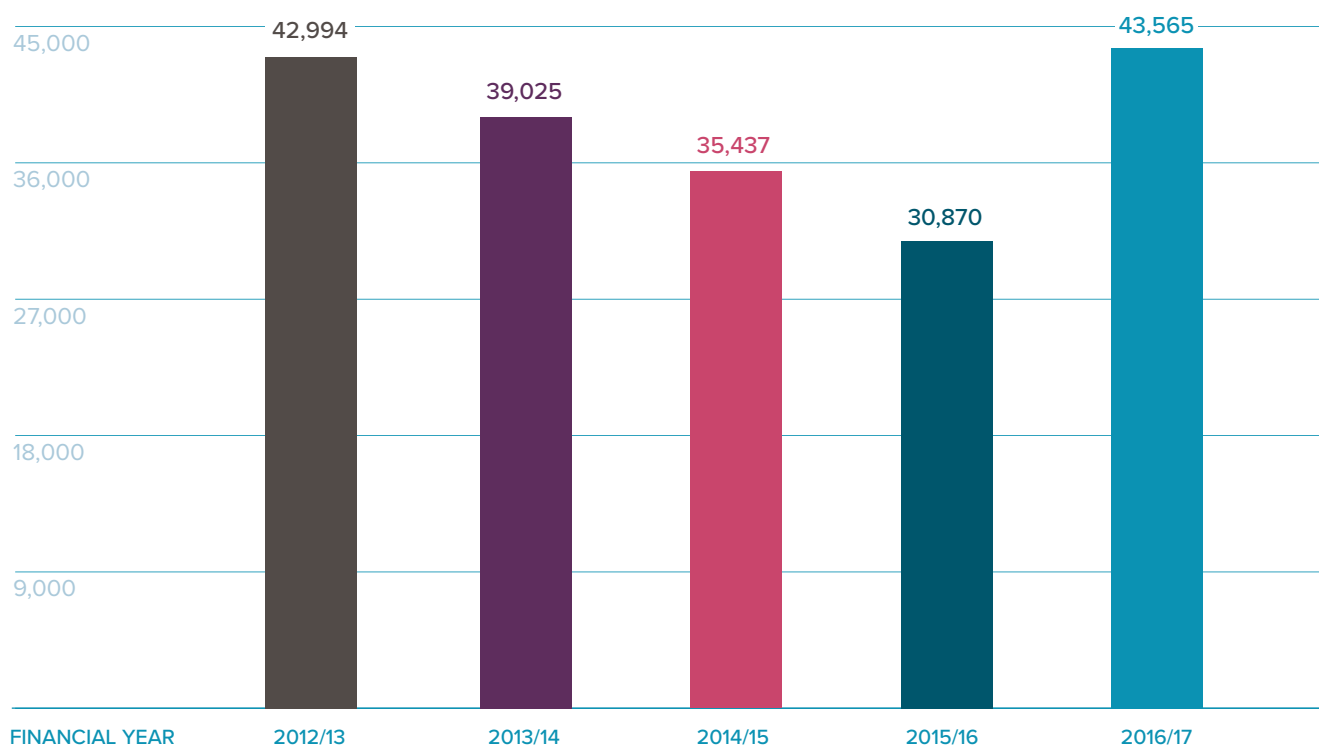
of national complaint numbers

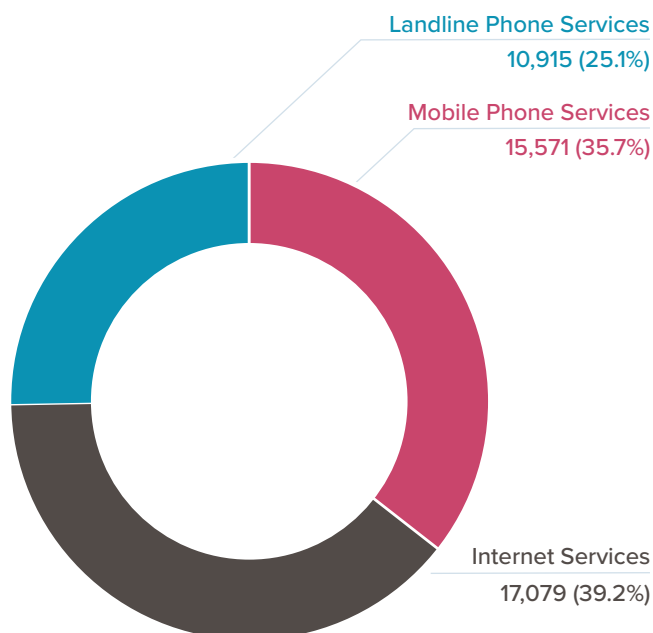
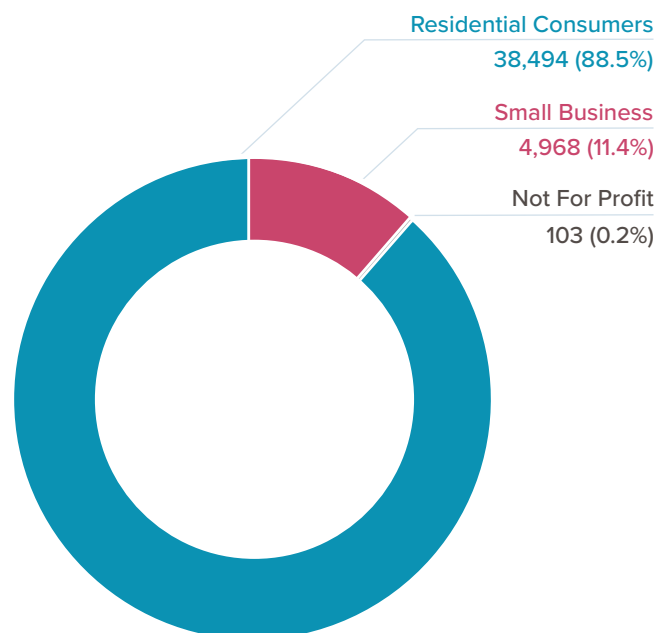


### COMPLAINT NUMBERS VS PREVIOUS YEARS

Complaints

Year over year change: 41.1%



COMPLAINTS ABOUT LANDLINE PHONES,  
MOBILE PHONES AND INTERNET SERVICESWHO COMPLAINED TO THE  
TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY OMBUDSMAN

## TOP COMPLAINT ISSUES

ISSUE	FINANCIAL YEAR	
	2016/17	2016/17 (%)*
Customer service	21,186	48.6%
Billing and payments	18,633	42.8%
Faults	14,892	34.2%
Complaint handling	13,449	30.9%
Contracts	8,732	20.0%
Connection	7,044	16.2%
Credit management	4,773	11.0%
Transfer	966	2.2%
Privacy	722	1.7%
Property	174	0.4%

## TOP 10 POSTCODES FOR COMPLAINTS

POSTCODE	SUBURB	FINANCIAL YEAR
		2016/17
3029	Hoppers Crossing	752
3030	Werribee	739
3064	Craigieburn	737
3977	Cranbourne	675
3175	Dandenong	574
3150	Glen Waverley	561
3350	Ballarat	471
3805	Narre Warren South	423
3199	Frankston	401
3023	Caroline Springs	399

\*Column one shows the number of complaints involving each issue. Column two shows the percentage of all complaints involving the issue. Complaints may involve multiple issues.

## Western Australia

13,623

total complaints received from  
Western Australia in 2016/17

49.1%

increase in complaints since 2015/16

8.6%

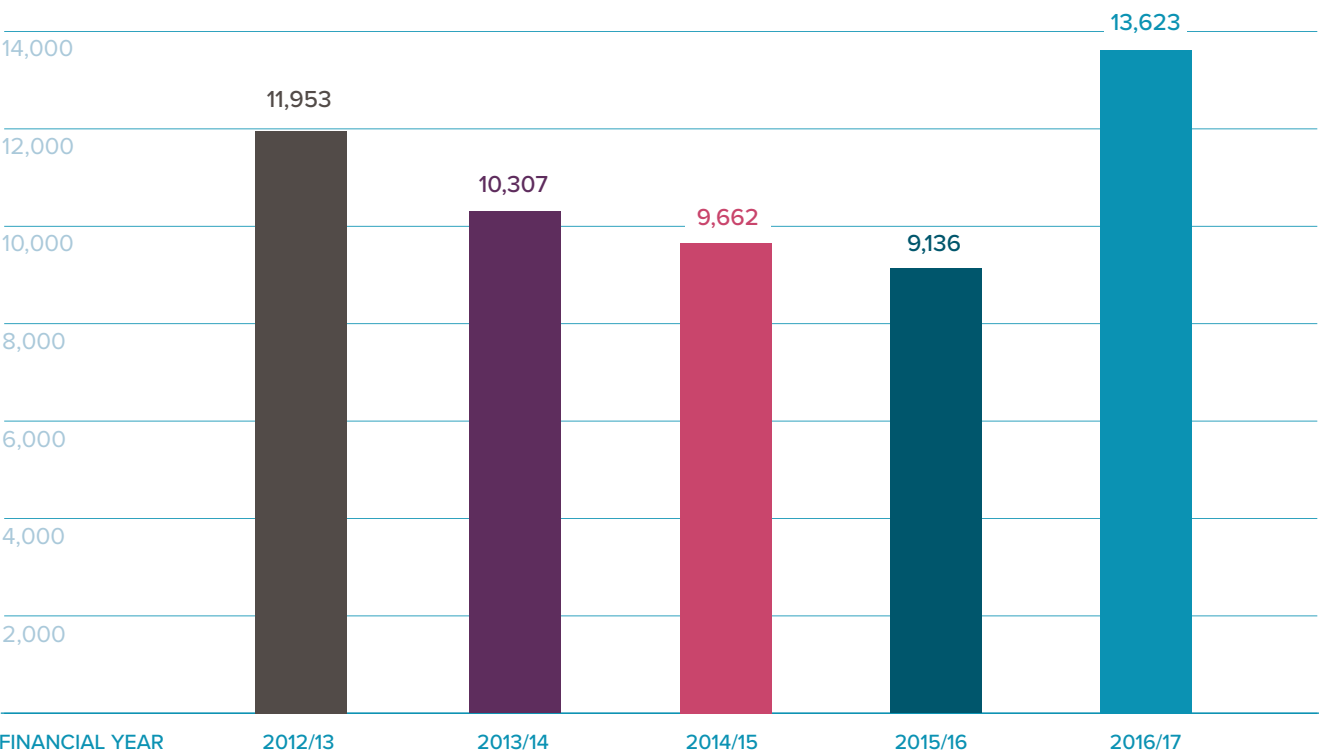
of national complaint numbers



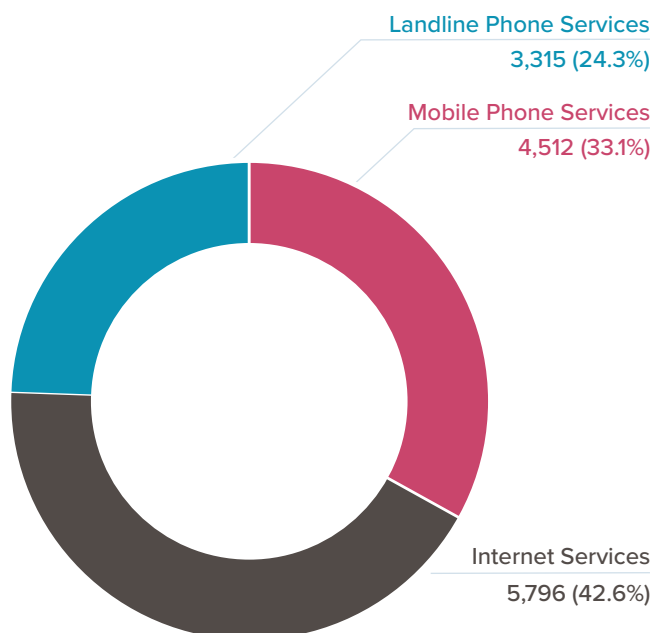
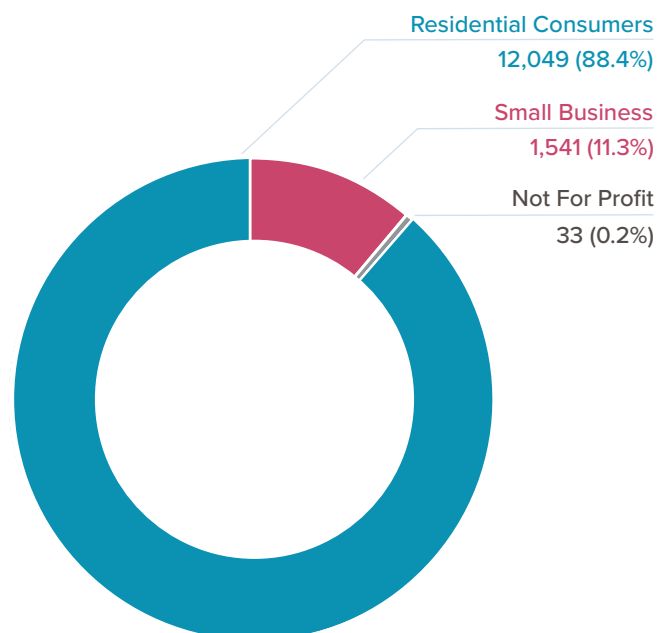
### COMPLAINT NUMBERS VS PREVIOUS YEARS

Complaints

Year over year change: 49.1%





COMPLAINTS ABOUT LANDLINE PHONES,  
MOBILE PHONES AND INTERNET SERVICESWHO COMPLAINED TO THE  
TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY OMBUDSMAN

## TOP COMPLAINT ISSUES

ISSUE	FINANCIAL YEAR	
	2016/17	2016/17 (%)*
Customer service	6,593	48.4%
Billing and payments	6,003	44.1%
Faults	4,982	36.6%
Complaint handling	4,278	31.4%
Contracts	2,765	20.3%
Connection	1,913	14.0%
Credit management	1,376	10.1%
Transfer	284	2.1%
Privacy	211	1.5%
Directories	64	0.5%

## TOP 10 POSTCODES FOR COMPLAINTS

POSTCODE	SUBURB	FINANCIAL YEAR
		2016/17
6210	Mandurah	469
6112	Armadale	393
6065	Wanneroo	355
6030	Clarkson	333
6163	Hamilton Hill	332
6107	Cannington	311
6164	Atwell	253
6056	Swan View	228
6155	Canning Vale	226
6061	Balga	188

\*Column one shows the number of complaints involving each issue. Column two shows the percentage of all complaints involving the issue. Complaints may involve multiple issues.

# Small Business

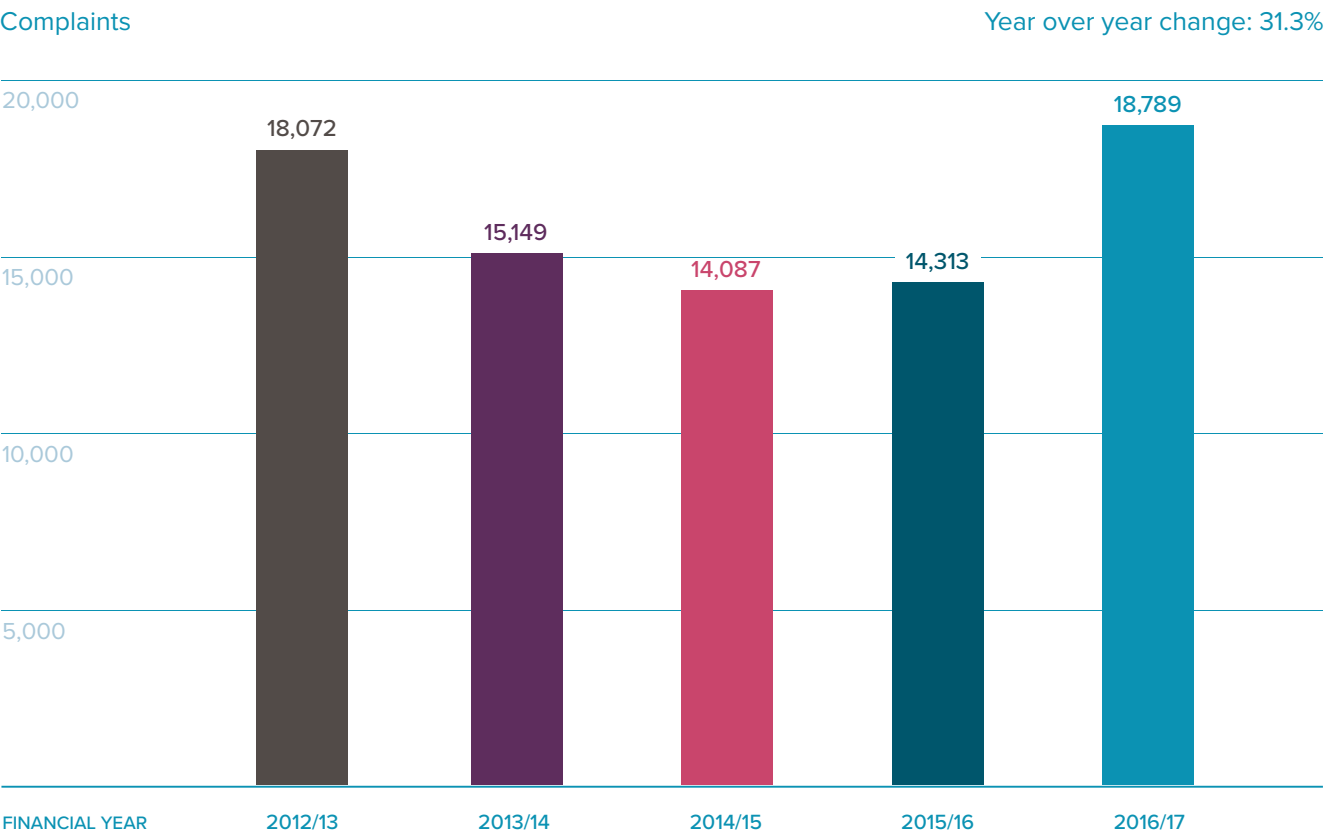
18,789

total complaints received from  
small businesses in 2016/17

31.3%

increase in complaints since 2015/16

## COMPLAINT NUMBERS VS PREVIOUS YEARS



## COMPLAINTS ABOUT LANDLINE PHONES, MOBILE PHONES AND INTERNET SERVICES

## Landline Phone Services

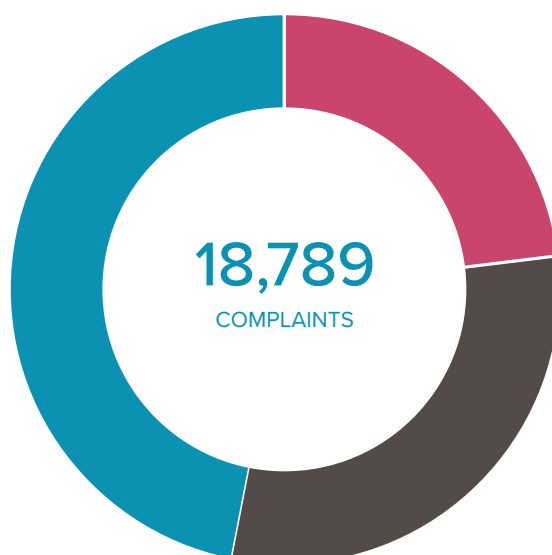
8,819 (46.9%)

## Mobile Phone Services

4,342 (23.1%)

## Internet Services

5,628 (30.0%)



## TOP COMPLAINT ISSUES

ISSUE	FINANCIAL YEAR	
	2016/17	2016/17 (%)*
Customer service	8,784	46.8%
Faults	7,854	41.8%
Billing and payments	6,863	36.5%
Complaint handling	5,915	31.5%
Contracts	3,410	18.1%
Connection	3,232	17.2%
Credit management	1,553	8.3%
Transfer	814	4.3%
Directories	328	1.7%
Privacy	290	1.5%

## TOP 10 POSTCODES FOR COMPLAINTS

			FINANCIAL YEAR	
SUBURB		STATE	2016/17	
2000	Sydney	NSW	137	
4870	Cairns	QLD	127	
3000	Melbourne	VIC	113	
2250	Central Mangrove	NSW	112	
3175	Dandenong	VIC	111	
2170	Liverpool	NSW	97	
4350	Toowoomba	QLD	87	
2560	Campbelltown	NSW	82	
2148	Blacktown	NSW	76	
2750	Penrith	NSW	76	

\*Column one shows the number of complaints involving each issue. Column two shows the percentage of all complaints involving the issue. Complaints may involve multiple issues.



## Complaints about phone and internet providers

As part of the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman's commitment to transparency and independence, this report features a breakdown of complaints about providers with the largest number of phone and internet complaints.

The data in the graphs is not adjusted for the number of customers or services in operation during the reporting period.

The ten service providers whose data is published in this report accounted for 90.9% of complaints in 2016/17.

Phone and internet providers have been listed in order of total number of complaints.

## Telstra

Complaints about Telstra in the 2016/17 financial year

# 76,650

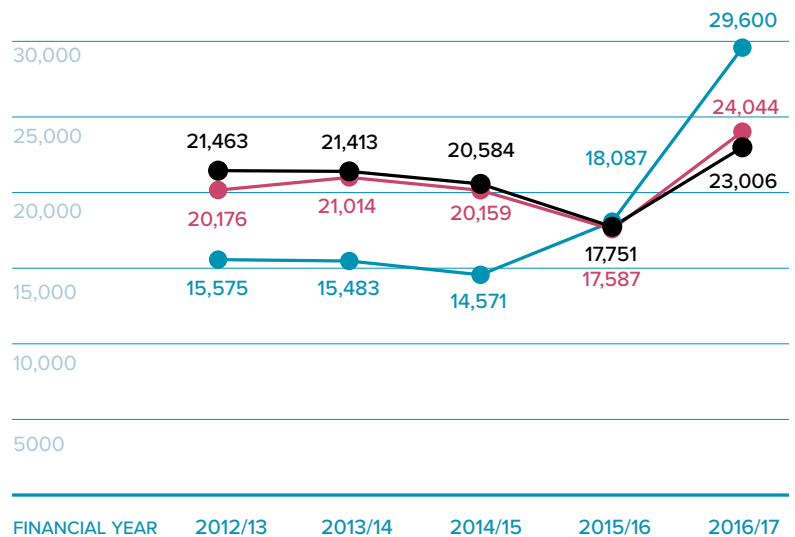
total complaints received compared to 53,425 received in 2015/16

# 43.5%

increase in complaints

# 13,536

complaints about services delivered over the national broadband network



## Optus Group

Complaints about Optus Group in the 2016/17 financial year

# 28,766

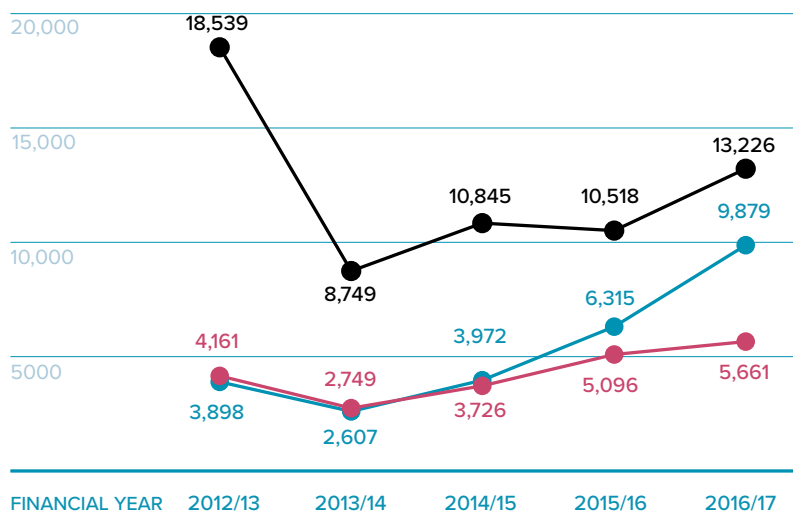
total complaints received compared to 21,929 received in 2015/16

# 31.2%

increase in complaints

# 3,938

complaints about services delivered over the national broadband network



- Landline Phone Services
- Mobile Phone Services
- Internet Services

## Vodafone Group

Complaints about Vodafone Group in the 2016/17 financial year

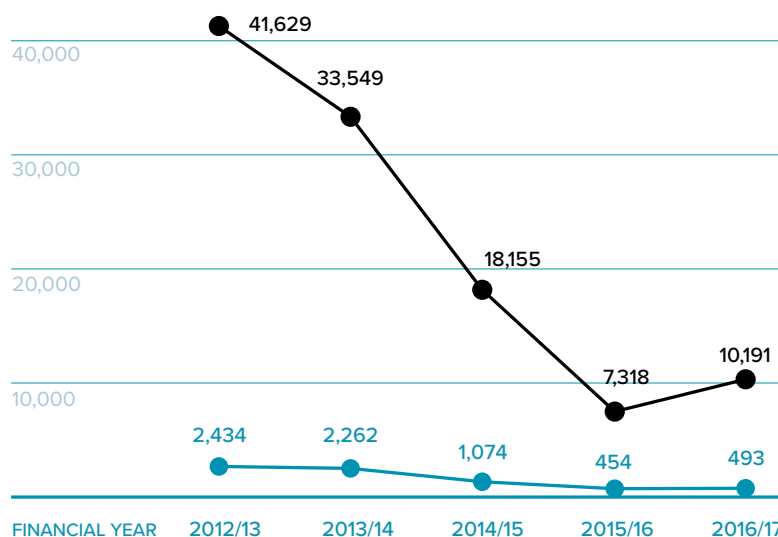
# 10,684

total complaints received compared to 7,772 received in 2015/16

# 37.5%

increase in complaints

Vodafone Group did not provide services delivered over the national broadband network in this financial year.



## iiNet

Complaints about iiNet in the 2016/17 financial year

# 10,170

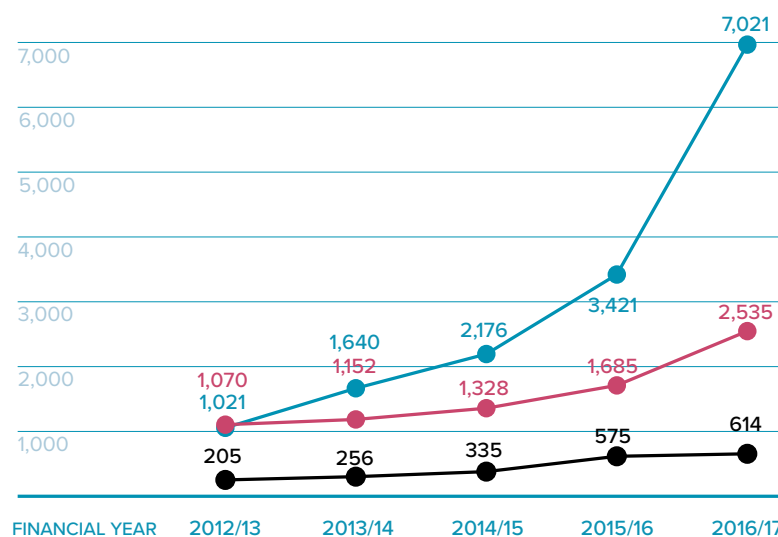
total complaints received compared to 5,681 received in 2015/16

# 79%

increase in complaints

# 2,197

complaints about services delivered over the national broadband network



- Landline Phone Services
- Mobile Phone Services
- Internet Services

## TPG Group

Complaints about TPG Group in the 2016/17 financial year

# 6,995

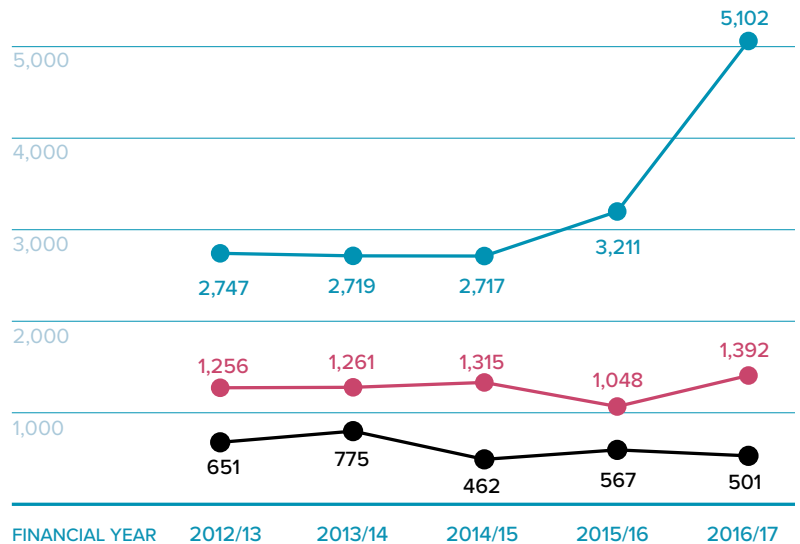
total complaints received compared to 4,826 received in 2015/16

# 44.9%

increase in complaints

# 1,916

complaints about services delivered over the national broadband network



## Dodo

Complaints about Dodo in the 2016/17 financial year

# 3,309

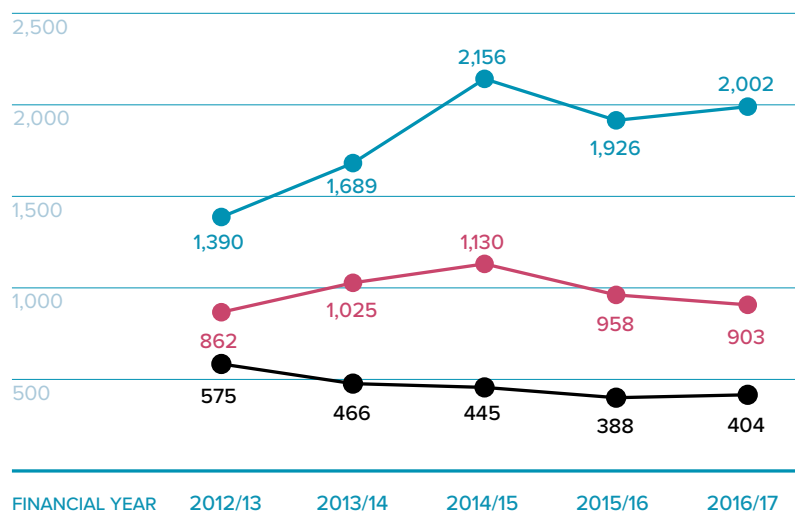
total complaints received compared to 3,272 received in 2015/16

# 1.1%

increase in complaints

# 726

complaints about services delivered over the national broadband network



- Landline Phone Services
- Mobile Phone Services
- Internet Services



## Southern Phone Company

Complaints about Southern Phone Company in the 2016/17 financial year

# 2,068

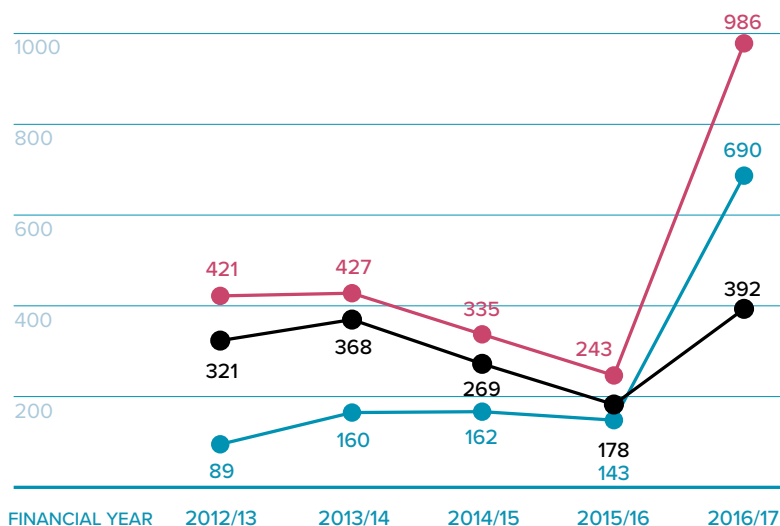
total complaints received compared to 564 received in 2015/16

# 266.7%

increase in complaints

# 865

complaints about services delivered over the national broadband network



## Primus Telecommunications

Complaints about Primus Telecommunications in the 2016/17 financial year

# 1,917

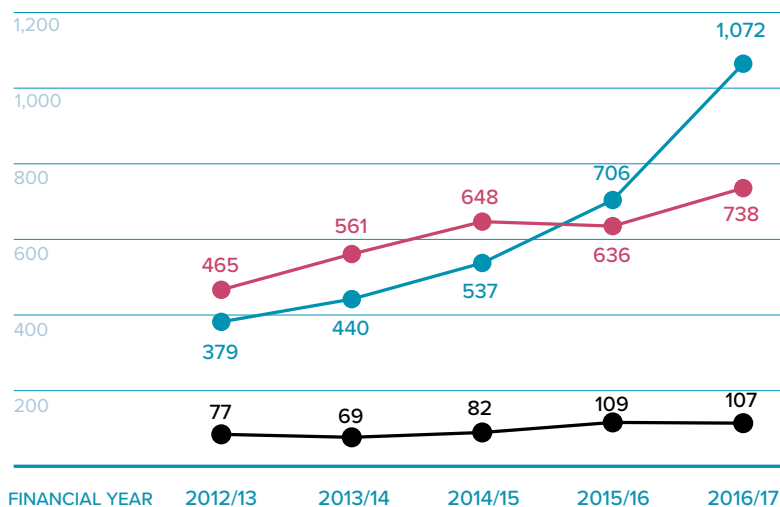
total complaints received compared to 1,451 received in 2015/16

# 32.1%

increase in Complaints

# 300

complaints about services delivered over the national broadband network



- Landline Phone Services
- Mobile Phone Services
- Internet Services

## M2 Commander

Complaints about M2 Commander in the 2016/17 financial year

# 1,704

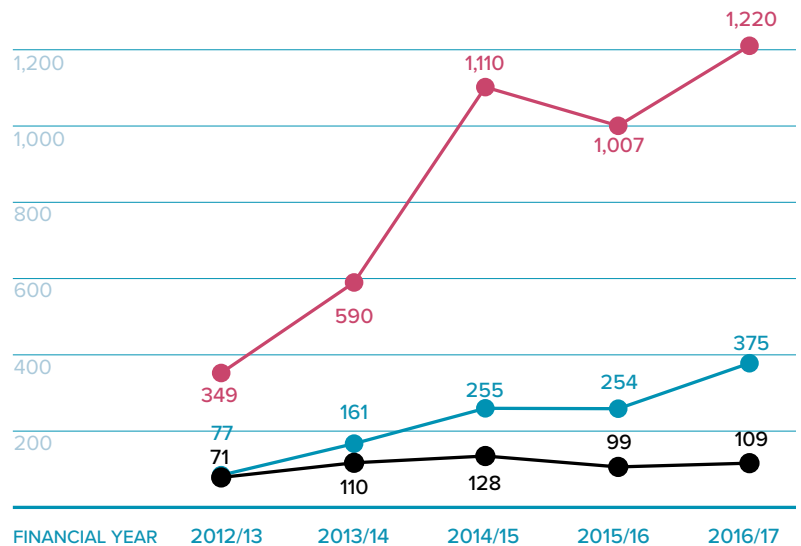
total complaints received compared to 1,360 received in 2015/16

# 25.3%

increase in complaints

# 259

complaints about services delivered over the national broadband network



## Virgin Mobile

Complaints about Virgin Mobile in the 2016/17 financial year

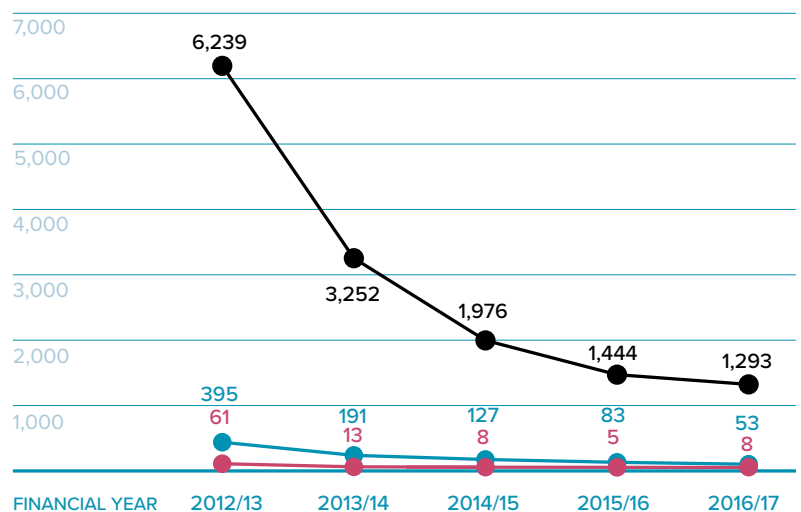
# 1,354

total complaints received compared to 1,532 received in 2015/16

# -11.6%

decrease in complaints

Virgin Mobile did not provide services delivered over the national broadband network in this financial year.



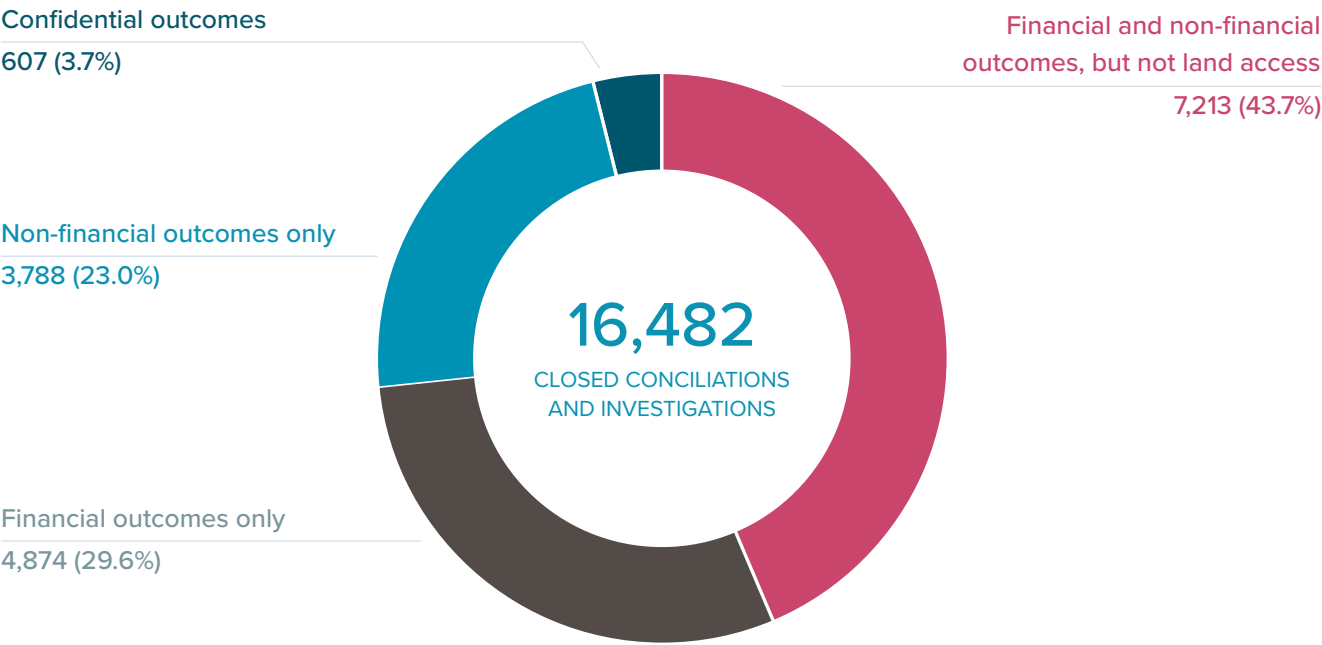
- Landline Phone Services
- Mobile Phone Services
- Internet Services

# Case Outcomes

When the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman closes a conciliation or investigation, outcomes are recorded. These can have a financial or non-financial benefit to the residential consumer or small business. The most common financial outcome for consumers in 2016/17 was a debt or fee reduction or waiver, followed by a billing adjustment. The median value in financial outcomes was \$350, and the most common non-financial outcome for residential consumers or small businesses was an explanation or assistance, followed by cancellation or change to a contract, service or plan.

While the median financial outcome is relatively modest, often knowing the bill was right or the explanation provided by the provider was correct can provide significant value to both parties.

## THE DISTRIBUTION OF CONCILIATION AND INVESTIGATION CASE OUTCOMES IN 2016/17



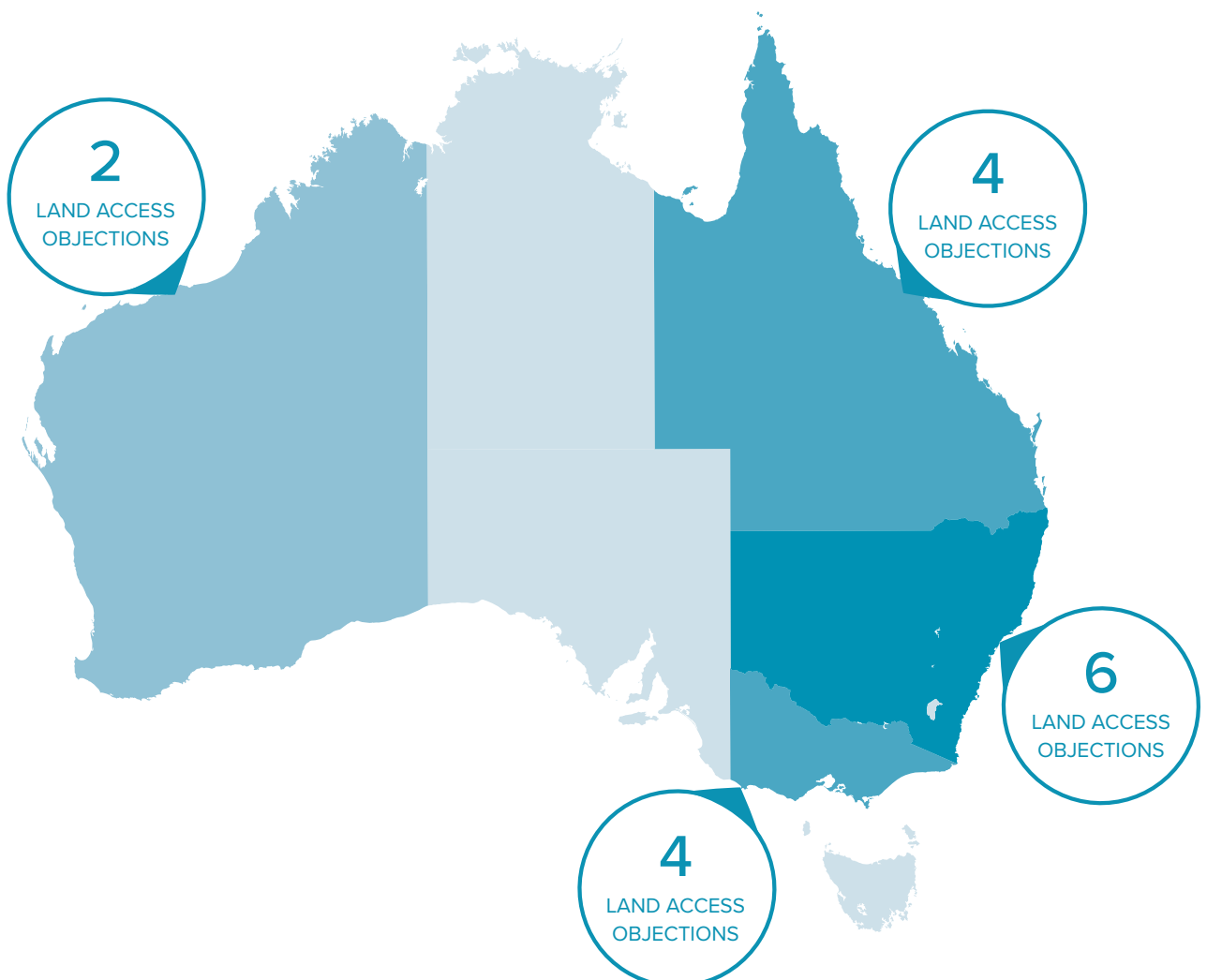
## EXAMPLES OF CONCILIATION AND INVESTIGATION CASE OUTCOMES

FINANCIAL	NON-FINANCIAL
Debt/fee reduction or waiver	Explanation or assistance
Billing adjustment	Cancellation or change to a contract
Payment arrangement	Repair of equipment, service or property damage
Customer Service Guarantee payment	Connection or reconnection
Compensation for non-financial loss	Apology
	Correction of a record

## Land access objections

Under the *Telecommunications Act 1997*, the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman deals with objections from landowners or occupiers about the proposed inspection, maintenance or placement of “low impact facilities” such as antennas or cabling on their land. Senior Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman staff with knowledge of the legislation work on these cases, and cases about land damage by a carrier when installing or maintaining telecommunications equipment. The Ombudsman makes the decisions on land access objections.

This year the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman received 16 new land access objections compared to six the previous year. There were six objections in New South Wales, four in Victoria, four in Queensland and two in Western Australia.











---

# FINANCIAL REPORT



## Financial Report for the year ending 30 June 2017

The Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman  
Financial Report is a separate document available  
for download on the Telecommunication Industry  
Ombudsman website [www.tio.com.au](http://www.tio.com.au)







## Contact us

By phone	1800 062 058*
Online	<a href="http://www.tio.com.au">www.tio.com.au</a>
By fax (free)	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.