



Media Release

Submission to the Regional Telecommunications Review 2021

20 October 2021

The Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (TIO) today published its submission to the Department's Regional Telecommunications Review 2021. The submission highlighted the concerns of telco consumers living outside Australia's metropolitan centres and provides insight into phone and internet complaint trends.

Each year, the TIO receives around 30,000 phone and internet complaints from consumers living in regional, rural and remote areas of Australia.

The TIO is uniquely placed to share its data and insights on the telco problems experienced by regional rural and remote consumers.

Complaint data shows service reliability, poor service coverage, lack of choice, and weak or damaged network infrastructure remain key concerns for consumers living in regional, rural, and remote Australia.

Consumers in regional, rural, and remote communities rely on telecommunications services to stay connected to family, emergency and support services, work and study from home, and run small businesses.

The consequences of poor service reliability can be greater for regional consumers. Complaints to the TIO show it can take longer to repair a fault and there are fewer alternatives available when the service is out.

Service outages can also have a significant impact on businesses operating in regional Australia.

Many of these businesses rely on telecommunication services to take orders and bookings, for promotion, to order stock, to take or process payments, and for other day-to-day business activities.

Suggested improvements to telco services and infrastructure include:

- Promoting a wider range of telecommunications services in regional communities through grants and other investment incentives.
- Standardising mobile coverage information that is provided by telcos and publishing up to date information about what services are available in regional areas.
- Offering government-subsidised mobile devices that can access both standard mobile networks and satellite networks.
- Constructing communal connectivity hubs for remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities offering voice, SMS, and data access to members of the community.

Read the submission: [Submission to the 2021 Regional Telecommunications Review](#)

Quote attributable to Ombudsman Judi Jones

"Consumers living in regional communities continue to have reduced access to telecommunications services.



“Regional communities face unique challenges in having a fault repaired or being able to access an alternative service. They also face a greater risk in natural disasters, such as bushfires and floods, where reliable telco services play a critical role in co-ordinating disaster response and recovery.

“Providing better access to information about available services could allow consumers to make more informed decisions, encourage competition, and bridge the telco divide between metropolitan and regional, rural and remote Australia.”

Ends

Notes to Editors

For all media enquiries please contact Sarah Carnovale on 0437 548 540 or mediaenquiries@tio.com.au

About 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.

Consumers and small businesses should contact tio.com.au or 1800 062 058.