



## **Backgrounder: Complaints Data Insights – January to March 2024**

### **Executive summary**

Overall, complaints increased by 9.1 percent over the previous quarter and decreased by 10.9 percent over the same period last year. The TIO received a total of 15,799 complaints in this period.

The top concerns raised by consumers were in relation to not having a working phone or internet service, and slow data speeds. The largest increase in complaints was for no phone or internet service (35.4 percent increase).

Complaints from residential consumers made up 89.1 percent of complaints, an increase of 10.6 percent compared to the previous quarter.

Complaints about Tangerine increased by 65.8 percent (98 complaints) in the previous quarter, whereas Optus decreased by 19 percent (845 complaints).

### **At a glance**

- Overall, complaints increased by 9.1 percent over the previous quarter and decreased by 10.9 percent over the same period last year. The TIO received a total of 15,799 complaints in this period.
- Complaints about landline services increased by 20 percent compared to the previous quarter, followed by internet service with an increase by 19.5 percent and mobile service which increased by 5.4 percent.
- The top five LGAs with the highest complaints were Brisbane (571), Gold Coast (378), Moreton Bay (302), Sunshine Coast (275) and Whittlesea (180).
- 388 consumers who identify as belonging to the First Nations Community made complaints with the TIO, which is an 11.2 percent increase in the number of consumers as compared to 349 consumers last quarter.
- Chinese, Arabic, and Hindi are the most used languages besides English spoken by consumers approaching the TIO.
- Complaints about Tangerine increased by 65.8 percent (98 cases) in the previous quarter, whereas Optus decreased by 19 percent (845 complaints).



## Complaints Data Insight - January to March 2024

### National Picture

Complaints from consumers rose by 9.1 percent, which translates to an increase of 1,316 complaints compared to the previous quarter. However, there was a decline of 10.9 percent, with 1,923 fewer complaints compared to the same period last year.

### Complaints by Issue

Eight of the top ten issues have increased from the previous quarter. The biggest rise of 35.4 percent was caused by an increase of 581 complaints from the previous quarter regarding **no phone or internet service**.

Keyword	Complaint numbers this quarter	Same period last year	Same period last quarter	Quarter on quarter	Year on year
No or delayed action by provider	9,194	9,839	8,789	4.6%	-6.6%
Service and equipment fees	5,086	6,246	4,723	7.7%	-18.6%
No phone or internet service	2,223	1,721	1,642	35.4%	29.2%
Intermittent service or drop outs	1,573	1,753	1,288	22.1%	-10.3%
Delay establishing a service	1,348	1,117	1,187	13.6%	20.7%
Inadequate fault testing	1,331	1,093	1,276	4.3%	21.8%
Resolution agreed but not met	1,247	1,941	1,427	-12.6%	-35.8%
Failure to cancel a service	1,133	1,448	1,079	5.0%	-21.8%
Slow data speed	1,025	1,103	792	29.4%	-7.1%
Non-financial loss - not privacy	983	1,065	1,128	-12.9%	-7.7%

Other notable increases were recorded for **slow data speed** (29.4 percent) and **intermittent service or drop outs** (22.1 percent) against the previous quarter. Although, there were a decrease in complaints for **non-financial loss not related to privacy** by 145 complaints (by 12.9 percent).

**Network outage** has dropped out of the top ten issues as the number of complaints were reduced from 850 complaints to 352 complaints compared to previous quarter.



## Complaints by Consumer Type

### Small business

- With 1,717 complaints, the number of small business complaints has dropped by 1.7 percent in the previous quarter.
- 10.9 percent of all complaints came from small businesses.
- In comparison to the previous quarter, complaints regarding business loss dropped by 12.7 percent to 269 complaints.
- With 150 complaints, the number of complaints regarding delay establishing a service climbed by 24 percent. A rise in complaints were also observed in no phone or internet service (by 7.3 percent), inadequate fault testing (by 3.2 percent), and intermittent service or drop outs (by 11.3 percent).
- Total dollars returned to small businesses for the period was \$412,095.

### Residential consumers

- Compared to previous quarter, residential consumer complaints have increased by 10.6 percent, reaching a total of 14,082 complaints.
- Complaints from residential consumers made up 89.1 percent of all complaints.
- Increases were recorded against issues such as providers not taking action, charges for services and equipment, not having phone or internet service, intermittent service or drop outs, as well as delay in establishing a service.
- Total dollars returned to residential consumers for the period was \$444,770.

## Complaints by demographic

### First Nation Consumers

- We received 388 complaints from consumers who identified as belonging to the First Nations Community.
- There was an increase in no or delayed action from the provider, service and equipment fee, no phone or internet service and intermittent service, or drop outs complaints from First Nation consumers.

### Consumers who speak a language other than English

- Consumers who speak a language other than English complained about no or delayed action from the provider, service and equipment fee, no phone or internet service and intermittent service, or drop outs.
- In comparison with previous quarter, along with Arabic and Hindi, Chinese was also the most used language spoken by consumers, other than English.



## Service Types

The number of complaints in relation to all service types has increased. Internet and Mobile complaints continue to be a concern to small businesses and residential consumers. Complaints in relation to landline services has by increased 20 percent.

### Internet complaints

- Complaints in relation to internet use has increased by 19.5 percent in the last quarter, with 1,064 more complaints compared to the previous quarter. These complaints now make up 41.4 percent of all complaints received.
- The top three issues consumers are reporting with their internet service includes no or delayed action by provider, service and equipment fees, and no phone or internet service.
- There has been a rise in complaints about internet services in each of the top ten LGAs.

### Mobile complaints

- Complaints in relation to mobile phone use increased by 5.4 percent, or by 350 complaints.
- The top three issues identified in mobile phone complaints were no or delayed action by provider, service and equipment fees, and poor mobile coverage.
- Out of all LGAs, Brisbane continues to have the highest percentage of mobile service complaints.

### Landline complaints

- The TIO received a 20 percent increase in complaints in relation to landline services on last quarter, or an increase of 176 complaints.
- A majority of complaints, 71.8 percent, came from residential consumers. An increase on last quarter which was 67.3 percent.
- In comparison with the previous quarter, all the top ten issues increased. The largest increase was seen in complaints for inadequate fault testing, which was up by 41 percent.



Keyword	Complaint numbers this quarter	Same period last year	Same period last quarter	Quarter on quarter	Year on year
No or delayed action by provider	623	571	558	11.6%	9.1%
No phone or internet service	386	282	285	35.4%	36.9%
Service and equipment fees	207	232	187	10.7%	-10.8%
Inadequate fault testing	141	48	100	41.0%	193.8%
Number problem due to connection, disconnection or transfer	96	88	77	24.7%	9.1%
Delay establishing a service	92	82	87	5.7%	12.2%
Partially restricted service	72	65	60	20.0%	10.8%
Failure to cancel a service	67	108	64	4.7%	-38.0%
Resolution agreed but not met	65	102	59	10.2%	-36.3%
Business loss	58	64	57	1.8%	-9.4%

#### Top 10 providers

1. Telstra	2. Optus
3. Vodafone	4. TPG
5. iiNet	6. Southern phone
7. Aussie Broadband	8. Tangerine
9. Dodo	10. Exetel (new to top ten)

- Of the top ten providers, eight have had an increase of complaints made against them.
- The proportion of complaints about Telstra rose from 37.2 percent in the second quarter to 42.5 percent in the third quarter.
- The proportion of complaints about Optus decreased from 30.7 percent in the second quarter to 22.8 percent in the third quarter.
- The largest increase in complaints in comparison to the last quarter was Tangerine which was up by 65.8 percent (by 98 complaints).



- Many consumers voiced their concerns primarily about their internet service, marking a significant increase of 80 complaints.
- Other increases in the number of complaints were recorded by Southern Phone, who had an associated rise of 42.6 percent (by 89 complaints), Exetel saw an increase of complaints by 37.6 percent (by 35 complaints), Vodafone saw a rise of 28.7 percent (by 341 complaints), Telstra experienced a 24.6 percent increase (by 1,328 complaints), and TPG had a 21.2 percent increase (by 109 complaints).

Providers	Complaint numbers this quarter	Same period last year	Same period last quarter	Quarter on quarter	Year on year
Telstra Group	6718	7097	5390	24.6%	-5.3%
Optus Group	3595	5314	4440	-19.0%	-32.3%
Vodafone Australia Limited	1528	1421	1187	28.7%	7.5%
TPG Group	622	546	513	21.2%	13.9%
iiNet Ltd	473	503	419	12.9%	-6.0%
Southern Phone Company Ltd	298	335	209	42.6%	-11.0%
Aussie Broadband Limited	261	240	222	17.6%	8.7%
Tangerine Telecom Pty Ltd	247	114	149	65.8%	116.7%
Dodo Services Pty Ltd	230	162	230	0.0%	42.0%
Exetel Pty Ltd	128	110	93	37.6%	16.4%

## State Picture

Nationally, the top five LGAs with the highest complaints were Brisbane (571), Gold Coast (378), Moreton Bay (302), Sunshine Coast (275) and Whittlesea (180).

### New South Wales (NSW)

- A total of 4,138 complaints were made by people in NSW, which shows a slight increase of 0.7 percent compared to last quarter, or an additional 27 complaints made by people in NSW.
- 8.5 percent complaints were made by small businesses, reflecting a decrease of 2.2 percent from the last quarter.
- The LGA in NSW with the highest number of complaints was Blacktown followed by Sydney, Lake Macquarie, Gosford and The Hills Shire.



### **Victoria (VIC)**

- A total of 3,790 complaints were made by people in Victoria. In comparison with the last quarter, 98 additional complaints were received from consumers which is an increase of 2.7 percent.
- Small businesses accounted for 8.5 percent of the total complaints. However, there has been a 2.2 percent decrease in complaints from small businesses compared to the last quarter.
- An increase in complaints was recorded against no phone or internet service, intermittent service or drop outs, and delay establishing a service.
- The LGA in Victoria with the highest number of complaints was Whittlesea followed by Wyndham, Casey, Hume and Greater Geelong.
- The LGA of Whittlesea in Victoria is one of the top five LGAs to receive the most complaints in Australia. Compared to last quarter, there are 32 complaints in addition, which is about 21.6 percent higher. People often complain due to no or delayed action by provider, service and equipment fees, and no phone or internet service.

### **Queensland (QLD)**

- A total of 2,832 complaints were made by people in Queensland. This is 16.3 percent more than in the previous quarter, which is an additional 397 complaints.
- 7.6 percent complaints were made by small businesses.
- Nationally, four of the top five LGAs with the most complaints continue to be in Queensland.
- The LGA in Queensland with the highest number of complaints was Brisbane followed by Gold Coast, Moreton Bay, Sunshine Coast and Logan.
- Although Brisbane had the most complaints nationwide, there were slightly fewer complaints compared to the previous quarter; 0.5 percent less, which is about 3 complaints fewer. Most of the complaints were due to no or delayed action by provider, service and equipment fees, and no phone or internet service.
- In the Brisbane LGA, consumers complaints in relation delays in getting a service increased by 28.9 percent on the previous quarter - and 13.7 percent in comparison to the same period last year.
- Complaints in relation to no phone or internet services increased by 79.1 percent since the last quarter and 53.6 percent for the same period the previous year. For Q3, Bundaberg and Scenic Rim LGAs had the largest quarter on quarter increase.



### **South Australia (SA)**

- A total of 1,021 complaints were made by people in South Australia. This represents a decrease of 1.5 percent compared to the last quarter.
- 91.9 percent of complaints were made by residential consumers.
- The LGA in SA with the highest number of complaints was Charles Sturt followed by Salisbury, Playford, Onkaparinga and Port Adelaide Enfield.
- Charles Sturt in South Australia reported a significant increase in complaints, up by 36.9 percent (to 89 complaints) since last quarter. Most of the complaints are due to no or delayed action by provider, service and equipment fees, and no phone or internet service.
- The issues that increased the most since last quarter in Charles Sturt are slow data speed (increased by 8 complaints), misleading conduct when making a contract (increased by 3 complaints) and non-financial loss –not privacy (increased by 4 complaints).
- For SA, complaints about misleading conduct when making a contract increased by 51.4 percent from the previous quarter. Other issues that saw a significant increase quarter on quarter were slow data speed (41.2 percent increase) and intermittent service or drop outs at 31.6 percent increase.

### **Western Australia (WA)**

- A total of 1,157 complaints were made by people in Western Australia.
- 7.5 percent of complaints were made by small businesses, a decrease of 2.8 percent compared to the previous quarter.
- The LGA in WA with the highest complaints continues to be Wanneroo (127 complaints). The increase in complaints were due to no or delayed action by provider, service and equipment fees, and no phone or internet service.

### **Tasmania (TAS)**

- A total of 198 complaints were made by people in Tasmania. This is a decrease of 14.3 percent complaints compared to previous quarter.
- 8.1 percent of these complaints were from small businesses. This is a decrease in the number of complaints compared to 11.5 percent in the previous quarter.
- The LGA in SA with the highest number of complaints was Clarence followed by Glenorchy, Huon Valley, Launceston and Kingborough.
- In comparison to the last quarter, there has been a decline in the number of complaints for no or delayed action by provider (124 complaints) and service and equipment fees (57 complaints).
- There has been an increase in complaints for internet service by 5 percent (by 4 complaints) and complaints for landline service by 25 percent (by 4 complaints) compared to Q2.



#### **Northern Territory (NT)**

- A total of 71 complaints were made by people in the Northern Territory. This is an increase of 31.5 percent complaints compared to the previous quarter.
- Among these complaints, 1.4 percent originated from small businesses, a decrease of 8 percent on the previous quarter.
- The LGA in the Northern Territory with the highest number of complaints was Darwin, followed by Litchfield, Alice Springs, and Palmerston.
- No complaints were registered by small businesses in Darwin, NT.
- There has been a significant increase in the complaints regarding no or delayed action by provider, service and equipment fees, and no phone or internet service.

#### **Australian Capital Territory (ACT)**

- People from ACT made 179 complaints. In comparison with the last quarter, 174 complaints have been made by consumers which is an increase of 2.9 percent.
- 93.9 percent of complaints were from residential consumers.
- The ACT recorded an increase of 59.1 percent in complaints in relation to service and equipment fees.