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INTERNET AND NBN COMPLAINTS RISE FROM AUSTRALIAN CONSUMERS AS MOBILE COMPLAINTS FALL

Australian Consumers made 112,518 new complaints to the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (TIO) in the last financial year (July 2015 to June 2016). In this period, new complaints about mobile services fell, however internet and National Broadband Network (NBN) related complaints both rose significantly.

Launching the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman's 2015-16 Annual Report today (17 November 2016), Ombudsman Judi Jones said the total number of new complaints about mobile, landline and internet services dropped 9.6 per cent in 2015-16.

The decline, however, appears to have leveled out and for the past nine months, complaints have increased. From July to September 2016, new complaints rose by 25.7 per cent on the same period last year.

Across all service types, billing and payments, customer service, faults, complaint handling and contracts were the most common complaints.

"We saw nearly a 100 per cent increase in the number of NBN related complaints this year, but the rate of growth is lower than the growth of active services" said Ms Jones. "Delays in connections to the network, faults including unusable services, and dropout of services were regularly reported, which is of concern."

New complaints about faults on NBN services jumped by 147.8 per cent, while complaints about NBN connections rose by 63.2 per cent. NBN complaints now represent 11.9 per cent of all new complaints to the TIO.

More than a quarter of our new complaints came from regional and rural Australia. Compared to last year, we saw a six per cent increase in the proportion of new regional and rural complaints.

The Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman has also seen a change in the services consumers complain about. More consumers are complaining to us about problems with their internet than in previous years. New complaints about internet services rose by 22 per cent to the highest level in five years.

"Consumers told us that slow data speed was the biggest problem with internet services," said Ms Jones. "New complaints about internet data speed increased by 48 per cent."

"Consumers also made an increased number of complaints about long waits for connections and repairing unreliable services."

There was a 28.8 per cent decrease in the number of new complaints about mobiles, to the lowest level in nine years. Complaints about problem areas such as coverage, excess data and roaming charges all decreased.

"Complaints about mobile services have reduced due to better product offerings from Telcos including higher data allowances and increased investment in mobile infrastructure," said Ms Jones.

"If consumers are unable to resolve a dispute with their telco, they can contact the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman online at tio.com.au or call 1800 062 058," said Ms Jones.

**For a copy of the report or an interview contact Caroline Ottinger on 0417 305 310
caroline.ottinger@tio.com.au The report will be at Annualreport2016.tio.com.au at 12pm Wed.**

NOTES TO EDITORS

The Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (TIO) provides a free and independent dispute service for small business and residential consumers who have an unresolved complaint about their telephone or internet service in Australia. www.tio.com.au or 1800 062 058.

KEY STATISTICS

In 2015-16 the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman received 47,778 enquiries and 112,518 new complaints.

New complaints to the TIO by service type in the 2015-16 financial year:

Mobile	36.6%
Internet	34.6%
Landline	28.8%

Telcos

- Telstra - New complaints about Telstra decreased by 3.2 per cent.
- Vodafone - New complaints about Vodafone dropped by 59.5 per cent compared to last year.
- Optus - There was an 18.2 per cent increase in new complaints about Optus, due to an increase in complaints about both landline and internet services.
- iiNet - There was a 48.2 per cent increase in new complaints about iiNet.
- TPG - There was a 7.4 per cent increase in TPG's new complaints.

Reasons for complaints – across mobile, internet and landline

1. Billing and payments
2. Customer service
3. Faults
4. Complaint handling
5. Contracts

The rankings are the same as the previous year.

Complaints by State

- Proportionally, we received more new complaints from Victorian consumers - 5.9 complaints per 1,000 people - than from the other states and territories.
- South Australia, which had 5.34 new complaints per 1,000, and ACT with 5.22 per 1,000, followed Victoria, then NSW with 5.21 new complaints per 1,000.
- Queensland recorded 4.80 new complaints per 1,000, Tasmania had 4.42 complaints per 1,000, Western Australia recorded 4.16 per 1,000 people and the Northern Territory recorded the fewest complaints per 1,000 people, at 3.83.
- The overall ratio of new complaints per 1,000 people across Australia was 5.24, and most of our new complaints came from consumers in major cities.

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