



Telecommunications
Dispute Resolution



20
Part Two
21

Biannual Report

JULY – DECEMBER 2021

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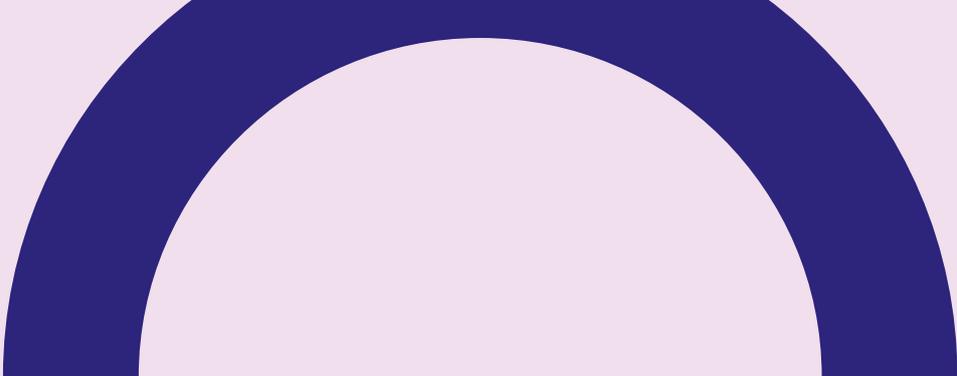
Welcome to our new look report, with information about the complaints and enquiries we saw in the second half of 2021. Telecommunications Dispute Resolution service (TDR) is here to help Kiwis to resolve issues with their broadband, mobile and home phone providers, and every six months we share a snapshot of what we are seeing.

Numbers were relatively stable across the two halves of 2021, with 935 and 941 complaints and enquiries received during each period. The top three complaint themes – billing, customer service and network performance – were consistent throughout the year although pleasingly the volumes were trending down in these categories during the latter half of the year. We did see an increase in other areas, notably in the installation and transfer categories as more New Zealanders move onto the fibre network and have experienced delays during this process. Reflecting the move onto more modern technologies, home phone complaints decreased by 35% in this period. Many New Zealanders now use internet-based voice services, with these issues being captured instead under our broadband category.

A particular highlight for me in this report is the positive increase by 18 in our Net Promoter Score (NPS). An NPS is a commonly used measure for customer satisfaction and a score of +73 is exceptionally high. Our team have been focussing on our customers' experience and it is rewarding to see this reflected in the feedback from our customers.

During this reporting period the Commerce Commission undertook its first review of TDR, which is required every three years. TDR welcomed the review and the final report released in November provided recommendations which will enable us to learn, to grow and improve our service. We have an action plan in place and are making great progress so far. We have introduced changes to the way we manage enquiries and complaints, enabling us to deadlock matters and begin formal interventions faster. We also published a selection of new determinations and complaint guides, amongst the many initiatives underway.

More recently, you'll notice changes to our brand and website. TDR has been helping Kiwis since 2007, and it was time for a refresh. Our new look portrays TDR as open, approachable, and modern. Communication is the key to resolving conflict, and our new logo reflects this. Supporting the brand is a new vibrant colour palette and a minimalistic pattern created from two faces. The focus is on people, their emotion, and their journey to satisfaction as a dispute is resolved. Our new website launched in April 2022. It centres on consumers and supporting them to resolve issues when they arise. It is simple to navigate, clear and concise, and makes it easy for a customer to check if we can help and to make a complaint.



Raising awareness is always a priority for TDR and I am pleased to announce the launch of our new campaign from May 2022. It's based on the key message that 'it's ok to complain' and the campaign will normalise this behaviour by sharing some of the common complaints TDR deals with. Keep an eye out for our commercials and radio ads!

We hope you find this report useful and learn more about how TDR can help untangle issues. We are free and independent, so please get in touch if you need some assistance resolving a complaint with your phone or internet provider. We also welcome your suggestions on how to improve our service and reports, so please feel free to contact us by email at contact@tdr.org.nz or by freephone on **0508 98 98 98**.

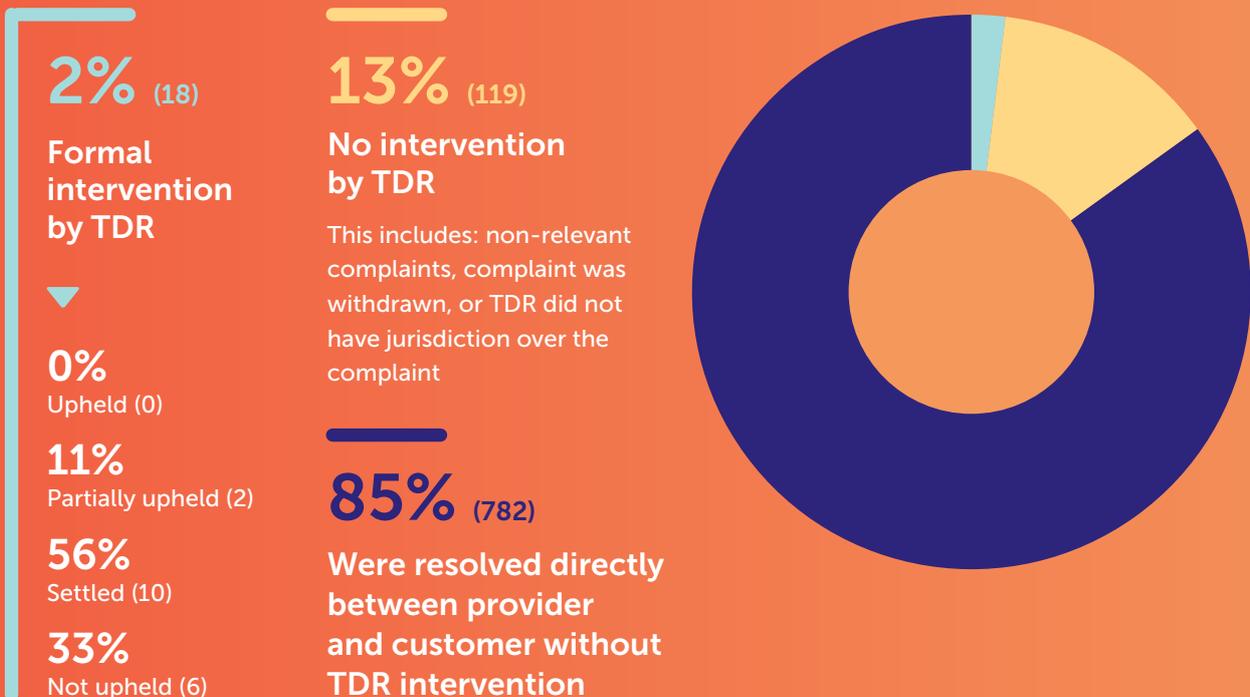


Jeanie Robinson

Operations Manager / Commercial Services
Telecommunications Dispute Resolution

TDR at a glance

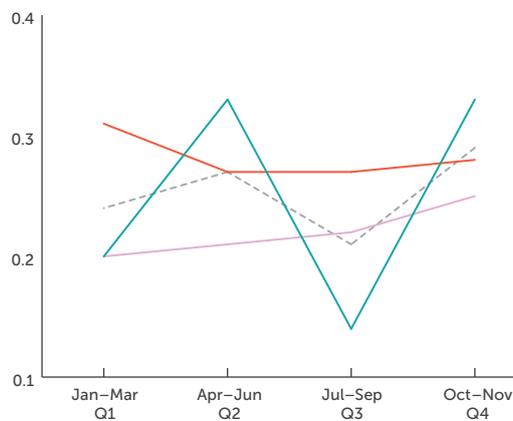
How complaints and enquiries were resolved at TDR



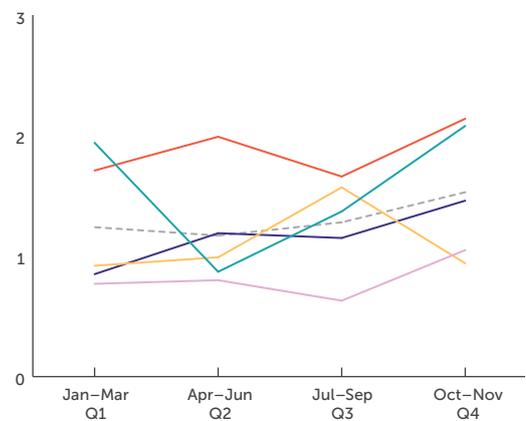
Nature of complaints and enquiries received



Complaints and enquiries per 10,000 connections



Scheme member	Q3	Q4
2degrees	0.14	0.33
Spark**	0.22	0.25
Vodafone	0.27	0.28
Industry average	0.21	0.29



Scheme member	Q3	Q4
2degrees	1.37	2.08
Spark	0.63	1.05
Trustpower	1.57	0.94
Vocus***	1.15	1.46
Vodafone	1.66	2.14
Industry Average	1.28	1.53

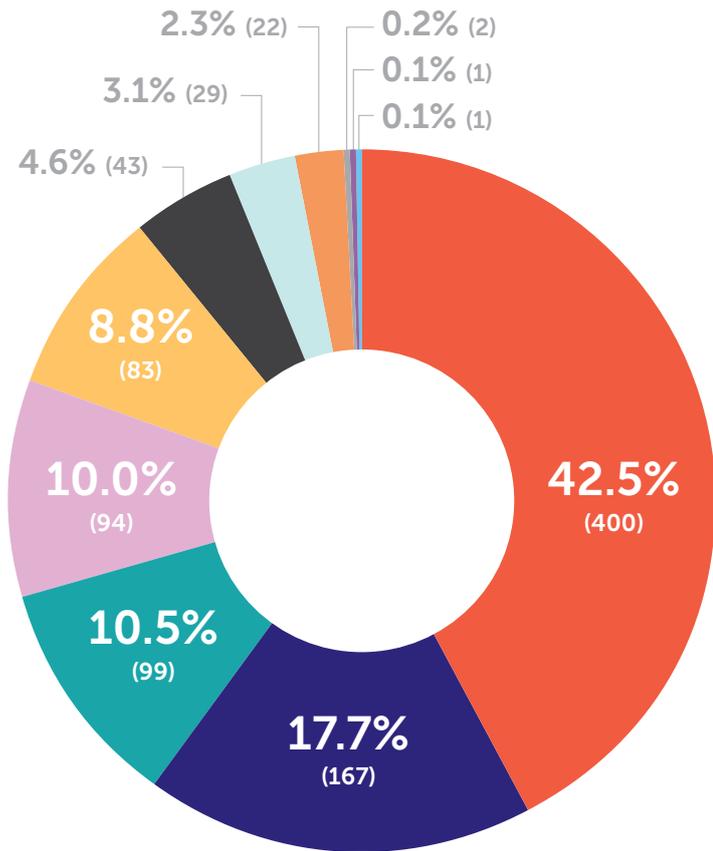
* IDC New Zealand supplies TDR with connection data from IDC's Telecommunications Market Tracker. Please refer to page 12 and 13 of the report for additional reporting information.

** Spark includes Spark, Skinny and Bigpipe.

*** Vocus includes 2Talk, Flip, Orcon, Slingshot, StuffFibre and Vocus Communications.

Nature of complaints and enquiries received

This section outlines our statistics for all complaints and enquiries about TDR members that were received by TDR from 1 July to 31 December 2021, based on a total of **941** complaints and enquiries.



Customer complaints code	Number of complaints	Percent of complaints
● Billing	400	42.5%
● Customer service	167	17.7%
● Network performance	99	10.5%
● Installation	94	10.0%
● Faults	83	8.8%
● Contracts/terms and conditions	43	4.6%
● Non-telecommunications matter	29	3.1%
● Transfer	22	2.3%
● Complaints handling	2	0.2%
111 Contact code		
● Customer service (111)	1	0.1%
● Vulnerable status removed	1	0.1%

Complaint and enquiry activities about home phones

Voice service, home phone and landline

In this report we have reported complaints and enquiries regarding voice services and landline services under 'home phone.' These complaints are separate to those that relate to broadband/internet services. For a more detailed description, please see glossary on page 17.

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Complaints and enquiries about home phones in this period

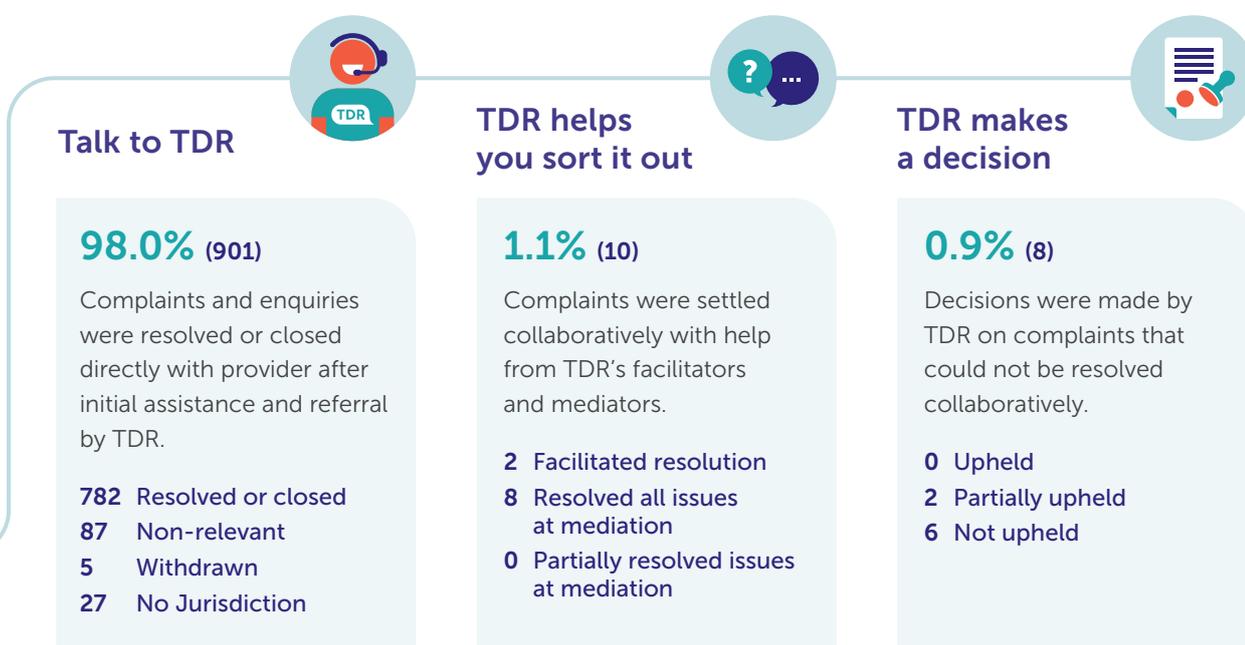
"My business has been without a phone line for a month which means I can't process Eftpos transactions."

"I have medical issues and I haven't been able to use my landline for 3 days!"

"My elderly parents' provider says they have to change to wireless but they are concerned and want to keep their copper connection."

How complaints and enquiries were resolved or closed

This table shows the movement through the process of the **919** complaints resolved or closed with assistance from TDR during the reporting period.



Outcome	What it means	Number of complaints	Percent of complaints
Settlement	Complaints were settled by TDR facilitators or mediators, meaning that before TDR had to make a decision, the consumer and their telecommunications provider were able to collaboratively resolve with assistance from TDR.	10	55.6%
Upheld	The TDR adjudicator determined that the complaint was successful, which means that the consumer's complaint prevailed.	0	0.0%
Partially upheld	Some aspects of these complaints were successful, which means that the TDR adjudicator found in favour of the consumer on those points.	2	11.1%
Not upheld	The TDR adjudicator determined that the complaint was not successful, which means that the consumer did not prevail.	6	33.3%

Net Promoter Score this period

A Net Promoter Score measures customer satisfaction. It is the core measure for customer experience around the world. The Net Promoter Score is calculated by customer responses to the question "how likely is it that you would recommend this company, product or service to a friend or colleagues?" The measure can run from -100 to +100.

In this period, TDR achieved a Net Promoter Score of **+73**.



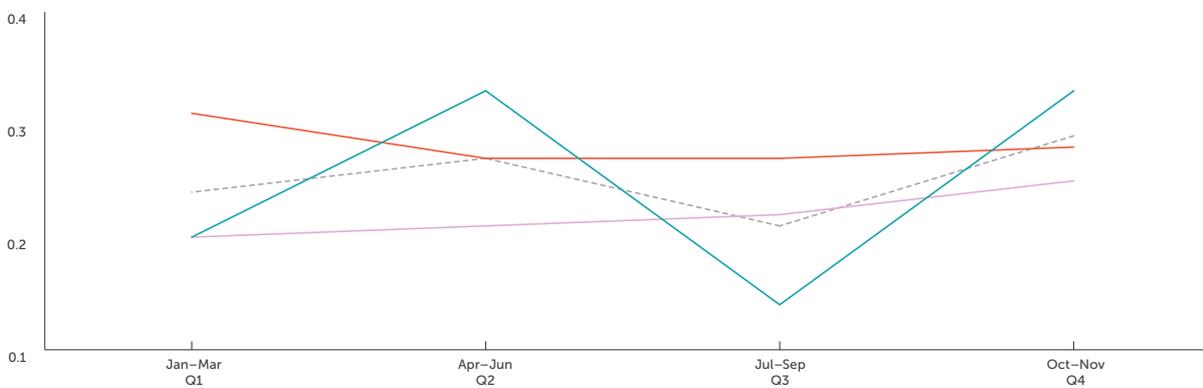
"My first contact by phone was friendly, informative and professional. The entire process was so efficient and the email communication was top level. Even if I hadn't have 'won' my case I was still super impressed with the service and so glad I found you."

"You put me in touch directly with the right person to solve the problem. Probably wouldn't have been able to do this alone."

"Immediate action when I initially submitted my complaint. TDR made contact with the company in question. TDR informed me they had done so. I received a call and email from that company on the same day. I was surprised to be told that I would have my complaint resolved in a few days. Communication from all parties was the key."

Year to date data

Complaint and enquiry activities per 10,000 connections – Mobile



	Q1 Based on total industry connections of 6,301,028		Q2 Based on total industry connections of 6,313,579		Q3 Based on total industry connections of 6,263,775		Q4 Based on total industry connections of 6,257,991	
Scheme member	*Per 10k connections	Total received						
2degrees	0.20	30	0.33	51	0.14	22	0.33	50
Spark**	0.20	48	0.21	50	0.22	53	0.25	60
Vodafone	0.31	73	0.27	63	0.27	62	0.28	64
Industry average	0.24		0.27		0.21		0.29	
^Other		6		6		9		4
TOTAL		157		170		146		178

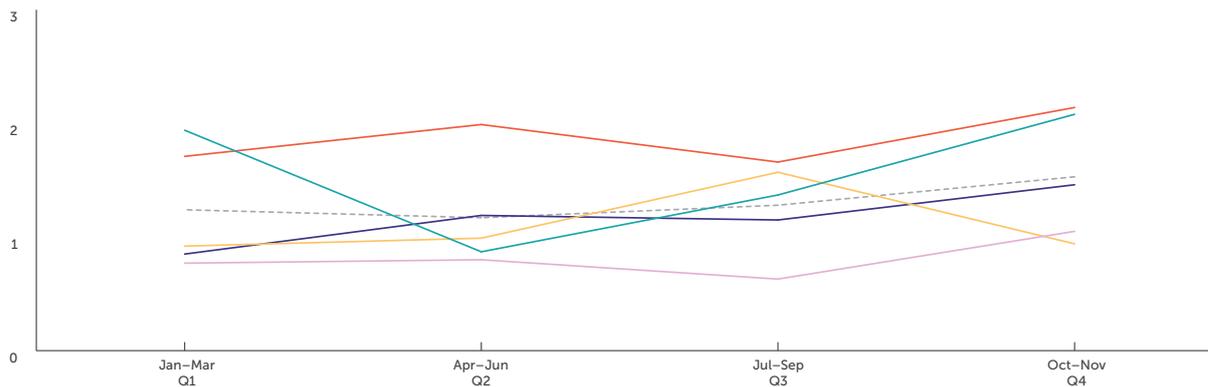
* IDC New Zealand supplies TDR with connection data from IDC's Telecommunications Market Tracker at quarterly points throughout the year. This report uses the connection data recorded at 31 March, 30 June, 30 September and 31 December 2021. Please refer to page 16 for additional information.

** Spark includes Spark, Skinny and Bigpipe.

^ TDR does not calculate the per 10k connections of 'Other' scheme members, for more detail please see the FAQ on page 16.

Note: The above information excludes non-relevant enquiries and complaints or enquiries where the service type was not specified by the customer.

Complaint and enquiry activities per 10,000 connections – Broadband



	Q1 Based on total industry connections of 1,870,049		Q2 Based on total industry connections of 1,890,316		Q3 Based on total industry connections of 1,909,100		Q4 Based on total industry connections of 1,920,499	
Scheme member	*Per 10k connections	Total received						
2degrees	1.94	26	0.87	12	1.37	20	2.08	31
Spark**	0.77	54	0.80	56	0.63	44	1.05	73
Trustpower	0.92	10	0.99	11	1.57	18	0.94	11
Vocus***	0.85	20	1.19	28	1.15	27	1.46	34
Vodafone	1.71	72	1.99	83	1.66	69	2.14	88
Industry average	1.24		1.17		1.28		1.53	
^Other		17		10		25		24
TOTAL		199		200		203		261

* IDC New Zealand supplies TDR with connection data from IDC's Telecommunications Market Tracker at quarterly points throughout the year. This report uses the connection data recorded at 31 March, 30 June, 30 September and 31 December 2021. Please refer to page 16 for additional information.

** Spark includes Spark, Skinny and Bigpipe.

*** Vocus includes 2Talk, Flip, Orcon, Slingshot, StuffFibre and Vocus Communications.

^ TDR does not calculate the per 10k connections of 'Other' scheme members, for more detail please see the FAQ on page 16.

Note: The above information excludes non-relevant enquiries and complaints or enquiries where the service type was not specified by the customer.

Case studies

Double trouble

The customer decided to change mobile phone providers. He made enquiries by phone and believed he was advised to buy a new SIM card before porting his old number across. He went to the provider's store, purchased a SIM card and topped up his new prepay account. The agent from his initial phone call believed he had ordered a SIM card and opened an account, resulting in the customer receiving a second SIM card by post and having a second separate account.

In addition to the SIM card and account miscommunications, he experienced network difficulties resulting in him missing out on important phone calls. During this period, he received several automated text messages from the new provider advising him that he had exceeded his data cap, which he believed was harassment. The customer and phone provider entered into a lengthy exchange of correspondence about the issues he had encountered. Confusion arose over the customer's accounts and plans. The provider offered a goodwill credit of \$10 in lieu of his top-up amount, however the customer was not satisfied with this offer and sought a high amount of compensation as he believed he had lost work due to missed calls.

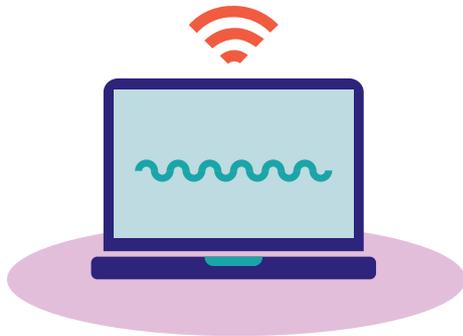
The customer contacted TDR, complaining that the provider's network service did not meet expected standards and customer service failures. We began gathering information from him and his provider.

TDR explored the option of mediation with the parties. The provider had concerns about the customer's attitude and behaviour towards their staff, and the customer was entrenched in their position. TDR's Resolution Practitioner ascertained that mediation was not appropriate in this case, instead proceeding the matter to adjudication where they would make an independent decision on the matter.

The TDR Resolution Practitioner acknowledged that miscommunication had happened, but also noted that this had been compounded by the customer having not read the details of the product he was purchasing or the term and conditions. The provider had demonstrated attempts to resolve issues and the customer had demonstrated difficult behaviour in response to these attempts.

A determination was issued and the complaint was not upheld.





A small business owner approached his internet provider to set up broadband for a new business premises. During the connection process multiple issues occurred. First, the fibre connection was delayed, then once fibre was connected the customer was charged for both fibre and an interim wireless broadband service they had received up until the fibre installation was completed. Finally, once the new business site was up and running, the provider disconnected a separate broadband connection of a completely different business site, belonging to the same customer. The multiple issues and extended completion timeframe resulted in confusion, frustration, and inconvenience. Due to the issues that occurred the customer requested an apology, refunds for both sites, and compensation for loss of profits.

TDR may determine a complaint is deadlocked if it's been six weeks or more since the customer contacted their phone or internet provider and the customer still doesn't have a resolution that they are happy with, or if a complaint raised with a scheme member by TDR remains unresolved after 15 working days, whichever comes first. When determining deadlock, TDR will take into consideration the complexity of the issue, the desired resolution, as well as whether escalating the matter will assist in resolving the complaint. Considering the timeframe involved since the issues first occurred, this matter was immediately deadlocked by TDR and the customer and scheme member were requested to provide formal submissions.

Bad for business

The TDR scheme adjudicator confirmed the complaint was within TDR jurisdiction as the matter was about customer service and information. There were questions as to whether the scheme member had met its obligations in terms of the principles outlined in the Customer Complaints Code, in particular clause 5 which notes that: scheme members will treat customers with respect and in a fair and courteous manner at all times; all information given to the customer will be accurate, up-to-date and in plain English, acknowledging telecommunications technology is fast moving and complex; and that scheme members will be clear in their communications to customers. The scheme adjudicator acknowledged that there would be certain aspects that a TDR Resolution Practitioner could not consider, such as granting an award for indirect loss, however that did not prevent the matter from being discussed and for TDR to provide formal assistance.

TDR recommended mediation to the parties, so they could explore the issues and solutions together with the help of someone independent. Through the dispute resolution process, the customer and scheme member reached a mediated agreement where the scheme member acknowledged, apologised and provided a good will payment for the issues the customer had to deal.

Both parties left the mediation satisfied and the customer continues to receive broadband services from the internet provider.

FAQ

Who is Telecommunications Dispute Resolution?

Telecommunications Dispute Resolution (TDR) is a free and independent service to help consumers manage complaints about any product or service from their telecommunications provider.

What is the purpose of this report?

This report is designed to improve transparency in the telecommunications sector and to keep the public informed of issues that come to TDR.

How often do you report this data?

The data in this report is reported on a six-monthly basis.

My provider does not appear in this report, why not?

The TDR scheme is mandatory for Telecommunications Forum (TCF) members and voluntary for non-TCF members.

The TDR scheme covers the majority of telecommunications providers in New Zealand (over 95% by revenue share).

We report on members who are identified in IDC New Zealand's Telecommunication Market Tracker which is presented at parent company level. A full list of our members can be found on *page 19*. If your provider does not appear in the list of members it means they are not a member of the TDR scheme.

Why is the data reported per 10,000 connections?

Each member's complaints and enquiries are reported per 10,000 connections to provide a fair comparison between different size members.

How did you work out how many connections each member has?

IDC New Zealand supplies TDR with connection data from IDC's Telecommunications Market Tracker. *You can find more about IDC here.*

Why do you report at parent company level?

Reporting at parent company level is consistent with IDC New Zealand's Telecommunications Market Tracker. A full list of our members can be found on *page 19*.

Does the volume of complaints and enquiries represent performance of the member?

There are many factors that can be taken into account when considering the overall performance of a member. Our reporting reflects the total volume of complaints and enquiries made to TDR during each quarter. Each member's complaints and enquiries are reported per 10,000 connections to provide a fair comparison between different size members.

Some members may have lots of consumers contact us, for example if an issue has been in the media, if there has been a migration of services, or it may reflect a greater level of promotion of the TDR scheme by the member. This report captures the total volume of complaints and enquiries we receive. At this stage, there are too few formal complaints to report on outcome of cases by individual members. However we do report on the combined outcome of all complaints that require TDR's formal intervention across all members and report on this (see *page 10* for more information).

How is the nature of complaints recorded?

A complaint or enquiry may feature several issues. The primary nature of the matter is recorded by TDR under generalised categories.

As an example, the network performance category could include issues such as coverage, service interruptions, or speed for mobile or internet connections.

What is the difference between complaints received and resolved?

When a customer contacts TDR about their home phone, mobile or broadband provider, we record this as a complaint or enquiry that has been 'received.'

TDR will then assist the customer and their provider. We keep track of their progress, and record when the complaint or enquiry has been 'resolved or closed.'

In any reporting period, there is often a difference between the numbers of complaints or enquiries 'received' compared to 'resolved or closed' as these progress through the TDR process.

Methodology

This report provides information about complaints and enquiries made to TDR about mobile, home phone and broadband services from residential and small business customers.

TDR's internal systems record data from initial contact to final resolution. This information is detailed in this report.

This report is designed to provide information on complaints and enquiries within context so some of the information is published as a proportion of telecommunications connections in operation per provider. Providers' connection data is supplied by IDC New Zealand.

The data count for previous periods may change from report to report. This reflects the lifecycle of complaints, which may have since reopened. For this reason, we provide the latest information in each report which portrays an accurate snapshot at that point in time.

Glossary

Broadband

Broadband refers to high-speed internet access. The most common broadband technologies available are fibre, copper, mobile, fixed-wireless and satellite. For the purposes of this report "broadband" means high-speed internet access delivered to a home or small business over fibre, copper, fixed-wireless or satellite.

Mobile

Mobile refers to mobile networks that are used for voice and data communications through wireless transmission technologies. Mobile services allow customers to make calls, send texts and access broadband to and from a mobile [cellular] handset when in range of a wireless transmission signal.

Mobile Network Operator (MNO)

A MNO is an operator that owns or controls all the elements necessary to deliver mobile services to consumers, including radio spectrum and the wireless network infrastructure.

Mobile Virtual Network Operator (MVNO)

A MVNO is an operator that provides mobile services but does not generally have its own radio spectrum or much of the infrastructure required to provide mobile services. It therefore relies on buying services from an MNO. The amount of control it has over the services it offers will vary according to the nature of its agreement.

Voice service / home phone/ landline

For the purposes of this report these terms mean voice services delivered to residential or small business consumers through a non-mobile device. Voice services can be delivered either over a traditional public switched telephone network (PSTN) or a digital network referred to as voice over internet protocol (VoIP).

How your provider delivers your home phone or small business phone service is evolving as the technology in this area is changing. TDR is reviewing the way complaints about voice services/ home phones/landlines will be reported in the future. In this report we have reported complaints and enquiries regarding voice services under 'home phone.' These complaints are separate to those that relate to broadband/internet services.



How we help

We aim to resolve complaints as early as possible using one or more of these steps

Get in touch with TDR
Free phone 0508 98 98 98
Email contact@tdr.org.nz
Online www.tdr.org.nz



Enquiry

Tell us about your complaint

We'll gather information and let your provider know about your complaint so you can work together to resolve it. Most complaints are resolved at this stage.



Mediation

Collaborate and reach an agreement

TDR will check if we can help further. If the complaint is within jurisdiction, a mediator will help you and your provider to explore the complaint and solutions.

Facilitation

Find a solution through conversation

Our team will ask questions to help you clarify issues, identify options you want to talk about with your provider, and help you work out what you think will resolve the issue.



Adjudication

TDR considers your complaint

If you don't reach an agreement together, TDR will make a decision. If you accept the decision, your provider must follow the directions within the decision.

Need some extra assistance?

If you have any special requirements (for example if English is your second language, if you have cultural requests, or if you experience vision or hearing problems) you should let TDR know as soon as possible so we can make suitable arrangements.

Contact details for TDR members

If you have any questions or concerns about your current services and would like to discuss them with your telecommunications provider, or you would like to sign up with one of the companies that belongs to TDR, please see their contact details below.



2degrees
0800 022 022



2Talk
09 281 4357



BigPipe
www.bigpipe.co.nz



Chorus
0800 600 100



DTS
0508 387 669



Enable Networks Limited
0800 4 FIBRE
(0800 43 42 73)



Flip
0800 60 SALES
(0800 60 72 53)



Kogan
www.kogan.com/nz



MyRepublic
0508 MYFIBRE
(0508 693 4273)



Northpower Fibre
0800 667 847



NOW
0800 GET NOW
(0800 43 86 69)



Orcon
0800 131 415



Primo Wireless
0800 12 37 74



Skinny Mobile
0800 4 SKINNY
(0800 475 4669)



Sky Broadband
0800 759 759



Slingshot
0800 892 000



Spark
0800 800 123



Stuff Fibre
0800 862 337



Trust Power
0800 878 787



Tuatahi First Fibre
0800 FIBRE LTD
(0800 34 27 35)



Unison Fibre
0800 286 476



Vector Fibre
0800 826 436



Vocus Communications
0800 895 000



Vodafone
0800 800 021



VolPcloud Wholesale
09 222 4699



VoiPline Telecommunications
09 222 1000



Warehouse Mobile
0800 284 800

Free phone 0508 98 98 98

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