



Telecommunications
Dispute Resolution



20
Part Two
22

Biannual Report

JULY – DECEMBER 2022

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Welcome to this biannual report, with information about the complaints we saw in the second half of 2022. Telecommunications Dispute Resolution service (TDR) is here to help Kiwis resolve issues with their broadband, mobile and home phone providers, and every six months we share a snapshot of what we are seeing.

In 2022, TDR launched its first major advertising campaign across radio, TV, and social media. This has had a big impact, with more Kiwis accessing our services as a result. Our average monthly website users were three times higher during the campaign. In the April – September period, the average amount of complaints per month increased to 302.5. This is up 53% from 2020 (197.8) and 88% from 2021 (160.8) for the same six months. We're delighted with the results and pleased to see awareness of TDR growing. This has had a positive impact on the volume of complaints made to our service during this period.

In total, 1,921 Kiwis contacted TDR from 1 July through to 31 December 2022. This almost equalled levels seen across the full year of 2020/21 year (1,940 complaints), which was a quieter year in volume for TDR, due to the strong efforts made by telecommunications providers to support New Zealanders through the lockdown era. Since then, our volumes are returning to normal in part due to the resumption of billing collections by phone and internet providers, but also due to the increased awareness efforts noted above. In 2022 alone, we have seen an increase of 53% from the first half of the year (1,253) to the second half (1,921).

While the overall volumes of complaints are up, there hasn't been huge changes in the individual complaint categories. The top themes follow the same order, with differing root causes. Notably billing complaints have risen by 5% and customer service complaints have declined by 3.6%. Across the board, TDR continues to resolve complaints as early as possible, with almost 97% of issues resolved during our first step. Of the 1,492 complaints that were resolved or closed during this period, 3 were settled by facilitation, 18 were resolved by mediated agreement and 29 required TDR's adjudicators to make a decision.

We were recently asked why there is a gap between the close of our reporting period and when our reports are being published. It's all down to the data. At the end of each period, the TDR team compile and analyse data from our case management system. To provide a fair comparison between providers both big and small, one section of our report apportions the complaints received per 10,000 customers. We rely on independent data on the volume of connections that each provider has at quarterly points in time and this information is usually released three months after the end of the reporting period. Once we have all the data, we work quickly to prepare and share our report.

While this report relates to late 2022, at the time of writing we are seeing the significant effects of Cyclone Gabrielle which brought with it widespread devastation to parts of the North Island. Our thoughts are with all those families who have lost their homes and livelihoods. Many more experienced extended power cuts, resulting in phone and internet services being down.

We are aware of the great efforts made by our scheme members to restore services, such as deploying technicians, laying new cables, and arranging back-up generators and batteries, in order to stand up services as quickly as possible. For customers who are still affected, we encourage you to contact your provider so they can get your device and services back up and running. If the issues remain ongoing or if you need some extra help to resolve things with your provider, TDR is here.

One big initiative underway is around the framework and governance of TDR. The TCF will be undertaking a consultation soon on the new proposed Constitution, Terms of Reference and Customer Care Code for TDR. We encourage you to take part and share your feedback as part of this process. Following this, the updated TDR scheme will be looking for an independent chair. Watch this space!

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 098 98 98**.

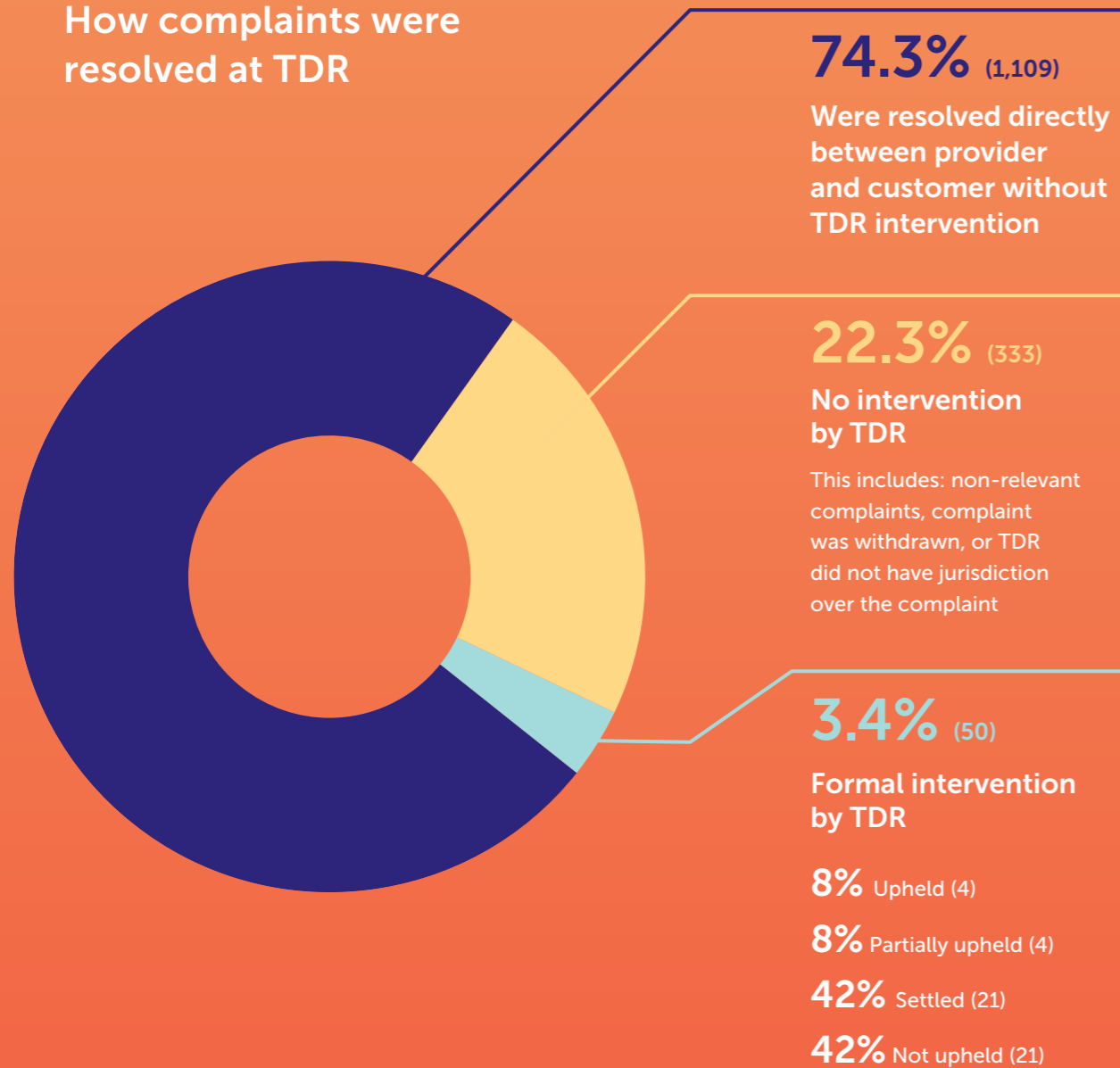


Jeanie Robinson

Operations Manager / Commercial Services
Telecommunications Dispute Resolution

TDR at a glance

How complaints were resolved at TDR

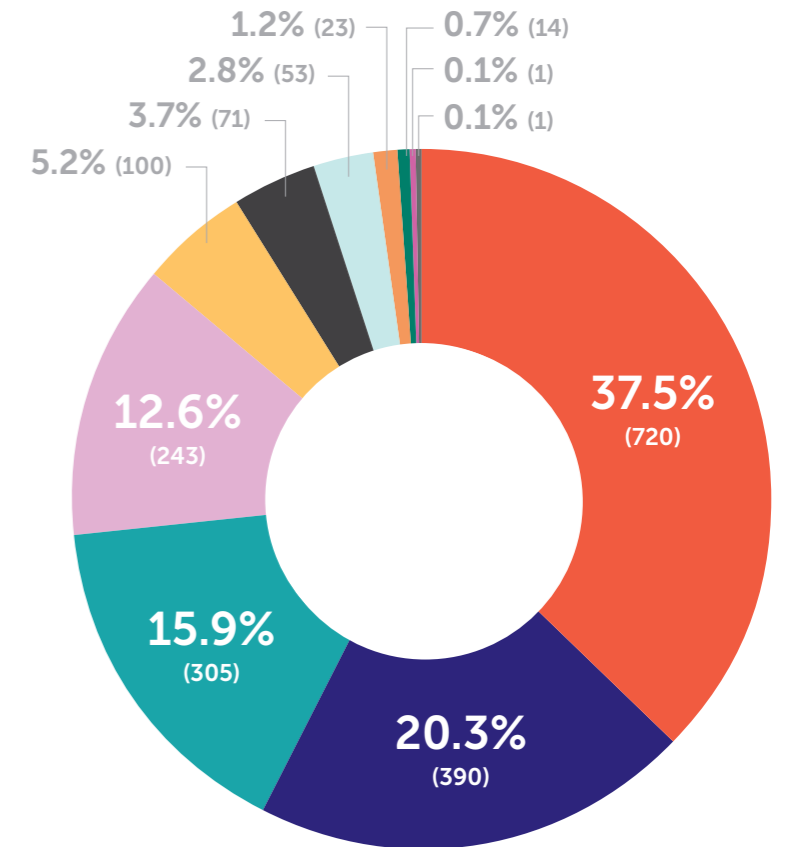


Nature of complaints received



Nature of complaints received

This section outlines our statistics for all complaints about TDR members that were received by TDR from 01 July to 31 Decemeber 2022, based on a total of **1,921** complaints.



Customer complaints code	Number of complaints	Percent of complaints
Billing	720	37.5%
Customer service	390	20.3%
Fault	305	15.9%
Installation	243	12.6%
Network performance	100	5.2%
Contracts/terms and conditions	71	3.7%
Transfer	53	2.8%
Non-telecommunications matter	23	1.2%
Complaints handling	14	0.7%
Copper withdrawal code		
Customer service	1	0.1%
111 contact code		
Vulnerable customer application	1	0.1%

Complaints about home phones

Voice service, home phone and landline

In this report we have reported complaints 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 16.

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Complaints about home phones in this period

"My father didn't understand that ringing a 0900 number would cost him money."

"I'm being charged for a landline that isn't even connected."

"Please help me set up the phone at home. I don't know which wires need to go where!"

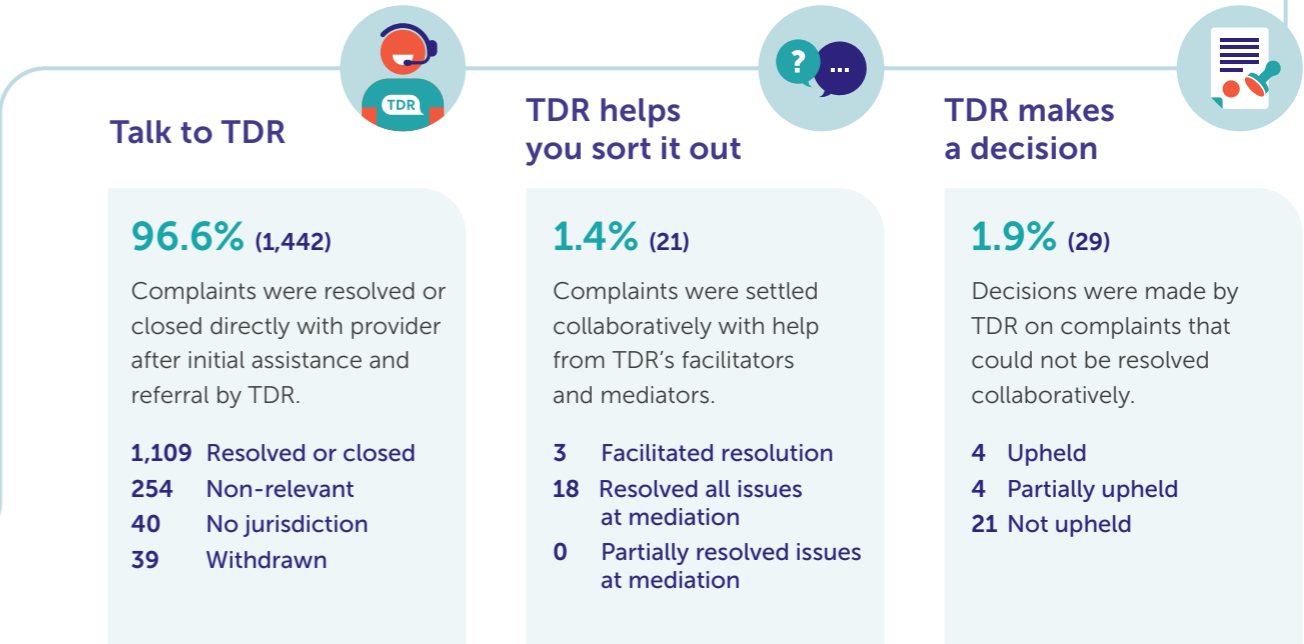
"I'm getting so many scam calls on my home phone."

"There's a fault, I asked for it to be fixed, but I'm still waiting."

"It's taking ages to connect the landline that I need urgently for medical reasons."

How complaints were resolved or closed

This table shows the movement through the process of the **1,492** 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.	21	42.0%
Upheld	The TDR adjudicator determined that the complaint was successful, which means that the consumer's complaint prevailed.	4	8.0%
Partially upheld	Some aspects of these complaints were successful, which means that the TDR adjudicator found in favour of the consumer on those points.	4	8.0%
Not upheld	The TDR adjudicator determined that the complaint was not successful, which means that the consumer did not prevail.	21	42.0%

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 **+74**.

+74
Net Promoter Score

"I had been trying to get the problem resolved for 4 months, and you cleared it up with one email."

"My TDR facilitator was fantastic - really helpful and made the process easy to engage with."

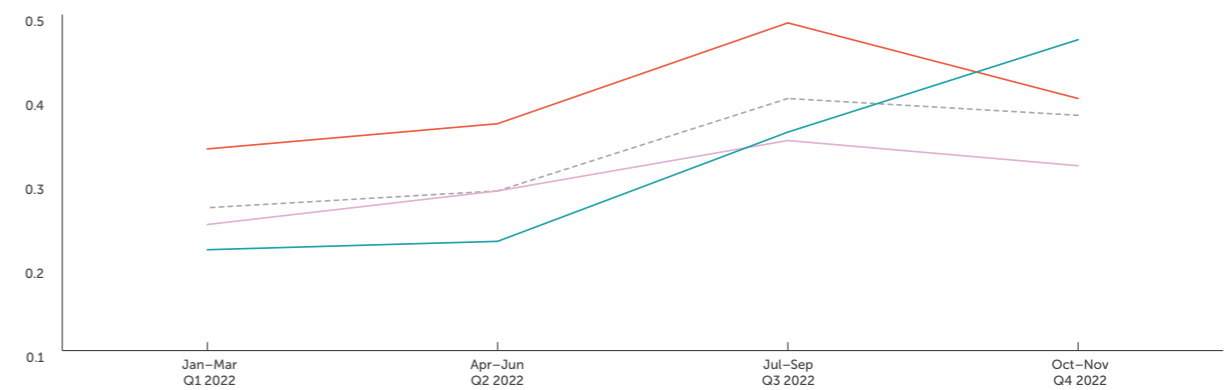
"Quick reply. Nice to know that you cared about my complaint."

"Your prompt response and the immediate response from my provider showed that they respected the process."

"I thought I'd exhausted all possibilities with my provider, but this was relieved swiftly after contacting you."

Year to date data

Complaint activities per 10,000 connections – Mobile



Scheme member	Q3 Based on total industry connections of 6,356,076		Q4 Based on total industry connections of 6,590,376	
	*Per 10k connections	Total received	*Per 10k connections	Total received
2degrees	0.36	56	0.47	76
Spark**	0.35	87	0.32	84
Vodafone***	0.49	110	0.35	82
Average	0.4		0.38	
^Other		6		3
TOTAL		259		245

* 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 from 01 January to 31 December 2022. Please refer to page 15 for additional information.

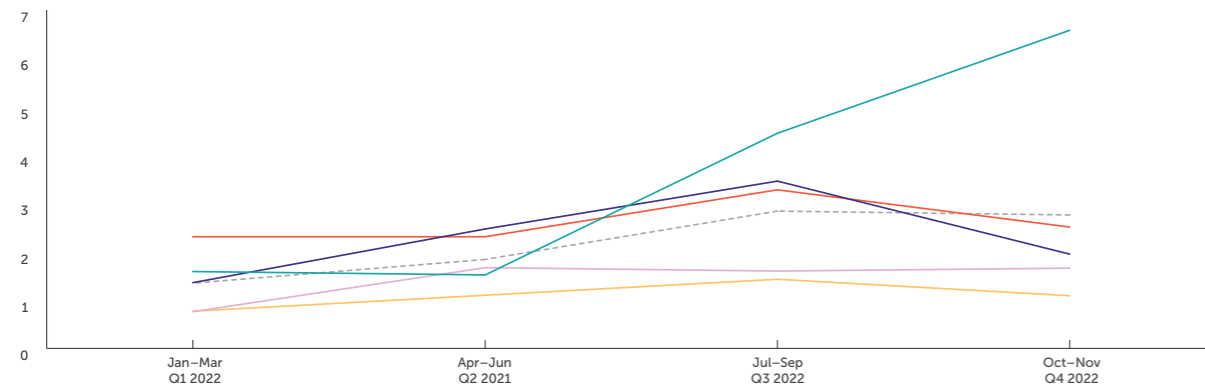
** Spark includes Spark, Skinny and Bigpipe.

*** Vodafone includes Kogan Mobile.

^ TDR does not calculate the per 10k connections of 'Other' scheme members, for more detail please see the FAQ on page 15.

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

Complaint per 10,000 connections – Broadband



Scheme member	Q3 Based on total industry connections of 1,955,926		Q4 Based on total industry connections of 1,961,268	
	*Per 10k connections	Total received	*Per 10k connections	Total received
2degrees	4.45	71	6.58	110
Spark**	1.60	112	1.66	116
Trustpower	1.43	17	1.09	13
Vocus***	3.46	67	1.95	37
Vodafone	3.28	131	2.51	99
Average	2.84		2.76	
^Other		27		18
TOTAL		425		393

Case studies

Long wait times

The customer lodged a complaint with TDR, saying that she had spent an extraordinarily long time on the telephone trying to sort out problems with her internet when the fault was not hers. On the first occasion the provider had made an error on her account and on the second occasion she was disconnected and received a message to say that this was because her payment was overdue.

The second error by the provider caused significant disruption and embarrassment when a planned business appointment was not able to be kept and led to loss of income and a great deal of stress. The stress was exacerbated when the customer had to wait online for her call to be answered and redirected, a process that took 2 hours and 42 minutes.

The provider acknowledged the inconvenience but noted that on both occasions the call centre person had dealt with the problem efficiently and both calls had lasted no more than five minutes each. The provider offered the customer a goodwill payment of a part-month reduction in fees. The customer was not satisfied with this, and the matter was deadlocked which is the point in which TDR can escalate the complaint and provide more formal dispute resolution assistance.

A TDR practitioner was appointed and they discussed the matter with both parties and listened to the voice recordings of how the complaint call had been dealt with. They arranged for a mediation to be held, so both sides could share their perspectives and collaborate together on reaching an agreement. The customer was aware that she was not able to make a claim for business loss but felt that the provider's offer didn't go far enough to acknowledge the stress involved in the overall situation.

The provider, although satisfied that the complaints had been dealt with swiftly, did appreciate that the wait times would have been stressful and agreed to extend the goodwill offer. The new offer was acceptable to the customer and the matter was settled at mediation.

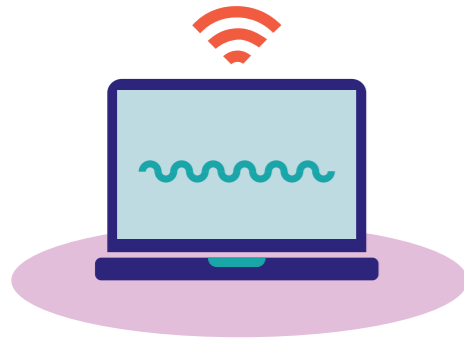
* IDC New Zealand supplies TDR with connection data from IDC's Telecommunications Market Tracker at quarterly points throughout the year. This report uses the connection data recorded from 01 January to 31 December 2022. Please refer to page 15 for additional information.

** 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 15.

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



Roaming repayment

The customer, having returned from an overseas trip, received a large bill which included roaming charges. The customer was dissatisfied with the large bill and contacted their provider to discuss waiving or reducing the amount to be paid. The customer felt that the provider did not do enough to mitigate roaming charges from being incurred and were inflexible with account suspension to prevent such charges from being incurred. When these attempts at negotiation were unsuccessful, the customer contacted TDR.

TDR assisted with the ongoing discussions between the customer and their provider. Despite TDR's assistance, the customer and their provider disagreed regarding the legitimacy of the bill. The provider insisted that the charges were valid and attributable to the customer. The complaint proceeded to deadlock and was assigned to a TDR practitioner.

The practitioner arranged a mediation so the customer and provider could meet and work towards a solution together. The practitioner assisted the customer and their provider to reach a mutually agreeable resolution whereby the customer would make weekly repayments towards the total outstanding balance. The practitioner drafted the terms of agreement which were agreed to by all parties.

Mediation allows parties to collaborate and explore more creative solutions. The terms and conditions of this customer's plan did not ordinarily allow for repayment plans, however through the mediation process they explored this option and agreed terms. Had the parties not reached an agreement and the case proceeded to adjudication, where TDR makes a decision, a repayment plan would not have been an option.

Upon review of the submissions from the customer and provider, the practitioner would have determined in favour of the provider based on the contract and information provided. The customer's decision to enter into a weekly repayment agreement with the provider was ultimately a good decision.

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 18*. 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 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 at www.idc.com/anz/about-idc.*

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 18*.

Does the volume of complaints 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 made to TDR during each quarter. Each member's complaints 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 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 9* for more information).

How is the nature of complaints recorded?

A complaint 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 that has been 'received.'

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

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

Methodology

This report provides information about complaints 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 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).

In this report we have reported complaints 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.



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.































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.

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.

 <p>2degrees 0800 022 022</p>	 <p>Mercury 09 475 7234</p>	 <p>Spark 0800 800 123</p>
 <p>2Talk 09 281 4357</p>	 <p>Megatel 0800 634 283 (MEGATEL) 09 912 1200</p>	 <p>Trust Power 0800 878 787</p>
 <p>BigPipe www.bigpipe.co.nz</p>	 <p>Northpower Fibre 0800 667 847</p>	 <p>Tuatahi 0800 FIBRE LTD (0800 34 27 35)</p>
 <p>Chorus 0800 600 100</p>	 <p>Nova 0800 634 236</p>	 <p>Unison Fibre 0800 286 476</p>
 <p>DTS 0508 387 669</p>	 <p>NOW 0800 GET NOW (0800 43 86 69)</p>	 <p>Vector Fibre 0800 826 436</p>
 <p>Enable Networks Limited 0800 4 FIBRE (0800 43 42 73)</p>	 <p>Orcon 0800 131 415</p>	 <p>Vocus Communications 0800 895 000</p>
 <p>Farmside 0800 32 76 74</p>	 <p>Primo Wireless 0800 12 37 74</p>	 <p>Vodafone 0800 800 021</p>
 <p>Flip 0800 60 SALES (0800 60 72 53)</p>	 <p>Skinny 0800 4 SKINNY (0800 475 4669)</p>	 <p>VoIPcloud Wholesale 09 222 4699</p>
 <p>Kogan www.kogan.com/nz</p>	 <p>Sky Broadband 0800 759 759</p>	 <p>VoiPline Telecommunications 09 222 1000</p>
 <p>MyRepublic 0508 MYFIBRE (0508 693 4273)</p>	 <p>Slingshot 0800 892 000</p>	 <p>Warehouse Mobile 0800 284 800</p>

Free phone 0508 98 98 98

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