



Telecommunications
Dispute Resolution



20 Update 23

Half year report

JULY – DECEMBER 2023



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Introduction

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.

The TDR is the telecommunication sector’s dispute resolution service, offering consumers a free and independent complaints scheme.

You will recall that in 2023, following a Commerce Commission review into the way the sector operated its dispute resolution scheme, the Telecommunications Forum overhauled the TDR scheme. A key aspect of that change was to place the TDR scheme into a new stand-alone company, with fresh independent governance via a new board of seven directors. I was appointed to chair this new board, and I was joined by three directors appointed by industry and three directors appointed by consumers.

This new board began in 1 July 2023 and is operating very effectively already. Our focus thus far has been on:

- Ensuring the recommendations of the Commerce Commission’s last review have all been addressed;
- Monitoring the efficiency and effectiveness of Fair Way, the TDR appointed scheme agent;
- Ensuring that all the obligations of TDR under the revised Terms of Reference are being appropriately resourced and addressed.

Like any organisation, a primary role of the Board is to examine and carefully align all our resources to ensure the TDR scheme is both effective and efficient. During the year we looked carefully at what other similar organisations do (including the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman in

Australia). We identified that we could, and should, make some changes to our operating model to make it both more effective and more efficient. This work is well advanced already, but in short we will do this by getting Fair Way to focus solely on the dispute resolution aspects of TDR. We will then bring important aspects of TDR in-house (such as communication with stakeholders, data analytics looking at systemic issues and trends, and expanding the participant group of the TDR scheme) rather than outsourcing all this work as we have done in the past.

The Commerce Commission is undertaking its next 3 yearly review of TDR and more specifically the progress made since its last review that recommended significant changes to TDR. We welcome this review and look forward to working with the Commission’s team on this important exercise.

On behalf of the Board, I now invite you to read more about what we are doing and what we have been seeing over the last six months via a series of data tables and case studies.

Ngā mihi



Barry Jordan

Chair & Independent Director
Telecommunications Dispute
Resolution

Kua hua te marama. This whakataukī speaks to the cyclical nature of things and seems fitting as we reflect on our service across the second half of 2023.

TDR continued to see a high level of issues raised by consumers in this period, with 1925 complaints received between July and December. This is on par with the same period in 2022 when 1921 consumers raised a complaint with TDR and almost nine percent higher than the previous six months in 2023 where 1770 Kiwis got in touch with us for assistance resolving a phone or internet issue.

Our team resolved or closed 1781 complaints this period. This has increased by 19 percent from the same period in 2022 and again is higher than the previous six months by seven percent. Our early resolution approach continues to make a big difference with 97 percent of these complaints being sorted in our first stage with a little help from TDR. For those remaining complaints that proceeded to our formal dispute resolution stages, it's pleasing to see so many of these being mutually resolved through facilitation or mediation with only 20 complaints requiring adjudication.

The top three categories remain as billing (50.7%), customer service (15.6%), and faults (12.8%). The main related issues within each of these categories were disputed charges (36.2%), failure to action a request (9.3%) and delays with service restoration (6.0%).

With the introduction of the TCF Customer Care Code in July 2023, TDR members are required to publish their own Customer Care Policy that includes a minimum standard of practice, a complaint handling process and information on how a complaint can be escalated to TDR. This addition to the TDR framework enables TDR to better assess the merit of a complaint based on the provisions of individual provider's policies. Other changes have included the ability for TDR to accept complaints from consumers regarding wholesale members directly. This improvement removes any unnecessary delays with achieving resolution.

We continually look for opportunities to enhance our service and processes. Behind the scenes, we have made a series of improvements to our case management system, improving how we capture and report information. We have also introduced some new dashboards, providing better visibility of our operations. Changes like these also support TDR as we continue to take a more detailed approach in identifying and understanding complaint trends for education and prevention purposes within the industry.

Within the team here, we have welcomed some new people on board recently to support us in providing the TDR service. Louise Taylor has joined our team as a new Resolution Practitioner. Louise has had a varied legal career, most recently as managing solicitor at Community Law in Canterbury. Hinemoa Dixon has been appointed as our new Cultural Capability Lead and Senior Resolution Practitioner. She will be working closely with our Head of Practice to further develop our practice strategy and build upon the cultural capability of our team. We will also have a new Resolution Coordinator joining us very soon. It is exciting to see the team grow. Nau mai haere mai ki TDR.

We hope you find this report useful and learn more about how TDR can help. We are free and independent, so please get in touch if you need some assistance resolving a complaint.

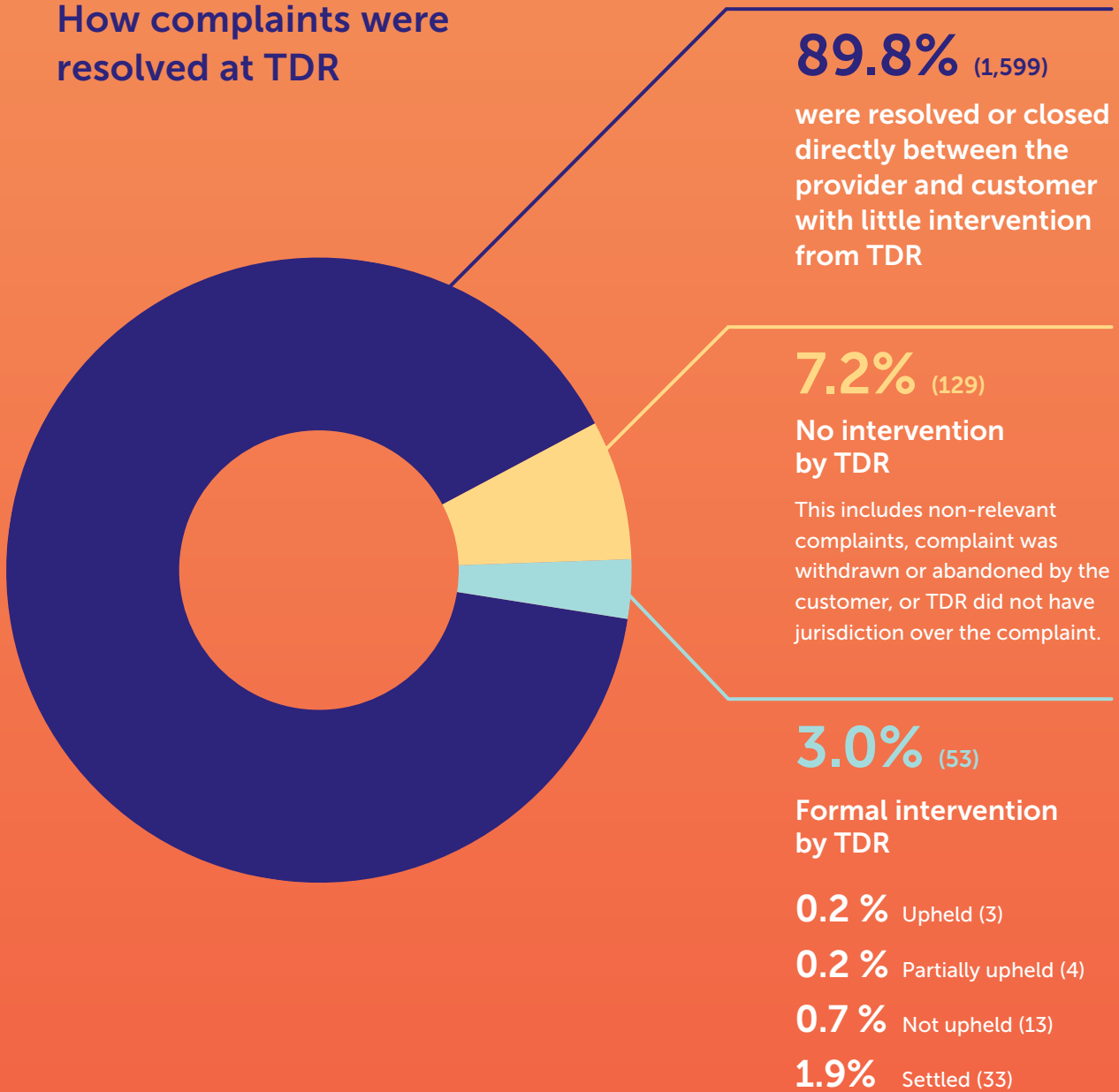


Jeanie Robinson

Operations Manager
Fair Way / Telecommunications
Dispute Resolution

TDR at a glance

How complaints were resolved at TDR



Nature of complaints received



36.2%
Disputed charges (696)



9.3%
Failure to action (179)

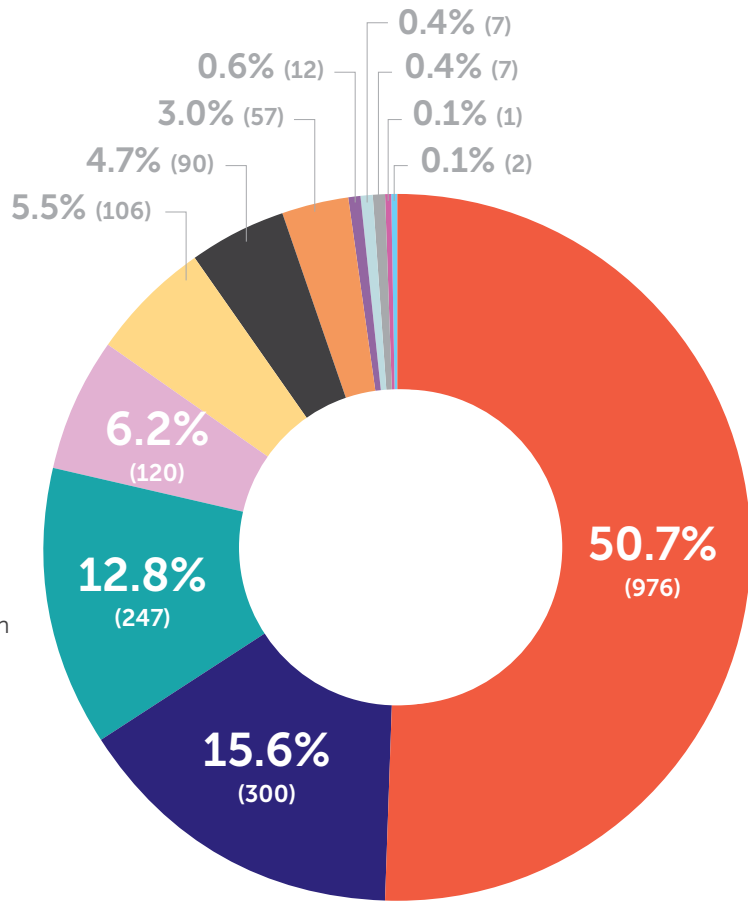


6.0%
Delay (115)

Category of complaints received

From **01-July to 31-December 2023** TDR received **1,925** complaints from consumers about their telecommunication products and services. This is a similar level to the same period last year when we received 1,921 complaints.

Here is a breakdown of the complaints received by category:



Customer complaints

	Number of complaints	Percent of complaints*
● Billing	976	50.7%
● Customer service	300	15.6%
● Faults	247	12.8%
● Installation	120	6.2%
● Network performance	106	5.5%
● Contracts/ Terms and conditions	90	4.7%
● Transfer	57	3.0%
● Non-telecommunications matter	12	0.6%
● Complaint handling	7	0.4%

Copper withdrawal code

● Customer Service	7	0.4%
● Notification	1	0.1%

111 contact code

● Device	2	0.1%
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* Percentages have been rounded and do not total 100% exactly.

Complaints about home phones

Voice service, home phone and landline

We capture complaints regarding voice 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 15*.

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Complaints about home phones this period

"My home phone has developed a humming sound which has not gone away in over a month."

"I can make calls from my phone, but I cannot get any incoming calls."

"I moved from one provider to another provider and they still haven't transferred my number. Both providers are blaming each other for the delay."

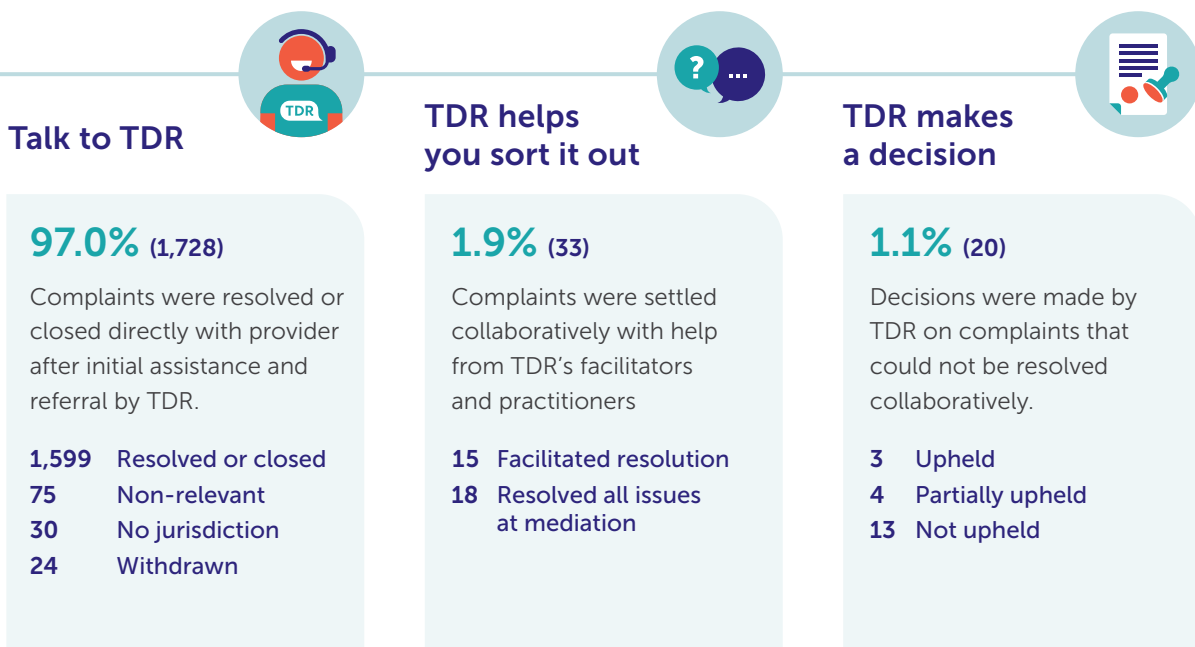
"I do not want copper removed from my home."

"I continue to be sent monthly accounts for a disconnected landline."

"Landline is not connected properly. No caller ID and my voicemail is not working."

How complaints were resolved or closed

The below chart presents the movement through the process of the **1,781** complaints that were resolved or closed during the reporting period. This is up 19% from the 1,492 complaints resolved during the same period last year.



Outcome	What it means	Number of complaints	Percent of complaints
Settlement	Complaints were settled by TDR facilitators or practitioners, meaning that before TDR had to make a decision, the consumer and their telecommunications provider were able to collaboratively resolve with assistance from TDR.	33	62.3%
Upheld	The TDR adjudicator determined that the complaint was successful, which means that they found in favour of the consumers.	3	5.7%
Partially upheld	Some aspects of the complaint were successful, which means that the TDR adjudicator found in favour of the consumers on those points	4	7.5%
Not upheld	The TDR adjudicator determined that the consumer's complaint was not successful, which means that they found in favour of the provider.	13	24.5%

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 colleague?” The measure can run from -100 to +100.

In this period, TDR achieved a Net Promoter Score of **+67**.



An NPS score above 0 is considered “good”. It means that your audience is more loyal than not. Anything above 20 is considered “favourable”. Bain & Co, the source of the NPS system, suggests that above 50 is excellent, and above 80 is world class.

“Great customer service. Listened tentatively and made sure that they recorded things accurately as I relayed my plight to them.”

“I believe that the person assigned did everything possible to fully understand the complaint and to find a resolution.”

“Excellent response time and the whole management of the process.”

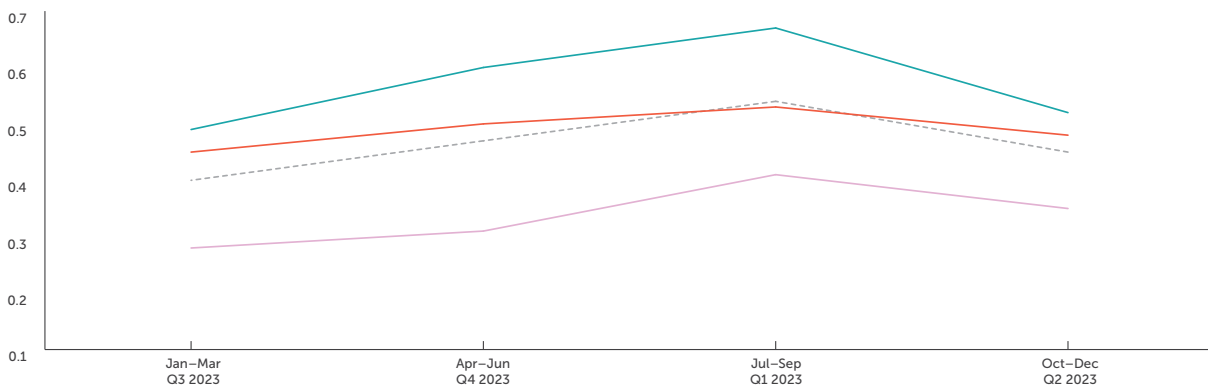
“I got a better result than expected.”

“I was able to get something done about an issue that seemed to have no resolution.”

“I was trying to get a solution to my basic problem for 2 weeks. One email to TDR and it was resolved within 4 hours.”

Year to date data

Complaints per 10,000 connections – Mobile



Q1

Based on total industry connections of 6,900,389*

Q2

Based on total industry connections of 6,994,190*

Scheme member	*Per 10k connections	Total received	*Per 10k connections	Total received
2degrees**	0.67	117	0.52	92
One NZ***	0.53	126	0.48	118
Spark****	0.41	111	0.35	95
Average	0.54		0.45	
Other^		7		9
TOTAL		361		314

* 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-July to 31-December 2023. Please refer to page 14 for additional information.

** 2degrees includes Vocus Communications, 2talk, Flip, Orcon, Slingshot, and Warehouse mobile.

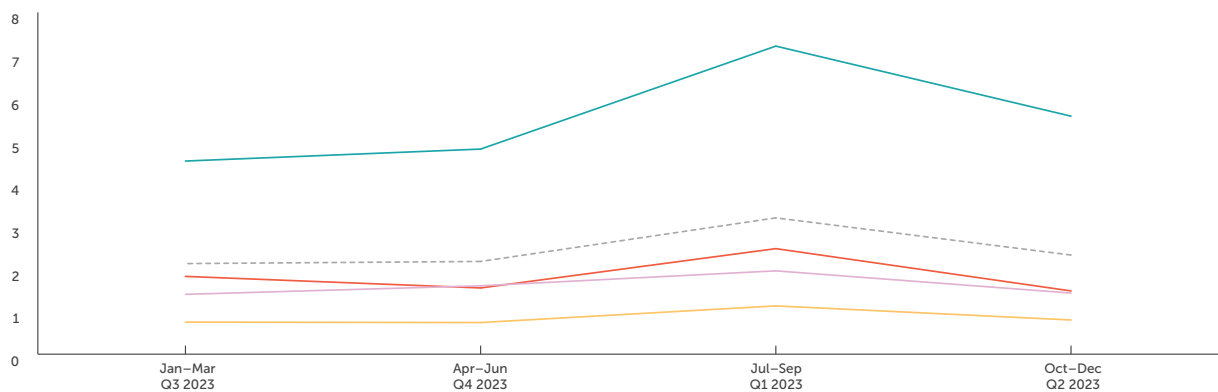
*** One NZ includes Kogan Mobile.

**** Spark includes Skinny and Bigpipe.

^ TDR does not calculate the per 10K connections of Other scheme members, for more detail please see the FAQ on page 14.

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

Complaints per 10,000 connections – Broadband



Q1

Based on total industry connections of 1,979,769*

Q2

Based on total industry connections of 1,986,996*

Scheme member	*Per 10k connections	Total received	*Per 10k connections	Total received
2degrees**	7.21	282	5.57	217
Mercury	1.13	17	0.80	12
One NZ	2.47	98	1.48	58
Spark***	1.95	134	1.43	98
Average	3.19		2.32	
Other^		55		34
TOTAL		586		419

* 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-July to 31-December 2023. Please refer to *page 14* for additional information.

** 2degrees includes Vocus Communications, 2talk, Flip, Orcon, Slingshot, and MyRepublic Broadband.

*** Spark includes Skinny and Bigpipe.

^ TDR does not calculate the per 10K connections of Other scheme members, for more detail please see the FAQ on *page 14*.

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

Case studies

Understanding an invoice

The customer's frustrations began in July when they contacted their provider to change to a different Optical Network Terminal (ONT) or 'fibre box' on the same property.

During the change process, several issues arose. These included delays with the change, the provider sending communications regarding the change to an incorrect address, and the customer having to answer the same questions multiple times to different representatives during the process.

The provider acknowledged that the customer was frustrated and had been inconvenienced. They offered a \$50 goodwill credit which was accepted by the customer. However, when the customer received their August invoice, they were unable to identify the goodwill credit on the invoice so they contacted TDR for assistance.

TDR engaged with their provider, who confirmed that the change had been completed and that credits had been applied to the customer's account. The provider explained that the invoice included a reimbursement for charges for the inactive connection, a credit for the early termination fee and the \$50.00 goodwill credit.

The provider identified that the \$50.00 goodwill payment was combined with the reimbursement and early termination credits. These payments were incorrectly noted on the invoice as a total payment under the description 'Credit for late payment fee'.

It was understandable that the customer questioned whether the credits had been applied, due to the seemingly complicated invoice and the line-item errors. However, with the support of TDR and clarification from the provider, the customer was able to understand the invoice. The customer was satisfied that the provider had in fact applied the credits.



Installation frustration at business

The owner of a small business contacted TDR about the service issues they experienced when trying to install broadband at their premises.

After two months of unsuccessfully attempting to connect to broadband with the provider, in frustration, the owner moved to a new provider. The owner said they had spent countless hours with their original provider trying to fix the issue. They felt their time had been wasted with poor communication and repeated requests for the same information.

The provider said the connection issues arose from the unique installation set-up and it was outside the scope of its responsibility to fix this.

When the owner transferred to their new provider, they moved both their broadband and phone contracts. Their phone contract with the original provider required them to pay for mobile phone handsets. The owner had not made the required repayments and the debt had been sent to a third-party debt collection agency.

TDR arranged a mediation where the practitioner facilitated a conversation and talked with both parties about TDR’s jurisdiction, the installation, the service provided, and the phone costs.

The owner and provider reached an agreement together. The owner accepted that they needed to pay for the cost of the phones and together with the provider, they agreed to a repayment plan for the phones. The provider agreed to waive the debt collection costs and unpaid broadband charges.



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 17*. 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 17*.

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 8* 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



Talk to TDR

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 during this phase.



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 current 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



Devoli
0800 842 326



Digital Emporium
0800 842 326



Electric Kiwi
www.electrickiwi.co.nz



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



Farmside
0800 32 76 74



Flip
0800 60 SALES
(0800 60 72 53)



Fortysouth
www.fortysouth.co.nz



Kogan
www.kogan.com/nz



Megatel
0800 634 283 (MEGATEL)
09 912 1200



Mercury
09 475 7234



Mighty Mobile
www.mightymobile.co.nz



MyRepublic
0508 MYFIBRE
(0508 693 4273)



Northpower Fibre
0800 667 847



Nova

0800 634 236



NOW

0800 GET NOW
(0800 43 86 69)



One NZ

0800 800 021



Orcon

0800 131 415



Primo Wireless

0800 12 37 74



Skinny

0800 4 SKINNY
(0800 475 4669)



Sky Broadband

0800 759 759



Slingshot

0800 892 000



Spark

0800 800 123



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



VoIPcloud Wholesale

09 222 4699



VoiPline Telecommunications

09 222 1000



Warehouse Mobile

0800 284 800

Free phone 0508 98 98 98

Email contact@tdr.org.nz

Online www.tdr.org.nz

