

## Press Release

### Telco complaint scheme celebrates

Telco consumers are well served when they have unresolved complaints against their company. This is the view of David Russell, Chair of the Telecommunications Dispute Resolution Council (TDR).

The Council is celebrating its fifth birthday of providing a prompt and fair process for consumers to resolve complaints against their telecommunication company.

“I’m delighted that all major telcos are members of the scheme. In practical terms this means that 97% of all customers are covered by the scheme.

“However, the success of a customer complaints scheme is not just the number of industry participants but of equal, indeed greater importance, the level of user satisfaction. We are proud that this year, 91% of consumers who used the scheme reported that they were satisfied with the service provided and 97% reported being happy with the way staff handled their complaint.

“This very high satisfaction with the scheme is a credit to Dispute Resolution Services Limited (DRSL), the independent Crown-owned company contracted by the Council to handle complaints.

“Last year we had 3,000 calls from consumers. This was slightly lower than the previous year but the drop is an indication that the companies are dealing effectively with complaints without the need for services of the TDR. This is an excellent outcome for customers. Another reason for the drop is that fewer complaints have come out of Christchurch, an indication that customers affected by the earthquake, have been accepting of service disruptions,” said Russell.

Last year the Telecommunications Carriers Forum, the industry body responsible for developing the complaints code, reviewed the way the TDR was funded and how the scheme operated. The Council says that changes made make the scheme simpler for the participating companies and fairer in the way costs are allocated.

The TDR scheme manager, Derek Pullen, has also welcomed the revamped code.

“The changes make the scheme more flexible meaning fewer complaints need to go through the formal dispute resolution service.

“Another benefit has been the opportunity to gather more detailed information about complaints which helps us identify systemic issues, both industry wide and company specific. This information is then fed back to scheme members and the TDR Council so steps can be taken to improve customer service,” said Pullen.

Russell thanked the Dispute Resolution Services for its professional handling of complaints and to the Telecommunications Forum for its support and commitment to the scheme.

### Ends

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**Further information**

DRSL is a specialist dispute resolution company. On 1 July 2011 it became an independent Crown-owned company. It provides services to resolve disputes between organisations and the people with whom they come into contact.

There are several alternative dispute resolution processes – facilitation, mediation and adjudication – and DRSL provides services in all of these areas, including the establishment of comprehensive complaint management systems for other organisations.

DRSL has resolved disputes of all kinds and all levels of complexity, including medical, insurance, disability, employment and commercial matters, and handles more than 10,000 issues nationwide per year. DRSL has offices in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch and has a staff of highly qualified professionals, including trained mediators and adjudicators.