Explanation of TIO data terms

Why we capture data

The TIO provides the telecommunications industry and the community with an independent perspective on the consumer experience in the context of landline, mobile, internet and mobile premium services. Through the thousands of contacts we receive each week and the many residential or small business consumers we help each year, we are able to identify complaint trends and their probable causes and to provide this valuable information to stakeholders.

We capture information about complaints for a variety of reasons including:

- monitoring of complaint trends
- identifying gaps in consumer protection as may be indicated by complaint trends
- identifying systemic problems within the industry
- measuring the impact of new technologies and changes in industry behaviour
- creating awareness and informing TIO Members about good industry practice as set out in Industry Codes
- reporting complaint trends and possible code compliance issues, to regulators and the industry
- allocating TIO resources in an efficient and effective manner
- reporting to the community on the work we do.

How we capture data

The TIO keeps a record of every telecommunications enquiry or complaint that is reported to us. Most consumer contacts are made through our free telephone number, with a smaller portion being lodged electronically via our website or by email. Each complaint is captured in our complaints management system and is categorised using a comprehensive list of 'keywords'. These keywords are divided into three tiers with the first tier categorising the general subject matter of the complaint and the second and third tiers identifying the precise nature of the complaint.

For example, a complaint about a credit or adjustment not having been applied to a bill would be recorded in our system as:

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Billing & Payments	Credit/Adjustment	Not Applied

Capturing complaints in this way means that we have a very rich source of data we can refer to for the purposes of giving information to stakeholders and undertaking our own analysis. We supply complaints data to TIO Members, industry groups and regulators. We publish quarterly and annual data on our website for public use. We see our data and its publication as important steps in helping to identify and address issues of concern for consumers.

New Complaints

The TIO records a 'new complaint' when it first receives an expression of grievance or dissatisfaction from a consumer where the telecommunications service provider has had an opportunity to consider the matter. A new complaint is initially classified at Level 1 of the TIO process, with a small number initially classified at Level 2 (and at Level 4 in limited circumstances such as Land Access Objections). Each new complaint has its own unique reference number.

Investigations (Escalated Cases)

Where a new complaint remains unresolved and requires conciliation or investigation by the TIO, it is escalated to a higher case level (usually, new complaints classified at Level 1 that remain unresolved are escalated to Level 2 for conciliation, and to Levels 3 and 4 for formal investigation/determination).

Cases

The TIO classifies cases at four case levels, namely Levels 1, 2, 3 and 4. Total cases recorded by the TIO each financial year include new complaints we receive and those escalated to higher case levels during the year. Each case level captures 'issues' that are relevant to that case level.

Issues

The TIO records 'issues' to capture the types of issues that are presented by each new complaint. Issues are selected from a choice of keywords that are aligned to industry codes or common complaint categories that the TIO has identified. These include connection and fault repair delays, credit management disputes, contractual disputes, customer service/complaint handling and billing disputes.

Every new complaint involves at least one complaint issue. Some complaints can involve multiple complaint issues – for example, a complaint about a faulty mobile service may also involve a concern over the lack of a response from the service provider about the fault. In such circumstances, the TIO would record one complaint comprising two issues – a faults issue and a customer service issue.

The TIO also updates the issues for unresolved complaints that are escalated to a higher case level.

Explanation of TIO data terms *continued*

Enquiries

The TIO records an enquiry for any new contact that is not classified as a new complaint. These include, for example, where the consumer:

- is expressing a grievance but has not given the TIO Member an opportunity to consider the matter
- does not have sufficient interest in the matter
- is only requesting for information.

Enquiries can also include matters that:

- are outside the TIO's jurisdiction
- could be raised with a more appropriate organisation
- are under consideration or have already been considered by another body
- are frivolous or vexatious.

Code Data

We capture data about compliance with industry codes.

(a) Possible Code Issues

When we refer to a 'possible code issue', this relates to a clause of an industry code that appears to be relevant to the complaint based on the consumer's version of events or the available information. We record possible code issues at Levels 1 and 2 where the claims of the consumer indicate that a code compliance problem may exist. Possible code issues are rarely reported at Levels 3 and 4 (as possible code issues are assessed, confirmed or dismissed at Levels 3 and 4).

Possible code data is captured by the TIO in two different ways:

- When recording a specific complaint issue at Level 1, a TIO Officer may be prompted by the TIO's complaint management system to answer a series of questions requiring 'yes' or 'no' answers, based on information provided by the consumer. These questions relate to obligations set out in industry codes which are incorporated into the TIO's complaint management system. Depending on the information provided by the consumer and the answers to these questions, the system may automatically record possible code issues in relation to the complaint.

- Where a complaint requires investigation at Levels 2, 3 or 4 in order to resolve the complaint, the TIO Officer will consider the obligations set out in industry codes and raise these with the TIO Member to assist in resolving the complaint. These possible code issues are then manually added to the TIO's complaint management system.

Possible code issue data is only reported upon closure of a complaint.

(b) Confirmed Code Breaches

We also capture 'confirmed breaches' against industry codes where evidence gathered during a formal investigation indicates that a breach has taken place. Confirmed code breaches are recorded only at Levels 3 and 4 of our complaint handling process.

The TIO records a 'confirmed code breach' when:

- a possible code issue has been raised in writing with a TIO Member during formal investigation of a complaint at either Level 3 or Level 4
- the TIO Member has been invited to respond to the possible code issue and give supporting evidence, within a reasonable amount of time
- in light of all available evidence including the TIO Member's response to the possible code issue, the TIO Officer has come to the conclusion that a breach of the relevant code obligation has occurred.

Confirmed code breach data code is only reported upon closure of a complaint.

Quality Assurance

Each month, quarter and end of financial year, we undertake a range of quality assurance activities to ensure the accuracy of our data.