



# THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY OMBUDSMAN

## What is the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman?

The Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman, or TIO, is a free service for Australians who have a problem with their telecommunications company. The TIO scheme is available to both individuals and small business customers. The TIO can look at complaints about landline phones, mobile phones and internet services.

The TIO is independent of industry, the government and consumer organisations.

## How does the TIO work?

The TIO acts as a dispute resolution organisation. It aims to settle complaints without going to a court. It does this by resolving complaints together with the telecommunications company. The TIO tries to be fair and objective by considering all aspects of the law and good industry practice.

## What complaints can the TIO consider?

The TIO usually only handles recent complaints, or those complaints that you have become aware of in the past two years.

This time may be extended in some circumstances. Examples of complaints the TIO can investigate include:

- > Billing & payments
- > Compensation
- > Contracts
- > Credit management
- > Customer service
- > Customer Service Guarantee
- > Directories
- > Disability equipment
- > Disconnections
- > Faults
- > Internet
- > Land access
- > Miscellaneous statements
- > Mobiles
- > Priority connections & repairs
- > Privacy
- > Provisioning (connections)
- > Transfers

If you are unsure about your complaint, contact the TIO by the means below. If the TIO cannot help, it will refer you to someone who can.

## How do I contact the TIO and make a complaint?

Before you contact the TIO, you must first speak to your telecommunications company to give it an opportunity to resolve the issue. If you remain dissatisfied after this initial approach, you can then contact the TIO. The TIO office hours are 9:00am to 5:30pm Monday to Friday, AEST and can be contacted by:

<b>Telephone</b>	1800 062 058 Standard rates apply for mobile calls. The TIO can return calls on request.
<b>Fax</b>	1800 630 614
<b>Online</b>	Through the TIO online complaint form at <a href="http://www.tio.com.au/making-a-complaint/submit-a-Online-complaint">www.tio.com.au/making-a-complaint/submit-a-Online complaint</a>
<b>Mail</b>	Send the TIO complaint form or letter to: The Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman, PO Box 276, Collins Street West, VIC 8007
<b>Street address</b>	Level 3, 595 Collins Street, Melbourne.
<b>TTY/ National Relay Service</b>	A telephone typewriter (TTY) is provided on 1800 675 692. For the NRS, call 1800 555 677 then ask for 1800 062 058.
<b>Translator and interpreter service</b>	1800 062 058 or the Translating and Interpreter Service at 131 450.

## How does the TIO handle my complaint?

The TIO handles your complaint in four progressive stages. The process consists of referral, conciliation, investigation and determination. When you first contact the TIO, the TIO sends an email to your service provider with the details of that complaint. The provider then has ten working days to respond to you to answer the complaint. This gives your provider another opportunity to repair your relationship.

If you do not recontact the TIO after this time, the TIO will assume your complaint has been resolved. The TIO will then close your case. Over 88 per cent of complaints are resolved at this initial 'Level 1' referral.

If you remain dissatisfied, the TIO will initiate a 'Level 2' conciliation process. This involves the TIO talking to both you and your provider to help negotiate an agreement. This conciliation stage also usually achieves a quick and satisfactory resolution.

Cases involving the more complicated 'Level 3' and 'Level 4' investigations require the collation of supporting evidence. They require longer timeframes. These higher-level investigations also allow the TIO to make binding decisions and recommendations on the telecommunications company. Visit the TIO website at [www.tio.com.au](http://www.tio.com.au) for further details about this complex process.

## What if I am not satisfied with the TIO investigation?

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your TIO complaint, you can request the TIO to review its investigation. A review involves an independent assessment of the investigation.

You are also under no obligation to accept any TIO decision or review outcome concerning your complaint. You are still entitled to take your complaint to another body - such as the Small Claims Tribunal in your State or Territory; or seek independent legal advice.

Visit the TIO website at [www.tio.com.au](http://www.tio.com.au) for further information on the role of the TIO.