



## Hot issues

### Positive outcomes from TIO review

[ACCAN's submission](#) to the Independent Review into the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (TIO) highlighted the important role of the TIO, but also identified a number of areas for improvement.

The final report agreed with ACCAN's recommendations that there is a need for:

- Providing clearer information for consumers about the complaints process, in diverse languages and formats.
- Increased engagement and awareness raising, working with other ombudsmen and especially with vulnerable consumer groups.
- Improving ways to support customers, including those with a disability, through the complaints process.
- Quicker resolution of complaints via stricter timeframes for service providers.
- Dealing with consumers in a way that reflects and mediates the power imbalance between the consumer and retail service provider.
- Increasing the transparency of how the TIO identifies and investigates systemic issues, and how these are escalated to regulators and industry.
- More detailed reporting and analysis of complaints to the TIO, and how they are resolved.

The [review report](#), released last week, makes 29 positive recommendations to improve TIO processes for consumers. ACCAN is very pleased that all of the recommendations have been supported by the TIO in its response.

Some key recommendations from the TIO Review Report most relevant to consumers are:

1. [Changes to the Terms of Reference](#) and, as necessary, the law to empower the TIO to effectively deal with multi-provider complaints. This means that wholesalers, such as nbn, can be required to provide information during the complaints process.
2. Improved assistance and guidance information for consumers and service providers to help them understand and work more effectively with the TIO.
3. A number of detail changes to the TIO dispute resolution processes.
4. A strengthening of quality assurance for telephone enquiries, consumer reviews/appeals and a process for quality assurance on outcomes for consumers referred back to their service providers.
5. A more assertive approach to matters such as the speed and quality of internet services.
6. Improving the TIO's ability to identify and investigate systemic issues and refer them to regulators and industry. The TIO should also focus immediate effort on issues relating to the NBN.
7. More transparent and detailed public reporting of TIO insights into the sector, and a greater willingness to consult with key stakeholders on its complaint classification process and reporting.

8. Strengthening TIO engagement with stakeholders including trialling an annual conference and establishing a consumer advisory group.