



Australian Government

Australian Communications Authority

Telecommunications Performance Monitoring Bulletin

Issue 30 – September 2004 Quarter

**A quarterly report on quality of service in the
telecommunications industry**

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*The Australian Communications Authority is
a government regulator of telecommunications
and radiocommunications*

Telecommunications Performance Monitoring Bulletin

Issue 30 – September 2004 quarter

A quarterly report on quality of service in the telecommunications industry

The ACA has a responsibility under the *Telecommunications Act 1997* to monitor and report to the Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts on the performance of carriers and carriage service providers with particular reference to consumer satisfaction, consumer benefits and quality of service.

Publisher

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Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
CUSTOMER SERVICE GUARANTEE.....	4
NETWORK RELIABILITY FRAMEWORK.....	12
MOBILE NETWORKS.....	18
PRIORITY ASSISTANCE.....	19
CALL CENTRE PERFORMANCE.....	23
COMPLAINTS.....	27
PAYPHONE SERVICES	29
SPECIAL INTEREST ITEM	32
DATA TABLES.....	34
NOTES	43
GLOSSARY	44

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *Telecommunications Performance Monitoring Bulletin* is published quarterly by the Australian Communications Authority (ACA) to report on carrier performance in meeting telephone service levels. The ACA receives reports from Telstra, Optus, AAPT and Primus about service performance against regulatory obligations such as the Customer Service Guarantee and Network Reliability Framework (Telstra only), as well as against other general performance measures.

September quarter performance highlights

Most performance indicators for the connection and repair of telephone services, as well as the maintenance of public payphones, either remained steady or improved in comparison with previous quarters.

Service connection performance remained stable or improved

All four major service providers (AAPT, Optus, Primus and Telstra) connected CSG-eligible telephone services within CSG timeframes in at least 97 per cent of cases.

Telstra's overall quarterly connection performance was 97 per cent within targeted timeframes. This was underpinned by a stable result of 98 per cent of in-place connections being completed on time, and an improvement in new service connection performance from 92 per cent last quarter to 93 per cent this quarter. However, customers seeking a telephone service in major rural areas who were not close to available infrastructure experienced a continued decline in performance from 93 per cent in the September 2003 quarter to 89 per cent in September 2004.

Optus continues to achieve around 99 per cent of service connections within CSG timeframes, despite a slight decline of 0.5 per cent in its in-place connection performance to 98 per cent in the September 2004 quarter.

AAPT's performance in connecting telephone services mirrored that of Telstra, with 97 per cent of telephone service connections being carried out within CSG timeframes during the September 2004 quarter.

Like AAPT, Primus resells Telstra services. Primus had a 99 per cent connection performance during the quarter.

The percentage of connections by Telstra that were more than five working days late ('extreme cases of failure') has fallen from 0.28 per cent in the previous quarter to 0.14 per cent in the September 2004 quarter. This was mirrored by the result for those that were more than 20 working days late, which fell from 0.02 per cent in the June 2004 quarter to 0.01 per cent in the September 2004 quarter. Optus' performance against this measure declined from 0.06 per cent of services connected more than five working days late in the June 2004 quarter to 0.10 per cent in the September 2004 quarter. However, none of these late connections by Optus were more than 20 working days past their CSG timeframes.

In the September 2004 quarter, 97.1 per cent of connections for Telstra's priority assistance customers were completed within the licence timeframes that apply to these services, the highest level of performance achieved on this indicator since December 2002.

Improvements in fault repair times

Service providers also achieved improved results in the timely repair of telephone services.

Telstra's fault repair performance has continued to improve from 88 per cent of faults in the March 2004 quarter repaired within the CSG timeframes to 93 per cent in the September 2004 quarter.

For the September 2004 quarter, Optus' fault repair performance remained stable at 98 per cent of faults repaired within the CSG timeframes, an improvement from its September 2003 performance of 94 per cent.

There were reductions in the number of mass service disruptions (MSDs) declared and in the percentage of extreme cases of failure for faults under the CSG Standard.

A total of 10 MSDs, affecting services on the south-east coast of Australia, were declared by Telstra during the quarter, down from 16 declared in the same period in 2003 and 11 in the previous quarter.

Ninety-five point four per cent of faults repaired for Telstra's priority assistance customers were cleared within licence condition timeframes. This is an improvement over the performance in the June 2004 quarter, but still below that for the September 2003 quarter.

Mixed reliability results

The Network Reliability Framework (NRF) monthly figures for the August to October 2004 period also show a level of reliability consistent with the previous three-month period. Telstra has generally improved on its 2003 performance this year. However, the reliability performance for this quarter was below that achieved during the same period in 2003.

The most recent data for October 2004 showed that 99.09 per cent of Telstra's CSG-eligible services did not experience a fault (0.08 per cent less than in October 2003) and services were available for an average of 99.94 per cent of the time (0.01 per cent less than October 2003).

Payphone improvements

Performance indicators for Telstra's public payphones have all shown an improvement in availability and repair times, particularly for the 'serviceability' of its payphones in Western Australia and Queensland.

Telstra reported that 84 per cent of payphone faults in remote areas were repaired within the relevant timeframe, up 25 percentage points from the same quarter in 2003. The improvement was smaller in urban (up six percentage points from the previous quarter to 91 per cent) and rural areas (up five percentage points from the previous quarter to 87 per cent).

Telstra attributes these improvements to its strategies implemented in response to Recommendation 2.13 of the Regional Telecommunications Inquiry (RTI).

Nationally, payphone fault repair times appear to have 'plateaued' for three quarters, but increasing trends in New South Wales and Tasmania have led to the ACA requesting an explanation from Telstra.

Dial-up Internet rates and telephone congestion

The RTI made a number of recommendations to improve telecommunication services for regional consumers, particularly in relation to telephone congestion and dial-up Internet rates. This edition of the *Telecommunications Performance Monitoring Bulletin* contains a special interest item discussing initiatives arising from three RTI recommendations that relate to telephone congestion caused by older pair gain systems and poor dial-up Internet rates.

CUSTOMER SERVICE GUARANTEE

The Customer Service Guarantee (CSG) Standard specifies timeframes for the connection and repair of standard telephone services, together with associated appointments. These CSG timeframes vary depending on the type of request (connection or repair), the location of the service and for new connections, the proximity of the service to available infrastructure.

If a carriage service provider (service provider) does not meet the relevant CSG timeframes, the service provider may be liable to pay compensation to the affected customers.

Information about the CSG timeframes and compensation entitlements are in an ACA fact sheet on the ACA website at www.aca.gov.au/consumer_info/fact_sheets/consumer_fact_sheets/fsc50.htm.

Service providers report to the ACA on key performance indicators concerning CSG Standard timeframes for connections, fault repair and compensation payments. Telstra and Optus also report to the ACA about cases of extreme failure (instances where the relevant CSG timeframes are exceeded by more than five working days).

In general the ACA considers service provider performance against CSG requirements and measures to be at a satisfactorily high level where performance of 90 per cent or more is achieved. This is consistent with the views taken by the Regional Telecommunications Inquiry in regard to CSG performance. The ACA monitors service provider performance against the CSG on a quarterly basis. When performance in two or more consecutive quarters shows a significant decline or is persistently below 90 per cent, the ACA will enquire and seek explanations from the service provider about possible causes and proposed actions to improve performance.

1. Connections

A performance of 97 per cent or better was achieved in meeting connection timeframes by each of the four major service providers (AAPT, Optus, Primus and Telstra) for the September 2004 quarter.

In summary, in the September 2004 quarter:

- AAPT achieved a 97 per cent performance for its new and in-place service connections within CSG timeframes.
- Optus achieved 99 per cent performance for connection of its services within the CSG timeframes, a strong performance that Optus has maintained during the last three quarters. Optus' connections are predominantly for new services rather than in-place services (in contrast to Telstra, see below).
- Primus' urban and rural performance data indicate a performance exceeding 99 per cent for connection of services within CSG timeframes.
- Telstra achieved an overall 97 per cent performance for its new and in-place connections—up by one percentage point from its March and June 2004 quarters, and two percentage points from the September 2003 quarter. Telstra's connections are predominantly in-place connections (around two thirds of total connections).

Telstra's quarterly performance data reflects the performance of its own retail operations. Optus' quarterly performance data includes only services directly connected to its own network in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. As noted in the March 2004 quarter issue of the bulletin, changes to Optus' reporting systems during the December 2003 quarter make comparisons between 2004 and 2003 performances misleading. The Optus' quarterly data in 2003 overstated in-place connections and understated new service connection performances.

For other major providers, the data specifically relate to retail services that use Telstra's network.

AAPT reports to the ACA on its CSG connection performance, but the data provided does not differentiate between in-place and new connections and is not included in the analysis below.

In-place connections

An in-place connection takes place when a telephone access service is already available and reconnection by the service provider is a relatively simple or administrative matter. The CSG Standard requires service providers to connect in-place services within two working days after the day of request, regardless of location.

As in previous quarters, Telstra reported that two-thirds of its connections were in-place connections and the other third were new services.

Telstra's quarterly performance for in-place connections remained stable with 98 per cent of national in-place connections in the September 2004 quarter completed within the CSG timeframe. This is an improvement of two percentage points in performance for the same quarter last year.

During the September 2004 quarter, Optus completed 98 per cent of national in-place connections within the CSG timeframe, a decline in performance of 0.5 percentage points from the previous quarter, which Optus attributed to an increase in the volume of in-place connection requests.

Primus continued its stable performance from the previous two quarters, with 99 per cent of urban in-place connections at the national level completed within CSG timeframes, an improvement on the 98 per cent Primus reported for the same quarter in 2003.

New service connections

Under the CSG Standard, service providers are required to connect new services according to timeframes that depend on the location of the service and its proximity to cabling or other infrastructure.

Urban areas

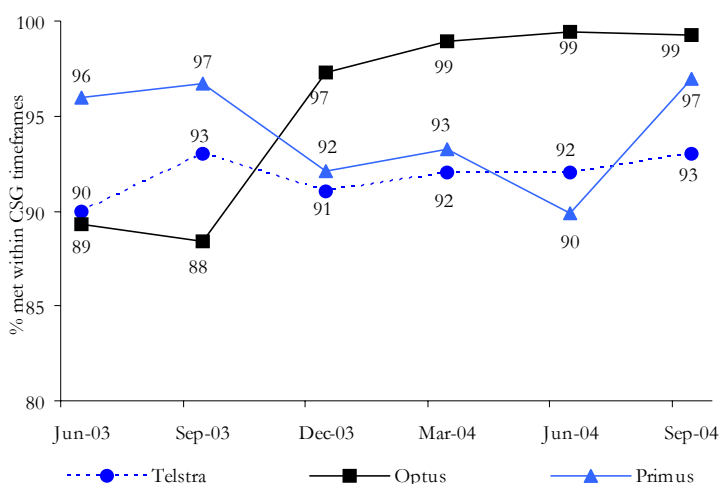
Figure 1 shows national new service connection performance for urban areas with and without infrastructure for Optus, Primus and Telstra.

Optus' performance for the September 2004 quarter is at 99 per cent and has remained stable since Optus refined its CSG reporting system in December 2003.

Primus' September 2004 quarter performance is consistent with its performance for the same quarter in 2003 with 97 per cent of connections completed within the CSG timeframe, up by seven percentage points from the previous quarter.

Telstra's new service connections performance in urban areas also remained stable relative to its performance for the same quarter last year, with 93 per cent meeting the CSG timeframe. This is an improvement of one percentage point from the previous quarter.

Figure 1: New service connection performance – urban areas (June 2003–September 2004)



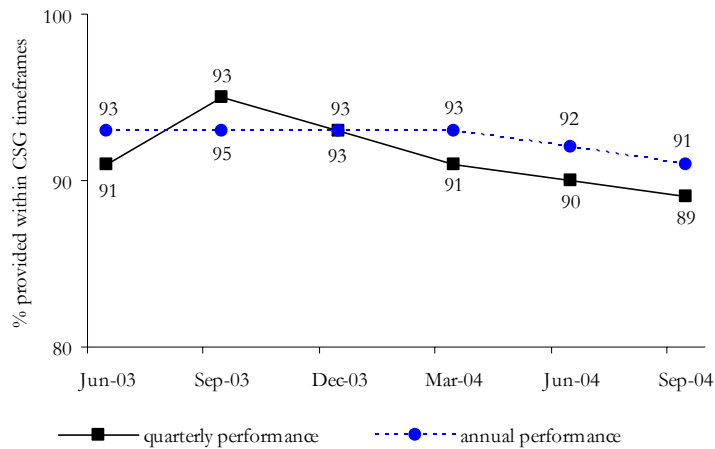
Note: Optus made improvements to its connection reporting systems during the December 2003 quarter.

Rural areas

Telstra's strategies for improving its performance in connecting services that are not close to infrastructure appear to be working overall. However a steady decline in performance since the September 2003 quarter is evident in major rural areas, dropping to less than 90 per cent in the September 2004 quarter as shown in Figure 2. Telstra has advised that the decline in performance in this quarter was caused by an increase in fault

volumes as a result of the heavy rain in the major rural areas of Western Australia diverting resources from connection to fault repair activities. The ACA will be closely monitoring this performance category over the next few quarters.

Figure 2: New service connection performance by Telstra – major rural areas without infrastructure (June 2003–September 2004)



2. Fault repair

Overall, fault performance was good for the September 2004 quarter. National fault repair performance for Telstra was 93 per cent repaired within the CSG timeframes and 98 per cent for Optus.

Telstra’s quarterly fault repair performance data reflects the performance of its own retail operations. Optus’ quarterly fault repair performance data includes both its resale services and services directly connected to its network in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane.

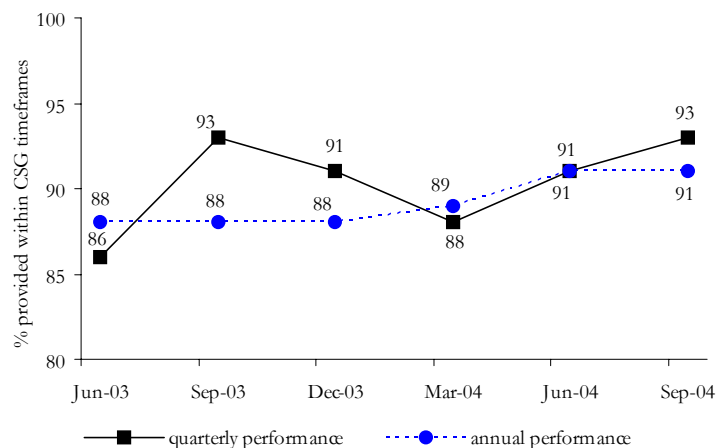
AAPT provides fault repair performance data to the ACA, but it is not reported because there is a lack of confidence in the data owing to the way it is extracted.

Primus advised that it cannot report on its fault performance data because it does not receive appropriate data from Telstra.

Telstra

Telstra’s overall fault repair performance has continually improved over the last two quarters, from 88 and 91 per cent of faults repaired in the March and June 2004 quarters within the CSG timeframes to 93 per cent in the September 2004 quarter. This performance is similar to that reported in the September quarter 2003 (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Telstra’s national fault repair performance (June 2003–September 2004)



The biggest improvement in Telstra’s fault repair performance is in urban areas. At the national level, Telstra repaired 93 per cent of faults in urban areas this quarter within the CSG timeframe, up two percentage points from the previous quarter.

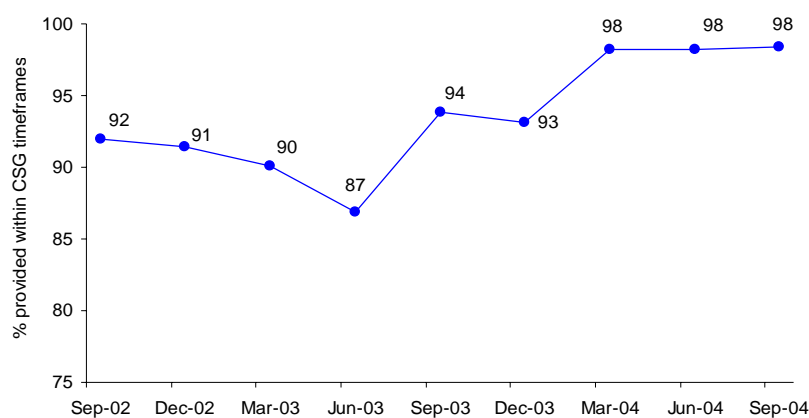
At the state level, Telstra’s urban fault repair performance improved this quarter in all states with the biggest improvement in Western Australia (92 per cent—up eight percentage points from the same quarter in 2003) and in South Australia (93 per cent—up seven percentage points from the same quarter in 2003).

Optus

Optus’ fault repair performance has remained stable over the last three quarters at 98 per cent of faults repaired within the CSG timeframes. This is an improvement from its September 2003 performance of 94 per cent (see Figure 4).

At the state level, Optus’ performance has improved compared to its September 2003 quarter fault repair performance in urban areas where a majority of Optus’ directly connected customers are located—in New South Wales/Australian Capital Territory from 94 per cent to 98 per cent, in Victoria from 95 per cent to 99 per cent and in Queensland from 94 per cent to 99 per cent.

Figure 4: Optus’ national urban area fault repair performance (September 2003–September 2004)



3. Exemptions from the CSG Standard

During the September 2004 quarter, Telstra and Optus extended the allowable period for service delivery in some areas due to circumstances beyond their control as provided for by the CSG Standard. Such an extension does not exempt Telstra and Optus from CSG requirements. Rather, it potentially extends the period over which the CSG requirements must be met. The percentage of connection and fault repair activity met within the CSG timeframes takes into account the effect of exemption claims on CSG performance.

The CSG Standard allows service providers to declare two types of exemptions:

- a mass service disruption (MSD), which is a general notice of exemptions requiring the service provider to notify a large number of customers that they are affected by an exemption; and
- an individual exemption, which is a notice of exemptions to individual customers.

Service providers declaring MSDs are required to follow procedures including notifying the ACA and the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman. There is no such requirement when a service provider issues a notice of exemption to individual customers. Most CSG exemptions are due to the declaration of MSDs.

Telstra reported that the percentage of Telstra services affected by exemptions associated with MSD declarations this quarter was two per cent, down from 2.8 per cent in the same quarter in 2003.

During the September 2004 quarter, Telstra declared 10 MSDs affecting services on the south-east coast of Australia:

- five in New South Wales/Australian Capital Territory;
- two each in Victoria and Tasmania; and
- one in South Australia.

In the corresponding quarter in 2003, there were 16 MSDs declared by Telstra, affecting mainland states except the Northern Territory.

Telstra advised that severe weather conditions restricting its connections and fault repair activity included lightning, heavy rain and strong winds.

Optus did not declare any MSDs for this quarter, but individual exemptions covered 3.6 per cent of new connections and 16.3 per cent of its fault repairs.

4. CSG compensation payments

Under Part 117A of the *Telecommunications (Consumer Protection and Service Standards) Act 1999*, service providers are required to initiate action to determine their liability to make compensation payments to customers where the service provider has not complied with a CSG performance standard. Furthermore, service providers are to meet timeframes in relation to this action.

Performance against this requirement is measured in relation to the timeliness of decisions and compensation payments.

Service providers report percentage compliance with the ACA against the following:

- decisions made within 14 days regarding payment liability;
- customers notified within 14 weeks of that decision; and
- liability discharged within 14 weeks of the decision to accept liability.

Telstra and Optus both reported 100 per cent compliance with each of the CSG payment requirements, consistent with their performance for the previous four quarters.

For the September 2004 quarter, AAPT advised that:

- 85 per cent of its decisions about liability were made within 14 days, an increase from the 70 per cent reported for the same quarter last year and reflects a continual improvement in AAPT's performance since the March 2004 quarter, when it reported that 76 per cent of its decisions about liability were made within the 14 days required;
- 90 per cent of its decisions were notified to customers within 14 weeks of the decision, an improvement from 89 per cent reported for the same quarter last year; and
- 92 per cent of its CSG liability was discharged within 14 weeks of the decision to accept the liability, an improvement from 91 per cent reported for the same quarter last year.

As reported in the June 2004 quarter issue of the bulletin, Primus advised it had difficulty making decisions about whether CSG compensations were payable within 14 days of becoming aware of a potential liability, because it relies largely on third party information to make these decisions. From the relevant September 2004 quarter data, it appears that Primus' reliance on the third party information continues to affect its compliance with this requirement with only 48 per cent of Primus' decisions about liability being made within 14 days—a further decline from 62 per cent reported for the previous quarter and 88 per cent for the same quarter in 2003. However, Primus reported that, for the September 2004 quarter, all customers were notified within 14 weeks of its decision regarding liability and it discharged all liabilities within 14 weeks of its decision to accept the liability.

5. Extreme cases of failure

Since January 2003, Telstra and Optus have been required to supplement their CSG performance information by reporting on extreme case of failure to meet the CSG timeframes for connections and fault repairs. Under this framework, an extreme case of failure is defined as exceeding the CSG timeframes by more than five working days.

Under these arrangements, Telstra and Optus:

- report on the frequency distribution of the time taken to connect and repair services at the national aggregate level (indicating an overall performance); and
- submit exception reports on any operational business unit where the percentage of cases exceeding the CSG Standard plus five working days is greater than one per cent.

(Note: In the case of Telstra, the operational business levels reported are the same as the field service areas reported under the Network Reliability Framework.)

In addition to the above, Optus also reports on the frequency distribution of the time its operational business units take to connect and repair services.

The information collected under the extreme case of failure monitoring and reporting framework enables the ACA to identify and monitor performance at both an aggregated and disaggregated level.

Measure of extreme cases of failure – connections

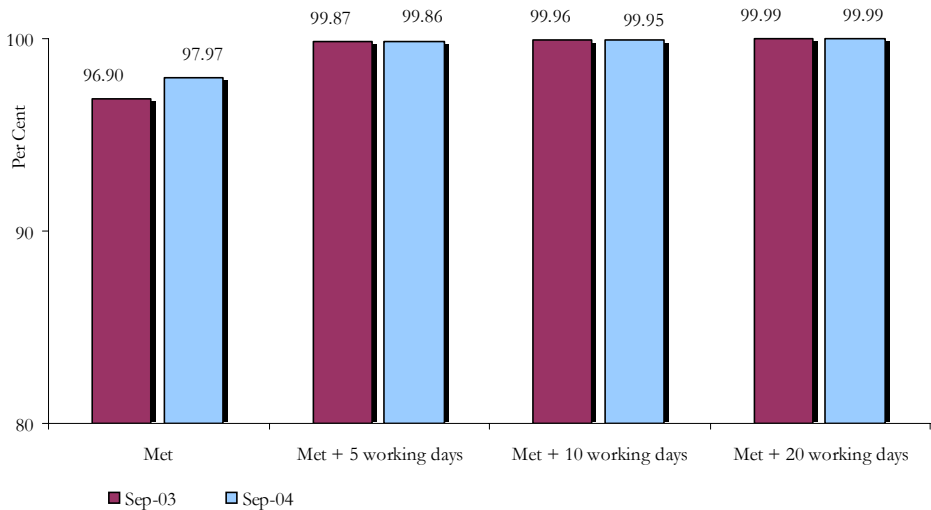
For connection activity, there is a single measure combining in-place connections and new connections with and without infrastructure.

Telstra

Telstra reported that 99.86 per cent of total connections during the September 2004 quarter were either provided within the CSG timeframes or within five working days after the CSG timeframes (see Figure 5). The remaining 0.14 per cent of connections were cases of extreme failure, which took six or more working days after the CSG timeframe to repair. This is consistent with its performance of 0.13 per cent for the same quarter in 2003 and an improvement from the 0.28 per cent reported for the previous quarter.

Telstra did not submit exception reports because its operational business units had not breached the threshold during this quarter.

Figure 5: Cumulative percentage of CSG connections provided by Telstra (September 2003 and 2004 quarters)



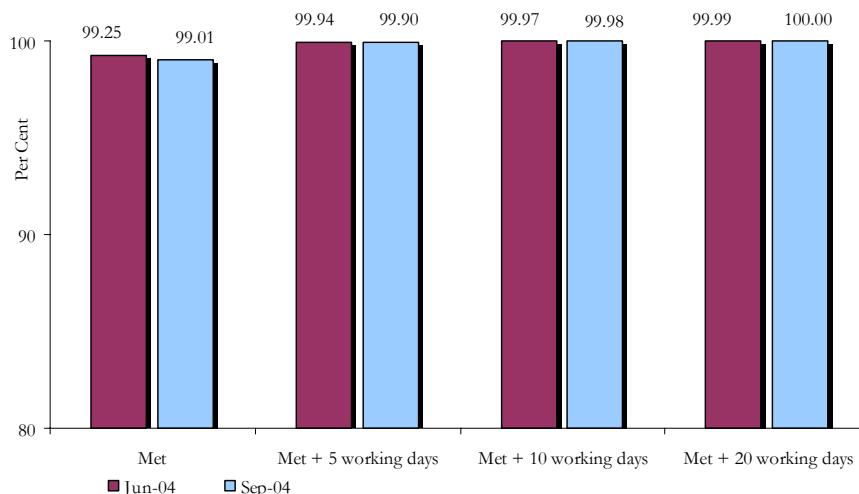
Optus

As noted in Section 1–Connections above, refinements to its reporting system during the December 2003 quarter make comparisons of Optus’ performance for 2003 and 2004 misleading. This also applies to Optus’ performance against the extreme case of failure measure for connections. Optus’ performance for this quarter is therefore only compared with the previous quarter.

During the September 2004 quarter, Optus reported that it completed 99.90 per cent of requests for connections within the CSG timeframes or within five working days after the CSG timeframes, a decline from the 99.94 per cent reported for the previous quarter (see Figure 6). This means that extreme cases of failure increased from 0.06 per cent in the previous quarter to 0.10 per cent for this quarter, but were completed within 20 working days after the CSG timeframe. For the June 2004 quarter, Optus took 21 working days or more after the CSG timeframe to complete 0.01 per cent of connections activity.

Optus did not submit exception reports because its operational business units had not breached the threshold during this quarter.

Figure 6: Cumulative percentage of Optus' CSG connections (June and September 2004 quarters)

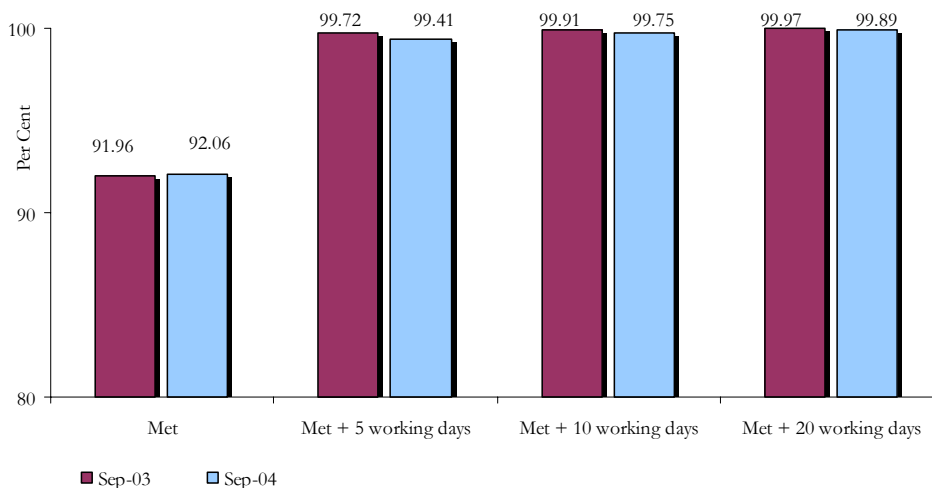


Measure of extreme cases of failure – fault repair

Telstra

Telstra reported that 0.59 per cent of total faults in the September 2004 quarter were cases of extreme failure and that the remaining 99.41 per cent were repaired within the CSG maximum timeframes or within five working days after the CSG timeframes. This is a decline from its performance for the same quarter in 2003 (see Figure 7), when Telstra reported 0.28 per cent of faults were cases of extreme failure, but an improvement from the previous quarter when 0.77 per cent of faults were cases of extreme failure.

Figure 7: Cumulative percentage of total CSG faults repaired by Telstra (September 2003 and 2004 quarters)

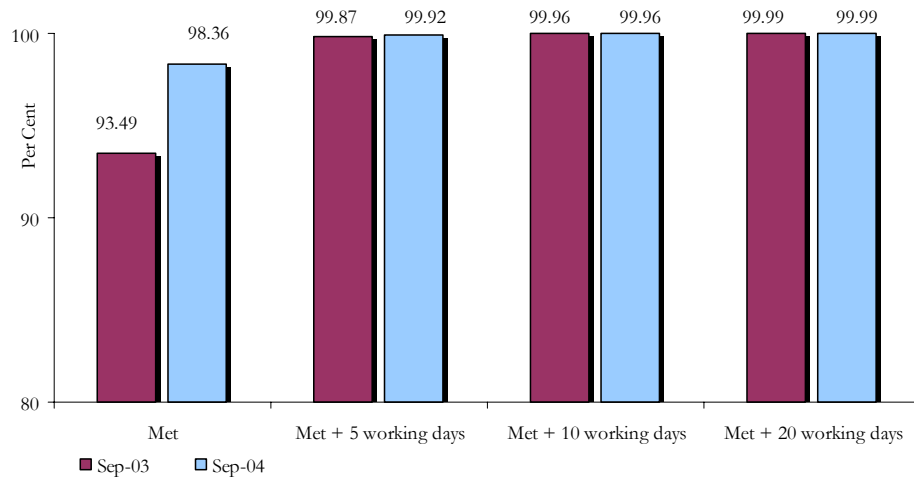


Telstra did not submit exception reports because its operational business units had not breached the threshold for fault repair activity during this quarter.

Optus

During the September 2004 quarter, 0.08 per cent of faults repaired by Optus were cases of extreme failure. Optus advised that the remaining 99.92 per cent of faults were repaired within the CSG timeframes or within five working days after the CSG timeframes. This is a slight improvement from the performance recorded in the same quarter in 2003 (see Figure 8) and the previous quarter, when Optus reported that 0.13 per cent and 0.11 per cent of faults, respectively, were cases of extreme failure.

Figure 8: Cumulative percentage of CSG faults repaired by Optus (September 2003 and 2004 quarters)



Optus did not submit exception reports because its operational business units had not breached the threshold for fault repair activity during this quarter.

NETWORK RELIABILITY FRAMEWORK

The Network Reliability Framework (NRF) is a three-tiered compliance and reporting arrangement under which Telstra provides information on faults in its network. Telstra services covered by the CSG are included (residential and small business customers with five lines or less).

The NRF monitors performance at three different levels of disaggregation:

- Level 1: Telstra's field service areas (FSAs);
- Level 2: exchange service areas (ESAs); and
- Level 3: individual services.

Level 1 – Field service area performance

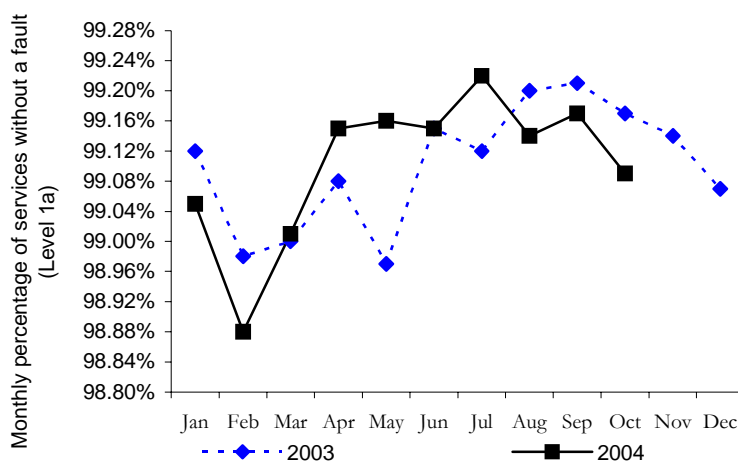
Level 1 requires Telstra to report on performance nationally and for each FSA in Australia. There are 44 FSAs in Australia and they include regions such as Perth South, the Northern Territory (NT) Top End, and the New South Wales (NSW) Central Coast. Performance is reported on a monthly basis in terms of:

- the percentage of services without a fault—Level 1(a); and
- the average availability of services—Level 1(b).

Level 1(a): Percentage of services without a fault

Level 1(a) looks at the percentage of services that did not have a fault in the month. Figure 9 compares Telstra's national performance against this measure between 2003 and 2004 (inclusive of October).

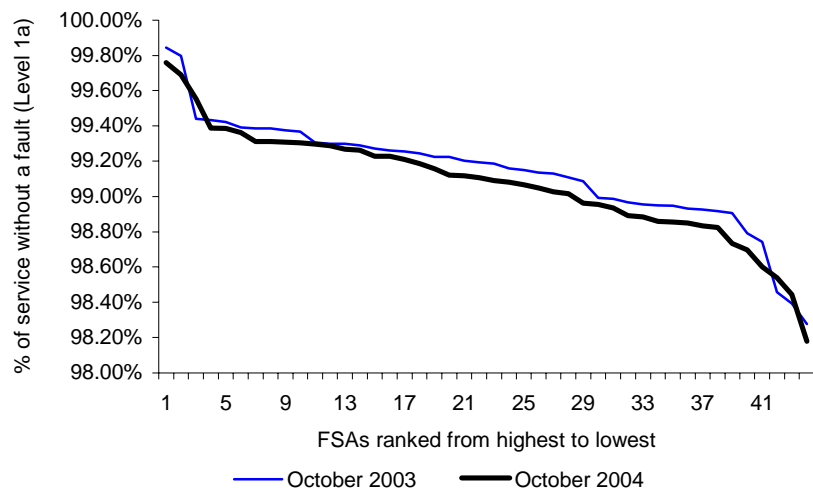
Figure 9: National monthly percentage of services without a fault (2003 and 2004)



Telstra's performance over the last seven months has been reasonably consistent, although there was a decline in October 2004, with 99.09 per cent of services in Australia not having a fault. Up to July, Telstra had generally improved on its 2003 performance, with a peak of 99.22 per cent in July. The last few months have been below the levels achieved in the corresponding months last year. The ACA notes that rainfall along the New South Wales coast and hinterland for the August to October 2004 period was greater than for the same period in 2003. This is likely to be one factor for the poorer national performance during the period.

Figure 10 shows how performance was spread across the 44 FSAs for October in both 2003 and 2004. Both curves have a similar shape, indicating that the slight decline in performance between the two periods was spread relatively evenly between the higher performing FSAs and the lower performing FSAs. There is a considerable drop-off in performance for the five lowest ranked FSAs in both periods. The ACA has begun discussions with Telstra to undertake case studies of the causes of poorer performance for particular FSAs, and will be looking at these case studies as a means of determining if there is scope for improving performance in the lowest ranked FSAs.

Figure 10: Spread of FSA performance against Level 1(a) (October 2003 and 2004 comparison)



Capital city central business districts generally had the best performances over the August to October 2004 period, with Brisbane City & Technology the highest with a monthly average of 99.79 per cent of services not having a fault. Country NSW continued to perform at relatively lower levels, with the NSW Central Coast the lowest with a monthly average of 98.07 per cent of services not having a fault.

Further Level 1(a) data is available at http://www.aca.gov.au/consumer_info/nrf/Level1.htm.

Level 1(b): Service availability

Level 1(b) of the NRF looks at the percentage of time during the month that a service on average was available (that is, not waiting for repair). This service availability measure is averaged across all services, whether or not they experienced a fault during the month. Telstra’s performance against this measure is affected by both the number of faults occurring as well as the time taken to repair them.

Figure 11 shows Telstra’s national service availability performance for 2004 to date compared with the corresponding period in 2003. Similar to Level 1(a), Telstra’s performance has been quite stable for a number of months, but has not been able to achieve the strong performances that it did during the August to October period in the previous year. Services on average were available for 99.94 per cent of the time in October 2004.

Figure 11: National service availability (2003 and 2004)

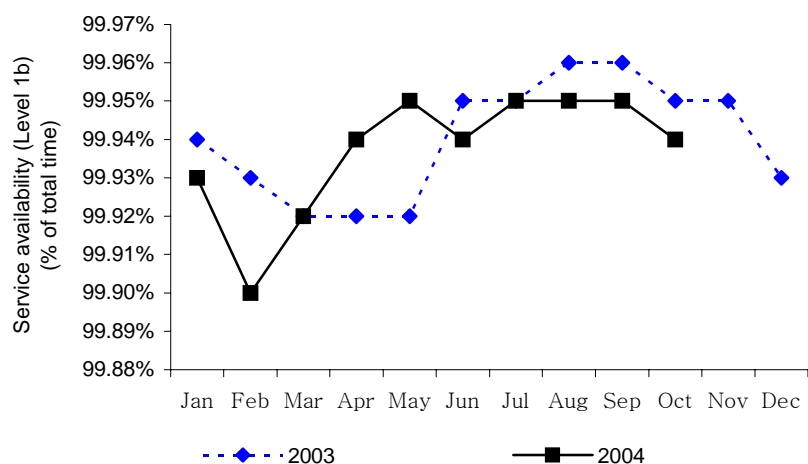
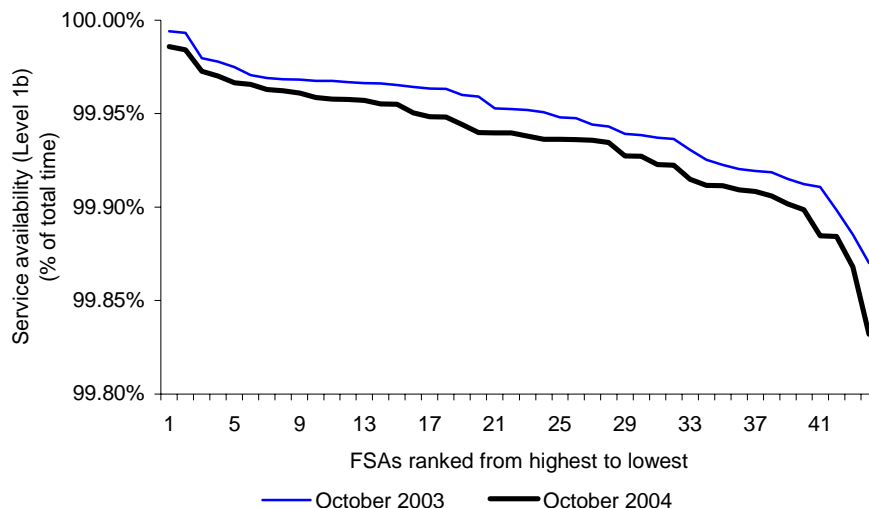


Figure 12 shows how Level 1(b) performance was spread across the 44 FSAs for October in both 2003 and 2004. As with Level 1(a), there is a considerable drop-off at the end of the 2004 curve, although this is due to the relatively poorer performance of only one FSA, NSW New England (which was also the worst performing FSA in October 2003).

Figure 12: Spread of FSA performance against Level 1(b) (2003 and 2004)



The highest performing FSAs over the August to October 2004 period were Brisbane City & Technology and Melbourne City & Dedicated Services, with both central business districts averaging 99.99 per cent service availability for each month. Capital city FSAs generally recorded a higher level of service availability than other FSAs, with NSW New England the worst with 99.83 per cent service availability.

Further Level 1(b) data is available at http://www.aca.gov.au/consumer_info/nrf/Level1.htm

ACA calculation: Time unavailable for fault-affected services (Level 1(c))

The ACA uses data provided under the NRF to also calculate the average amount of time that services that experienced a fault were waiting for repair. This is calculated by dividing the total time taken to repair faults by the number of services that experienced a fault. It should be noted that this is measured in elapsed hours, whereas the CSG fault repair timeframes are based on working hours and measured in working days. Telstra’s performance against this measure is affected by the time taken to repair faults, as well as the number of services that have multiple faults in the one month.

On average, for each month in the August to October 2004 period, fault-affected services were unavailable for an average of 47 hours (see Figure 13). This is an increase of six hours on the average of 41 hours for the same period in 2003.

Figure 13: National time unavailable for fault-affected services (2003 and 2004)

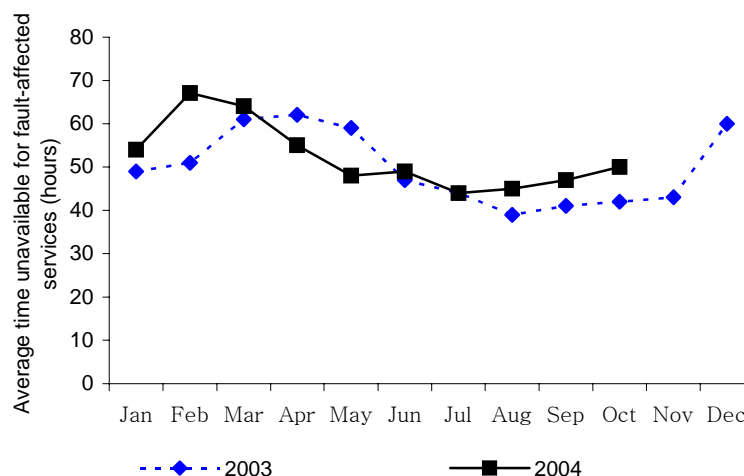
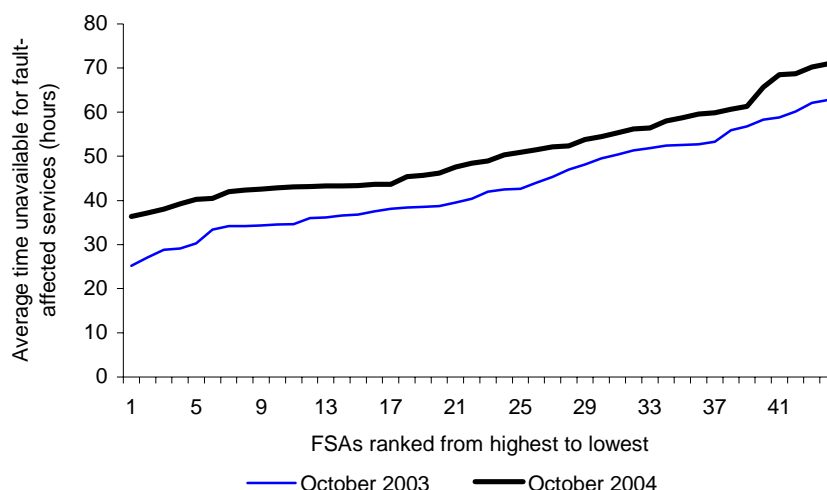


Figure 14 shows how Level 1(c) performance was spread across the 44 FSAs for October in both 2003 and 2004. The graph shows that the decline in performance between the two periods appears to be slightly larger in the highest and lowest ranked FSAs. Performance in the August to October 2004 period ranged from an average of 35 hours in Brisbane City & Technology to 71 hours in NSW Greater Western.

Figure 14: Spread of FSA performance against Level 1(c) (2003 and 2004)



Level 2 – Exchange service area performance

Under the NRF, Telstra is required to report to the ACA each month on any ESAs where a specified number of services each had at least one fault per month for two consecutive months. The specified number of services varies between two and five according to the total number of services in operation in the ESA.

Where the exchange service area has...	Telstra must report if...
1 to 100 CSG services	2 or more services each had at least one fault in each of the preceding months
101 to 1,000 CSG services	3 or more services each had at least one fault in each of the preceding months
1,001 to 10,000 CSG services	4 or more services each had at least one fault in each of the preceding months
10,001 or more CSG services	5 or more services each had at least one fault in each of the preceding months

In the July–August, August–September, and September–October reporting periods of 2004, 374 exchanges exceeded the Level 2 reporting thresholds. By comparison, 353 exchanges were reported as exceeding the thresholds for the same period in 2003.

The reporting of an exchange under Level 2 is not necessarily an indication of poor performance or that an ESA is in need of remediation. Faults caused by circumstances beyond the control of Telstra, such as floods, fires and cable cuts, contribute to the number of faults recorded in an ESA. However, this reporting in itself may not indicate the presence of a reliability issue for an ESA.

The ACA requested further information from Telstra on underlying causes of service difficulties in 22 ESAs (see Table T.10 at the end of the bulletin). In selecting ESAs, the ACA broadly applies the following criteria:

- those with a high percentage of services with faults in consecutive months;
- those with a high number of services with faults in consecutive months; and
- those that have appeared in multiple Level 2 reports.

The ACA uses this information to identify whether there are common causes for faults reported that need to be addressed. Where appropriate, the ACA requests remediation plans from Telstra to ensure that performance in particular areas is improved.

The ACA will continue to monitor performance in certain ESAs for a potential recurrence of low performance indicated by Level 2, and will take action where service difficulties continue. More information and Level 2 data is on the ACA website at www.aca.gov.au/consumer_info/nrf/Level2.htm.

Level 3 – Performance at the individual service level

The NRF requires Telstra to take action to prevent a particular service from experiencing

- four or more faults in a rolling 60-day period—a Level 3(a) breach; or
- five or more faults in a rolling 365-day period—a Level 3(b) breach.

Telstra is required to report services that reach these thresholds to the ACA. In the August to October 2004 period, 434 services were reported under Level 3.

Figure 15 shows the number of services that were reported for breaching the Level 3(a) threshold of having four or more faults in a rolling 60-day period. It shows that there were 16 reports in October 2004, which is less than the 20 reports for the corresponding month in 2003. Telstra has generally been performing better in 2004 than in 2003, which reflects the new processes that Telstra has put in place to give greater attention to services that are one fault away from breaching one of the Level 3 thresholds.

Figure 15: Services experiencing four or more faults in a rolling 60-day period (2003 and 2004)

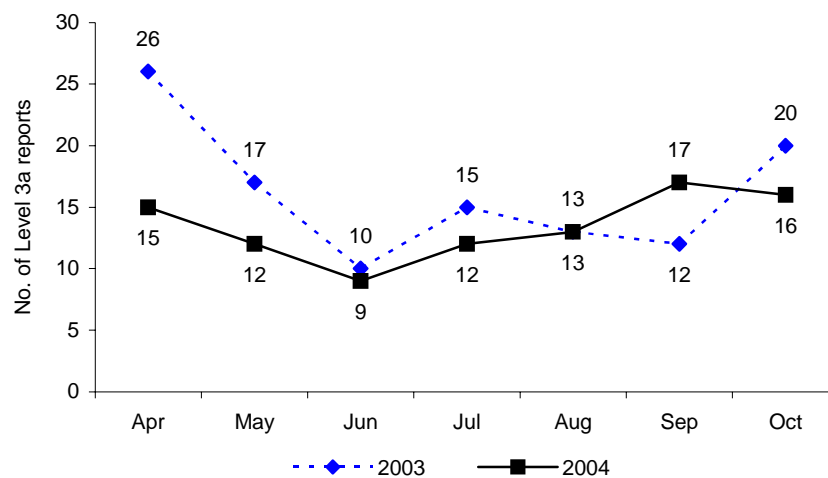
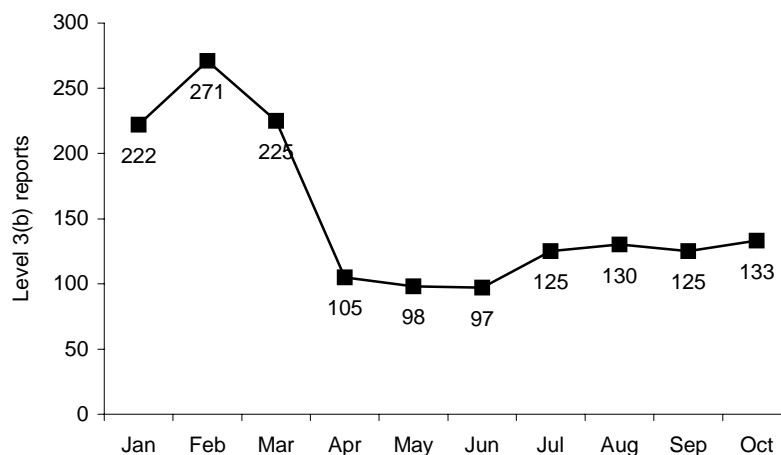


Figure 16 shows that there were 133 services reported in October 2004 for breaching the Level 3(b) threshold of having five or more faults in a rolling 365-day period. The graph shows that the number of services breaching this threshold is slowly increasing, a trend which is expected to continue as summer approaches with its extreme weather conditions. While the more favourable weather conditions in winter have helped Telstra improve its performance from the high numbers of services reported at the start of the year, the improvement also reflects the effectiveness of Telstra’s new processes for taking proactive action for services in danger of breaching the threshold.

Figure 16: Services experiencing five or more faults in a rolling 365-day period (2004)



Telstra’s reports for services that breach Level 3(a) and 3(b) thresholds include the details of affected services, a fault history for each service and a description of both repair and, if appropriate, remediation strategies.

For each service reported under Level 3, the ACA examines the adequacy and appropriateness of Telstra's actions for improving performance and, where necessary, requests that Telstra undertake further remediation activities. While the ACA frequently asks for more information about individual service difficulties, the ACA has not yet had cause to formally reject any of Telstra's remediation plans.

Remediation of the worst performing exchange service areas in response to the Regional Telecommunications Inquiry

Recommendation 2.9 of the Regional Telecommunications (Estens) Inquiry required Telstra to implement a strategy to raise the performance of ESAs that had been identified as the worst performing in Australia by the ACA. Telstra advised the ACA that remediation work for all 54 ESAs was completed by June 2004, at a cost of more than \$10 million.

The ACA is monitoring the performance of these 54 ESAs through service tail index (STI) data, which takes into account repeat faults and is considered to give a reasonable reflection of customer experience. STI data has indicated that performance has improved in the majority of areas. While performance improvement is not yet evident in a small number of remediated areas, it is important to note that the STI is calculated as a twelve-month rolling average, meaning that further reports will be necessary for this data to reflect the full benefits of remediation work.

STI performance data for each of the 54 remediated ESAs is on the ACA website at www.aca.gov.au/consumer_info/nrf/RTIprogress.htm

More information

More information about the NRF is available on the ACA website at www.aca.gov.au/consumer_info/nrf/index.htm. This includes current and historical monthly Level 1 information on all FSAs. The information is also available from Telstra's website at www.telstra.com.au/servicereports/n_reliability.cfm.

MOBILE NETWORKS

Three types of terrestrial mobile service networks currently operate in Australia:

- global system for mobile communications (GSM);
- code division multiple access (CDMA); and
- wideband code division multiple access (W-CDMA).

Annual performance

The GSM carriers and Hutchison (for its CDMA network) provide data on call congestion, call drop-out and population coverage on an annual basis. These figures are reported in the ACA's *Telecommunications Performance Report 2003–04*.

The ACA has commenced discussions with Hutchison on future monitoring arrangements for the '3' network. It is anticipated that Hutchison will commence reporting to the ACA in early 2005 on the drop-out and congestion performance of voice calls on the 3 network.

Quarterly performance

The ACA monitors the performance of Telstra's CDMA network on a quarterly basis. Call drop-out and congestion performance on the Telstra CDMA network in the September 2004 quarter was largely unchanged from the June 2004 quarter with variations between state level performance of less than one per cent.

PRIORITY ASSISTANCE

Priority assistance is a service offered by various telephone companies to customers with a diagnosed life-threatening medical condition. For these customers, priority assistance is intended to provide a higher level of service when they experience a fault or require a phone connection. Customers receiving such a service are referred to as 'priority customers'. For more information about priority assistance, see the ACA website at: www.aca.gov.au/consumer_info/priority_index.htm

Under its priority assistance licence condition, Telstra is required to provide service connection and fault repair for its priority customers within 24 hours for urban and rural areas and 48 hours for remote areas.

1. Telstra's performance

Priority customer base

The ACA tracks changes in Telstra's priority customer base to monitor community take-up of priority assistance and to provide a context in which to assess the fault repair, connection, and service reliability indicators.

At the end of September 2004, Telstra had 117,695 priority customers, of which 60,024 (51 per cent) had completed the application process to become 'validated' customers. The remaining customers were provisional or 'tagged' customers, meaning that they were equally entitled to receive the benefits of priority assistance but were yet to submit a form to Telstra to become validated. During the September 2004 quarter, Telstra reported this validated/provisional breakdown (for the current and previous quarters) for the first time.

The total priority assistance customer base has fluctuated from quarter to quarter, increasing by almost 11 per cent in the September 2004 quarter compared with the previous quarter. However, Telstra also received around 40 per cent fewer application forms for validation (compared with the June 2004 quarter) and it appears that much of the increase in customer numbers may have come from provisional customers.

Service connection performance

In the September 2004 quarter, Telstra improved its performance in connecting priority assistance customers.

Nationally, slightly more than 19,000 priority customer connections took place—a workload increase of 2 per cent on the June 2004 quarter and a decrease of around 15 per cent on September 2003. Nationally, 97.1 per cent of priority customer connections in the September 2004 quarter were provided within the licence timeframes. This is the highest level of performance recorded on this indicator since December 2002.

As shown in Figure 17, connection performance in rural and remote areas continue to rate below urban areas, although Telstra lifted its performance in all three categories in this quarter and the 'spread' of performance is small (95, 96 and 97 per cent for remote, rural and urban areas respectively).

Figure 17: Priority customer connections: volume of connections and percentage meeting licence timeframes (September 2003–September 2004)

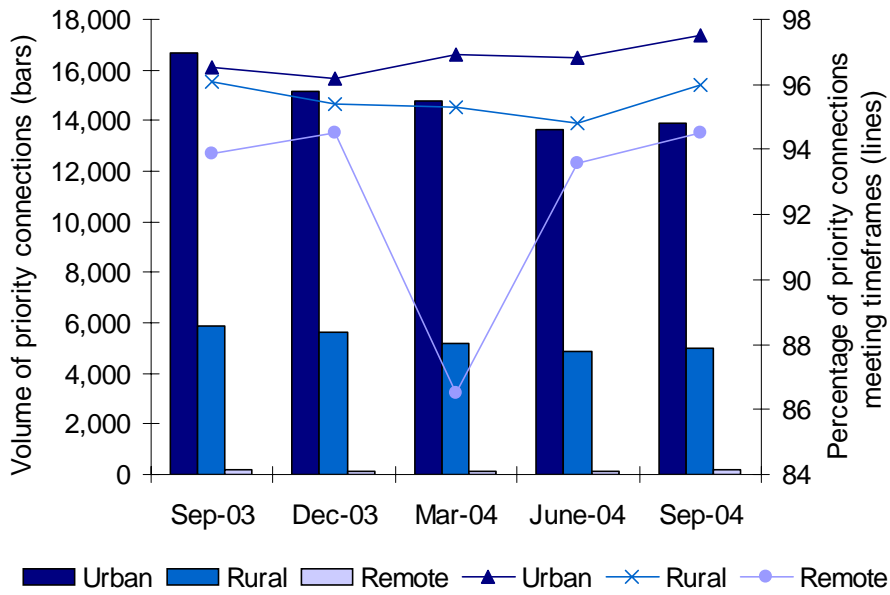
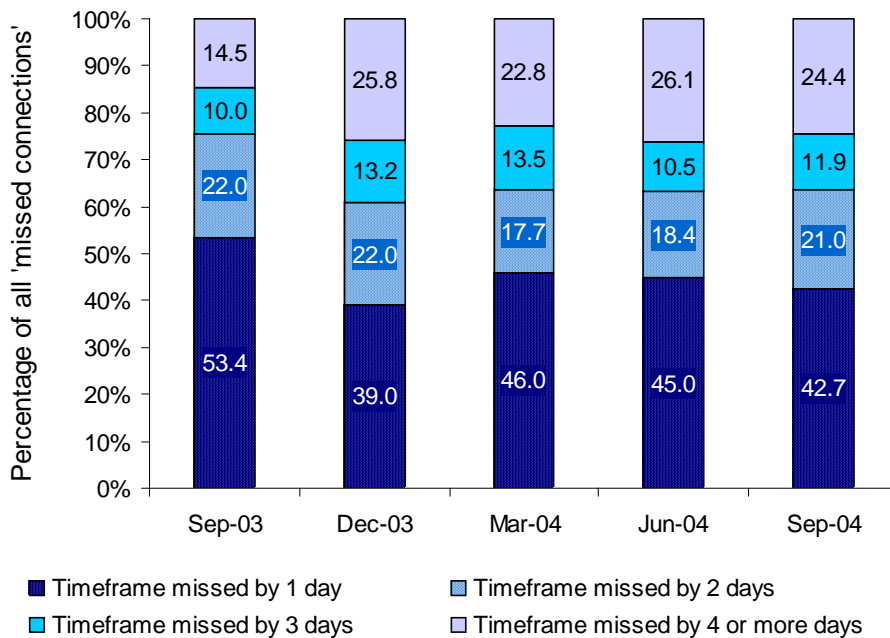


Figure 18 shows that the distribution of connections that missed licence timeframes has remained relatively stable for the last three quarters. However, performance has declined on a year-on-year basis. In the September 2004 quarter, 43 per cent of these connections were completed within one day of the timeframes compared with 53 per cent at the same time last year. Connections completed four or more days outside the timeframes were 24 per cent of the total compared with 15 per cent in the September 2003 quarter.

Figure 18: Distribution of priority customer connections that missed licence timeframes (September 2003–September 2004)



Telstra advised that the main reasons for not meeting licence timeframes were:

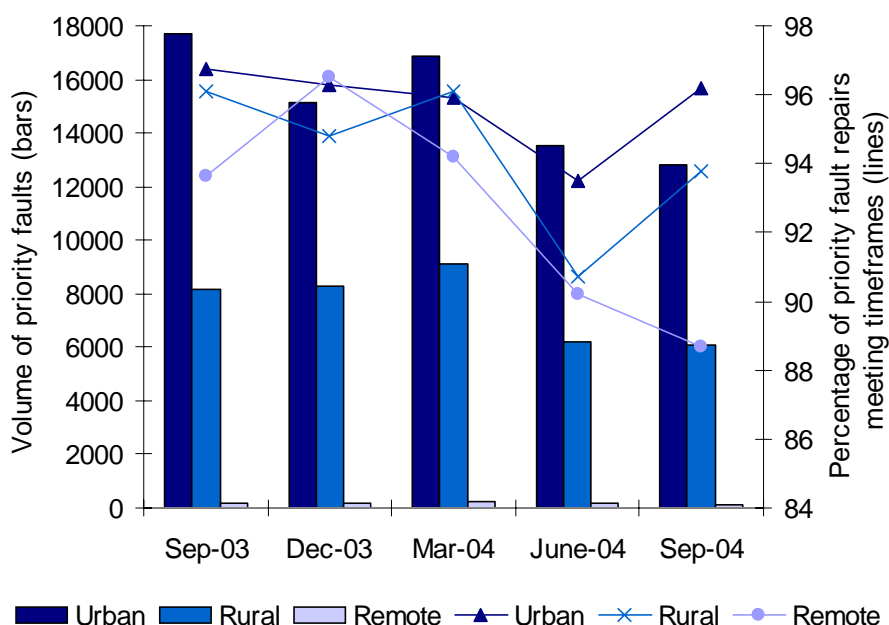
- (i) the appointment was revised by the customer or Telstra;
- (ii) exchange work was completed late;
- (iii) Telstra was awaiting disconnection of the previous customer’s service (‘connect outstanding’).

Fault repair performance

In the September 2004 quarter Telstra's priority fault repair performance improved nationally for the first time since the corresponding quarter last year, albeit on slightly reduced fault volumes. Priority customers reported just over 19,000 faults in the September 2004 quarter and 95.4 per cent of these were repaired within the specified timeframes. This represents an improvement of around three per cent on the June 2004 quarter, but remains below September 2003 (96.5 per cent).

Figure 19 shows declining performance for fault repairs in remote areas. While the volume of remote fault repair requests fell to 141 for the quarter, the lowest figure since reporting began, the timeliness of the repairs declined to 88.7 per cent repaired within the timeframes. This compares to 93.6 per cent of faults being repaired within the licence timeframes in the September 2003 quarter. This may indicate that the task facing Telstra in meeting the priority assistance timeframes in remote areas is relatively more difficult. It should also be noted that the relatively small number of customers in this category means that the percentage performance is significantly affected by outcomes in a handful of cases.

Figure 19: Priority assistance fault repairs: volume of faults and percentage meeting licence timeframes (September 2003–September 2004)

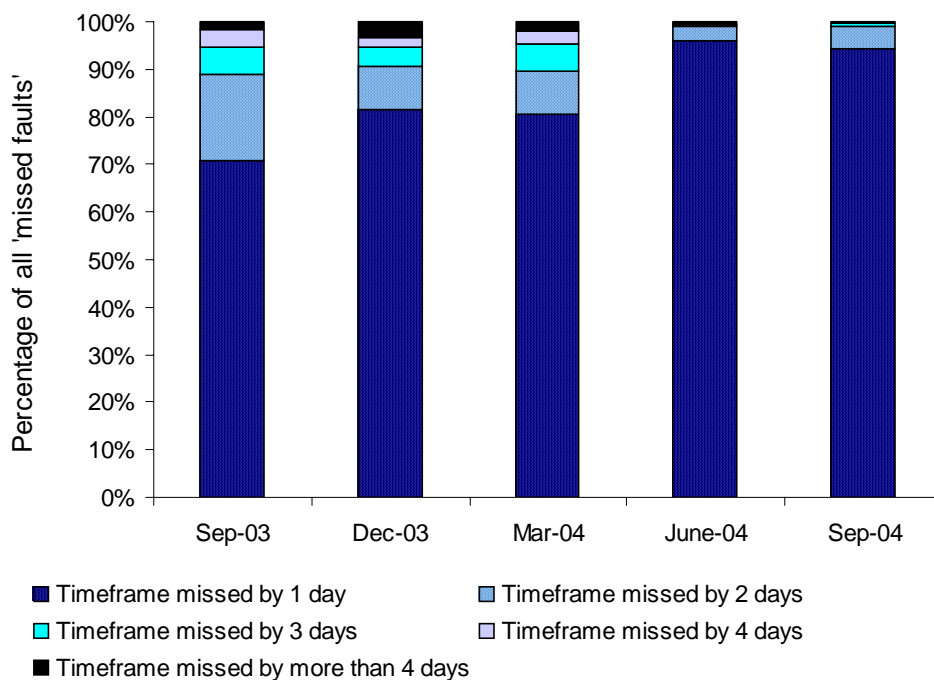


The previous issue of the bulletin noted that, in cases where the licence timeframes for fault repair had been missed, Telstra had significantly shortened the delays experienced by customers. In the September 2004 quarter, 94.2 per cent of these fault repairs missed the timeframes by less than a day—a marginal decline from 96 per cent in June 2004 (see Figure 20). However, Telstra also provided data showing that the majority of fault repairs that missed the licence timeframes were repaired within six hours. Further, the percentage of customers experiencing lengthy delays of four days or greater declined from 5.2 per cent in the September 2003 quarter to 0.2 per cent in the current quarter.

Telstra advised that the main reasons for not meeting licence timeframes were:

- (i) the technician was despatched too late;
- (ii) restoration of the customer's service took longer than expected;
- (iii) Telstra failed to fast-track the request.

Figure 20: Distribution of priority customer fault repairs that missed licence timeframes (September 2003–September 2004)



In addition to meeting connection and repair timeframes, Telstra is also expected to provide priority customers with a better standard of service reliability. In part, this is measured by examining the number of services experiencing repeat faults. There was a small increase in the number of priority assistance customers experiencing repeat faults (defined as two or more faults in a three month period) in the September 2004 quarter. Telstra reported that 271 customers experienced repeat faults, compared with 255 in the June 2004 quarter. This measure counts faults on validated services only, not provisional services. As such, this September 2004 result is roughly equivalent to 0.45 per cent of Telstra’s validated priority customer base experiencing repeat faults during the quarter.

2. Other service providers

Primus and AAPT are the only carriers other than Telstra to offer priority assistance services. The ACA received the first performance reports from both carriers for the September 2004 quarter. Primus was unable to report completely on fault repair performance but advised that it was implementing new systems so that it can fully report data for the March 2005 quarter.

At the end of the quarter, AAPT reported that it had a total of 1,168 priority customers and Primus reported a total of 2,616 priority customers.

When data integrity issues are resolved, the ACA expects to publish comparative performance statistics for these carriers.

3. Review of priority assistance arrangements

On 29 June 2004, the Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts requested that the ACA review the administrative arrangements for Telstra’s priority assistance service. Following public and stakeholder consultation, the ACA completed the review in November 2004 and has submitted its report to the Minister.

CALL CENTRE PERFORMANCE

Four service providers (Telstra, Optus, AAPT and Primus) report on the performance of their call centres by providing the following information:

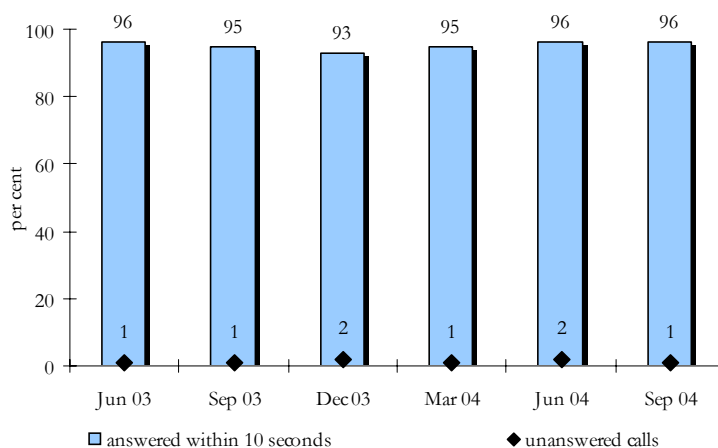
- the percentage of calls answered within a timeframe established by the service provider; and
- the percentage of calls that leave the call centre unanswered.

Directory assistance services

Telstra provides a national fixed-line directory assistance service, which it defines as ‘an information service supplementing the printed telephone directory where operators provide telephone numbers’. The directory assistance service is available through the numbers 1223 (free of charge to residential telephones), 12455 (free of charge to residential telephones unless the call is connected through) and Sensis 1234 (a charge applies). Telstra charges business and mobile users for calls to all of these numbers.

In the September 2004 quarter, 96 per cent of directory assistance calls were answered within 10 seconds of entering the network, while one per cent of calls were unanswered. These figures are the same as those for the previous quarter and a slight improvement on the September 2003 quarter results of 95 per cent answered within 10 seconds. The percentage of unanswered calls to directory assistance has remained within one to two per cent of calls over the past five quarters (see Figure 21).

Figure 21: Telstra directory assistance performance (June 2003–September 2004)

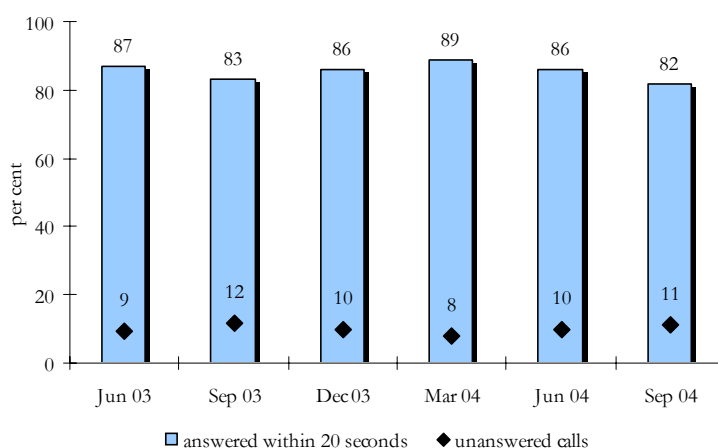


Information and connection services for international and long distance calls

Both Telstra and Optus provide information on answering times and unanswered calls for their operator-assisted international and long distance call services. Optus reports against a 20-second timeframe for answering calls, while Telstra reports against a 10-second timeframe.

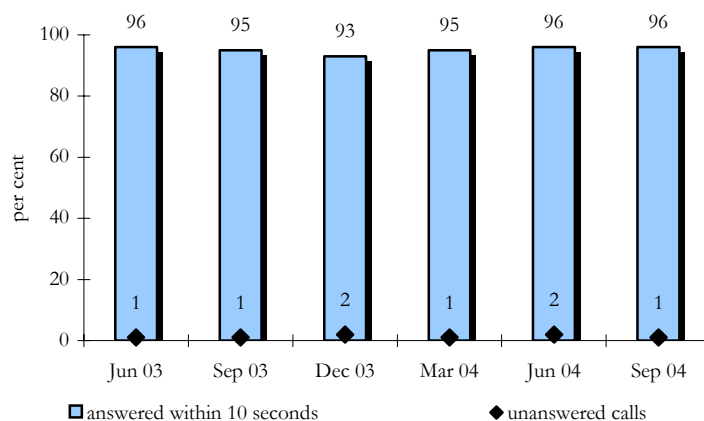
In the September 2004 quarter, Optus reported that the percentage of calls answered within 20 seconds declined to 82 per cent, down from 86 per cent answered in the June 2004 quarter but comparable to 83 per cent answered in the September 2003 quarter (see Figure 22). Optus reported that its performance in the September 2004 quarter was adversely affected by a large volume of calls incorrectly made to the Optus International Operator Service by customers wanting connection to the Telstra/Sensis 1234 operator.

Figure 22: Optus' information and connection service performance for international and long distance calls (June 2003–September 2004)



In the September 2004 quarter, Telstra reported that the percentage of calls answered within 10 seconds remained at 96 per cent and the rate of unanswered calls decreased to one per cent, down from two per cent recorded in the June 2004 quarter. Telstra's performance against both of these measures has been relatively stable within a one to three per cent range of variation since the September 2003 quarter (see Figure 23).

Figure 23: Telstra information and connection service performance for international and long distance calls (June 2003–September 2004)



Repairs and faults service call centre performance

Optus and Telstra report on answering times and unanswered calls for their repair and fault reporting services. Optus reports against a 20-second timeframe for answering calls, while Telstra reports against a 15-second timeframe.

Optus reported that 68 per cent of calls were answered within 20 seconds and seven per cent of calls left the network unanswered (see Figure 24). These figures represent a decrease in performance on the June 2004 quarter despite reduced call volumes this quarter (77 per cent answered within 20 seconds and five per cent of calls unanswered), but are comparable with the same period last year (71 per cent of calls answered within 20 seconds and 10 per cent unanswered).

Figure 24: Optus 24-hour faults and service difficulties call centre performance (June 2003–September 2004)

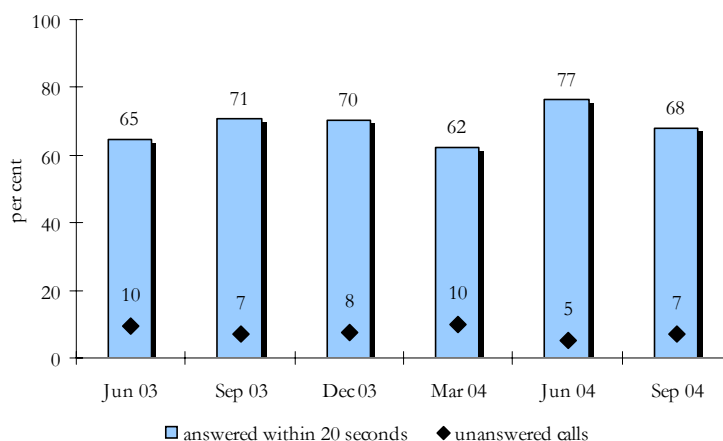
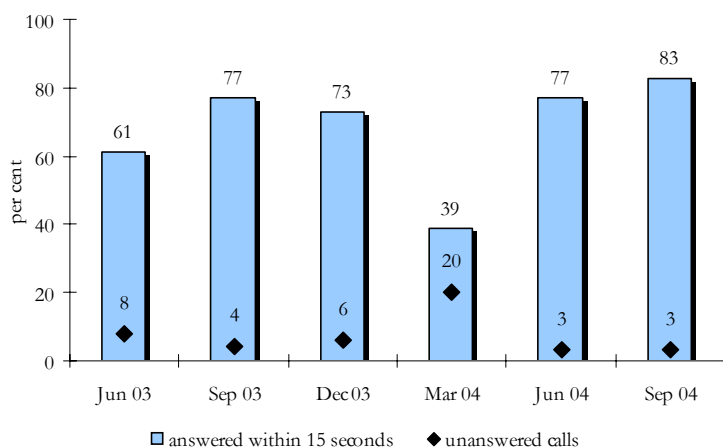


Figure 25 shows that in the September 2004 quarter, Telstra reported an improvement in the performance of its fault and service difficulties call centre for the second consecutive quarter. The percentage of calls answered within 15 seconds improved from 77 per cent in the June 2004 quarter to 83 per cent in the September 2004 quarter. The percentage of calls leaving the network unanswered remained stable at three per cent in the September 2004 quarter. This is the best result in six quarters and Telstra attributed the performance improvement to stabilised call demand and improvement initiatives.

Figure 25: Telstra’s 132 203 and 132 999 faults and service difficulties service performance (June 2003–September 2004)



Call centre performance – AAPT and Primus

AAPT and Primus report aggregated call centre performance figures against a 20-second call answering timeframe. Primus continued the practice, which began in the March 2003 quarter, of including calls answered by an automated service in the total number of calls answered within 20 seconds.

AAPT’s performance in answering calls within its 20-second timeframe declined from 40 per cent in the June 2004 quarter to 21 per cent in the September 2004 quarter (see Figure 26). The percentage of unanswered calls increased from 25 per cent to 34 per cent of calls. AAPT attributes the decline to the introduction in June 2004 of a new consumer product, a \$59 price cap for national and international calls, which resulted in an increased number of enquiries into the call centres during July and August.

Figure 26: AAPT call centre performance (June 2003–September 2004)

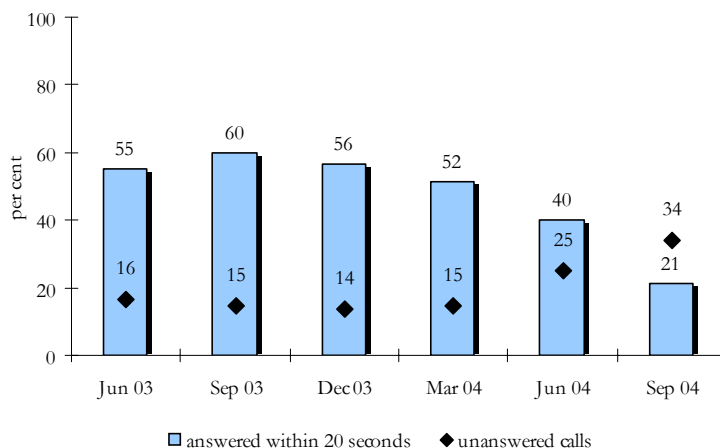
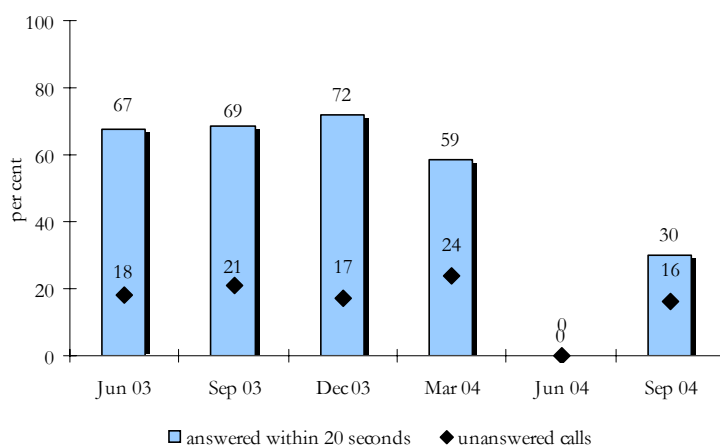


Figure 27 shows Primus’ performance during the September 2004 quarter, which declined for calls answered within 20 seconds compared with performance for the same quarter of 2003. In the September 2004 quarter, only 30 per cent of calls were answered within 20 seconds, down from 69 per cent in the September 2003 quarter. Primus’ performance in terms of calls leaving unanswered improved in comparison with September 2003, down to 16 per cent in September 2004 from 21 per cent in September 2003. Primus did not provide data for the June 2004 quarter because of difficulties in its reporting systems.

Figure 27: Primus call centre performance (June 2003–September 2004)



COMPLAINTS

A 'complaint' is defined for reporting purposes as 'any expression of dissatisfaction with the provision of a standard telephone service'. However, when a customer first notifies a service provider of a fault, it is reported as a 'fault' rather than a 'complaint'.

The ACA collects data from four service providers (Telstra, Optus, AAPT and Primus) on the number of complaints received against five specified categories, based on the major areas of complaint used by the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (TIO) (see Table 1).

The categories and examples are:

- *provision of service*—delays in service provision, connection issues;
- *fault repair*—delays in restoring service, fault repair works;
- *customer transfer*—issues about 'slamming' (unauthorised customer churn) and authorised churn processes which may, for example, involve delays;
- *credit control*—collection of debts, credit control policies of service providers, bonds; and
- *billing*—accuracy of accounts, bill presentation, delays in billing.

Complaints levels are translated into ratios for every 10,000 units in the category. For instance, complaints about customer transfer are recorded as numbers of complaints for every 10,000 customer transfers. The calculation of complaints ratios differs between service providers for certain categories, limiting the direct comparisons that can be made between the ratios.

The differences are as follows:

- The definition of 'complaint' used by Telstra and Optus for all complaint categories differs from the ACA definition. Both Telstra and Optus define a complaint as 'any expression of dissatisfaction with customer service, product or policy, or with any aspect of ... oral or written communication with [the service provider] that requires some action by [the service provider] beyond the initial contact'. As a result, the complaints information provided by Telstra and Optus is likely to be an understatement of their complaints in comparison with the ACA complaints indicator definition.
- Primus calculates its provision of service complaints against new services provided, rather than total services in operation.
- Telstra calculates its fault repair complaints against faults cleared within target, instead of faults reported. Telstra also includes a customer reporting a fault for the first time in its fault repair complaints if the customer specifically seeks to make a complaint.

A summary of the complaints ratios for Telstra, Optus, AAPT and Primus is at Table 1.

Provision of service

Telstra and Optus recorded decreases in the ratio of complaints about the provision of service during the September 2004 quarter. Telstra reported a decrease in the ratio of complaints from 2.6 to 2.3, while Optus reported a decrease from 1.1 in the June 2004 quarter to 0.9 in the September 2004 quarter. AAPT reported a marginal increase from 0.5 to 0.7 from the June 2004 to September 2004 quarters, but this reflected a small volume of complaints. AAPT provided adjusted complaints ratios in all categories for the September quarter, noting that previously double-counting occurred for some complaints. Primus reported an increase this quarter compared with the previous quarter, up from 91 in the June 2004 quarter to 113.2 in September 2004, but this was also on a low volume of complaints.

Fault repairs

Telstra reported a decrease in the ratio of complaints about fault repairs in the September 2004 quarter, down from 188 to 158. Optus reported an increased ratio of 86 in the September 2004 quarter, up from 76 in the June 2004 quarter, consistent with increased fault activity for the quarter. AAPT recorded a marginal increase in the ratio of fault repair complaints, up from 35 in the June 2004 quarter to 36 in the June 2004 quarter, although again the increase was on a small volume of complaints. Primus reported a decreased ratio of 7.3 this quarter, down from 19.1 in the June 2004 quarter.

Customer transfer

The ratio of complaints relating to Telstra, Optus and AAPT customer transfer activities rose from the June to September 2004 quarters from 2.4 to 4.4 for Telstra, 6.0 to 7.0 for Optus and 2.5 to 4.7 for AAPT. The ratio of

customer transfer complaints for Primus was 22.3, which is higher than those reported by other service providers.

Credit control

Telstra, Optus and Primus reported marginal increases in the ratio of complaints for credit control this quarter, from 1.0 to 1.1 for Telstra, 0.4 to 0.5 for Optus and 0.2 to 0.1 for Primus. AAPT recorded an increase in the ratio of credit control complaints, up from 1.3 in the June 2004 quarter to 1.9 in the September 2004 quarter.

Billing

Telstra and Optus reported marginal decreases in the ratio of billing complaints from the June to September 2004 quarters, dropping marginally from 2.9 to 2.8 for Telstra and from 2.4 to 2.3 for Optus. AAPT recorded an increase from a ratio of 1.6 in the June 2004 quarter to 2.4 in the September 2004 quarter. Primus' ratio of billing complaints, at 27.8, was higher than those reported by other service providers, although this represented a decrease from a ratio of 39.6 in the June 2004 quarter.

Table 1: Complaints ratios

	Telstra			Optus			AAPT			Primus		
	Mar-04	Jun-04	Sep-04	Mar-04	Jun-04	Sep-04	Mar-04	Jun-04	Sep-04	Mar-04	Jun-04	Sep-04
PROVISION OF SERVICE												
Ratio of complaints per 10,000 services in operation	1.9	2.6	2.3	1	1.1*	0.9	2.1	0.5*	0.7	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ratio of complaints per 10,000 services provided	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	58.2	91	113.2
FAULT REPAIR												
Ratio of complaints per 10,000 faults reported	N/A	N/A	N/A	83	76	86	56.1	35*	36	39.6	19.1	7.3
Ratio of complaints per 10,000 faults cleared within target	204	188	158	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
CUSTOMER TRANSFER												
Ratio of complaints per 10,000 transfers	3.5	2.4	4.4	14	6*	7	5.9	2.5*	4.7	27.1	23.9	22.3
CREDIT CONTROL												
Ratio of complaints per 10,000 services in operation	1.1	1	1.1	0.4	0.4	0.5	7.5	1.3*	1.9	0.2	0.2	0.1
BILLING												
Ratio of complaints per 10,000 bills issued	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.9	2.4	2.3	0.9	1.6*	2.4	39.6	39.6	27.8

* adjusted figure
N/A = not applicable

PAYPHONE SERVICES

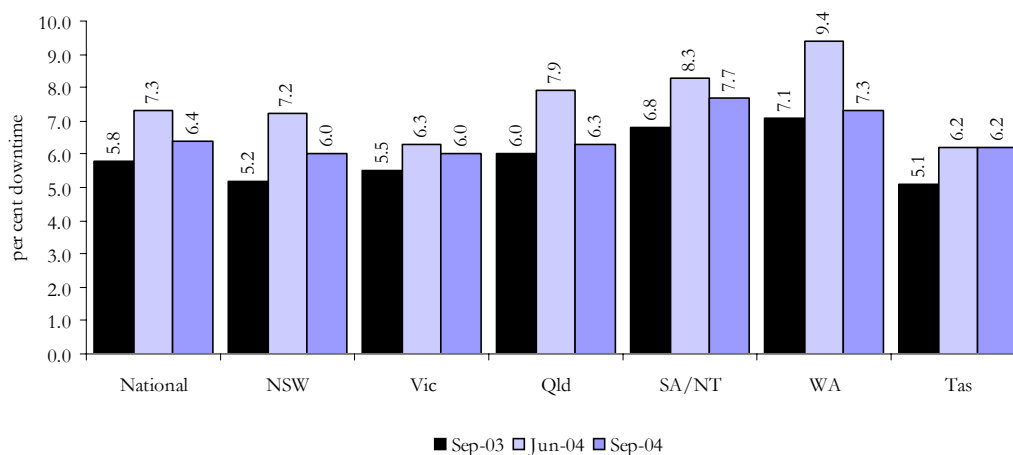
The information in this section refers to Telstra-operated payphones only. It does not include the payphones operated by private entities.

Payphone downtime

Payphone downtime refers to the percentage of time during the period that each payphone on average is 'unserviceable'. Telstra determines a payphone to be unserviceable if a fault, detected through automatic fault-detection equipment or a customer fault report, does not allow all call types to be made using all payment mechanisms offered at that payphone. Downtime is measured against elapsed hours (24 hours a day, seven days a week) and also includes the time that Telstra takes to repair faults.

At the national level, the percentage of time Telstra payphones were unserviceable declined 0.9 percentage points from the previous quarter to 6.4 per cent this quarter. Telstra improved the 'serviceability' of its payphones in all states or territories by reducing the downtime on its payphones. This was the case in Western Australia, where payphone downtime this quarter was down by 2.1 percentage points from the previous quarter to 7.3 per cent, and Queensland, where payphone downtime this quarter was 6.3 per cent, down 1.6 percentage points from the June 2004 quarter (see Figure 28).

Figure 28: Telstra payphone downtime (September 2003, June and September 2004)



Fault repair

Telstra specifies its performance service standard for payphones in its universal service obligation Standard Marketing Plan. For fault repair, Telstra reports that:

‘...Telstra will use reasonable endeavours to repair an unworkable Telstra operated payphone or payphone access line in the following timeframes according to the service location:

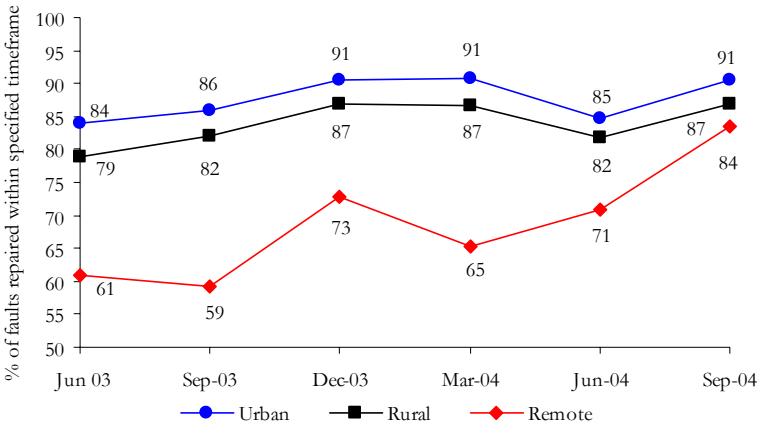
- Urban Area: end of one [1] full working day after being notified of the fault;
- Major Rural Area and Minor Rural Area: end of two [2] full working days after being notified of the fault; and
- Remote Area: end of three [3] working days after being notified of the fault.

Vandalism to payphone and/or cabinets resulting in significant damage may require specialised solutions and thus prevent the above standards from being met.’

Telstra’s September 2004 quarter data for repairing payphone faults indicates a performance improvement across all service locations (see Figure 29). The largest improvement in performance reported was for remote areas, where 84 per cent of payphone faults were repaired within the specified timeframe, up 13.8 and 25 percentage points respectively from the June 2004 and September 2003 quarters. Telstra advised that the improvement in remote areas has come about as a result of its ‘10-point plan’ response to Recommendation 2.13 of the Regional Telecommunications Inquiry, for improving payphone repair times. The plan included upgrading and improving the reliability and durability of payphones, which Telstra initially targeted at remote areas. Telstra has advised that the plan was 80 per cent complete at the end of October 2004.

In urban areas, during September 2004 quarter, Telstra repaired 91 per cent of faults within the specified timeframe, up six percentage points from the June 2004 quarter and five percentage points from the September 2003 quarter. For payphones in rural areas, Telstra reported repairing 87 per cent of faults within the relevant timeframe, up five percentage points from the previous quarter and the same quarter in 2003.

Figure 29: Telstra payphone faults repaired within the specified timeframe (June 2003–September 2004)



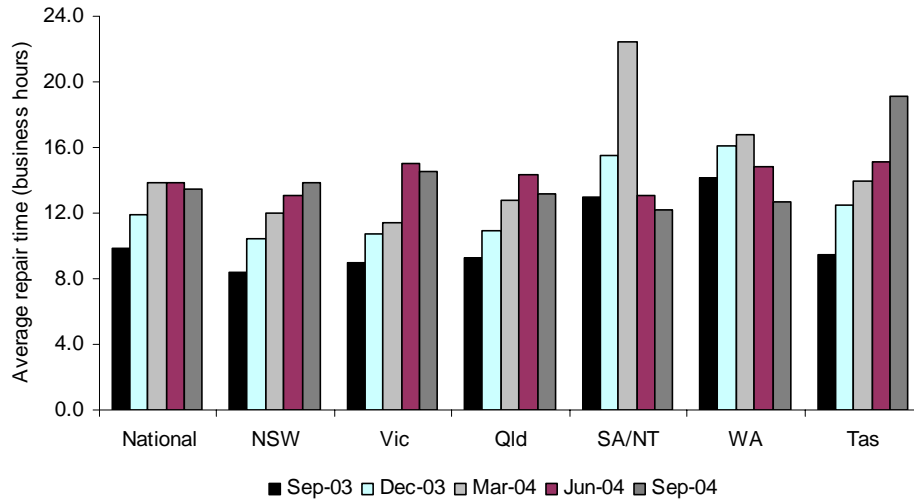
The average time taken by Telstra to repair payphone faults is measured between the hours of 7:00 am and 6:00 pm, Monday to Friday. The average time taken by Telstra to repair faults at the national level in the September 2004 quarter decreased to 13.5 from 13.9 business hours in the previous quarter, but increased from 9.9 business hours reported for the same quarter in 2003 (see Figure 30). Telstra’s performance in most states or territories has declined, with this quarter’s average business hours to repair a payphone fault at a higher level compared to the same quarter in 2003:

- in New South Wales and Tasmania, average business hours to repair a payphone fault has increased every quarter since September 2003 (from 8.4 to 13.1 average business hours in New South Wales, and from 9.5 to 19.1 average business hours in Tasmania); and
- in Queensland and Victoria, average business hours to repair a payphone fault decreased this quarter after three quarter’s of increases, but remains higher than the September 2003 quarter (at 13.2 average business hours in Queensland, up from 9.3 in the September 2003 quarter and at 14.5 average business hours in Victoria, up from 9.0 in the September 2003 quarter).

The ACA is seeking an explanation from Telstra about increases in payphone repair times in the Eastern states.

However, in South Australia/Northern Territory and Western Australia, where there are large numbers of remote payphones, the time Telstra has taken to repair its payphones has decreased in two consecutive quarters and is also down from the September 2003 quarter. Telstra has reduced the average business hours to repair payphones in South Australia and the Northern Territory from 13.0 hours in the September 2003 quarter to 12.2 hours. During the September 2004 quarter, Telstra required an average of 12.7 business hours to repair a payphone in Western Australia, down from 14.1 average business hours in the September 2003 quarter.

Figure 30: Telstra's average (business) hours to repair a payphone fault (September 2003–September 2004)



Trouble reports

A trouble report is a fault report that can be made by either a customer or through automatic fault-detection technology inside a payphone. Telstra advised that trouble reports are not limited to faults that make a payphone inoperable. In the September 2004 quarter, the average number of trouble reports per payphone remained stable (compared with the June 2004 quarter) at 0.36 reports per payphone. This compares with 0.4 reports per payphone in the September 2003 quarter.

SPECIAL INTEREST ITEM

Telephone congestion and dial-up Internet performance

The ACA has found that Telstra has made good progress in addressing concerns raised by the Regional Telecommunications Inquiry (RTI) about telephone congestion and dial-up Internet data rates.

Progress has been made in replacing older pair gain systems and improvements in the quality of telephone service have been demonstrated by those that remain in service.

Construction solutions have been undertaken to improve Internet dial-up speeds for customers on older pair gain systems.

Telstra's Internet Assistance Programme (IAP) continues to provide advice and assistance to Internet users to enable them to achieve a dial-up Internet data speed of at least 19.2 kilobits per second.

This section discusses the RTI recommendations that led to this work, the undertakings made by Telstra in response to these recommendations and the outcomes reported to the ACA on the implementation of those undertakings.

Background

A pair gain system is a transmission system that uses either concentrators or multiplexers so that fewer wire pairs are used. Without pair gain systems, each customer generally requires an exclusive pair of copper wires from their house to the local telephone exchange. Pair gain systems therefore offer potential efficiency gains. These systems are also known as mini line concentrator (MLC) systems.

Recommendation 2.7

Recommendation 2.7 of the RTI called for Telstra to address congestion issues associated with older types of pair gain systems (such as the 6/16 system).

These 6/16 pair gain systems can have up to 16 customers sharing six lines. Unlike newer or larger MLCs, all 16 customers cannot make or receive calls simultaneously—only six of the 16 customers can be on the phone at the same time. The success of these systems relies on the low statistical probability that more than six customers out of the total sixteen will be on the phone at the same time. Changes in telephone usage patterns (such as the increasing use of telephone lines to access the Internet) can affect the validity of this statistical assumption. Not all MLCs are fully occupied and some do not experience congestion in practice. By addressing those that do, Telstra is expected to improve the average performance for customers on MLCs.

On 18 December 2003, DCITA and Telstra signed a Deed of Undertaking for this RTI recommendation. The deed requires strategies to improve performance on MLCs and to take measurements that demonstrate a reduction in the chance of customers experiencing congestion. The target requires that 95 per cent of traffic readings of all MLC systems indicate less than 0.005 statistical probability that a call on a particular MLC system will not be connected due to congestion.

Monitoring Arrangements

Under the deed established for Recommendation 2.7, Telstra is required to report on:

- the number of mini line concentrator (MLC) pair gain systems in operation and the number of services connected to them;
- the network grade of service achieved;
- the number of MLC systems included in the remediation list; and
- the MLC systems remedied within target restoration periods.

Service Outcomes

The ACA has received data under the Deed of Undertaking by Telstra for this RTI recommendation. Before the deed, 5,505 MLC systems were operating in Telstra's network, and only 90.6 per cent of traffic readings met the system grade of service target. At the end of the September 2004 quarter, the number of MLC systems in operation had been reduced to 4,585, and Telstra reported that the system grade of service was met by 95.3 per cent of MLC system traffic readings. Telstra has therefore achieved the 95 per cent target grade of service,

established by the deed, one quarter earlier than scheduled. The deed requires ongoing reporting to ensure the system grade of service is maintained.

Recommendation 4.1

Recommendation 4.1 placed a licence condition on Telstra to continue to provide the minimum equivalent throughput (MET) of 19.2 kbit/s dial-up Internet speed to all Australians provided under the IAP. The IAP consists of two main components, an On-Line Help Service and the Technical Support Service, which offer solutions to Internet users to achieve the MET. Telstra has made the IAP available to customers under *Carrier Licence Conditions (Telstra Corporation Limited) Declaration 1997 (Amendment No. 2 of 2003)*, which commenced operation on 9 October 2003.

Monitoring Arrangements

Under the licence condition relating to Recommendation 4.1, Telstra is required to meet specified timeframes for completing consultations with customers and conducting field activities (physical activities that may need to be made to the copper network, customer premises equipment, exchange equipment and pair gain systems) to satisfy the MET requirement.

Service Outcomes

The ACA has received four reports since the commencement of the IAP licence condition. During this time, the IAP website was accessed 186,439 times. For the current quarter, 12,405 enquiries were made to the IAP, of which 92.7 per cent were resolved online. The remainder were addressed by Telstra's technical services, with 49 issues remaining open at the end of the September 2004 quarter.

Recommendation 4.2

Recommendation 4.2 stated that Telstra should be required to demonstrate that it has an effective strategy to address dial-up data speed issues arising from poorly performing pair gain systems.

DCITA and Telstra signed the deed to address recommendation 4.2 of the RTI on 7 July 2004. This deed requires Telstra to measure and record information on individual pair gain systems and its network over the activity period.

Monitoring Arrangements

The deed requires Telstra to report to the ACA on the nature and extent of performance issues with respect to poorly performing pair gain systems, the measures Telstra has undertaken to address poorly performing pair gain systems and the effectiveness of those measures.

Service Outcomes

The ACA received the first report under the Deed of Undertaking for the September 2004 quarter. Telstra reported that 74 network construction solutions, 87 network service solutions and seven other actions were taken in that quarter to improve the MET.

Ongoing Monitoring

To date, Telstra has demonstrated through its reports that it is implementing effective solutions to address congestion and dial-up speeds within its network. The ACA will continue to monitor Telstra against the licence condition and deeds.

More information about the licence condition and the deeds is on the ACA website at: www.aca.gov.au/consumer_info/regional_telcomms_inquiry/index.htm.

DATA TABLES

PRIMUS PERFORMANCE INDICATORS—SUMMARY

Table P.1: Percentage of connections provided by Primus within CSG Standard timeframes, quarterly

	In-place services								New services, with and without infrastructure							
	December 03		March 04		June 04		September 04		December 03		March 04		June 04		September 04	
	met	not met	met	not met	met	not met	met	not met	met	not met	met	not met	met	not met	met	not met
Urban areas																
National	99	1	99	1	99	1	99	1	92	8	93	7	90	10	97	3
NSW	99	1	99	1	99	1	99	1	93	7	92	8	91	9	97	3
ACT	100	0	99	1	100	0	100	0	100	0	90	10	90	10	100	0
Vic	99	1	99	1	99	1	99	1	91	9	93	7	94	6	96	4
Qld	99	1	99	1	99	1	99	1	92	8	94	6	83	17	98	2
SA	99	1	99	1	99	1	99	1	91	9	92	8	83	17	93	7
WA	99	1	100	1	99	1	99	1	100	0	96	4	95	5	98	2
Tas	100	0	100	0	100	0	99	1	95	5	100	0	86	14	100	0
NT	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0	67	33	100	0	100	0	100	0
Major rural areas																
National	99	1	99	1	100	0	100	0	93	7	88	12	96	4	100	0
NSW	98	2	100	0	100	0	100	0	93	7	91	9	100	0	100	0
ACT	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	100	0	100	0	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o
Vic	97	3	100	0	100	0	98	2	93	7	82	18	89	11	100	0
Qld	100	0	97	3	100	0	100	0	92	8	83	17	100	0	100	0
SA	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0
WA	100	0	97	3	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0
Tas	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0
NT	n/o	n/o	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0	n/o	n/o	100	0	n/o	n/o
Minor rural areas																
National	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0
NSW	100	0	100	0	100	0	n/o	n/o	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0
ACT	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o
Vic	100	0	n/o	n/o	100	0	100	0	100	0	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o
Qld	100	0	100	0	n/o	n/o	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0
SA	100	0	n/o	n/o	100	0	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	100	0	n/o	n/o
WA	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0	n/o	n/o	100	0	100	0	n/o	n/o
Tas	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o
NT	100	0	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	100	0	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o
Remote areas*																
National	100	0	100	0	n/o	n/o	100	0	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	100	0	100	0
NSW	100	0	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	100	0	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o
VIC	n/o	n/o	100	0	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o
Qld	100	0	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	100	0	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	100	0	n/o	n/o
SA	n/o	n/o	100	0	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o
WA	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	100	0	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	100	0
NT	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	100	0	100	0	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o

Due to rounding, met + not met may not add to 100 per cent in some cases.

* States not listed in the 'remote areas' section did not have any in-place or new service connection activity in the four quarters covered in the table.

n/o No orders (no connections were requested).

AAPT PERFORMANCE INDICATORS—SUMMARY

Table A.1: AAPT's call centre performance, quarterly

		December 03	March 04	June 04	September 04
Percentage of calls entering the network and answered within 20 seconds	National	56.4	51.6	40.0	21.0
	Sydney	53.4	50.4	56.0	28.0
	Bendigo	56.8	51.7	38.0	17.0
Percentage of calls entering the network and leaving without being answered	National	13.6	14.6	25.0	34.0
	Sydney	9.2	9.8	25.0	31.0
	Bendigo	14.2	15.1	7.0	36.0

OPTUS PERFORMANCE INDICATORS—SUMMARY

Table Op.1: Percentage of connections provided by Optus on its own network within CSG Standard timeframes, quarterly

		December 03		March 04		June 04		September 04	
		met	not met	met	not met	met	not met	met	not met
In-place services	National	99.7	0.3	97.0	3.0	98.5	1.5	98.0	2.0
	NSW	99.7	0.3	97.5	2.5	98.7	1.3	97.8	2.2
	Vic	99.7	0.3	96.2	3.8	97.9	2.1	97.5	2.5
	Qld	99.8	0.2	97.9	2.1	99.4	0.6	99.5	0.5
New services	National	97.3	2.7	98.9	1.1	99.4	0.6	99.3	0.7
	NSW	95.0	5.0	98.2	1.8	99.1	0.9	98.7	1.3
	Vic	98.5	1.5	99.2	0.8	99.6	0.4	99.6	0.4
	Qld	99.5	0.5	99.5	0.5	99.7	0.3	99.7	0.3

Due to rounding, met + not met may not add to 100 per cent in some cases.

The figures cover activity on the Optus network in urban areas only and do not cover local access resale operations.

Optus made improvements to its connection reporting systems during the December 2003 quarter.

Table Op.2: Percentage of faults repaired by Optus within CSG Standard timeframes, quarterly

		December 03		March 04		June 04		September 04	
		met	not met	met	not met	met	not met	met	not met
National		92.7	7.3	98.2	1.8	98.1	1.9	98.4	1.6
NSW/ACT		92.8	7.2	97.6	2.4	98.0	2.0	98.3	1.7
Vic		94.0	6.0	98.8	1.2	98.7	1.3	98.8	1.2
Qld		91.8	8.2	98.1	1.9	98.6	1.4	98.8	1.2
SA		91.7	8.3	98.7	1.3	95.5	4.5	96.8	3.2
WA		89.2	10.8	99.7	0.3	96.6	3.4	96.9	3.1
Tas		83.1	16.9	98.9	1.1	97.9	2.1	95.0	5.0
NT		95.0	5.0	99.5	0.5	98.6	1.4	98.7	1.3

Due to rounding, met + not met may not add to 100 per cent in some cases.

Figures for SA, WA, Tas and NT cover Optus resale of services on the Telstra network. Figures for other states cover both the Optus and Telstra networks.

Table Op.3: Percentage of services for which Optus claimed exemption from CSG Standard timeframes

		December 03	March 04	June 04	September 04
In-place connections	National	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.0
New service connections	National	5.1	4.6	4.2	3.6
	NSW	7.0	5.7	4.5	4.1
	Vic	4.0	4.0	4.4	3.5
	Qld	3.4	3.8	3.5	2.7
Fault repairs	National	2.3	10.4	0.8	16.3
	NSW/ACT	1.3	6.6	1.0	13.3
	Vic	5.3	1.1	0.9	20.4
	Qld	0.7	28.7	0.4	18.8
	SA	0.0	0.2	0.0	21.4
	WA	0.1	0.1	0.0	4.1
	Tas	8.5	0.0	0.0	9.5
	NT	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7

Table Op.4: Optus' call centre performance, quarterly

		December 03	March 04	June 04	September 04
Operator services	Per cent of calls answered within 20 seconds	86.1	88.6	86.1	82.3
	Per cent of calls leaving without being answered	9.9	7.8	9.8	10.7
Fault reporting	Per cent of calls answered within 20 seconds	70.4	62.3	76.5	68.1
	Per cent of calls leaving without being answered	7.5	9.9	5.4	6.7

TELSTRA PERFORMANCE INDICATORS—SUMMARY

Table T.1: Percentage of in-place connections provided by Telstra within CSG Standard timeframes, quarterly

	December 03		March 04		June 04		September 04	
	met	not met	met	not met	met	not met	met	not met
National	97	3	97	3	98	2	98	2
NSW/ACT	97	3	97	3	98	2	98	2
Vic	97	3	97	3	98	2	98	2
Qld	97	3	97	3	98	2	98	2
SA	98	2	98	2	98	2	98	2
WA	97	3	97	3	97	3	98	2
Tas	98	2	98	2	98	2	98	2
NT	98	2	97	3	98	2	98	2

Table T.2: Percentage of new service connections provided by Telstra within CSG Standard timeframes, quarterly

		December 03		March 04		June 04		September 04	
		met	not met	met	not met	met	not met	met	not met
All areas, with infrastructure	National	91	9	92	8	92	8	93	7
	NSW/ACT	91	9	91	9	93	7	93	7
	Vic	90	10	92	8	94	6	93	7
	Qld	91	9	94	6	89	11	94	6
	SA	91	9	93	7	91	9	94	6
	WA	91	9	91	9	93	7	94	6
	Tas	94	6	93	7	91	9	93	7
	NT	92	8	93	7	95	5	97	3
All areas, without infrastructure	National	93	7	91	9	89	11	90	10
	NSW/ACT	93	7	91	9	87	13	90	10
	Vic	93	7	91	9	90	10	90	10
	Qld	94	6	92	8	89	11	89	11
	SA	94	6	90	10	88	12	92	8
	WA	95	5	94	6	93	7	92	8
	Tas	91	9	90	10	88	12	90	10
	NT	93	7	89	11	89	11	90	10
All areas, with and without infrastructure	National	91	9	92	8	92	8	93	7
	NSW/ACT	91	9	91	9	92	8	93	7
	Vic	90	10	92	8	94	6	92	8
	Qld	92	8	93	7	89	11	93	7
	SA	92	8	93	7	91	9	94	6
	WA	91	9	91	9	93	7	93	7
	Tas	94	6	93	7	91	9	93	7
	NT	92	8	93	7	94	6	96	4
Urban areas, with infrastructure	National	90	10	92	8	92	8	93	7
	NSW/ACT	91	9	91	9	93	7	93	7
	Vic	89	11	92	8	95	5	93	7
	Qld	91	9	93	7	89	11	94	6
	SA	91	9	93	7	91	9	94	6
	WA	91	9	91	9	93	7	93	7
	Tas	94	6	93	7	90	10	93	7
	NT	91	9	93	7	95	5	98	2
Urban areas, without infrastructure	National	94	6	91	9	89	11	91	9
	NSW/ACT	94	6	91	9	87	13	90	10
	Vic	94	6	92	8	90	10	91	9
	Qld	95	5	91	9	89	11	90	10
	SA	95	5	90	10	87	13	93	7
	WA	96	4	93	7	93	7	93	7
	Tas	97	3	91	9	88	12	91	9
	NT	100	0	100	0	89	11	94	6

TELSTRA PERFORMANCE INDICATORS—SUMMARY (Continued)

Table T.2 continued: Percentage of new service connections provided by Telstra within CSG Standard timeframes, quarterly

		December 03		March 04		June 04		September 04	
		met	not met	met	not met	met	not met	met	not met
Urban areas, with and without infrastructure	National	91	9	92	8	92	8	93	7
	NSW/ACT	91	9	91	9	92	8	93	7
	Vic	89	11	92	8	94	6	93	7
	Qld	91	9	93	7	89	11	94	6
	SA	91	9	92	8	91	9	94	6
	WA	91	9	91	9	93	7	93	7
	Tas	94	6	93	7	90	10	93	7
	NT	92	8	94	6	95	5	98	2
Major rural areas, with infrastructure	National	94	6	95	5	93	7	95	5
	NSW/ACT	94	6	95	5	94	6	96	4
	Vic	93	7	95	5	93	7	93	7
	Qld	94	6	96	4	92	8	94	6
	SA	94	6	96	4	94	6	95	5
	WA	93	7	92	8	94	6	96	4
	Tas	97	3	95	5	95	5	95	5
	NT	97	3	94	6	96	4	98	2
Major rural areas, without infrastructure	National	93	7	91	9	90	10	89	11
	NSW/ACT	93	7	89	11	88	12	91	9
	Vic	93	7	92	8	92	8	88	12
	Qld	95	5	91	9	89	11	89	11
	SA	93	7	90	10	92	8	90	10
	WA	95	5	94	6	93	7	85	15
	Tas	93	7	92	8	89	11	95	5
	NT	94	6	94	6	87	13	75	25
Major rural areas, with and without infrastructure	National	94	6	95	5	93	7	94	6
	NSW/ACT	94	6	94	6	93	7	95	5
	Vic	93	7	94	6	93	7	93	7
	Qld	94	6	96	4	91	9	93	7
	SA	94	6	95	5	94	6	95	5
	WA	93	7	93	7	94	6	96	4
	Tas	96	4	94	6	94	6	95	5
	NT	97	3	94	6	96	4	96	4
Minor rural areas, with infrastructure	National	93	7	93	7	91	9	93	7
	NSW/ACT	93	7	92	8	91	9	94	6
	Vic	93	7	92	8	93	7	91	9
	Qld	93	7	94	6	89	11	94	6
	SA	92	8	95	5	92	8	94	6
	WA	92	8	93	7	94	6	95	5
	Tas	95	5	94	6	92	8	92	8
	NT	81	19	88	12	92	8	96	4
Minor rural areas, without infrastructure	National	92	8	91	9	89	11	89	11
	NSW/ACT	91	9	91	9	89	11	90	10
	Vic	91	9	88	12	88	12	87	13
	Qld	93	7	93	7	87	13	88	12
	SA	93	7	92	8	91	9	89	11
	WA	93	7	94	6	91	9	91	9
	Tas	87	13	89	11	87	13	87	13
	NT	91	9	90	10	67	33	86	14 **
Minor rural areas, with and without infrastructure	National	92	8	93	7	91	9	92	8
	NSW/ACT	92	8	92	8	90	10	93	7
	Vic	93	7	91	9	92	8	90	10
	Qld	93	7	94	6	89	11	93	7
	SA	92	8	95	5	92	8	93	7
	WA	92	8	93	7	94	6	94	6
	Tas	92	8	92	8	91	9	91	9
	NT	83	17	88	12	88	12	95	5

TELSTRA PERFORMANCE INDICATORS—SUMMARY (Continued)

Table T.2 continued: Percentage of new service connections provided by Telstra within CSG Standard timeframes, quarterly

		December 03		March 04		June 04		September 04	
		met	not met	met	not met	met	not met	met	not met
Remote areas, * with infrastructure	National	95	5	91	9	92	8	95	5
	NSW/ACT	93	7	100	0	94	6	90	10
	Vic	100	0	100	0	100	0	n/o	100
	Qld	97	3	88	12	89	11	96	4
	SA	94	6	100	0	96	4	87	13
	WA	95	5	94	6	95	5	95	5
	NT	93	7	88	12	90	10	93	7
Remote areas, * without infrastructure	National	92	8	90	10	91	9	90	10
	NSW/ACT	94	6	100	0	78	22	70	30
	Vic	100	0	100	0	n/o	100	n/o	0
	Qld	92	8	90	10	93	7	88	12
	SA	100	0	87	13	75	25	100	0
	WA	90	10	98	2	98	2	95	5
	NT	90	10	86	14	91	9	91	9
Remote areas, * with and without infrastructure	National	94	6	91	9	91	9	93	7
	NSW/ACT	94	6	100	0	85	15	84	16
	Vic	100	0	100	0	100	0	n/o	100
	Qld	95	5	89	11	90	10	94	6
	SA	96	4	95	5	91	9	95	5
	WA	94	6	95	5	96	4	95	5
	NT	92	8	87	13	90	10	92	8

Volatility may reflect small numbers in these categories.

* Tasmania is omitted from the 'remote areas' sections because Telstra's current methodology only allows reporting for urban and rural areas in Tasmania.

Table T.3: Percentage of connections provided by Telstra within CSG Standard timeframes, annual basis

			December 03		March 04		June 04		September 04	
Infrastructure			met	not met	met	not met	met	not met	met	not met
In-place services	All areas		97	3	97	3	97	3	98	2
New services	All areas	with	92	8	92	8	92	8	92	8
		without	94	6	93	7	92	8	91	9
		with and without	92	8	92	8	92	8	92	8
	Urban	with	91	9	91	9	92	8	92	8
		without	94	6	93	7	92	8	91	9
		with and without	92	8	91	9	92	8	92	8
	Major rural	with	94	6	94	6	94	6	94	6
		without	93	7	93	7	92	8	91	9
		with and without	94	6	94	6	94	6	94	6
	Minor rural	with	93	7	93	7	93	7	92	8
		without	93	7	92	8	91	9	90	10
		with and without	93	7	93	7	92	8	92	8
	Remote	with	96	4	95	5	93	7	93	7
		without	92	8	93	7	92	8	91	9
		with and without	95	5	94	6	93	7	92	8

TELSTRA PERFORMANCE INDICATORS—SUMMARY (Continued)

Table T.4: Percentage of fault repairs provided by Telstra within CSG Standard timeframes, quarterly

		December 03		March 04		June 04		September 04	
		met	not met	met	not met	met	not met	met	not met
All areas	National	91	9	88	12	91	9	93	7
	NSW/ACT	91	9	86	14	91	9	94	6
	Vic	89	11	89	11	93	7	93	7
	Qld	91	9	90	10	89	11	93	7
	SA	93	7	89	11	88	12	93	7
	WA	91	9	88	12	90	10	92	8
	Tas	94	6	94	6	94	6	94	6
	NT	93	7	90	10	97	3	97	3
Urban areas	National	90	10	88	12	90	10	93	7
	NSW/ACT	91	9	85	15	91	9	94	6
	Vic	87	13	88	12	93	7	94	6
	Qld	89	11	91	9	88	12	93	7
	SA	92	8	88	12	86	14	93	7
	WA	90	10	87	13	89	11	92	8
	Tas	92	8	93	7	94	6	95	5
	NT	93	7	92	8	97	3	98	2
Rural areas	National	93	7	90	10	92	8	93	7
	NSW/ACT	91	9	88	12	90	10	93	7
	Vic	93	7	92	8	93	7	92	8
	Qld	94	6	89	11	90	10	93	7
	SA	95	5	93	7	94	6	94	6
	WA	92	8	92	8	94	6	92	8
	Tas	96	4	94	6	94	6	93	7
	NT	91	9	89	11	97	3	96	4
Remote areas*	National	94	6	88	12	90	10	93	7
	NSW/ACT	92	8	90	10	88	12	88	12
	Vic	100	0	100	0	60	40	80	20
	Qld	95	5	87	13	89	11	92	8
	SA	96	4	97	3	94	6	88	12
	WA	91	9	87	13	92	8	96	4
	NT	94	6	88	12	93	7	95	5

* Tasmania is omitted from the 'remote areas' sections because Telstra's current methodology only allows reporting for urban and rural areas in Tasmania.

Table T.5: Percentage of fault repairs provided by Telstra within CSG Standard timeframes, annual basis

		December 03		March 04		June 04		September 04	
		met	not met	met	not met	met	not met	met	not met
All areas		88	12	89	11	91	9	91	9
Urban areas		86	14	88	12	90	10	90	10
Rural areas		92	8	92	8	92	8	92	8
Remote areas		93	7	92	8	91	9	91	9

Table T.6: Percentage of services for which Telstra claimed exemption from CSG Standard timeframes

		December 03	March 04	June 04	September 04
Connections and fault repairs	National	8	9	2	2

TELSTRA PERFORMANCE INDICATORS—SUMMARY (Continued)

Table T.7: Telstra's call centre performance, quarterly

		December 03	March 04	June 04	September 04
Directory assistance	Percentage of calls entering the network* that were answered within 10 seconds	94	95	96	96
	Percentage of calls entering the network* that left without being answered	2	1	1	1
Operator connected international and long distance calls	Percentage of calls offered** that were answered within 10 seconds	93	95	96	96
	Percentage of calls entering the network* that left without being answered	2	1	2	1
Service difficulties queue	Percentage of calls offered** that were answered within 15 seconds	73	39	77	83
	Percentage of calls entering the network* that left without being answered	6	20	3	3

* Calls entering the network includes calls offered plus calls refused.

** Calls offered excludes calls which are refused due to system congestion. In such cases, callers are directed by a recorded message to call back later.

Table T.8: Quarterly performance of Telstra's operated payphones

		December 03	March 04	June 04	September 04
Downtime (per cent)	National	7	7	7	6
	NSW/ACT	7	7	7	6
	Vic	6	6	6	6
	Qld	6	8	8	6
	SA/NT	7	7	8	8
	WA	8	9	9	7
	Tas	5	7	6	6
Average business hours* to clear a fault	National	12	14	14	14
	NSW/ACT	10	12	13	14
	Vic	11	11	15	15
	Qld	11	13	14	13
	SA/NT	16	22	13	12
	WA	16	17	15	13
	Tas	13	14	15	19
Percentage of faults cleared within:					
1 working day** in urban areas	National	91	91	85	91
2 working days** in rural areas	National	87	87	82	87
3 working days** in remote areas	National	73	65	71	84
Average trouble reports per payphone per month	National	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.4
Percentage of payphones available to make calls	National	99	99	99	99

* Business hours for the purposes of this reporting are 7.00 am to 6.00 pm, Monday to Friday. All other hours (weekends and Monday to Friday between 6.00 pm and 7.00 am are excluded from the calculation).

** A working day for the purposes of this reporting measure is 7.00 am to 6.00 pm, Monday to Friday. Weekends and public holidays are excluded from the calculation.

TELSTRA PERFORMANCE INDICATORS—SUMMARY (Continued)

Table T.9: Telstra's monthly performance in each field service area against measures of the Network Reliability Framework for Level 1, August 2004—October 2004

Geographical area	Monthly percentage of services without a fault			Monthly percentage service availability		
	August	September	October	August	September	October
Adelaide City & Technology	98.79	99.32	99.38	98.79	99.32	99.38
Adelaide Greater Metro	98.74	99.25	99.27	98.74	99.25	99.27
Brisbane City	99.35	99.34	99.21	99.35	99.34	99.21
Brisbane City & Technology	99.83	99.85	99.69	99.83	99.85	99.69
Brisbane Northern	99.25	99.21	99.19	99.25	99.21	99.19
Brisbane Southern	99.32	99.23	99.12	99.32	99.23	99.12
Central Australia	99.32	99.28	99.29	99.32	99.28	99.29
Melbourne Bayside	99.28	99.28	99.39	99.28	99.28	99.39
Melbourne Central	99.32	99.33	99.31	99.32	99.33	99.31
Melbourne City & Ded. Services	99.68	99.69	99.76	99.68	99.69	99.76
Melbourne North	99.32	99.35	99.31	99.32	99.35	99.31
Melbourne South	99.22	99.15	99.26	99.22	99.15	99.26
Melbourne West	99.21	99.23	99.30	99.21	99.23	99.30
NSW Central Coast	96.97	98.81	98.44	96.97	98.81	98.44
NSW Greater Western	99.01	99.18	98.96	99.01	99.18	98.96
NSW Mid Coast	98.97	98.92	98.54	98.97	98.92	98.54
NSW New England	98.88	98.49	98.18	98.88	98.49	98.18
NSW Newcastle	99.19	99.06	98.82	99.19	99.06	98.82
NSW North Coast	99.10	99.18	98.83	99.10	99.18	98.83
NSW Riverina Murray	99.07	98.81	99.16	99.07	98.81	99.16
NSW South East	99.07	98.76	98.60	99.07	98.76	98.60
NT Top End	98.73	98.75	98.89	98.73	98.75	98.89
Perth North	99.45	99.31	99.36	99.45	99.31	99.36
Perth South	99.31	99.27	99.31	99.31	99.27	99.31
QLD Central	99.18	99.20	98.85	99.18	99.20	98.85
QLD Far North	98.90	99.10	99.09	98.90	99.10	99.09
QLD North	99.17	99.14	99.03	99.17	99.14	99.03
QLD South West	98.97	99.05	98.86	98.97	99.05	98.86
QLD Wide Bay	99.32	99.10	98.73	99.32	99.10	98.73
SA Country South	99.27	99.31	99.11	99.27	99.31	99.11
Sydney Canberra	99.34	99.20	99.23	99.34	99.20	99.23
Sydney Central	99.16	99.17	99.02	99.16	99.17	99.02
Sydney City & Technology	99.43	99.46	99.55	99.43	99.46	99.55
Sydney Eastern	99.08	99.23	99.08	99.08	99.23	99.08
Sydney North	99.24	99.17	99.12	99.24	99.17	99.12
Sydney Southern	99.28	99.17	98.89	99.28	99.17	98.89
Sydney West	99.06	99.04	98.70	99.06	99.04	98.70
Tasmania	99.26	99.35	99.30	99.26	99.35	99.30
VIC Central	99.18	98.95	98.93	99.18	98.95	98.93
VIC South East	99.13	98.91	99.05	99.13	98.91	99.05
VIC Western	99.19	99.16	99.23	99.19	99.16	99.23
WA Midlands	98.85	98.98	98.86	98.85	98.98	98.86
WA Northern	99.11	98.99	98.96	99.11	98.99	98.96
WA Southern	99.10	99.05	99.07	99.10	99.05	99.07
National	99.14	99.17	99.09	99.95	99.95	99.94

TELSTRA PERFORMANCE INDICATORS—SUMMARY (Continued)

Table T.10: Exchange service areas reported under Level 2 of the Network Reliability Framework for which the ACA requested further information, July–August to September–October

Exchange service area	Field service area
ALBION PARK	Sydney Southern
BLACKWOOD	Adelaide Greater Metro
BOLGART	WA Midlands
CALLIOPE	QLD Wide Bay
CAMPBELLTOWN	Sydney Southern
CROOBLE	NSW New England
EAST GUYONG	NSW Greater Western
ELLENBOROUGH	NSW Mid Coast
GINGKIN	NSW Greater Western
JOCELYN	NSW Greater Western
KELLYVILLE	Sydney West
LADY BARRON	Tasmania
MONTAGU	Tasmania
MULBRING	NSW Mid Coast
NIGHTCLIFF	NT Top End
OBERON	NSW Greater Western
OURIMBAH	NSW Central Coast
PEATS RIDGE	NSW Central Coast
ROCKDALE	Sydney Southern
SARATOGA	NSW Central Coast
TUMORRAMA	NSW Riverina Murray
WOOTTON	NSW Mid Coast

NOTES

This is the 17th report of performance by AAPT, Optus, Telstra and Primus against the CSG Standard 2000 and other key performance indicators.

Comparisons between the performance of the carriers should be made in the context of the different networks, the business operations of the carriers as well as the different geographic spread of operations between carriers. Carriers may provide local, long distance or international services individually or as a bundled product and may provide services over their own networks, or resell services over other carriers' networks. The variety of supply arrangements has made it difficult for some carriers to provide comprehensive data.

Performance data provided by carriers and service providers are checked, but not routinely audited, by the ACA. The ACA is currently examining ways of to verify the accuracy of this performance data.

Complaint categories

The complaints ratios are based on the five major areas of complaint identified from data from the Telecommunication Industry Ombudsman (TIO):

- billing—accuracy of accounts, bill presentation, billing delays;
- provision of service—delays in service provision, connection issues;
- fault repair—delays in restoring service, fault repair work;
- customer transfer—issues about unauthorised (slamming) and authorised churn processes which may, for example, involve delays; and
- credit control—for example, collection of debts, credit control policies of provider or bonds.

GLOSSARY

AAPT	AAPT Limited
ACA	Australian Communications Authority
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
Call congestion	Occurs when a mobile phone call cannot be set up because all mobile radio channels serving the area are in use. This becomes apparent to a mobile originating caller by the tone which is heard after the number has been called. It is known as a 'fast busy' tone. Callers to a mobile phone can encounter congestion for the same reasons, but they normally receive a recorded message.
Call drop-out	An unintended disconnection of a call by the network during conversation because of, for example, signal fading or radio interference. The likelihood of a call drop-out can be influenced by reflections and shadowing by physical features such as high rise buildings, by the size of the customer base at any particular time in a mobile service area when handover between cells may be required, and by some aspects of customer usage of mobile equipment.
CDMA	code division multiple access
CSG	Customer Service Guarantee
GSM	global system for mobile communications
In-place connection	A connection whereby a telephone access service is already available and reconnection is either purely an administrative matter (changing the name on the account) or, if disconnection has happened without displacing the cable, reconnection of service simply requires some work at the exchange to connect and restore dial tone.
New service connection	A new connection which requires some external plant work somewhere between the customer's premises and the local telephone exchange.
No.	Number
NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory
Primus	Primus Telecommunications
Qld	Queensland
SA	South Australia
Tas	Tasmania
TIO	Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman
Vic	Victoria
WA	Western Australia