



Australian Government

Australian Communications Authority

Telecommunications Performance Monitoring Bulletin

Issue 31 – December 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 31 – December 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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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *Telecommunications Performance Monitoring Bulletin* is published quarterly by the Australian Communications Authority (ACA) to report on carriage service provider (CSP) performance in meeting telephone service levels. The ACA receives reports from Telstra, Optus, AAPT and Primus (who, between them, supply the majority of standard telephone services to residential and small business customers) about service performance against regulatory obligations such as the Customer Service Guarantee (CSG) and Network Reliability Framework (Telstra only), as well as against other general performance measures.

December quarter performance highlights

Most performance indicators for the connection and repair of telephone services, as well as the maintenance of public payphones, either remained stable or declined slightly in line with normal seasonal performance for the December quarter.

Service connection performance typical for season

Overall, all four major service providers (AAPT, Optus, Primus and Telstra) connected CSG-eligible telephone services within CSG timeframes in at least 92 per cent of cases.

Telstra's overall quarterly connection performance of 96 per cent was underpinned by a stable performance of 98 per cent of in-place connections, and 92 per cent of new service connections being completed within CSG timeframes (which is consistent with the same quarter last year).

However, customers seeking a telephone service where there is no existing infrastructure in major rural areas experienced a further decline to 88 per cent in December 2004 quarter from 89 per cent in the September 2004 quarter. Although Telstra has attributed this to extreme weather conditions, the decline is a matter of further discussion between the ACA and Telstra. Connections in major rural areas—with and without existing infrastructure—made up around three per cent of new and in-place connections, and connections without infrastructure are a minority of these.

Throughout the four quarters of 2004, Optus maintained a performance of 99 per cent of CSG-eligible services being connected within CSG timeframes.

AAPT reported that 98 per cent of its service connections were carried out within the CSG timeframes in the December quarter.

'Extreme cases of failure'—services connected more than five working days after CSG timeframes—continue to be a small percentage of connections for both Telstra (0.20 per cent of connections) and Optus (0.08 per cent of connections) in this quarter.

The number of Telstra priority assistance customers has steadily increased during this quarter, and the national performance in meeting licence condition timeframes for these connections has marginally decreased. During this quarter, 96 per cent of connections met the required timeframes.

Fault repair performance remains high

Service providers continued to complete more than 90 per cent of fault repairs within CSG standard timeframes during the December 2004 quarter.

Telstra's fault repair performance was consistent with the same period last year, with 91 per cent of faults repaired on time. Optus repaired 98 per cent of faults on time, a result it achieved consistently throughout 2004.

Telstra reported that harsher weather conditions, typical for this time of year, caused a seasonal increase in the effects of mass service disruptions (MSDs), with a total of 58 MSDs being declared during the December 2004 quarter, compared with just 10 in the previous quarter, but is on par with the 55 reported in the December 2003 quarter.

Extreme cases of failure for fault repairs—those faults repaired more than five days after CSG timeframes—continued to be a small percentage of all faults repaired for both Telstra and Optus. During the December 2004 quarter, 0.66 per cent of Telstra's fault repairs and 0.06 per cent of Optus fault repairs were completed more than five working days after CSG timeframes.

Telstra's national performance with fault repairs for its priority assistance customers against the licence condition timeframes decreased marginally to 94 per cent during the December 2004 quarter.

Network reliability remains steady

The Network Reliability Framework (NRF) figures (which Telstra is required to provide on a monthly basis) show that Telstra's performance generally improved against all measures in January 2005, after poorer performance towards the end of 2004. During January 2005, services were available (not waiting for repair) on average for 99.93 per cent of the time and 99.05 per cent of services did not experience a fault.

Payphone repair declines

Payphone average downtimes (as measured by the percentage of time that payphones were not fully serviceable) remained stable or improved for individual states except New South Wales and Queensland, where payphone downtime increased. This drove the national average payphone downtime from 6.4 per cent in the September 2004 quarter to 6.8 per cent in the December 2004 quarter. This is a change from the seasonal improvements seen in the previous quarter.

Payphone fault repair performance against specified repair timeframes were 87 per cent for payphones in urban areas and 83 per cent in rural areas, representing a decline of four percentage points in performance compared with the same period last year, as well as the September 2004 quarter.

While remote area payphone repair performance declined in the December quarter, it was an improvement on the same time last year—78 per cent of payphones in remote areas were repaired within the specified timeframes during the December 2004 quarter (a decline of six percentage points from the previous quarter, but an improvement of five percentage points from the December 2003 quarter).

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.

When a carriage service provider (service provider) does not meet 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 a fact sheet entitled *Customer Service Guarantee 2000 (No.2)* on the ACA website at www.aca.gov.au.

Service providers report to the ACA on key performance indicators concerning:

1. the percentage of service connections meeting CSG Standard timeframes;
2. the percentage of fault repairs meeting CSG Standard timeframes;
3. the extent to which CSG exemptions have been declared;
4. timeliness in responding to claims for compensation payments; and
5. in the case of Telstra and Optus, the proportion of connections and faults that were extreme cases of failure (instances where the relevant CSG timeframes are exceeded by more than five working days).

This chapter reports on each of these indicators.

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

Nationally, CSG connection performance of each of the four major service providers (AAPT, Optus, Primus and Telstra) for the December 2004 quarter was 92 per cent or better:

- AAPT connected 98 per cent of its new and in-place services combined (99 per cent of in-place services and 95 per cent of new services) within the CSG timeframes.
- Optus connected 99 per cent of overall connections (new and in-place services combined) activity within the CSG timeframes, and matching the performance Optus maintained throughout 2004. Optus' connections are predominantly for new services (more than three quarters of total connections) rather than in-place services.
- Primus connected 99 per cent of in-place services and 92 per cent of new services in urban areas across Australia within the CSG timeframes. In major rural areas, Primus achieved performance of 97 per cent and 90 per cent for in-place and new services, respectively.
- Telstra connected 96 per cent of overall connections (new and in-place connections combined) activity within the CSG timeframes. Two-thirds of Telstra's total connections are in-place connections.

Telstra's quarterly performance data for connections reflects the performance of its own retail services.

Optus' quarterly performance data for connections includes only those telephone lines installed by Optus and directly connected to its own network in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane (as distinct from those services that are installed and maintained by Telstra which Optus resells). 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 connection performance and understated new service connection performance.

For other major providers—AAPT and Primus—the data specifically relates to retail services that use Telstra's network. Primus does not provide combined in-place and new service connection performance data.

In-place connections

An in-place connection refers to the connection of a telephone service at a site where a previous working CSG service has been cancelled, and is available for automatic reconnection or reactivation by a carriage service provider. The CSG Standard requires service providers to connect in-place services within two working days after the day of request, regardless of location. Unlike new service connections, in-place connection performance is less likely to be affected by changes in weather conditions, since work is either remotely managed or carried out within exchange buildings. Furthermore, in-place service activations have less variation in the type of work to be performed, and are therefore generally less prone to delay compared with new service connections. However, the need to visit unstaffed remote telephone exchanges to complete in-place activations could sometimes be a cause of delay.

Telstra's quarterly performance nationally for in-place connections remained stable at 98 per cent of in-place connections in the December 2004 quarter completed within the CSG timeframe. This is an improvement of one percentage point compared with the same quarter last year. As in previous quarters, Telstra reported that two-thirds of its connections were in-place connections and the other third were new services.

During the December 2004 quarter, Optus completed 98 per cent of in-place connections nationally within the CSG timeframe, an improvement of 0.3 percentage points from the previous quarter, in spite of a five per cent increase in the volume of in-place connections.

As reported in the previous quarter's bulletin, the ACA did not previously analyse AAPT's CSG connection performance because the data AAPT provided did not differentiate between in-place and new connections. AAPT is now able to report on its performance for in-place and new connections, and has provided retrospective performance information for each of the four quarters in 2004. As well as national performance, this is disaggregated by state and territory and by CSG geographic area (urban, minor rural, major rural and remote).

This data shows that AAPT's 2004 quarterly performance nationally for in-place connections has been consistently at or above 98 per cent within the CSG timeframes each quarter. For the December 2004 quarter, AAPT reported that, overall, 99 per cent of in-place connections were provided within CSG timeframes. AAPT's state/territory performance for in-place services exhibited only minor variation from this national figure during the December 2004 quarter. The in-place performance for all states and territories was also 99 per cent, except Western Australia and Northern Territory, which both achieved 98 per cent of in-place connections within CSG timeframes.

In urban areas, Primus continued its stable performance from the previous three quarters, with 99 per cent of in-place connections completed within CSG timeframes, consistent with its performance 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. As noted above, new service connections are more susceptible than in-place connections to delays such as those caused by bad weather. 'New services with infrastructure' refers to new service connections for which cabling or other network infrastructure is in situ and can be used to provide the services, although technical work may be required to make use of the infrastructure. 'New services without infrastructure' refers to connections where new infrastructure needs to be installed to give effect to the services, for example, the laying of new cable in a customer's street or in a new estate.

Urban areas

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

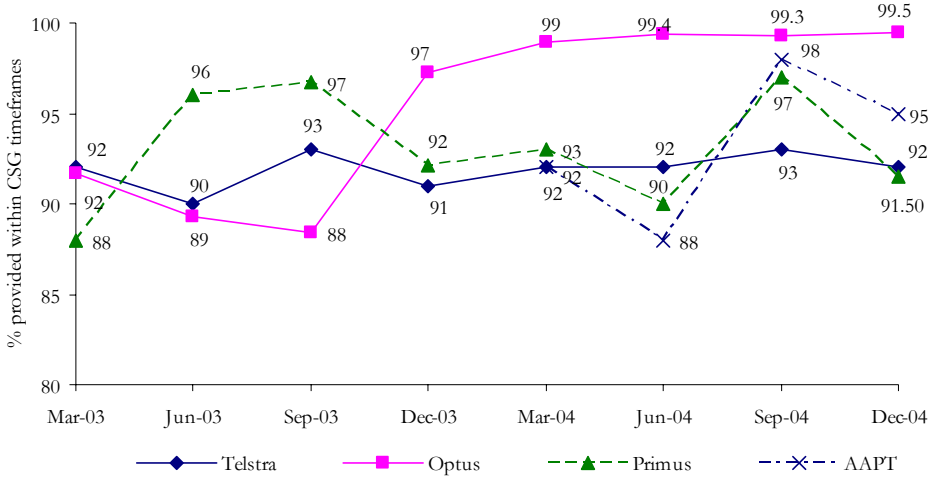
AAPT completed 95 per cent of new connections during the December 2004 quarter within the CSG timeframes.

Optus has maintained its performance from the previous three quarters with 99.5 per cent of new connections in the December 2004 quarter completed within the CSG timeframe. These connections refer only to Optus services directly connected to the Optus' own network infrastructure, and are therefore a true indication of Optus' own processes. These new service connections are categorised as 'close to/with infrastructure' because Optus offers directly-connected services only where its network is deployed. Requests for Optus new service connections in areas without Optus infrastructure are met through a resale arrangement with Telstra.

Primus provided 92 per cent of new connections within the CSG timeframes during the December 2004 quarter, which is consistent with its performance for the same quarter in 2003.

Telstra reported that its new connections performance is consistent with what was reported for the same quarter last year, with 92 per cent meeting the CSG timeframe.

Figure 1: New service connection performance – urban areas, March 2003–December 2004



Note 1: Optus made improvements to its connection reporting systems during the December 2003 quarter.
 Note 2: AAPT has started reporting its connections performance disaggregated into in-place and new connections, and has provided data from the March 2004 quarter.

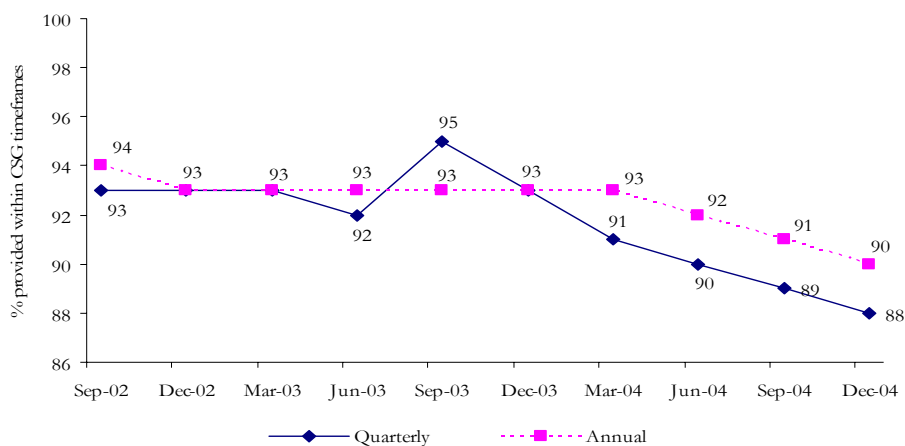
Major rural areas

Telstra’s performance providing new service connections where there is existing infrastructure in major rural areas within CSG timeframes has remained stable throughout 2004 (see Table T.2).

However, its major rural performance for new connections where there is no existing infrastructure continued to decline marginally. This decline is also reflected in rolling average performance data provided by Telstra to the ACA, which has the effect of dampening the seasonal variation so that trends can be easily identified. For two consecutive quarters, Telstra has reported national performance of below 90 per cent for new connections without infrastructure in major rural areas (see Figure 2). This affects a relatively small number of customers, principally in eastern Australia. Connections in major rural areas—with and without existing infrastructure—made up around three per cent of new and in-place connections and connections without infrastructure are a minority of these.

It was noted in the previous edition of the bulletin that Telstra’s performance declined in the September 2004 quarter. Telstra has advised the ACA that this 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. Although Telstra advised that extreme weather conditions across Australia have again had a major impact on its rural performance during the December 2004 quarter, the decline is now a matter of further discussion between the ACA and Telstra.

Figure 2: New service connection performance by Telstra—major rural areas without infrastructure, September 2002–December 2004



Telstra’s national performance this quarter appeared to have been affected by its performance in major rural areas of:

- New South Wales/Australian Capital Territory, where 89 per cent of new connections (without infrastructure) were completed within the CSG timeframes, down two percentage points from the previous quarter and the 93 per cent reported for the December 2003 quarter;
- Queensland, where 88 per cent of new connections (without infrastructure) were completed within the CSG timeframes, down one percentage point from the previous quarter and down from 95 per cent reported for the same quarter in 2003; and
- Victoria, where Telstra provided 85 per cent of new connections (without infrastructure) within the CSG timeframes, down from 88 per cent in the previous quarter and down from 93 per cent performance reported in the December 2003 quarter.

Minor rural and remote areas

At the national level, Telstra’s overall performance in minor rural areas has remained stable (see Table T.2). In minor rural areas, Telstra provided 92 per cent of new connections during the December 2004 quarter within the CSG timeframes, equivalent to its performance in the previous and the December 2003 quarters.

In remote areas, Telstra provided 90 per cent of new connections across Australia during the December 2004 quarter within the CSG timeframes, down three percentage points from the previous quarter and four percentage points from the December 2004 quarter. However, new services connections in remote areas comprise only 0.5 per cent of total new connections and the change in performance is likely to be a result of these small numbers.

2. Fault repair

Overall, fault performance remained at high levels during the December 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 (unlike its connection performance data) includes both its resale services and services directly connected to its network, which is located in parts of Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane.

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

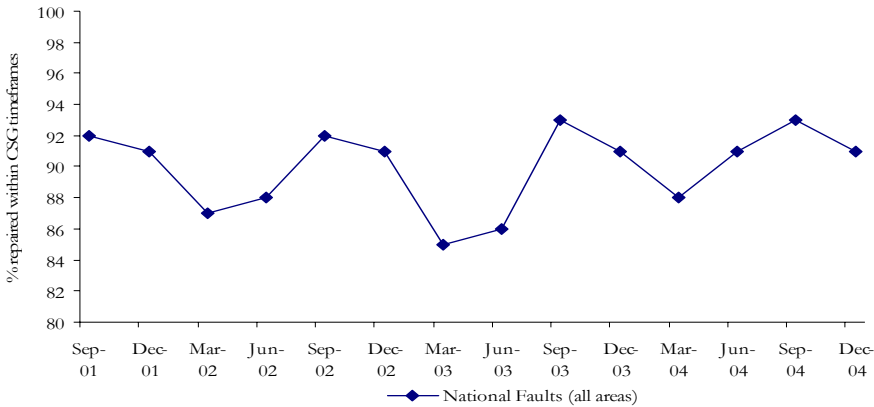
Primus advised that it cannot report on its fault performance data because it does not currently receive appropriate data from Telstra.

Telstra

At the national level, Telstra repaired 91 per cent of faults during the December 2004 quarter within the CSG timeframes. This performance was similar to its performance for the corresponding quarter in 2003, but was two percentage points down from 93 per cent for the September 2004 quarter. This is consistent with its performance

in previous years for the December quarter (see Figure 3). At the state level, Telstra’s fault repair performance across all areas (urban, rural and remote) is also consistent with its performance for the December 2003 quarter, except in Victoria, where Telstra repaired 92 per cent of faults within the CSG timeframes, up three percentage points from 89 per cent Telstra reported for the December 2003 quarter.

Figure 3: National fault repair performance, Telstra, September 2001–December 2004

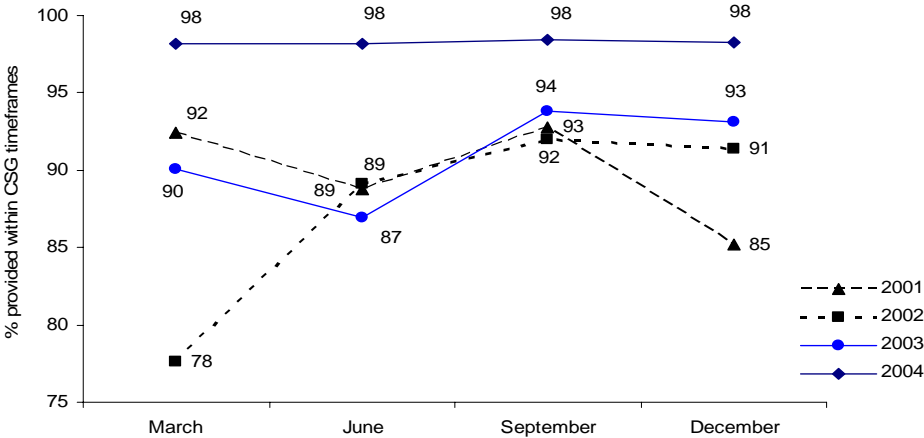


Optus

Compared with previous years, Optus’ national fault repair performance in urban areas for each quarter of 2004 has remained consistent at 98 per cent of faults being repaired within the CSG timeframes (see Figure 4). This is also reflected in Optus’ fault repair performance at the state level for its urban exchanges, where a majority of Optus’ directly connected customers are located:

- in New South Wales/Australian Capital Territory, Optus repaired 98 per cent of faults during the December 2004 quarter within the CSG timeframes, up from 93 per cent in the December 2003 quarter;
- in Victoria, 99 per cent of faults were repaired within the CSG timeframes during the December 2004 quarter, an improvement from 94 per cent reported for the December 2003 quarter; and
- in Queensland, 98 per cent of faults were repaired within the CSG timeframes during the December 2004 quarter, up from 92 per cent reported for the December 2003 quarter.

Figure 4: National urban area fault repair performance, Optus, 2001–2004



3. Exemptions from the CSG Standard

During the December 2004 quarter, both 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, and most MSDs are due to the effects of weather. Extreme weather conditions sometimes have two major effects. Firstly, they can directly damage telecommunications infrastructure leading to a sudden increase in faults. Secondly, particularly in the case of severe flood, access to facilities can be delayed thus hindering the repair of faults or the connection of new services. Shifting human resources from one area to another in response to these situations can also have flow-on effects to performance in areas not directly affected.

Primus and AAPT chose not to declare MSDs in relation to their resale customers, even though their customers were likely to have been affected by the same events that led to Telstra declaring MSDs. This is understood to be a commercial decision based on the number of services affected, and the relative costs of compensation compared with the declaration process.

During the December 2004 quarter, Telstra declared 58 MSDs affecting services on the east and west coast of Australia—39 in New South Wales/Australian Capital Territory, 10 in Queensland, seven in Victoria and two in Western Australia.

In the corresponding quarter in 2003, there were 55 MSDs declared by Telstra, affecting all mainland states but not the Northern Territory. Telstra advised that the severe weather conditions restricting its connections and fault repair activity included lightning, heavy rain, hail storms and strong winds.

Telstra reported that nine per cent of Telstra services were affected by exemptions associated with MSD declarations during the December 2004 quarter, up from 7.9 per cent in the same quarter in 2003.

Optus advised that its in-place connection activity during this quarter was not affected by any exemptions, but 4.3 per cent of new connections and 10.6 per cent of fault repair activities were affected by a combination of individual exemptions and an MSD it declared because of inclement weather in the Sydney area in October 2004.

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 and 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.

AAPT and Primus have also reported 100 per cent compliance with each of the CSG payment requirements for the December 2004 quarter reflecting an improvement to internal processes for handling potential payment liability for breach of the CSG performance standard timeframes.

5. Extreme cases of failure to meet the CSG timeframes

Since January 2003, Telstra and Optus have been required to supplement their CSG performance information by reporting on extreme cases of failure to meet the CSG timeframes for connections and fault repairs. 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 cases of failure monitoring and reporting framework enables the ACA to identify and monitor performance at both an aggregated and disaggregated level.

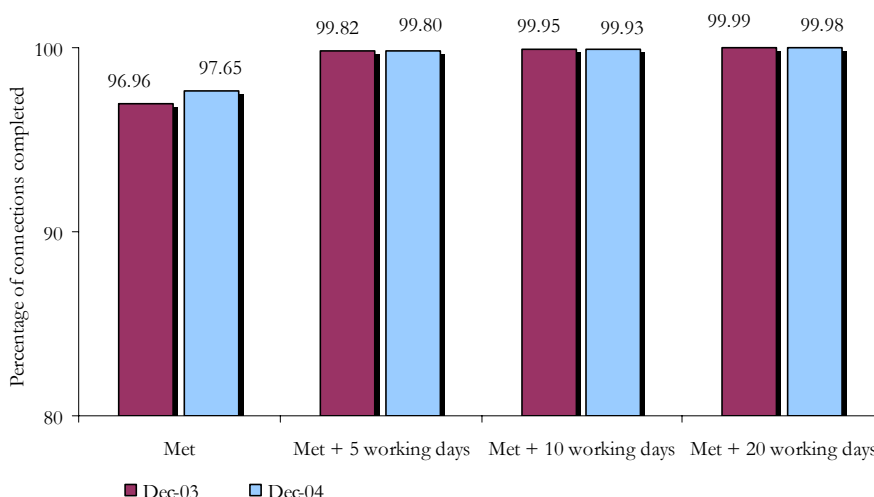
Measure of extreme cases of failure – connections

For connection activity, there is a single performance measure for extreme cases of failure, combining in-place connections and new connections (with and without infrastructure) because in-place connections are less likely to suffer extreme case of failure delays than new service connections.

Telstra

Telstra reported that 99.80 per cent of connections during the December 2004 quarter were either provided within the CSG timeframes or within five working days after the CSG timeframes (see Figure 5). The remaining 0.20 per cent of connections represents extreme cases of failure. This is slightly worse compared with the previous quarter, when 0.14 per cent and 0.18 per cent of connections were extreme cases of failure in the September 2004 and December 2003 quarters respectively.

Figure 5: Cumulative percentage of CSG connections, Telstra, December 2003 and 2004 quarters

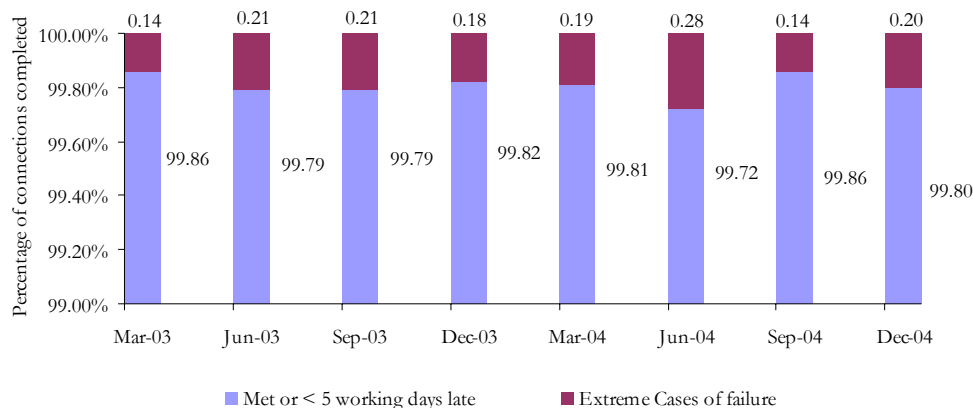


Notes: The y-axis starts at 80% for illustrative purposes.
‘Met’ means connected within CSG timeframes, ‘Met + 5 working days’ means either met or missed by 5 working days or less.

Telstra did not submit exception reports because none of its operational business units breached the threshold during this quarter.

The ACA has now received from Telstra eight successive quarters of extreme cases of failure data. As shown in Figure 6, there does not appear to be a long-term upward or downward trend in extreme cases of failure.

Figure 6: Extreme cases of failure for connections, Telstra, March 2003 to December 2004



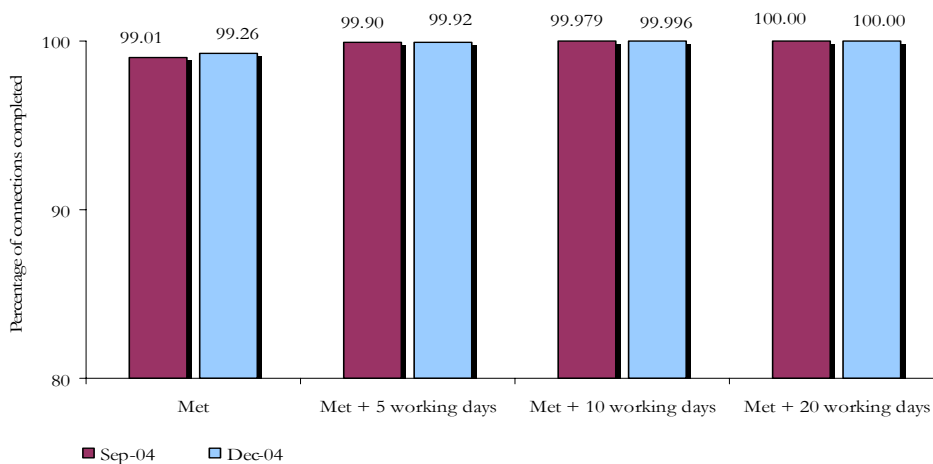
Optus

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 cases of failure measure for connections. Optus’ performance for this quarter is therefore only presented in the context of the current year.

During the December 2004 quarter, Optus reported that it completed 99.92 per cent of requests for connections within the CSG timeframes or within five working days after the CSG timeframes, consistent with 99.90 per cent reported for the previous quarter (see Figure 7). This indicates that extreme cases of failure for the December 2004 quarter represented 0.08 per cent of total connections.

Optus did not submit exception reports because none of its operational business units breached the threshold during this quarter.

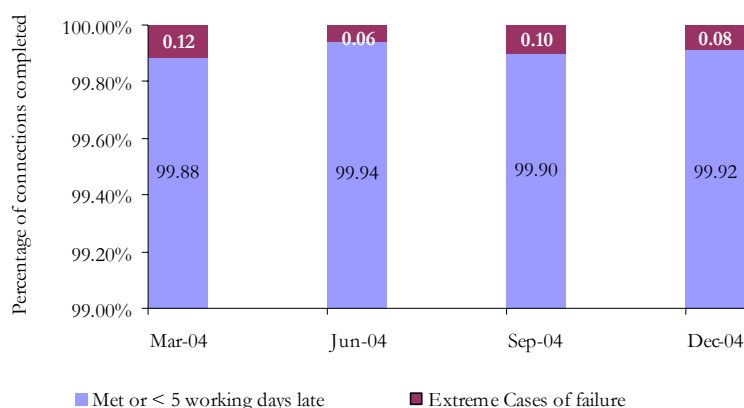
Figure 7: Cumulative percentage of CSG connections, Optus, September and December 2004 quarters



Note: The y-axis starts at 80% for illustrative purposes. ‘Met’ means connected within CSG timeframes, ‘Met + 5 working days’ means either met or missed by 5 working days or less.

Figure 8 shows Optus’ performance against the extreme cases of failure measure for connections has fluctuated slightly for each of the four quarters during 2004.

Figure 8: Extreme cases of failure for connections, Optus, March to December 2004 quarters



Note: The y-axis starts at 99% for illustrative purposes.

Measure of extreme cases of failure – fault repair

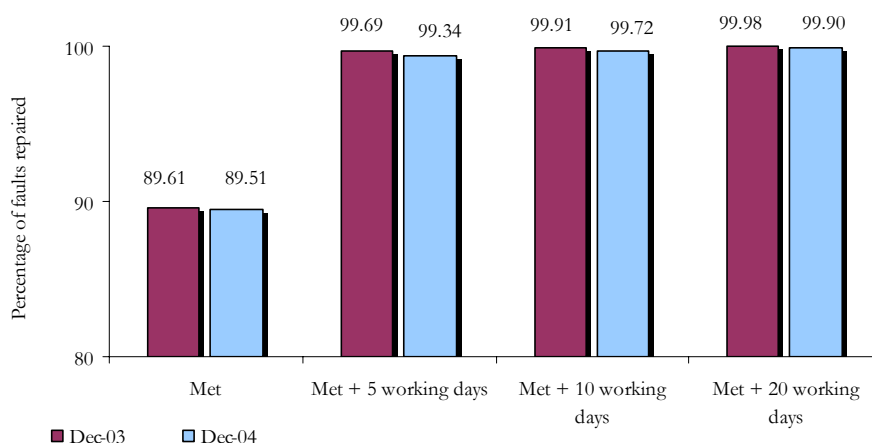
Telstra

Telstra’s extreme cases of failure for fault repair (faults repaired more than five working days after CSG timeframes) continue to be less than one per cent of CSG-eligible fault repairs in each quarter.

Telstra reported that 0.66 per cent of total faults in the December 2004 quarter were extreme cases of failure and that the remaining 99.34 per cent were repaired within the CSG maximum timeframes or within five working days after the CSG timeframes. This compares with:

- 0.59 per cent in the previous quarter; and
- 0.31 per cent for the December 2003 quarter (same quarter last year). See Figure 9.

Figure 9: Cumulative percentage of total CSG faults repaired, Telstra, December 2003 and 2004 quarters

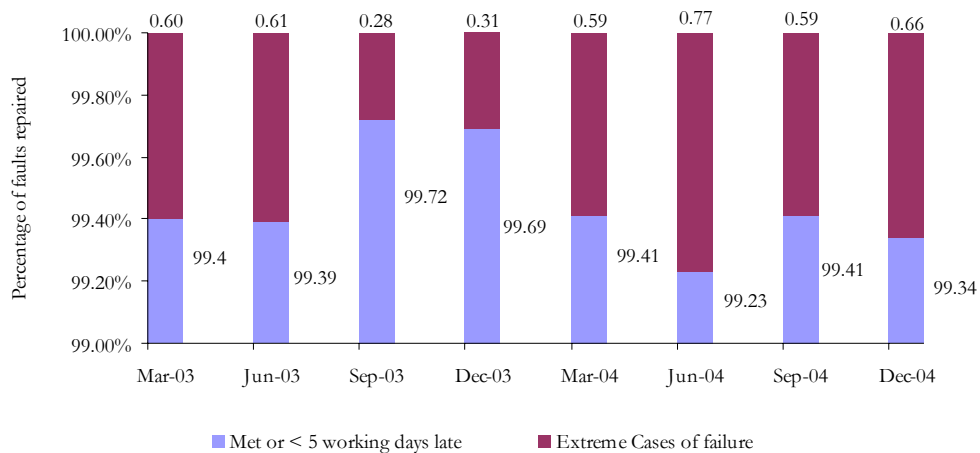


Note: The y-axis starts at 80% for illustrative purposes. ‘Met’ means connected within CSG timeframes, ‘Met + 5 working days’ means either met or missed by 5 working days or less.

Telstra advised that six of its 44 operational business units (field service areas) during this quarter had more than one per cent of fault repair activities that were extreme cases of failure. As required by this monitoring and reporting framework, Telstra submitted exception reports for each of the six operational business units. According to the exception reports, each had breached the one per cent threshold because of extreme weather conditions affecting the east coast of Australia, which increased the volume of both connections and fault repair activities above the average expected for this quarter, as well as restricted staff access to Telstra’s network.

Based on eight successive quarters of extreme cases of failure data that Telstra has provided, extreme cases of failure increased from the September 2003 quarter to June 2004 quarter, but declined in the next quarter before increasing again in the December 2004 quarter (see Figure 10).

Figure 10: Extreme cases of failure for fault repairs, Telstra, March 2003 to December 2004



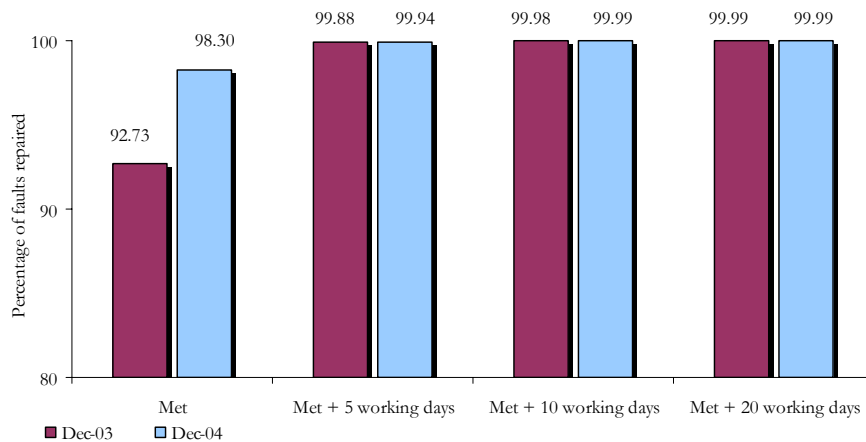
Note: The y-axis starts at 99% for illustrative purposes.

Optus

During the December 2004 quarter, 0.06 per cent of faults repaired by Optus were extreme cases of failure. This is an improvement from the performance reported for the same quarter in 2003 (see Figure 11), when Optus reported that 0.12 per cent of faults were extreme cases of failure.

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

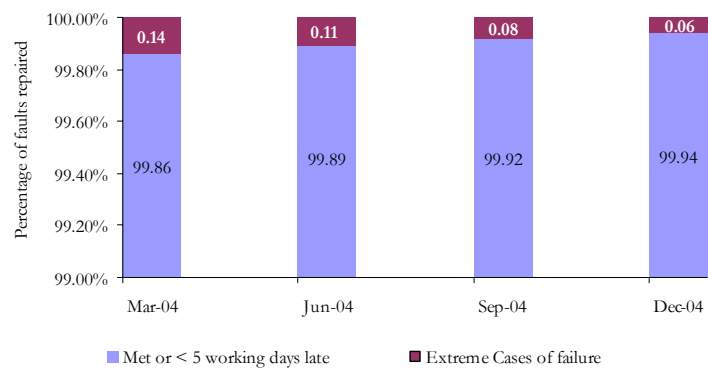
Figure 11: Cumulative percentage of CSG faults repaired, Optus, December 2003 and 2004 quarters



Note: The y-axis starts at 80% for illustrative purposes.

Optus' performance against this measure for repairing faults has improved in successive quarters during 2004 (see Figure 12). In the March 2004 quarter, Optus reported 0.14 per cent of faults repaired were extreme cases of failure. This has steadily declined to 0.06 per cent for the December 2004 quarter.

Figure 12: Extreme cases of failure for fault repairs, Optus 2004



Note: The y-axis starts at 99% for illustrative purposes.

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.

Unlike other sections in this report, NRF data is provided to the ACA on a monthly, not quarterly, basis. The ACA therefore reports January 2005 NRF performance figures (in most cases), in the interests of providing the most up-to-date information.

Level 1 – Field service area performance

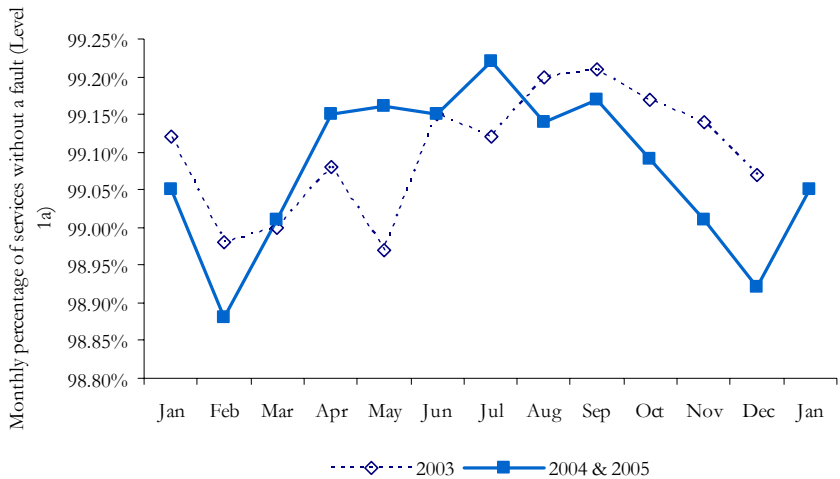
Level 1 requires Telstra to report on performance nationally and for each FSA in Australia. The 44 FSAs in Australia include regions such as Perth South, NT Top End, and NSW Central Coast. Performance is reported on a monthly basis in terms of:

- 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 13 shows Telstra’s national performance against this measure between 2003 and January 2005. The graph shows that very few services experience a fault in any particular month. In January 2005, 99.05 per cent of services did not experience a fault. This performance equaled that of January 2004 and is 0.07 percentage points below the January 2003 performance level.

Figure 13: National monthly percentage of services without a fault, 2003–2005



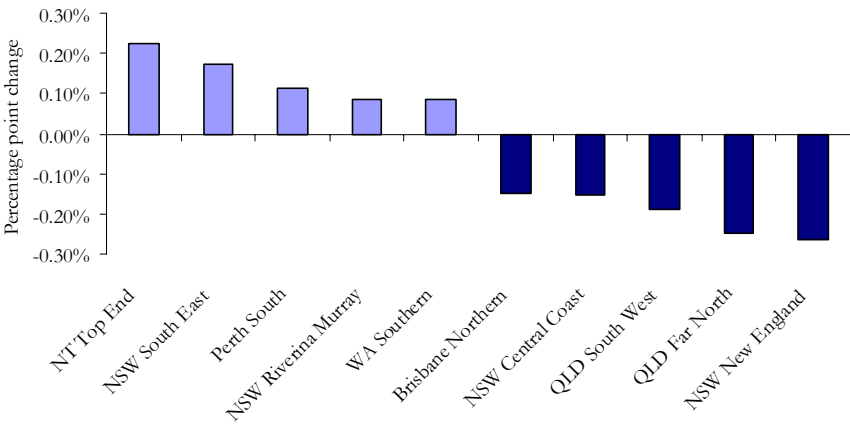
Rainfall is a large determinant of movements in performance and explains why better performance is generally achieved during the more favourable weather conditions during the middle of the year. Bureau of Meteorology data shows that rainfall across the more populated eastern states was similar in January 2004 and January 2005, partly explaining Telstra’s similar performance. In contrast, November and December rainfall across this area was heavier in 2004 than the previous year, and this is reflected in the lower performance achieved during this period in 2004.

Capital city central business districts generally had the best performances over the November 2004 to January 2005 period. Melbourne City & Dedicated Services had the highest performance, with a monthly average of 99.77 per cent of services not having a fault. FSAs in rural New South Wales remained towards the bottom of the rankings. The lowest performance was recorded by NSW New England, with a monthly average of 97.40 per cent of services not having a fault.

A comparison of Level 1(a) performance for the year 2004 against the year 2003 shows that of the 44 FSAs, 17 recorded a higher monthly average for 2004 while 27 FSAs recorded a lower monthly average. The majority of FSAs experienced percentage point changes of less than 0.05. The greatest improvement in performance was in the NT Top End FSA (an improvement of 0.22 percentage points) while the biggest fall in performance was in NSW New England (a decline of 0.26 percentage points).

Figure 14 shows the FSAs with the greatest improvement or decline in performance, comparing the monthly averages for 2004 against 2003 (note that these FSAs are at different levels of overall performance).

Figure 14: FSAs with greatest change in average monthly Level 1(a) performance, 2004 compared with 2003



More Level 1(a) data is available on the ACA website at www.aca.gov.au (go to Consumer Information, Information Portals, Network Reliability Framework).

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 15 shows Telstra’s national service availability performance between 2003 and 2005. The graph shows that services on average were available for 99.93 per cent of the time in January 2005. Telstra’s performance in November and December 2004 was lower than for the same period in 2003, while its January 2005 performance was the same as that achieved in January 2004.

Figure 15: National service availability, 2003–2005

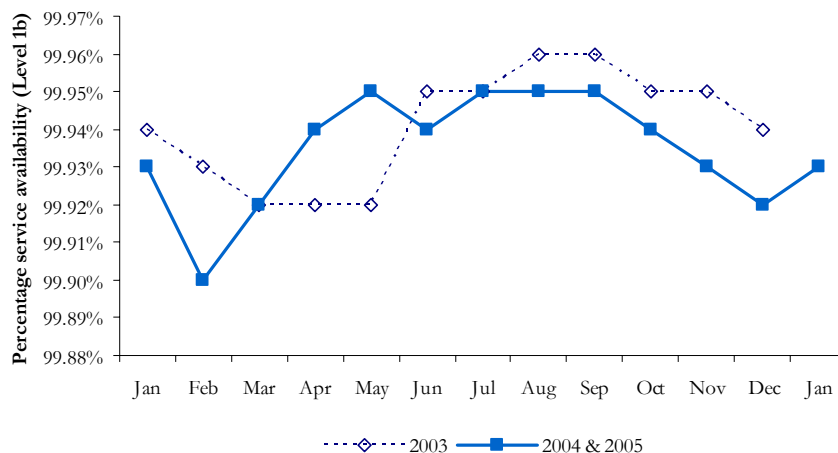
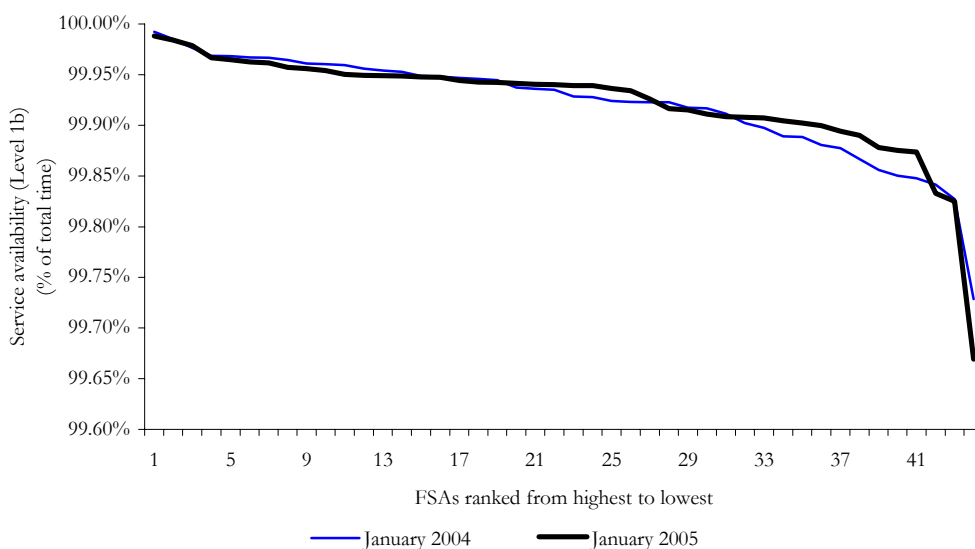


Figure 16 shows how Level 1(b) performance was spread across the 44 FSAs for January in both 2004 and 2005. Similar to Level 1(a), performance of some of the lower ranked FSAs improved, but the lowest ranked FSA (NSW New England) fell further behind.

Figure 16: Spread of FSA performance against Level 1(b), January 2004 and January 2005



The highest performing FSA over the November 2004 to January 2005 period was Melbourne City & Dedicated Services, which averaged 99.99 per cent service availability for each month over the period. Capital city FSAs generally recorded a higher level of service availability than other FSAs.

More Level 1(b) data is available at www.aca.gov.au (go to Consumer Information, Information Portals, Network Reliability Framework).

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

The ACA uses data provided under the NRF to also calculate the average amount of time that services that experience 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. 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.

Telstra’s monthly performance against this measure is shown in Figure 17. For each month in the November 2004 to January 2005 period, fault-affected services were unavailable for an average of 54 hours. This is similar to the average of 52 hours for the same period in 2003.

Figure 17: National time unavailable for fault-affected services, 2003–2005

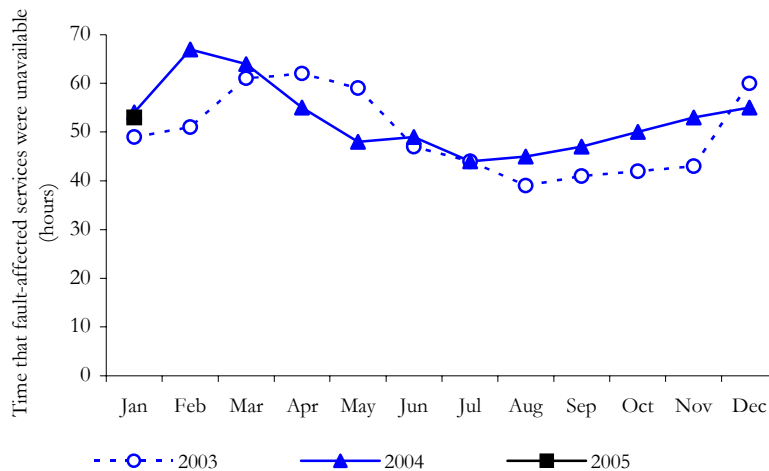
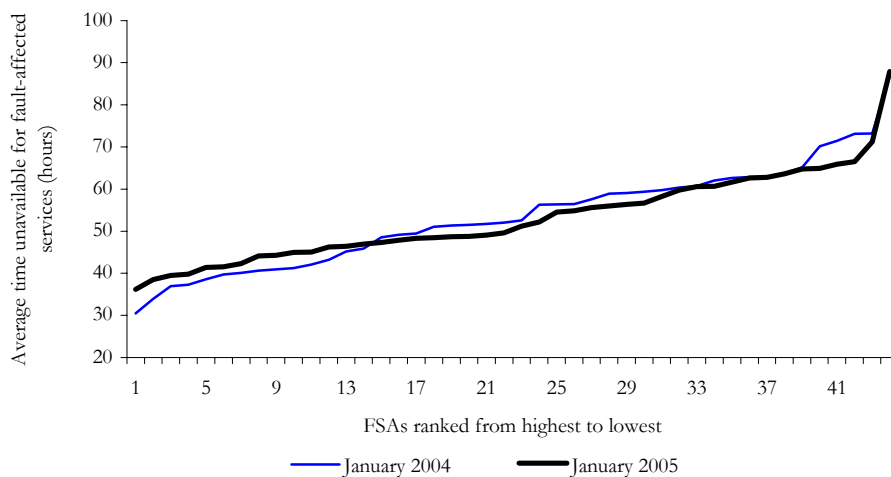


Figure 18 shows how Level 1(c) performance was spread across the 44 FSAs for January in both 2004 and 2005. The graph shows that the 2005 curve is slightly flatter than that 2004 curve, indicating that performance is slightly more even among the FSAs. On this measure, fault-affected services in Brisbane City & Technology FSA experienced the shortest average period of ‘down-time’ for January 2005 (36 hours per fault-affected service). At the other end of the scale, fault-affected services in NSW New England recorded the longest average down-time (88 hours per fault-affected service).

Figure 18: Spread of FSA performance against Level 1(c), January 2004 and January 2005



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 October–November, November–December, and December–January reporting periods of 2004–05, 874 exchanges exceeded the Level 2 reporting thresholds at least once. By comparison, 603 exchanges were reported as exceeding the thresholds for the same reporting periods in 2003–04.

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 concern for an ESA.

Between October 2004 and January 2005, the ACA requested further information from Telstra on underlying causes of service difficulties in 24 ESAs (see Table T.10 at the end of this 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 may need to be addressed. Where appropriate, the ACA uses its powers to request 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 (go to Consumer Information, Information Portals, Network Reliability Framework).

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 November 2004 to January 2005 period, Telstra submitted 638 Level 3 reports.

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.

Figure 19 shows the number of Level 3(a) reports over time. There were 40 reports in January 2005, compared with the 35 reports for the corresponding month in 2004. The graph demonstrates a significant spike in the number of Level 3(a) reports during the January to March months.

Figure 19: Level 3(a) performance, January 2003 to January 2005

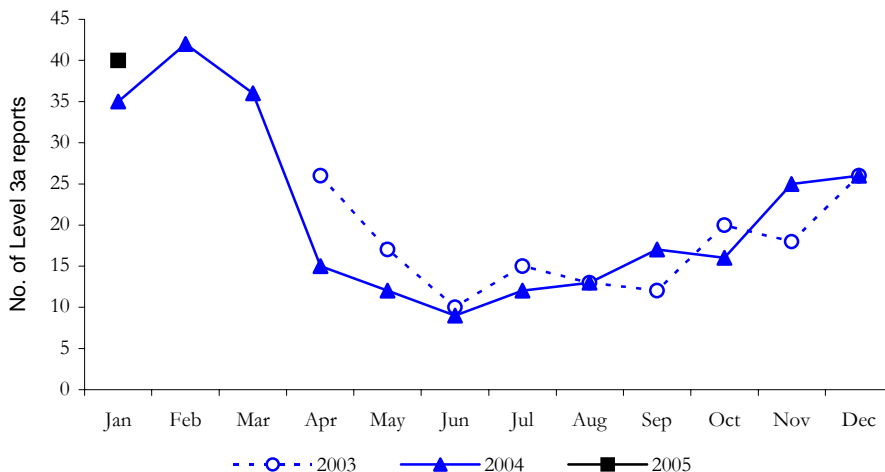
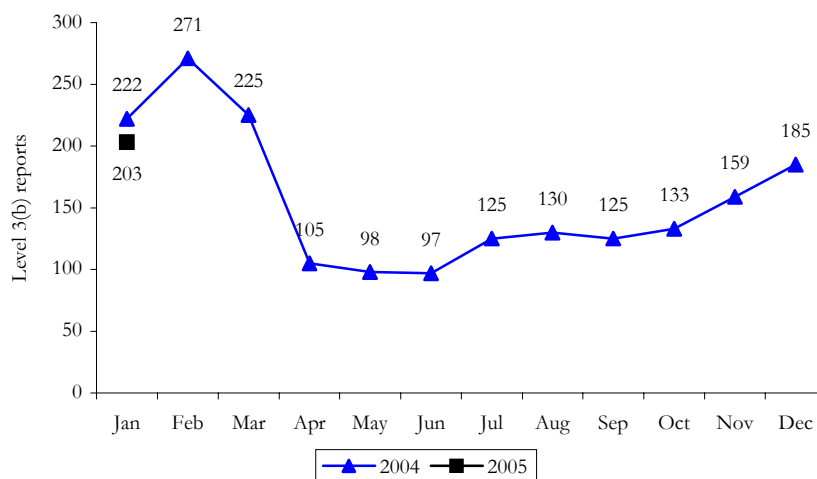


Figure 20 shows that there were 203 Level 3(b) reports in January 2005, slightly fewer than for the corresponding month of 2004.

Figure 20: Level 3(b) performance, January 2004 to January 2005



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.

More information

More information about the NRF is on the ACA website at www.aca.gov.au (go to Consumer Information, Information Portals, Network Reliability Framework). 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 annual data on call congestion, call drop-out and population coverage. These figures will be reported in the telecommunications performance report for 2004–05.

Hutchison has begun reporting to the ACA on the performance of voice calls on its ‘3’ network. The ACA may report on this performance in the future.

Quarterly performance

The ACA receives quarterly data about the performance of Telstra’s CDMA network. Call drop-out and congestion performance on the Telstra CDMA network in the December 2004 quarter remained at similar levels to the September 2004 quarter, with variations in performance between states 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 (go to Consumer Information, Information Portals, Priority Assistance).

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 the level of 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 December 2004, Telstra had 129,127 priority customers, of which 62,328 (48 per cent) had completed the application process to become ‘validated’ customers. The remaining customers were provisional or ‘tagged’ customers, meaning that they were entitled to receive the benefits of priority assistance but were yet to submit a form to Telstra for validation.

The total priority assistance customer base fluctuates from quarter to quarter—in each of the last two quarters the customer base has increased by at least 10 per cent. The number of validated priority assistance customers only increased by four per cent in the December 2004 quarter, which means that much of the increase in overall priority assistance customer numbers was due to an increase in the number of provisional customers, or the number of customers requesting priority assistance.

Service connection performance

Telstra’s performance in connecting priority assistance customers within licence timeframes declined from 97.10 per cent in the September 2004 quarter to 96 per cent in December 2004. This decline in priority connections performance occurred against a 10 per cent fall in workload (or demand)—nationally, only 17,000 priority connections were requested. This is a 10 per cent decrease since the September 2004 quarter and the lowest number of priority connections recorded since December 2002. As shown in Figure 21, priority connection performance in rural and remote areas continues to rate below that in urban areas.

Figure 21: Priority customer connections: volume of connections and percentage meeting licence timeframes (December 2003–December 2004)

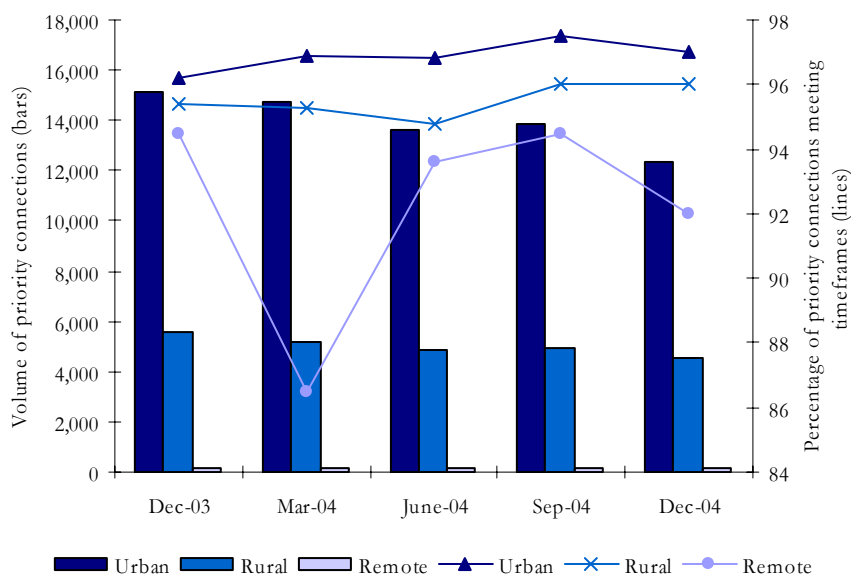
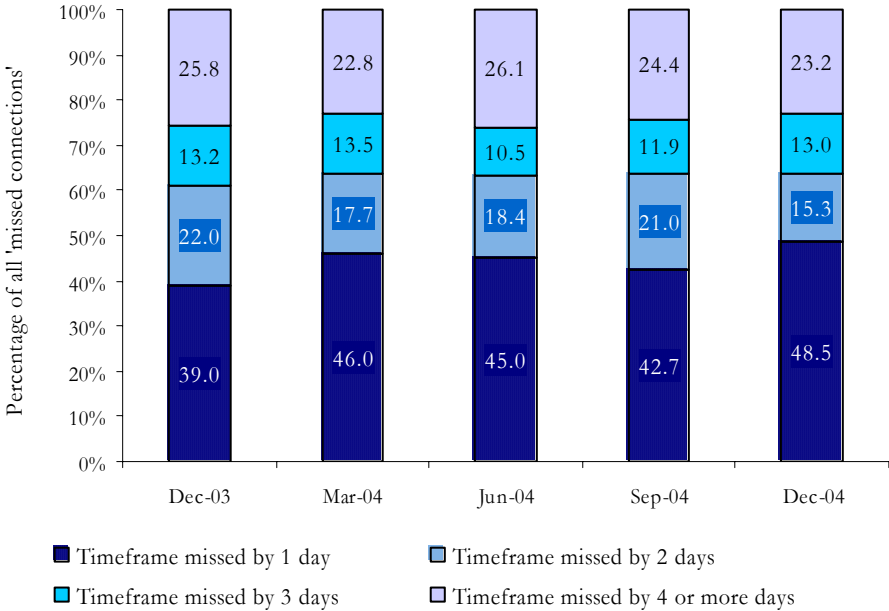


Figure 22 shows the distribution of connections that missed licence timeframes. Connections missing the timeframe by one day have increased by nine percentage points—48.5 per cent of ‘missed connections’ missed the timeframe by one day in December 2004, compared with 39 per cent at the same time last year. On the other hand, connections completed four or more days outside the timeframes have decreased from 25.8 per cent in the December 2003 quarter to 23.2 per cent in the December 2004 quarter.

Figure 22: Distribution of priority customer connections that missed licence timeframes (December 2003–December 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

More than 26,000 faults were reported by priority assistance customers in the December 2004 quarter. Fault volumes increased in all regions (urban, rural and remote) and 94 per cent of these faults were repaired within the licence timeframes. This represents a one per cent decrease from the performance in the September 2004 quarter, but is above the lowest figure recorded during the year of 92 per cent for the June 2004 quarter.

Figure 23 shows a slight improvement in priority fault repair performance in remote areas. While the volume of remote priority fault repair requests increased to 191 for the quarter (from 141 in September 2004), the timeliness of the repairs improved to 91 per cent repaired within the timeframes. This represents a five per cent decrease in performance from the corresponding December 2003 quarter. However, the relatively small number of customers will mean that percentage performance will be affected by any increase in the number of faults recorded by customers in remote areas.

During the September 2004 quarter, Telstra advised the ACA that significant delays in Telstra’s performance monitoring systems were experienced in regional areas, which affected the capacity to monitor performance and Telstra’s ability to take corrective action. It appears that these problems have since been rectified, resulting in an improvement in performance in the December 2004 quarter. Telstra has expressed confidence that this improvement trend will continue in subsequent reporting periods.

Figure 23: Priority assistance fault repairs – volume of faults and percentage meeting licence timeframes, December 2003–December 2004

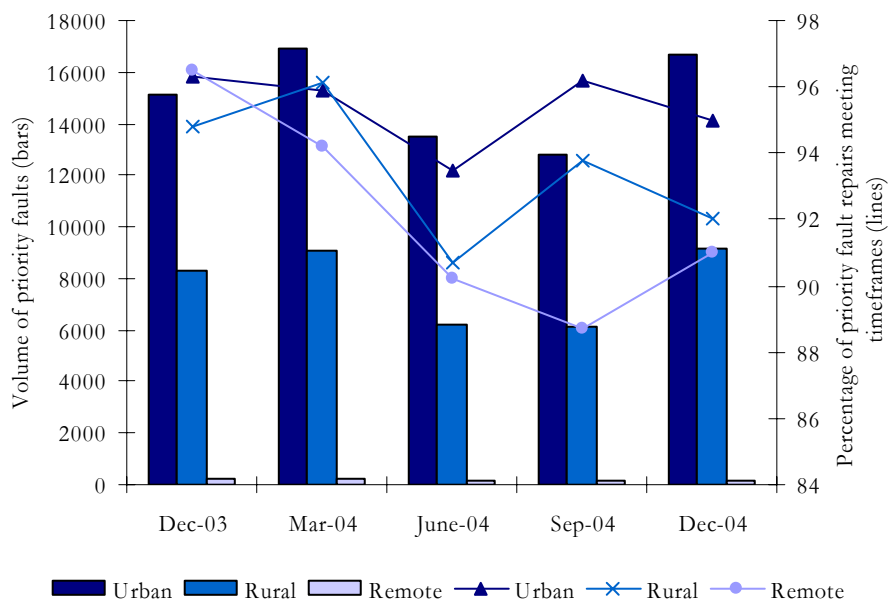
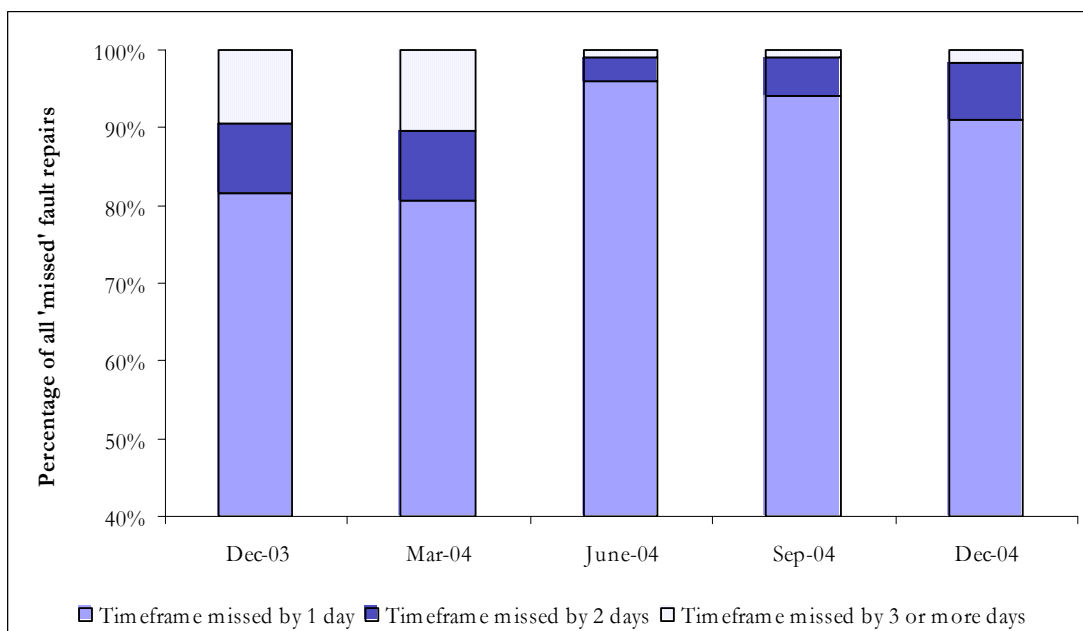


Figure 24 shows the distribution of faults repaired outside the licence timeframes. Telstra provided data indicating that 91.1 per cent of these faults missed the timeframe by less than one day. Of these, over 73.3 per cent were completed less than six hours outside the timeframe. Telstra reported that only 1.8 per cent of customers experienced delays of more than three days or more.

Figure 24: Distribution of priority assistance fault repairs that missed licence timeframes, December 2003–December 2004



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.

In addition to meeting connection and repair timeframes, Telstra is also expected to provide priority assistance 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 significant increase in the number of priority assistance customers experiencing repeat faults (defined as two or more faults in a three month period) in the December 2004 quarter.

Telstra reported that 448 validated priority customers experienced repeat faults during the December 2004 quarter, compared with 271 in the September 2004 quarter. The repeat fault measure counts faults on validated services only. This means that around 0.7 per cent of Telstra's validated customer base experienced repeat faults during the December 2004 quarter compared with 0.45 per cent in the September 2004 quarter.

The ACA has sought an explanation from Telstra as to the increase in repeat faults for the December 2004 quarter.

2. Other service providers

Primus and AAPT are the only major carriers to offer priority assistance services. The ACA received the first performance reports from both carriers for the September 2004 quarter. Both carriers reported that implementation issues are preventing full reporting on performance measures.

At the end of the December 2004 quarter, Primus reported that they have 2,820 priority assistance customers, an increase of 204 from the September 2004 quarter. Primus intends to fully report in the March 2005 quarter, once new systems allowing for the automation of priority assistance data reporting are available.

In the December 2004 quarter, AAPT undertook a complete review of all of its priority assistance customers, including those with provisional status. As a result of this review, data reporting capabilities will be improved and AAPT advised it will be able to provide complete data for the March 2005 quarter.

The ACA expects to publish performance statistics for both of these carriers in the bulletin for the March 2005 quarter.

CALL CENTRE PERFORMANCE

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

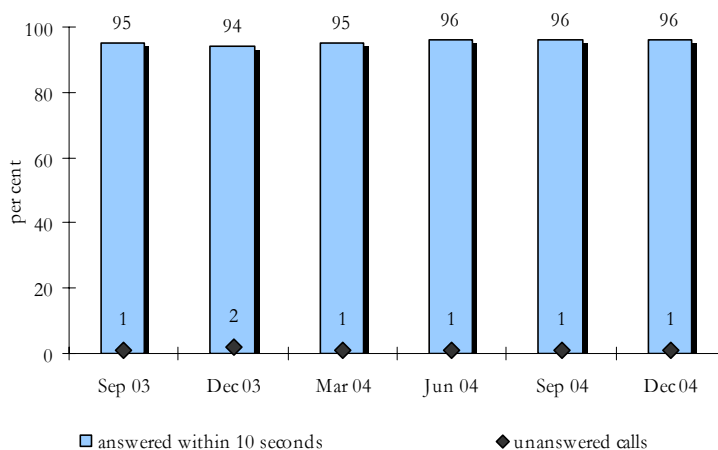
- the percentage of calls answered within a timeframe established by the service provider; and
- the percentage of calls that leave the call centre unanswered.

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 fixed line services), 12455 (free of charge to residential fixed line services 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 December 2004 quarter, 96 per cent of directory assistance calls to all three numbers 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 two quarters. The percentage of unanswered calls to directory assistance has remained within one to two per cent of calls to the directory assistance services over the past six quarters (see Figure 25).

Figure 25: Telstra directory assistance performance, September–December 2004

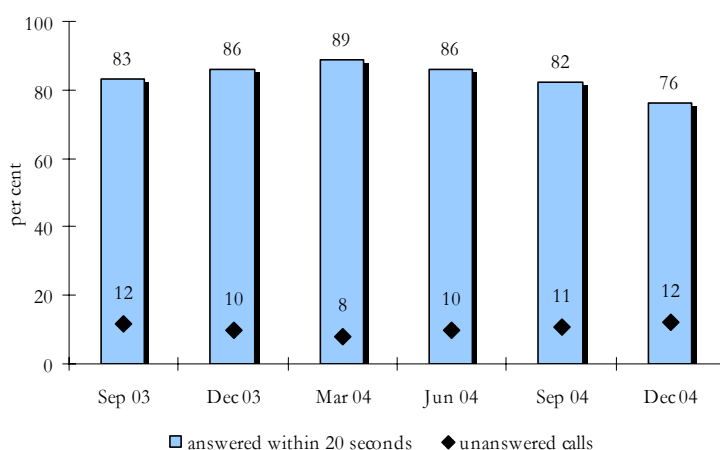


Information and connection services for international and long distance calls

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.

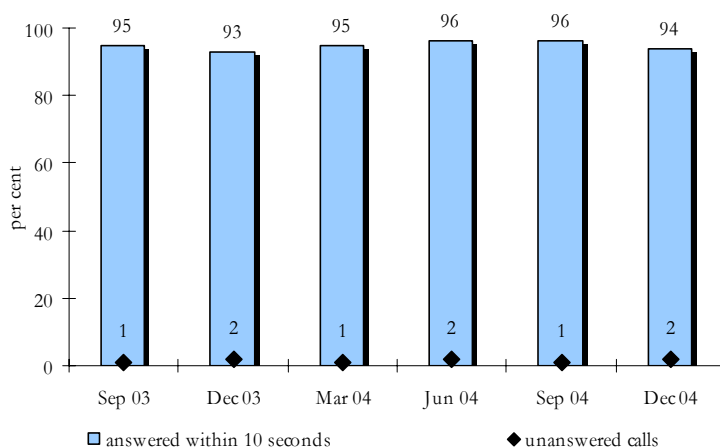
In the December 2004 quarter, Optus reported that the percentage of calls answered within 20 seconds declined to 76 per cent and the percentage of unanswered calls rose to 12 per cent (see Figure 26). Optus reported that, as in the previous quarter, its performance this quarter was adversely affected by a large volume of calls incorrectly made to the Optus International Operator Service (available to Optus customers through the number 1234) by customers wanting connection to the Telstra/Sensis 1234 service (available to Telstra customers only). Optus advised that it was using recorded voice announcements to inform its customers about the Sensis service being unavailable to them and was considering additional options to address this issue.

Figure 26: Optus' information and connection service performance for international and long distance calls, September–December 2004



In the December 2004 quarter, Telstra reported that the percentage of calls answered within 10 seconds was 94 per cent, down from 96 per cent recorded in the September quarter and the rate of unanswered calls increased to two per cent, up from one per cent recorded in the September 2004 quarter. Telstra's performance against both of these measures has been relatively stable—varying by one to three per cent since the September 2003 quarter (see Figure 27).

Figure 27: Telstra information and connection service performance for international and long distance calls, September–December 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 60 per cent of calls were answered within 20 seconds and 12 per cent of calls left the network unanswered (see Figure 28). These figures represent a decrease in performance on the September 2004 quarter (68 per cent answered within 20 seconds and seven per cent of calls unanswered). The December 2004 quarter also represented a decrease in performance on the same period last year (70 per cent of calls answered within 20 seconds and eight per cent unanswered). Optus attributed its reduced performance to increased call volumes in this quarter arising from seasonal weather conditions.

Figure 28: Optus 24-hour faults and service difficulties call centre performance, September–December 2004

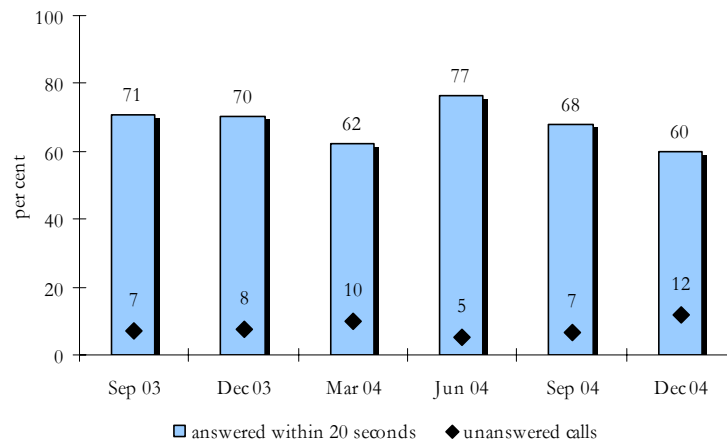
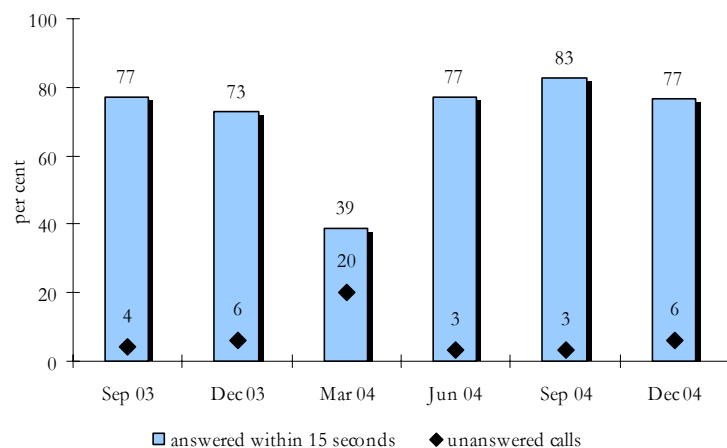


Figure 29 shows that in the December 2004 quarter, the performance of Telstra’s fault and service difficulties call centre declined compared with the previous quarter, but improved compared with the same period the previous year. The percentage of calls answered within 15 seconds was 77 per cent in the December 2004 quarter, a decrease from 83 per cent in the September 2004 quarter, but an improvement on 73 per cent in the December 2003 quarter. The percentage of calls leaving the network unanswered rose to six per cent this quarter, up from three per cent in the previous quarter, but consistent with the same period last year. Telstra reported that its performance was affected by severe weather conditions during the December 2004 quarter.

Figure 29: Telstra’s 132 203 and 132 999 faults and service difficulties service performance, September–December 2004



Call centre performance – AAPT and Primus

AAPT and Primus report aggregated call centre performance figures against a 20-second call answering timeframe. The practice of including calls answered by an automated service in the total number of calls answered within 20 seconds has been observed by Primus since March 2003 and was commenced by AAPT in the December 2004 quarter. For this quarter, AAPT reported that it had introduced a natural language voice recognition (NLVR) system to answer all customer service-related calls. AAPT advised that the NLVR system is a centralised system that distributes customers to AAPT’s two contact centres based on customers’ requests, with all calls being routed to a relevant customer service area within six seconds of entry to the network.

AAPT reported that, as a result of this change to its call-handling process, its performance in answering calls within its 20-second timeframe rose from 21 per cent in the September 2004 quarter to 100 per cent in the December 2004 quarter (see Figure 30). The percentage of unanswered calls decreased from 34 per cent of calls to zero.

Figure 30: AAPT call centre performance, September–December 2004

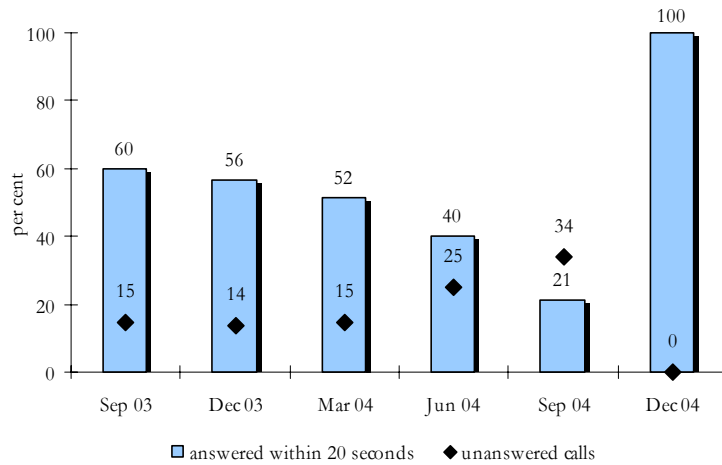
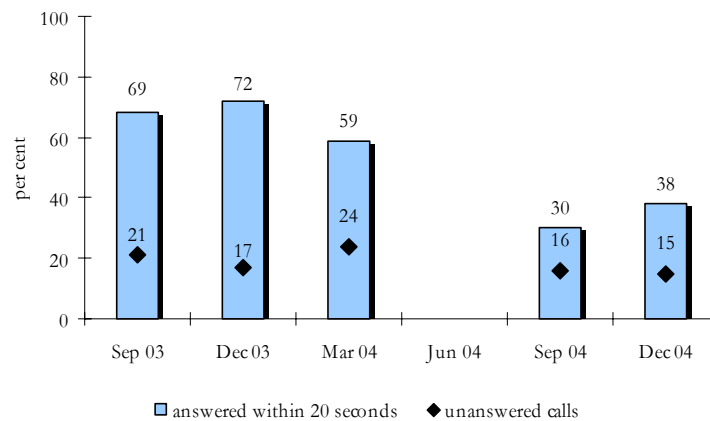


Figure 31 shows Primus’ performance during the December 2004 quarter, which improved for calls answered within 20 seconds compared with the September 2004, but remained well below the level of performance achieved for the December 2003 quarter. In the December 2004 quarter, only 38 per cent of calls were answered within 20 seconds, up from 30 per cent in the September 2004 quarter, but down from 72 per cent in the December 2003 quarter. Primus’ performance in terms of calls leaving unanswered improved slightly to 15 per cent, down from 16 per cent in December 2004 and 17 per cent in December 2003. Primus did not provide data for the June 2004 quarter owing to difficulties in its reporting systems.

Figure 31: Primus call centre performance, September–December 2004



Data not provided for Jun 2004 quarter.

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 that 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. It should be noted that the calculation of complaints ratios differs between service providers for certain categories, therefore 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 uses a broad definition of 'complaint', whereby all contacts that are not general enquiries are classified as complaints. This includes contacts in which the customer's issue is resolved at first instance.
- 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 Primus recorded decreases in the ratio of complaints about provision of service during the December 2004 quarter. Telstra reported a decrease in the ratio of complaints from 2.3 in the September 2004 quarter to 1.6 in the December 2004 quarter, while Primus reported a decrease from 113.2 in the September 2004 quarter to 77 this quarter (note that Primus' ratio is calculated on a different basis to other carriers). Optus' ratio remained stable at 0.9. AAPT reported an increase from 0.7 in the September 2004 quarter to 1.3 in the December 2004 quarter, but this reflected a relatively small volume of complaints.

Fault repairs

Telstra, Optus and AAPT reported increased ratios for complaints about fault repairs in the December quarter. Telstra reported a ratio of 172.4 in the December 2004 quarter, up from 158 in the September 2004 quarter and attributed its performance to increased fault activity for the quarter. Optus' ratio increased from 86 in the September 2004 quarter to 153 in the December 2004 quarter, against a small increase in fault activity for the quarter. Optus advised that the increase in fault repair complaints was largely due to a process change—customers are now classified as reporting a fault repair complaint if they report a second fault within 28 days, whereas previously this timeframe was 14 days.

AAPT recorded an increase in the ratio of fault repair complaints, from 36 in the September 2004 quarter to 44 in the December 2004 quarter, although again the increase was on a small volume of complaints. Primus reported a decreased ratio of 3.1 this quarter, down from 7.3 in the September 2004 quarter.

Customer transfer

The ratio of complaints about Telstra and AAPT customer transfer activities rose from the September to December 2004 quarters from 4.4 to 5.5 for Telstra and 11.9 to 13.8 for AAPT. Optus' ratio for transfers remained stable at seven. The ratio of customer transfer complaints for Primus was 16.6, a decrease from 22.3 in the September 2004 quarter.

Primus also reported that in this quarter, it changed its method of calculating the customer transfer complaints ratio to now count all multi-carrier preselection and commercial churn transfers in the base of 'total transfers'. Primus advised that it had previously counted only transfers to Primus when counting total transfer for the purposes of calculating the ratio.

Credit control

Telstra reported a decrease in the ratio of complaints for credit control this quarter, down from 1.1 to 0.6. Optus' ratio remained steady at 0.5. AAPT reported an increase in the ratio of complaints for credit control this quarter, from 1.9 to 2.3. Primus' ratio was 0.8 this quarter. Primus' figures for September and June 2004 quarters are not comparable—Primus advised that these had been calculated on a different basis.

Billing

Telstra, Optus and AAPT reported decreases in the ratio of billing complaints from the September to December 2004 quarters, dropping from 2.8 to 1.7 for Telstra, from 2.3 to 1.8 for Optus and 2.4 to 1.5 for AAPT. Primus' ratio of billing complaints, at 23.2, continues to be higher than those reported by other service providers, although this represented a decrease from a ratio of 27.8 in the September 2004 quarter. Primus considers that its higher ratio is due to its broad definition of 'billing complaint', under which approximately 50 per cent of all complaints to Primus are classified as billing complaints.

Table 1: Complaints ratios

	Telstra			Optus			AAPT			Primus		
	Jun-04	Sep-04	Dec-04	Jun-04	Sep-04	Dec-04	Jun-04	Sep-04	Dec-04	Jun-04	Sep-04	Dec-04
PROVISION OF SERVICE												
Ratio of complaints per 10,000 services in operation	2.6	2.3	1.6	1.1	0.9	0.9	0.5*	0.7	1.3	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	91	113.2	77
FAULT REPAIR												
Ratio of complaints per 10,000 faults reported	N/A	N/A	N/A	76	86	153	35	36	44	19.1	7.3	3.1
Ratio of complaints per 10,000 faults cleared within target	188	158	172.4	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	2.4	4.4	5.5	6*	7	7	7.7*	11.9*	13.8	23.9	22.3	16.6**
CREDIT CONTROL												
Ratio of complaints per 10,000 services in operation	1	1.1	0.6	0.4	0.5	0.5	1.3	1.9	2.3	0.2	0.1	0.8**
BILLING												
Ratio of complaints per 10,000 bills issued	2.9	2.8	1.7	2.4	2.3	1.8	1.6	2.4	1.5	39.6	27.8	23.2

* Adjusted figure provided by AAPT

** New method of calculation introduced by Primus this quarter

N/A = not applicable

PAYPHONE SERVICES

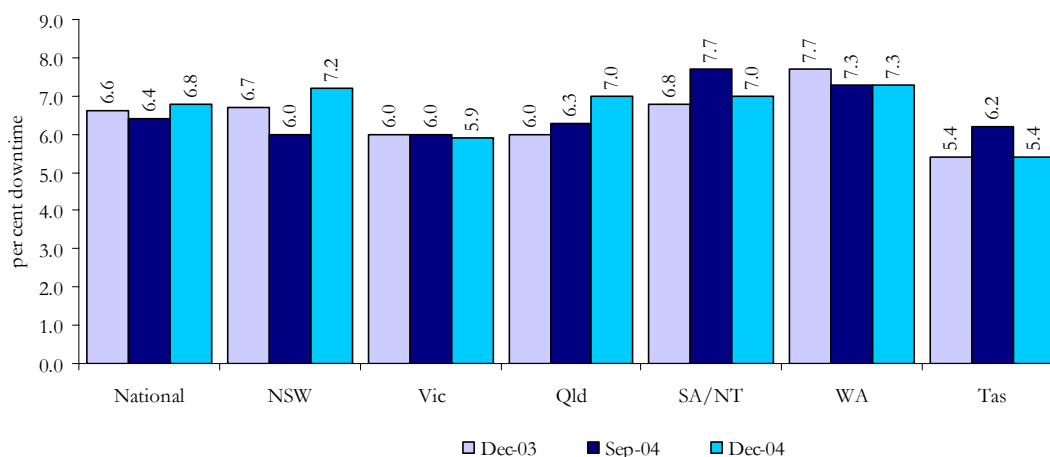
The information in this section refers to Telstra-operated payphones only. It does not include the payphones operated by private entities.

Payphone downtime

Payphone downtime refers to the percentage of time during the quarter 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.

The serviceability of Telstra payphones remains stable. At the national level, the percentage of time Telstra payphones were unserviceable increased 0.4 percentage points from the previous quarter to 6.8 per cent this quarter, but is consistent with its December 2003 quarter performance. Figure 32 shows that at the state level, Telstra's payphone serviceability varied. Payphone downtime increased (when compared to the corresponding quarter in 2003) in New South Wales and Queensland, declined in Western Australia and remained stable in the other states. Telstra advised that the serviceability of its payphones in New South Wales was adversely affected by severe weather conditions in October 2004.

Figure 32: Telstra payphone downtime, December 2003, September and December 2004



Fault repair

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

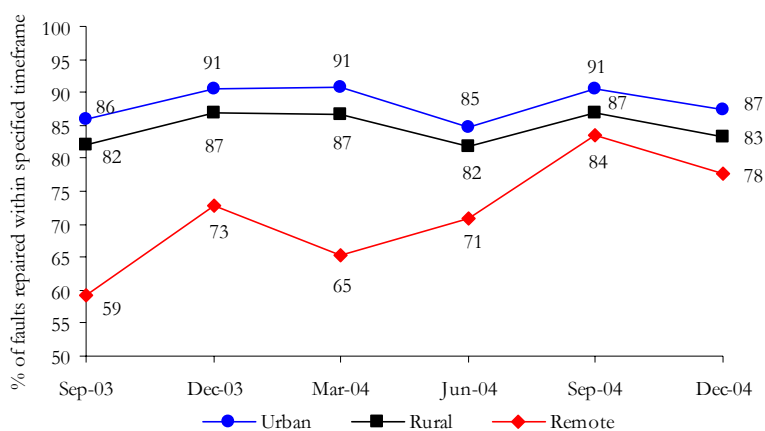
- '...Telstra will use reasonable endeavours to repair an unworkable Telstra operated payphone or payphone access line in the following timeframes according to the service location:
- Urban Area: end of one [1] full working day after being notified of the fault;
 - Major Rural Area and Minor Rural Area: 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.'

Following the September 2004 quarter improvement in Telstra's performance repairing payphone faults across all service locations, its performance declined in urban and rural areas in the December 2004 quarter (see Figure 33). In urban areas, Telstra repaired 87 per cent of payphone faults within the specified timeframes, down four percentage points from the previous quarter and the December 2003 quarter. In rural areas, 83 per cent of payphone faults were repaired within the specified timeframes, down four percentage points from the previous and December 2003 quarters.

The decline in performance is larger in remote areas, down six percentage points from the previous quarter to 78 per cent of payphone faults repaired within the specified timeframes in the December 2004 quarter, but a consistently better performance than that reported for the corresponding quarter in 2003, when Telstra repaired 73 per cent of payphone faults within the specified timeframes.

Figure 33: Telstra payphone faults repaired within the specified timeframe, September 2003–December 2004



Telstra advised that the decline in its payphone performance in remote areas was the result of upgrades to its payphones, including all payphones in remote areas. The payphones are being upgraded as part of Telstra’s 10-point plan response to Recommendation 2.13 of the Regional Telecommunications Inquiry for improving payphone repair times. The upgrade to payphones involved:

- installing new software that has a self-diagnostic capability, detecting faults before customers are aware of it; and
- hardware upgrades, which initially resulted in problems with alignment of components within the payphones and subsequently caused an increase in the number of visits to rectify coin jams.

The implementation of this 10-point plan improved Telstra’s payphone performance in remote areas during the September 2004 quarter, as reported in the previous edition of the bulletin. However, Telstra advised that the upgrades, together with the severe weather conditions during the December 2004 quarter, resulted in an increase in the number of faults and an increase in the workload. Telstra advised that it will continue to closely monitor the performance of its payphones in remote localities.

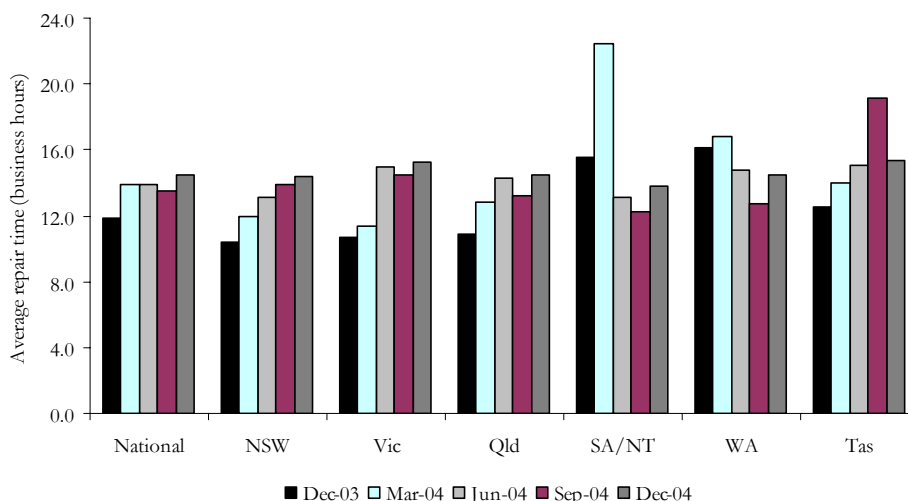
The average time taken by Telstra to repair payphone faults is measured in business hours, between the hours of 7:00 am and 6:00 pm, Monday to Friday. It includes all payphone faults including faults associated with the payphone booth.

Compared to the corresponding quarter in 2003, Telstra is taking longer to repair payphone faults in all states, other than South Australia/Northern Territory and Western Australia (see Figure 34):

- New South Wales—average repair time has increased every quarter since December 2003 from 10.4 to 14.4 hours;
- Tasmania—average repair time declined to 15.4 hours this quarter from 19.1 hours reported for the previous quarter, but is higher than 12.5 hours for the December 2003 quarter;
- Queensland and Victoria—average repair time during the December 2004 quarter is higher than what was reported for the corresponding quarter in 2003 (at 14.5 hours in Queensland, up from 10.9 hours for the December 2003 quarter and at 15.3 hours in Victoria, up from 10.7 hours for the December 2003 quarter); and
- South Australia/Northern Territory and Western Australia—average repair time in South Australia and the Northern Territory during the December 2004 declined to 13.8 hours from 15.5 hours in the December 2003 quarter. Average repair time in Western Australia during the December 2004 quarter is 14.5 hours, down from 16.1 hours for the December 2003 quarter.

The decline in performance in a majority of states/territory has resulted in an increase in the national average time taken by Telstra to repair faults from 11.9 business hours in the December 2003 quarter to 14.5 business hours this quarter.

Figure 34: Telstra's average (business) hours to repair a payphone fault, December 2003–December 2004



As reported in the previous edition of the bulletin, the ACA sought an explanation from Telstra about the September 2004 quarter increases in payphone repair times in the eastern states. Telstra attributed the decline in its performance to the following factors:

- the short-term shortage in payphone handset spares resulted in delays to the repair and clearance of handset faults;
- extreme weather conditions during the quarter saw existing resources having to repair many more faults on the fixed network, including its payphones; and
- the handover process associated with the change to a new contractor for payphone booth repairs caused some delays, mainly affecting New South Wales.

It appears that these factors have continued to affect the time Telstra has taken during the December 2004 quarter to repair payphone faults. The ACA will closely monitor Telstra's performance against this measure, particularly in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland.

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 December 2004 quarter, the average number of trouble reports per payphone remained stable compared with the September 2004 quarter at 0.37 reports per payphone. This compares with 0.4 trouble reports per payphone in the December 2003 quarter.

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							
	March 04		June 04		September 04		December 04		March 04		June 04		September 04		December 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	93	7	90	10	97	3	92	8
NSW	99	1	99	1	99	1	98	2	92	8	91	9	97	3	92	8
ACT	99	1	100	0	100	0	100	0	90	10	90	10	100	0	100	0
Vic	99	1	99	1	99	1	99	1	93	7	94	6	96	4	86	14
Qld	99	1	99	1	99	1	99	1	94	6	83	17	98	2	94	6
SA	99	1	99	1	99	1	97	3	92	8	83	17	93	7	89	11
WA	100	1	99	1	99	1	100	0	96	4	95	5	98	2	97	3
Tas	100	0	100	0	99	1	100	0	100	0	86	14	100	0	92	8
NT	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0
Major rural areas																
National	99	1	100	0	100	0	97	3	88	12	96	4	100	0	90	10
NSW	100	0	100	0	100	0	97	3	91	9	100	0	100	0	88	12
ACT	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	100	0	100	0	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o
Vic	100	0	100	0	98	2	92	8	82	18	89	11	100	0	67	33
Qld	97	3	100	0	100	0	100	0	83	17	100	0	100	0	100	0
SA	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0
WA	97	3	100	0	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	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0	n/o	n/o	100	0	n/o	n/o	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	n/o	n/o	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0	n/o	n/o
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	n/o	n/o	100	0	100	0	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	100	0
Qld	100	0	n/o	n/o	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0
SA	n/o	n/o	100	0	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	100	0	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o
WA	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0	n/o	n/o	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	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	n/o	n/o
Remote areas*																
National	100	0	n/o	n/o	100	0	100	0	n/o	n/o	100	0	100	0	n/o	n/o
NSW	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	n/o	n/o
VIC	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
Qld	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	100	0	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	100	0	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o
SA	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	n/o	n/o
WA	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	100	0
NT	n/o	n/o	100	0	100	0	n/o	n/o	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: Percentage of connections provided by AAPT within CSG Standard timeframes, quarterly

	In-place services								New services, with and without infrastructure							
	March 04		June 04		September 04		December 04		March 04		June 04		September 04		December 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	98	2	100	0	99	1	92	8	88	12	98	2	95	5
NSW/ ACT	99	1	97	3	100	0	99	1	91	9	86	14	98	2	96	4
Vic	99	1	98	2	100	0	99	1	91	9	94	6	99	1	94	6
Qld	99	1	98	2	100	0	99	1	95	5	88	12	97	3	95	5
SA	99	1	99	1	100	0	99	1	93	7	83	17	100	0	96	4
WA	99	1	97	3	100	0	99	1	93	7	90	10	100	0	96	4
Tas	99	1	99	1	100	0	99	1	100	0	86	14	100	0	100	0
NT	100	0	98	2	99	1	98	2	85	15	67	33	100	0	100	0
Major rural areas																
National	98	2	98	2	100	0	99	1	94	6	88	12	99	1	96	4
NSW/ ACT	98	2	99	1	100	0	99	1	88	12	85	15	98	2	97	3
Vic	98	2	98	2	100	0	99	1	93	7	94	6	98	2	92	8
Qld	99	1	99	1	100	0	98	2	99	1	87	13	98	2	96	4
SA	99	1	98	2	100	0	98	2	97	3	86	14	100	0	98	2
WA	98	2	97	3	100	0	99	1	91	9	85	15	100	0	95	5
Tas	96	4	100	0	100	0	98	2	91	9	100	0	100	0	95	5
NT	100	0	100	0	94	6	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0
Minor rural areas																
National	98	2	98	2	100	0	98	2	91	9	88	12	96	4	94	6
NSW/ ACT	100	0	96	4	100	0	100	0	92	8	88	12	96	4	96	4
Vic	96	4	99	1	100	0	98	2	94	6	85	15	98	2	97	3
Qld	99	1	100	0	100	0	98	2	92	8	80	20	94	6	93	7
SA	98	2	97	3	100	0	98	2	84	16	93	7	92	8	92	8
WA	100	0	99	1	100	0	96	4	90	10	91	9	97	3	92	8
Tas	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0	80	20	100	0	100	0	100	0
NT	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0
Remote areas*																
National	100	0	93	7	100	0	94	6	n/o	n/o	80	20	100	0	100	0
NSW/ ACT	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	100	0	n/o	n/o
VIC	100	0	100	0	100	0	80	20	n/o	n/o	100	0	n/o	n/o	100	0
Qld	100	0	n/o	n/o	100	0	100	0	n/o	n/o	100	0	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o
SA	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	100	0	100	0
WA	100	0	86	14	100	0	100	0	n/o	n/o	50	50	100	0	100	0
Tas	n/o	n/o	100	0	100	0	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o
NT	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

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

Table A.2: AAPT's call centre performance, quarterly

		March 04	June 04	September 04	December 04
Percentage of calls entering the network and answered within 20 seconds	National	51.6	40.0	21.0	0.0
	Sydney	50.4	56.0	28.0	100.0
	Bendigo	51.7	38.0	17.0	100.0
Percentage of calls entering the network and leaving without being answered	National	14.6	25.0	34.0	0.0
	Sydney	9.8	25.0	31.0	1.0
	Bendigo	15.1	7.0	36.0	1.0

OPTUS PERFORMANCE INDICATORS—SUMMARY

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

		March 04		June 04		September 04		December 04	
		met	not met	met	not met	met	not met	met	not met
In-place services	National	97.0	3.0	98.5	1.5	98.0	2.0	98.3	1.7
	NSW	97.5	2.5	98.7	1.3	97.8	2.2	98.4	1.6
	Vic	96.2	3.8	97.9	2.1	97.5	2.5	97.7	2.3
	Qld	97.9	2.1	99.4	0.6	99.5	0.5	99.1	0.9
New services	National	98.9	1.1	99.4	0.6	99.3	0.7	99.5	0.5
	NSW	98.2	1.8	99.1	0.9	98.7	1.3	99.4	0.6
	Vic	99.2	0.8	99.6	0.4	99.6	0.4	99.5	0.5
	Qld	99.5	0.5	99.7	0.3	99.7	0.3	99.9	0.1

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

		March 04		June 04		September 04		December 04	
		met	not met	met	not met	met	not met	met	not met
National		98.2	1.8	98.1	1.9	98.4	1.6	98.3	1.7
NSW/ACT		97.6	2.4	98.0	2.0	98.3	1.7	97.9	2.1
Vic		98.8	1.2	98.7	1.3	98.8	1.2	98.8	1.2
Qld		98.1	1.9	98.6	1.4	98.8	1.2	98.2	1.8
SA		98.7	1.3	95.5	4.5	96.8	3.2	99.0	1.0
WA		99.7	0.3	96.6	3.4	96.9	3.1	99.1	0.9
Tas		98.9	1.1	97.9	2.1	95.0	5.0	99.4	0.6
NT		99.5	0.5	98.6	1.4	98.7	1.3	98.8	1.2

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

		March 04	June 04	September 04	December 04
In-place connections	National	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
New service connections	National	4.6	4.2	3.6	4.3
	NSW	5.7	4.5	4.1	5.2
	Vic	4.0	4.4	3.5	3.7
	Qld	3.8	3.5	2.7	3.5
Fault repairs	National	10.4	10.4	16.3	10.6
	NSW/ACT	6.6	1.0	13.3	13.1
	Vic	1.1	0.9	20.4	9.2
	Qld	28.7	0.4	18.8	11.5
	SA	0.2	0.0	21.4	0.2
	WA	0.1	0.0	4.1	1.2
	Tas	0.0	0.0	9.5	0.0
	NT	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.6

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

		March 04	June 04	September 04	December 04
Operator services	Per cent of calls answered within 20 seconds	88.6	86.1	82.3	76.0
	Per cent of calls leaving without being answered	7.8	9.8	10.7	12.4
Fault reporting	Per cent of calls answered within 20 seconds	62.3	76.5	68.1	56.9
	Per cent of calls leaving without being answered	9.9	5.4	6.7	12.3

TELSTRA PERFORMANCE INDICATORS—SUMMARY

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

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

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

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

TELSTRA PERFORMANCE INDICATORS—SUMMARY (Continued)

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

		March 04		June 04		September 04		December 04	
		met	not met	met	not met	met	not met	met	not met
Urban areas, with and without infrastructure	National	92	8	92	8	93	7	92	8
	NSW/ACT	91	9	92	8	93	7	92	8
	Vic	92	8	94	6	93	7	92	8
	Qld	93	7	89	11	94	6	91	9
	SA	92	8	91	9	94	6	90	10
	WA	91	9	93	7	93	7	93	7
	Tas	93	7	90	10	93	7	94	6
	NT	94	6	95	5	98	2	94	6
Major rural areas, with infrastructure	National	95	5	93	7	95	5	94	6
	NSW/ACT	95	5	94	6	96	4	96	4
	Vic	95	5	93	7	93	7	93	7
	Qld	96	4	92	8	94	6	94	6
	SA	96	4	94	6	95	5	94	6
	WA	92	8	94	6	96	4	96	4
	Tas	95	5	95	5	95	5	96	4
	NT	94	6	96	4	98	2	92	8
Major rural areas, without infrastructure	National	91	9	90	10	89	11	88	12
	NSW/ACT	89	11	88	12	91	9	89	11
	Vic	92	8	92	8	88	12	85	15
	Qld	91	9	89	11	89	11	88	12
	SA	90	10	92	8	90	10	90	10
	WA	94	6	93	7	85	15	92	8
	Tas	92	8	89	11	95	5	91	9
	NT	94	6	87	13	75	25	86	14
Major rural areas, with and without infrastructure	National	95	5	93	7	94	6	94	6
	NSW/ACT	94	6	93	7	95	5	95	5
	Vic	94	6	93	7	93	7	92	8
	Qld	96	4	91	9	93	7	93	7
	SA	95	5	94	6	95	5	94	6
	WA	93	7	94	6	96	4	95	5
	Tas	94	6	94	6	95	5	95	5
	NT	94	6	96	4	96	4	91	9
Minor rural areas, with infrastructure	National	93	7	91	9	93	7	93	7
	NSW/ACT	92	8	91	9	94	6	93	7
	Vic	92	8	93	7	91	9	92	8
	Qld	94	6	89	11	94	6	92	8
	SA	95	5	92	8	94	6	92	8
	WA	93	7	94	6	95	5	94	6
	Tas	94	6	92	8	92	8	95	5
	NT	88	12	92	8	96	4	100	0
Minor rural areas, without infrastructure	National	91	9	89	11	89	11	88	12
	NSW/ACT	91	9	89	11	90	10	88	12
	Vic	88	12	88	12	87	13	86	14
	Qld	93	7	87	13	88	12	89	11
	SA	92	8	91	9	89	11	90	10
	WA	94	6	91	9	91	9	89	11
	Tas	89	11	87	13	87	13	90	10
	NT	90	10	67	33	86	14	60	40 **
Minor rural areas, with and without infrastructure	National	93	7	91	9	92	8	92	8
	NSW/ACT	92	8	90	10	93	7	92	8
	Vic	91	9	92	8	90	10	91	9
	Qld	94	6	89	11	93	7	91	9
	SA	95	5	92	8	93	7	91	9
	WA	93	7	94	6	94	6	94	6
	Tas	92	8	91	9	91	9	94	6
	NT	88	12	88	12	95	5	94	6

TELSTRA PERFORMANCE INDICATORS—SUMMARY (Continued)

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

		March 04		June 04		September 04		December 04	
		met	not met	met	not met	met	not met	met	not met
Remote areas, * with infrastructure	National	91	9	92	8	95	5	90	10
	NSW/ACT	100	0	94	6	90	10	87	13
	Vic	100	0	100	0	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o
	Qld	88	12	89	11	96	4	83	17
	SA	100	0	96	4	87	13	100	0
	WA	94	6	95	5	95	5	96	4
	NT	88	12	90	10	93	7	93	7
Remote areas, * without infrastructure	National	90	10	91	9	90	10	90	10
	NSW/ACT	100	0	78	22	70	30	100	0
	Vic	100	0	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o
	Qld	90	10	93	7	88	12	88	12
	SA	87	13	75	25	100	0	100	0
	WA	98	2	98	2	95	5	94	6
	NT	86	14	91	9	91	9	88	12
Remote areas, * with and without infrastructure	National	91	9	91	9	93	7	90	10
	NSW/ACT	100	0	85	15	84	16	93	7
	Vic	100	0	100	0	n/o	n/o	n/o	n/o
	Qld	89	11	90	10	94	6	84	16
	SA	95	5	91	9	95	5	100	0
	WA	95	5	96	4	95	5	95	5
	NT	87	13	90	10	92	8	91	9

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

			March 04		June 04		September 04		December 04	
Infrastructure			met	not met	met	not met	met	not met	met	not met
In-place services	All areas		97	3	97	3	98	2	98	2
New services	All areas	with	92	8	92	8	92	8	92	8
		without	93	7	92	8	91	9	90	10
		with and without	92	8	92	8	92	8	92	8
	Urban	with	91	9	92	8	92	8	92	8
		without	93	7	92	8	91	9	90	10
		with and without	91	9	92	8	92	8	92	8
	Major rural	with	94	6	94	6	94	6	94	6
		without	93	7	92	8	91	9	90	10
		with and without	94	6	94	6	94	6	94	6
	Minor rural	with	93	7	93	7	92	8	92	8
		without	92	8	91	9	90	10	89	11
		with and without	93	7	92	8	92	8	92	8
	Remote	with	95	5	93	7	93	7	92	8
		without	93	7	92	8	91	9	91	9
		with and without	94	6	93	7	92	8	91	9

TELSTRA PERFORMANCE INDICATORS—SUMMARY (Continued)

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

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

* 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

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

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

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

TELSTRA PERFORMANCE INDICATORS—SUMMARY (Continued)

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

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

* '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

		March 04	June 04	September 04	December 04
Downtime (per cent)	National	7	7	6	7
	NSW/ACT	7	7	6	7
	Vic	6	6	6	6
	Qld	8	8	6	7
	SA/NT	7	8	8	7
	WA	9	9	7	7
	Tas	7	6	6	5
Average business hours* to clear a fault	National	14	14	14	15
	NSW/ACT	12	13	14	14
	Vic	11	15	15	15
	Qld	13	14	13	15
	SA/NT	22	13	12	14
	WA	17	15	13	15
	Tas	14	15	19	15
Percentage of faults cleared within:					
1 working day** in urban areas	National	91	85	91	90
2 working days** in rural areas	National	87	82	87	85
3 working days** in remote areas	National	65	71	84	78
Average trouble reports per payphone per month	National	0.3	0.3	0.4	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, November 2004—January 2005

Geographical area	Monthly percentage of services without a fault (1a)			Monthly percentage service availability (1b)		
	Nov	Dec	Jan	Nov	Dec	Jan
Adelaide City & Technology	99.25	99.12	99.20	99.96	99.94	99.95
Adelaide Greater Metro	99.16	99.09	99.15	99.94	99.93	99.95
Brisbane City	99.01	98.93	99.04	99.94	99.92	99.95
Brisbane City & Technology	99.56	99.81	99.67	99.97	99.99	99.98
Brisbane Northern	98.98	98.90	99.04	99.93	99.92	99.94
Brisbane Southern	98.72	98.56	98.96	99.91	99.89	99.94
Central Australia	99.36	99.22	99.31	99.96	99.94	99.94
Melbourne Bayside	99.05	99.03	99.34	99.94	99.94	99.96
Melbourne Central	99.18	99.22	99.33	99.95	99.95	99.96
Melbourne City & Ded. Services	99.75	99.80	99.77	99.99	99.99	99.99
Melbourne North	99.19	99.23	99.36	99.94	99.95	99.96
Melbourne South	99.13	99.09	99.23	99.94	99.94	99.95
Melbourne West	99.23	99.13	99.31	99.95	99.94	99.96
NSW Central Coast	98.74	98.33	98.71	99.93	99.88	99.91
NSW Greater Western	98.55	98.34	98.54	99.87	99.86	99.88
NSW Mid Coast	98.60	98.43	98.47	99.90	99.89	99.87
NSW New England	97.86	97.15	97.20	99.79	99.72	99.67
NSW Newcastle	98.94	98.91	99.06	99.93	99.94	99.94
NSW North Coast	98.56	98.67	98.79	99.88	99.91	99.91
NSW Riverina Murray	98.92	98.66	98.81	99.90	99.88	99.89
NSW South East	98.37	97.81	98.25	99.87	99.76	99.83
NT Top End	97.89	98.02	97.51	99.86	99.87	99.83
Perth North	99.37	99.39	99.46	99.97	99.96	99.97
Perth South	99.26	99.21	99.28	99.96	99.95	99.96
QLD Central	98.68	98.68	98.72	99.90	99.90	99.90
QLD Far North	99.06	98.57	98.50	99.92	99.88	99.88
QLD North	99.02	98.87	98.51	99.94	99.93	99.90
QLD South West	98.58	98.68	98.63	99.88	99.90	99.89
QLD Wide Bay	98.74	98.73	98.99	99.91	99.90	99.93
SA Country South	99.29	98.92	99.31	99.95	99.91	99.95
Sydney Canberra	99.22	99.02	99.14	99.94	99.94	99.94
Sydney Central	99.00	98.98	99.04	99.94	99.94	99.94
Sydney City & Technology	99.52	99.57	99.62	99.97	99.97	99.98
Sydney Eastern	99.19	99.13	99.27	99.95	99.95	99.95
Sydney North	99.15	99.18	99.24	99.94	99.94	99.94
Sydney Southern	99.14	99.08	99.07	99.94	99.94	99.94
Sydney West	98.78	98.78	98.72	99.91	99.91	99.90
Tasmania	99.25	99.21	99.24	99.95	99.95	99.95
VIC Central	98.77	98.68	98.99	99.90	99.88	99.91
VIC South East	98.95	98.67	99.00	99.90	99.88	99.92
VIC Western	99.16	98.92	99.19	99.93	99.92	99.93
WA Midlands	98.87	98.88	98.94	99.90	99.92	99.91
WA Northern	98.75	98.92	99.11	99.92	99.92	99.94
WA Southern	99.02	98.90	98.97	99.92	99.92	99.91
National	99.01	98.92	99.05	99.93	99.92	99.03

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, October–November 2004 to December–January 2005

Exchange service area	Field service area
BERRY SPRINGS	NT Top End
BOLGART	WA Midlands
DIAMOND SWAMP	NSW New England
ESSINGTON	NSW Greater Western
FITZGERALDS VALLEY	NSW Greater Western
HELENSBURGH	Sydney Southern
JOCELYN	NSW Greater Western
KOMUNGLA	NSW South East
MARDALE	QLD Wide Bay
MIRIAM VALE	QLD Wide Bay
MOLE RIVER	NSW New England
MOREE	NSW New England
NARRABRI	NSW New England
OAKDALE	NSW South East
SANDY FLAT	NSW New England
TINGHA	NSW New England
TINTENBAR	NSW North Coast
TOOLERN VALE	Melbourne West
WEROMBI	NSW Southeast
WOLLOMOMBI	NSW New England
WOY WOY	NSW Central Coast
WYONG	NSW Central Coast
YARRIE LAKE	NSW New England
YARROWYCK	NSW New England

NOTES

This is the 18th 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
CSP	Carriage service provider as defined in the <i>Telecommunications Act 1997</i>
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