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COMMUNICATIONS ALLIANCE PUBLISHES NEW FACT SHEETS DESIGNED TO IMPROVE THE WAY COMPLAINTS ARE HANDLED

Sydney, 27 September 2006 – Communications Alliance today announced it had published four new fact sheets addressing complaints processes and consumers' rights to information about telecommunications services.

Two of the fact sheets are aimed at communications service providers (CSPs) and VoIP providers, promoting best practice behaviour in relation to the way they handle customer complaints. They also remind CSPs and VoIP providers about their obligations in relation to the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (TIO).

In particular, the fact sheets counsel CSPs and VoIP providers about the most effective way to work with their customers and the TIO to resolve complaints. The fact sheets point out that the TIO regularly reports a high number of breaches of the Complaint Handling Code, and emphasises that dissatisfied customers should be informed about their right to escalate unresolved complaints to the TIO.

The third fact sheet provides a more detailed explanation of the Complaint Handling Code and sets out the complaint handling rules and timeframes for dealing with various types of complaints.

The fourth fact sheet is aimed at consumers, telling them about the type of information they are entitled to receive or request about their telecommunications service. It lists the information under the various categories that form the lifecycle of a customer relationship -- from the initial inquiry about a purchase, through the purchase process and until the relationship ends.

Communications Alliance CEO Anne Hurley said the rationale behind the fact sheets was to encourage best practice by service providers and, by doing so, improve customer satisfaction.

"Our discussions with the industry and the TIO have confirmed that many of the complaints about breaches of the Complaint Handling Code can be traced to lack of knowledge by service providers about the rules for handling customer complaints," Ms Hurley said.



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“We are also concerned that many consumers are unaware of the type of information they are entitled to receive or request about their telecommunications services. In each of these scenarios, lack of adequate knowledge appears to be the root cause of many problems.

“So Communications Alliance is attempting to fill that information void with easy-to-understand fact sheets that are readily available via our website.”

The Ombudsman, John Pinnock said: “The TIO is a strong supporter of Communications Alliance’s initiatives in consumer and industry awareness. The fact sheets are an important addition to this work”.

The facts sheets can be downloaded by clicking on www.commsalliance.com.au

About Communications Alliance

The Communications Alliance was formed in 2006 to provide a unified voice for the Australian communications industry and to lead it into the next generation of converging networks, technologies and services.

Although the Communications Alliance has its genesis in the merger of the Australian Communications Industry Forum (ACIF) and the Service Providers Association Inc (SPAN), it is a new organisation created specifically to drive the industry into the future with confidence, vitality and strength of purpose.

In pursuing its goals, the Communications Alliance offers a forum for the industry to make coherent and constructive contributions to policy development and debate.

By providing leadership on new trends and directions, the Communications Alliance fulfils a vital unifying role on behalf of the industry and its members, particularly in areas of competition, innovation and industry development.

The prime mission of the Communications Alliance is to promote the growth of the Australian communications industry and the protection of consumer interests by fostering the highest standards of business ethics and behaviour through industry self-governance.

For further information see www.commsalliance.com.au

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