

FILE NOTE

Legal and Professional Privilege Applies - Telecom Confidential

FILE: MR ALAN SMITH
FROM: ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~
SUBJECT: BILLING DISPUTE 1800 TELEPHONE SERVICE
DATE: 16 JANUARY, 1998

On 14 January, 1998, ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ and ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ of Telstra's Customer Response Unit met with Mr Smith to examine documentation in relation to his complaints lodged with the Minister's Office and the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman regarding his 1800 telephone service.

Mr Smith in these complaints had made general allegations with regard to overcharging of the 1800 telephone service, however, Telstra had not received any supporting documentation along with his complaints.

In telephone discussions with Mr Smith, I advised him that in order for Telstra to address his claims, documentation supporting his complaints would need to be forwarded to allow Telstra to fully investigate the matter.

Mr Smith raised concerns with regard to the matter and the Arbitration and I advised that I would be investigating any instances he put forward since the conclusion of the Arbitration. Mr Smith stated that he had evidence of instances that spanned through the Arbitration and that the problem was not addressed in the Arbitration and further that the same instances continued after the Arbitration.

I suggested that we meet so that Telstra could view the documents he was referring to and work at resolving the matter from there.

Meeting Notes 14 January, 1998**Present at Meeting**

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ - Telstra
~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ - Telstra

Alan Smith - Cape Bridgewater Holiday Camp
Ray Whitworth - Observer

Alan Smith explained that he had attempted to have this matter addressed in his Arbitration and via Austel and the Ministers office for quite some time. He believes that this issue was not addressed in his Arbitration although Telstra had given an undertaking to Austel in November, 1994.

I explained to Alan that it was my understanding that at the time Austel wrote to Telstra, the Arbitration was in process and that Telstra had written back to Austel and the Arbitrator that it believed the matter would be addressed in the Arbitration.

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I then explained to Alan that Telstra had replied to the letter from Austel dated 4 October, 1994 and to further letters from Austel on this matter dated 1 December, 1994 and 3 October, 1995 and in this provided a response to his complaints of charging discrepancies and short duration calls on the 1800 telephone number.

Mr Smith put forward two copies of the Lanes Resource Unit reports. One that had been forwarded to him as part of the Arbitration and one that had been obtained from Dr Hughes's office by mistake when he collected his Arbitration documents.

In what appeared to be a "Draft" of the Lanes report, a paragraph appears relating to Mr Smith's billing complaints, that an addendum report was to be provided at a later date otherwise the report is complete.

Mr Smith stated that the issued report did not include the addendum report nor did it make any reference to his 1800 complaints.

Further Mr Smith produced various printouts of CCAS data in comparison with his Telstra accounts. In many instances the calls add up however, in some cases there appeared to be differences in the duration of the call times.

Mr Smith also provided Telstra accounts that showed an overlap in the time of calls.

Mr Smith stated that there were also discrepancies in details taken by the Commonwealth Ombudsman. He advised that he had asked the Commonwealth Ombudsman to only use the 1800 telephone number when contacting Mr Smith. In the Assessment Documentation for Mr Smith's claim for compensation for FOI matters, Mr Smith states that there is a large discrepancy between the number of calls listed by the CO as being made to Mr Smith and the number of calls he had been charged for on the 1800 account.

I note that the examples given by Mr Smith at the meeting spanned the period of the Arbitration and after the conclusion of the Arbitration.

I advised that Telstra had not seen copies of his examples and had not been able to clearly respond to his complaints without being able to examine the documentation he had put forward at the meeting.

Mr Smith advised that he had provided all details to the TIO office, I responded that we may not have seen all the documentation he had put forward and that the TIO at this point had not raised a formal dispute or complaint regarding the matter.

I advised Mr Smith that I would seek copies of any additional information that they may have with regard to his complaint.

Mr Smith advised that he would provide me copies of all documentation that he had with regard to the 1800 number and copies of the documentation he had produced at the meeting. Mr Smith advised that he would provide this material to me during the week beginning 19 January, 1998.

I advised that once Telstra had received the information, further investigation could be carried out in the matter.

Mr Smith again enquired about the matter of the Arbitration. I again advised that I would be examining the documents with regard to complaints after the Arbitration, and that a further response with regard to the Arbitration would be provided.