

Call For Justice
Evidence File 1-A to 10

Another internal Telstra document notes "As a result of the investigations into difficult customer complaints and associated reports it has become apparent that the present RVA for incorrect numbers requires revision". This memo refers in particular to the message "The number you have called is not connected or has been changed. Please check the number before calling again. You have not been charged for this call." This confirms Telstra's acknowledgement that serious faults existed, particularly since the author of this memo goes on to say "....this message tends to give the caller the impression that the business they are calling has ceased trading, and they should try another trader."

Internal Memo

Telecom
AUSTRALIA

To: [REDACTED]
From: [REDACTED]
Subject: Change to Network RVA
File: [REDACTED]
Date: 3 November 1993
Dist: [REDACTED] Don Piel

Commercial
Customer Service Planning and
Development
13th Floor
40 Cast Street
Brisbane Qld 4000
Australia
Telephone 07 857 8672
Message Mail
Facsimile 07 821 7274

Nick,

As a result of the investigations into difficult customer complaints and associated reports, it has become apparent that the present Recorded Voice Announcement (RVA) for incorrect numbers requires revision. The RVA in question is worded:

"The number you have called is not connected or has been changed. Please check the number before calling again. You have not been charged for this call"

The problem arises when equipment or customer faults cause customers who are calling legitimate numbers to be connected to this message. In a business environment, especially in these times, this message tends to give the caller the impression that the business they are calling has ceased trading, and they should try another trader.

What is required is a less conclusive set of words that make allowances for the fact the customers are connected to these messages when in fact the required number is operational. Once we have a set of words that are agreed to be all sections of the corporation, and market tested, Network Products will implement the new RVA in association with providing reference numbers on all such messages. These reference numbers will aid in fault location.

The sample message is indicative of what I feel the flavor of the new RVA should be, and is not meant to be the finished article.

"Telecom regrets that we have been unable to connect this call. Please check the number before calling again. The following reference number should be noted and reported to Telecom should the difficulty continue. Reference 142"

This needs to be implemented in the near future to reduce customer complaints, aid fault finding and reduce rework. Your immediate attention would be appreciated.

Regards
[REDACTED]

C00757

Anyone who uses a telephone has at some time reached a recorded voice announcing "The number you are calling is disconnected" or something similar. Within the telecommunications industry these messages are referred to as RVAs or Recorded Voice Announcements (refer Glossary). Among the multitude of FOI documents that I received in 1994 was a copy of a Telstra internal e-mail dated 26/9/93, which refers to the need to "have a very basic review of all our RVA messages and how they are applied." This e-mail goes on to say "... I am sure when we start to scratch around we will find a host of network circumstances where inappropriate RVAs are going to line." Obviously Telstra were aware of RVA problems long before I experienced them.

[Handwritten signature] 73

Holmes, Jim

From: DPinel
To: EBlake
Cc: DPinel; AHumrich; JHolmes
Subject: RVA Messages
Date: Sunday, 26 September, 1993 2:12PM

Ed,

We need to have a very basic review of all our RVA messages and how they are applied. At the moment, a customer who dials a legitimate number which is redirected to a non-existent number gets a "the number you have dialed is incorrect or has been disconnected" message. This is patently wrong and whilst the "old school" continues to tell me this is all the customer's fault, it is clearly unacceptable. I have only quoted one common example - I am sure when we start to scratch around we will find a host of network circumstances where inappropriate RVAs are going to line.

Can you please have someone identify the current network RVAs and where they are applied. A review of these could identify some that are better replaced with redirection to an operator for assistance, some where we should repeat the number dialed to the A party, some where the words should be changed for clarity and accuracy and some where the conditions serviced by a single RVA need to be split to a number of varying options.

On a related point, I think we need to review busy and congestion tones and consider replacing with a voice message. At the moment, many customers cannot readily differentiate the tones (I have trouble myself) and this may be causing some unnecessary problems. We already put a voice announcement on congestion in the Trunk network so maybe a similar approach to the junction and local networks is appropriate.

A03544

Don

L-B

Faye & Alan
Separate October 1989

1174

57267

Alan Smith

Alan Smith rang 11/12/91 re service

He calls are receiving engaged signal when
its not busy two calls from calling word
PM 14/10/91

this has been a continuing problem and
he is losing a lot of business

I said it appears from the fault history
that the problem may be in the exch
and that the next RCM 21/8 would
solve these problems but that I would
check this out with the techs

I also said we would have a look
at the service now to try and get
it working correctly until cutover

reports:

The service was fully upgraded through STDs
and phone + tone ringer replaced.

They are not positive on causes. (specific faults
scattered are noted on leopard) Extensive
tests on the STD have been done and
no fault found

elms put on a couple of months ago
show no fault

there are only five lines portland - cape/bng
if all are busy caller gets cong tone

14/8 7:30 - 8 pm (5 busy)
8 - 8:30 pm (4 busy)

RCM will fix this problem.

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Postal Address
PO Box 356
Glen Waverley 3150

1 September 1992

Mr Alan Smith
Cape Bridgewater Holiday Camp
RMB 4408
CAPE BRIDGEWATER 3306

Dear Alan

We have not had the pleasure of meeting. However I have been briefed on the matters relating to the standard of your telephone service and recent communications between Telecom and yourself. Let me first assure you that we in Telecom are committed to ensure that the service provided to all customers is of the highest possible standard.

I understand that since our recent tests on your service were completed you or your representative met with senior Telecom managers from our National and Corporate offices. I also understand that at that meeting you expressed concerns that your service was not operating at required levels of performance and sought an undertaking that action would be taken to rectify this situation.

Whilst our recent tests indicate that your service is now performing to normal network standards, I am initiating a further detailed study of all the elements of your service and the tests which have been conducted. The aim of this study is to confirm the standard of service you currently receive and to check that there are in fact no ongoing problems. This testing could also involve an additional check of the communications equipment at your premises, if you agree. I anticipate that this study will be completed by early October and I will be happy to discuss the results with you then, should you so desire. Should this investigation identify any faults in the Telecom component of your service they will be rectified in accordance with normal practice.

Let me close by assuring you that I am personally committed to resolving this matter and I am available at any time to discuss your concerns and explore opportunities to resolve our differences. I can be contacted on (03) 550 7500, should you wish to raise any further matters with me.

Rosanne Pittard
Rosanne Pittard
General Manager
Telecom Commercial Vic/Tas

ID: RP010902



Telecom Australia

01:

Telecom Commercial
540 Springvale Rd
Glen Waverley 3150

Postal Address
PO Box 356
Glen Waverley 3150

Tel: (03) 550 7330
Fax: (03) 562 1926

18 September 1992

Mr Alan Smith
Cape Bridgewater Holiday Camp
RMB 4408
CAPE BRIDGEWATER 3304

Dear Mr Smith

Thank you for your letter of 10 September 1992 regarding the quality of your telephone service at Cape Bridgewater.

May we assure you that Telecom is committed to providing a quality service for all our customers and this commitment is supported by a technical organisation capable of responding quickly and efficiently to a service difficulty should there be a need.

We believe that the quality of your telephone service can be guaranteed and although it would be impossible to suggest that there would never be a service problem we could see no reason why this should be a factor in your business endeavours.

Should you still be concerned about the ability of Telecom to provide a reliable service may we offer the services of our Area Manager, Mr Mark Ross (telephone: (053) 370 211) of myself (telephone: (03) 550 7330) as a contact should you wish to discuss any current or future issues.

Yours sincerely

Bob Beard
Service Manager
Telecom Commercial Vic/Tas

ID: BB180901



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Olympic team 1992

Australian and Overseas
Telecommunications Corporation
Limited

A.C.N. 051 775 556

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To: Manager
Warrnambool COG
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Pair Gains Support

Subject: Portland to Cape
Bridgewater RCM System.

File: XS132.

Date: 12th July 1993.

National Switching Support
(Melb)

9th Floor
26 Coleridge St
Melbourne 3000
Australia

C.C. Manager Network Investigations Att. D. Stockdale
Manager Commercial Network Support Att. R. Morris.

PORTLAND - CAPE BRIDGEWATER RCM SYSTEM.

At the request of [REDACTED] Manager, Warrnambool COG. (CPE), NSS-Melbourne, Pair Gain Support Section, visited Portland exchange on 2nd March '93, to investigate problems reported on the Portland - Cape Bridgewater RCM system.

Initial reports were of a vocal customer at Cape Bridgewater complaining of VF cut-offs in one direction. The customer had been transferred off system 1, onto systems 2 and 3 on the 24th February '93, and had experienced no further problems. Investigations revealed that system 1 was running a large number of degraded minutes (DM) and errored seconds (ES) in the Portland to Cape Bridgewater direction, these errors could have caused the VF cut-off problem.

Initial error counter readings:-

Portland to Cape Bridgewater direction:-

	System 1	System 2	System 3
SES	0	0	0
DM	45993	3342	2
ES	65535	65535	87

Cape Bridgewater to Portland direction:-

	System 1	System 2	System 3
SES	0	0	0
DM	1	1	0
ES	246	751	23

At this stage we had no idea over what period of time these errors had accumulated.

Attempts to test the inground repeaters using the "trios" system were unsuccessful as the strapping records could not be located.

Other faults identified with the Cape Bridgewater installation were:-

-the presence of 500Hz. noise on all customer lines at -58 dBm causing minor noise problems.

M34204

-
- cable ducts into both the cross connect cabinet and the concrete hut were sealed allowing the ingress of moisture, which could affect the error counts detailed above. U, U, i
 - the alarm system on all three RCM systems had not been programmed. This would have prevented any local alarms being extended back to Portland.

The bearer performance was monitored overnight and revealed that system 1, in the Portland to Cape Bridgewater direction, accumulated approximately 450 DM's and 43500ES's while systems 2 and 3 recorded no errors in either direction.

→ A problem with the installation of the enhanced lightning protection modules in the IDS block at Cape Bridgewater was discovered. After this problem was rectified and the bearer monitored overnight, no DM's or ES's were recorded. II


All the SE boards used in the Portland - Cape Bridgewater RCM system have now been modified to eliminate the 500Hz. noise problem. SE boards installed in the Portland - Alcoa RCM system were also modified to eliminate a 500Hz. noise problem on cut over.

The problem of sealing the cable ducts has since been rectified by the local lines staff.

NSS-Melbourne has continued to monitor the Portland - Cape Bridgewater bearers since the 3rd March '93. In the period from the 3rd March '93, to the 17th March '93, the errors on all three bearers have been minimal.

ie:- Portland to Cape Bridgewater direction:- system 1, 4 ES
- system 2, 3 ES
- system 3, 0 ES

Cape Bridgewater to Portland direction:- system 1, 1 ES
- system 2, 1 ES
- system 3, 3 ES


for Supervising Engineer, National Switching Support - Melbourne.

M34205

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SERVICE DIFFICULTIES

- Fault history - registered on 17/05
- Check with Peter post 12/16
- Cutover to RCM when? - Likely length of MELN probe

Chris Dobby

- Likely $\%$ via MELN path
- Destination that go via MELN every one in vic.

Mich Ross 310211

- Compensation taking? reimbursement

obstacles his mark?

... identified track.
Mich Ross spoke with Bruce Walker
and Guy in QM, I was Ken Downer
regal support services.
He sent receipts for about 2/00s
more only when the ones came
to the name of Ross & wife,
I was asked. Mark regarding



Telecom Australia

Minute

File 0607921 Subject Problems with Cape Bridgewater Customer
055 267267
Phone (053) 334411 From MIKE ROBINS 95/0603-01
To Graeme Davies 75

Graeme,

It is my understanding of the sequence of events:-

Aug 91 - Cutover from RAX to RCM when? - approx 7/8 mths.
50% maximum

- Customer Complaints re N.R.R.

16/3/92 - Customer Complaints can't be called

17/3/92 - Problem found at MEL U which would have caused any customer parenting or trunking through MEL U (where digital trunking was used) to have a call failure Customer 053 267267 would not have been able to be rung.

The trunking arrangements for Vic and Interstate is such that MEL U is only one of these major trunk exchanges, other's are Bendigo, MEL Q, Ballarat, Morwell or Moolap (Geelong). If the call was switched via any of these other exchanges, it would have been successful.

The problem does not appear, as first thought, to be a data production error, rather a fault condition quite specific in nature, causing a problem to this code only.

Telecom Secret

C04006

Issues Involved During the Resolution - Factors Considered

1. Alan requested \$150k
2. Chances of legal action - high
3. Chances of media action - 100%
4. Poor performance of Telecom:
 - historically
 - March ^{20th} problem
 - Local Portland problem fixed in October
 - wiring and cabling issues
 - RVA on congestion
5. Slow resolution of past problems both technical and claims
6. COT involvement:
 - chances of class action
 - chances of mass media action
 - chances of membership growth
 - Adelaide Pizza
 - Mt Gambia
 - Portland
7. Evidence of problems:
 - Many letters stating the problem of not getting through to Alan Smith
 - People prepared to make statements of problems
 - Claims that Alan had rung himself from his Goldphone and not got through
 - Austel and Ombudsman both had trouble getting through
 - Many claims which might be difficult to substantiate in court but would be credible in the media
 - Viability of business for the future - increased bookings since the service Period of time
8. Costs incurred:
 - Additional phone calls to chase up business - about \$1000
 - Legal costs - about \$1000
 - Camps prepared but not run
 - Advertising
 - Time
9. Alan's time and other consequential costs - health, stress, etc

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C04007

10. Loss of business:
- Camps lost because party could not contact Alan (evidence in letters - \$10,000 loss of profit)
 - Extrapolating - about \$40,000 over a period
11. Loss of partnership:
- Alan claims \$100,000 loss because he had an opportunity to sell a share in his business but this opportunity was lost because the potential partner stated he could not contact Alan Smith initially and lost faith in the telephone service available - hence withdrew his offer
12. Possible legal costs:
- If Alan took legal action Telecom would incur significant legal costs to defend it - about ?
 - If Telecom lost, we could also incur Alan Smith's costs
 - Estimated what possible bill?
13. Inquiry costs - both Austel and Ombudsman's Office has been actively involved. Enquiries are ongoing. Cost of ^{saving} ? - about
14. Cost of arbitration - Mr Smith wanted to use an independent arbitrator to resolve the dispute - cost in a case in Sydney \$25k
15. Management time - I have spoken to Alan Smith regularly (daily) over a period. I began making appointments for when I would ring him - he nearly always rings me prior to the call. When I did not ring him daily (even if I was not scheduled to) he wrote to Frank Blount and Doug Campbell or both. He had regularly rung Doug Campbell's office (Judy Lanstrom) several times a week and Austel and others in Telecom. This was despite my setting up a regular contact point (Mark Ross in Ballarat) for him and a specialist diagnostic technical manager (Bruce Pendlebury). Mark spoke with Alan Smith once a week at least. Bruce averaged 5-6 calls a week to and from Alan Smith. He also contacted the Area Manager, Don Lucas, on a regular basis. Don also visited Alan Smith at Cape Bridgewater. This was going to continue forever if all matters were not resolved.
16. Legal position - Mr Smith's service problems were network related and spanned a period of 3-4 years. Hence Telecom's position of legal liability was covered by a number of different acts and regulations. The immunity claimed has never been tested in court and the current immunity from paying loss of business compensation depends upon Section 8 of the BCS Tariffs lodged with Austel. This is probably the least clear of the immunities. In my opinion Alan Smith's case was not a good one to test Section 8 for any previous immunities - given his

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C04008

evidence and claims. I do not believe it would be in Telecom's interest to have this case go to court.

Overall, Mr Smith's telephone service had suffered from poor grade of network performance over a period of several years; with some difficulty to detect exchange problems in the last 8 months.

In the media Telecom would not have looked good at a time when we are working hard to improve general customer perceptions.

In a legal battle, Telecom's chance of winning would have to be about 50/50. The bad publicity for Telecom would have been significant.

In my view were Alan Smith to win a legal battle he could have been awarded payment as high as \$40,000. If we went to arbitration a payout of the order of \$80,000 would not be out of the question; with costs of setting up the arbitration extra.

In the interests of expediency and Commercial judgement I considered it better to reach a commercial settlement.

Mr Smith's communication arrangement is questionable:

- other ways eg second line, fax, 008, etc of contacting him not set up
- use of answering machine improper or incorrect
- answering arrangements when Mr Smith was not there *not satisfactory*
- Telecom's defence in some doubt on causality

There are few personal notes recorded at the time of settlement. Alan Smith did not appear to present both substantiation of his claim.

Norm Pittard

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On 3th October I complained of four calls that had dropped out, at 1.20, 1.40, 2.00 and 3.00 and a single time when I had answered the phone to find a dead line. The Telstra technicians found, as they had in many instances before, no faults that they could detect.

INCOMING ANSWERED
 END SEIZURE 13:40:40
 CONVERS TIME: 000675
 SEIZURE : 13:29:25 }
 DATE : 1992-10-13 }
 NUMBER OF RINGS: 08 }
 RINGING: 13:29:13 }
 13:40:40 H-ON: 000001
 13:29:25 H-OFF: 000001
 13:29:23 R
 13:29:22 R
 13:29:20 R
 13:29:19 R
 13:29:17 R
 13:29:16 R
 13:29:14 R
 13:29:13 R

INCOMING ANSWERED
 END SEIZURE 15:04:03
 CONVERS TIME: 000172
 SEIZURE : 15:01:11 }
 DATE : 1992-10-13 }
 NUMBER OF RINGS: 14 }
 RINGING: 15:00:50 }
 15:04:03 H-ON: 000001
 15:01:11 H-OFF: 000001
 15:01:09 R
 15:01:08 R
 15:01:06 R
 15:01:05 R
 15:01:03 R
 15:01:02 R
 15:01:00 R
 15:00:59 R
 15:00:57 R
 15:00:56 R
 15:00:54 R
 15:00:53 R
 15:00:51 R
 15:00:50 R

I informed [REDACTED]
 03 [REDACTED] of this on 15-10-92



MR Smith has complained
 that on the 13-10-92 he
 received incoming calls

at 1.20 ✓
 1.40 ✓
 2.00 ✓
 3.00 ✓

and no one was there when he
 answered the calls. - (He drops on
 or answer?)

We had the Elnis disconnected at the
 RCM and was installing it at MR Smith's
 house. The CCAS. showed no evidence of above

Facsimile



To Ross Anderson

Network Products
National Facsimile Support Centre
23 rd Floor 242 Exhibition St
Melbourne, 3000

Company Telecom Portland

Australia
Telephone 03 634 6993
Facsimile 03 640 0997

Facsimile 055 236 56

From Alan Barrow
P.T.T.O.1

Subject COT Case

K01489

Date 29 October 1993

Ross,

The following pages are copies of my fax machines journal and the protocol printouts of failed calls.

On the date of 28-OCT-93 we were trying to create a line failure condition that would re-produce the same error on the transmitting machine and no record on the receiving Mitsubishi machine (055 267 230). The reason for this was to show that a sending fax machine could get to the point of transmitting a page to the Mitsubishi fax machine without the Mitsubishi machine having any record of the call.

The COT case call in question was the 27-10-93 at 10:46 on the journal (it is suspected that the clock in this machine is approx ^{45-46 MIN} 1 Hour and 15 minutes in error). The duration of the transmitting machine page of 2:21 minutes suggests that the call failed at the end of the page, possibly when requesting a reply from the receiving end. The presence of the ID in the journal of "055 267230" indicates the call was connected to the Mitsubishi fax machine in question. The receiving Machine has no matching entry in its journal for this call.

A call was placed to 055 267230 and connectivity terminated at the beginning of the page but this resulted in an error of NG in the journal along with the ID of the calling fax machine. The only way to reproduce the conditions experienced above was to interrupt the power on the receiving Mitsubishi fax machine. This would result in an entry in the transmitting machine and no entry whatsoever in the receiving Mistubishi machine.

During testing the Mitsubishi fax machine, some alarming patterns of behaviour were noted, these affecting both transmission and reception. Even on calls that were not tampered with the fax machine displayed signs of locking up and behaving in a manner not in accordance with the relevant CCITT Group 3 fax rules. A half A4 page being transmitted from this machine resulted in a blank piece of paper 4cm long. the relevant protocol printout in sample #2 shows that the machine sent the correct protocol at the end of the page. Even if the page was sent upside down the time and date and company name should have still appeared on the top of the page, it wasn't. During a received call the machine failed to respond at the end of the page even though it had received the entire page (sample #3). The Mitsubishi fax machine remained in the locked up state for a further 2 minutes after the call had terminated, eventually advancing the page out of the machine.

Regards
Alan Barrow

