

15 November 1995

Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman
TIO Limited
321 Exhibition St
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Dear Sir,

**RE : Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman - Resource Unit
Fast Track Arbitration - Alan Smith**

We refer to your letter dated 9 November 1995 with the attached facsimile from Mr Alan Smith dated 8 November 1995, and your recent conversations with Ms [redacted] of this office concerning the above completed arbitration.

You have asked us to provide clarification of the issue raised by Mr Smith relating to the deletion of references to a potential addendum on possible discrepancies in Smith's Telecom bills in the final Technical Evaluation Report. We have spoken to [redacted] Telecommunications Pty Ltd ("Telecom"), who acted as Technical Consultants to the Resource Unit in the above Arbitration, and they have provided the following comments in relation to the issue raised by Mr Smith:

"At a late stage of the Arbitration process, at the time of preparation of the Technical Evaluation Report, there was discussion about billing issues which had been raised by Mr Smith. A draft of the Technical Evaluation Report therefore included reference to the billing matters, which it was thought might require further work beyond the time of issue of the Report.

The primary matter concerned Mr Smith's bills for outgoing calls from Cape Bridgewater. Mr Smith had observed that there was a discrepancy between the call durations of STD calls on his bills and the durations shown by Telecom's call recording equipment connected to Mr Smith's line (in the Customer Access Network).

Discussions were held with Telecom (Mr [redacted]) in Mr Smith's presence during the visit to Cape Bridgewater in April 1995, which provided the following information:

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- For outgoing calls on a normal customer exchange line, the caller notes the answer of the called party by cessation of the ring tone and the answering voice. However, there is no corresponding physical (electrical) signal on the caller's line (CAN side of the exchange) for the call recording equipment to register that an answer has occurred. Consequently, timing of the call recording equipment is configured to allow a fixed time to answer (say 30 seconds) from the time the caller lifts the handset, or from the completion of dialling, until it assumes that answer has taken place. Thus the overall measured duration of the call from lifting to replacement of the handset is reduced by this fixed amount to give the (assumed) nominal conversation time.
- Billing on the other hand is based on signals recorded at the caller's exchange, including a physical signal to indicate called party answer. Thus the billing duration is precise.
- At an individual call level, there will therefore be discrepancies between the two sets of call duration records except where the actual and assumed times to answer are the same.
- Lanes considered and accepted this technical explanation from Telecom as plausible, and believe Mr Smith also understood and accepted it. Consequently, as the discussion appeared to have resolved this matter, it was not included in the formal Technical Evaluation Report.

A second matter involved 008 calls. Again, this matter was current at a late stage (April 1995) of the Arbitration process. This matter concerned possible overlap in the records of 008 calls made to Mr Smith, and for which he was billed. However, [redacted] and [redacted] Group Inc concluded that the level of disruption to Mr Smith's overall service was not clear, and that it was unlikely that further work would clarify the matter to the extent that it would have a measurable effect on the Arbitrator's determination. The matter was discussed in Section 2.23 of the Technical Evaluation Report, and an assessment of "Indeterminate" was reached.

↓ As no further progress was likely to be made on these matters, the formal version of the Technical Evaluation Report did not leave the billing issue open."

I trust that the above advice from [redacted] Telecommunications clarifies the issue raised by Mr Smith regarding the Resource Unit's Technical Evaluation Report.

If you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact the writer or Ms
Hodgkinson on (03) 7855.

Yours faithfully,

~~_____~~
~~_____~~
~~_____~~
Project Manager
Associate Director

cc
Mr ~~_____~~ Telecommunications Pty Ltd
Mr ~~_____~~ Group Inc