

MEDIA STATEMENT

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Ombudsman welcomes small business telecommunications dispute team

The Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman, Kate Carnell today welcomed the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman's (TIO) announcement that it will form a Small Business Team.

"From 1 April 2019, small businesses who are in dispute with their telephone, mobile or internet services provider will have a specific team to contact," Ms Carnell said.

"Connectivity is key to a business' success. With 95% of small businesses online, a disruption or complete lack of connection can affect their sales, marketing, ordering and invoicing processes.

"It's not acceptable for small businesses to lose customers due to problems with phone or internet connections, which is why this new small business team within TIO is needed.

"For example, we recently helped a Canberra-based chemist whose phone line had been disconnected for 59 days. The telecommunications provider had cut the lines while redirecting to the NBN. The chemist then had their fax line disconnected which caused, among other issues, critical concerns regarding doctors being unable to fax prescriptions for palliative care medication.

"Once my Assistance team stepped in, the telecommunications provider reconnected both the phone and fax lines.

"We will continue to support measures that assist small businesses to maintain and grow their digital connectivity," Ms Carnell said.

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