

Name and/or organisation (if applicable):

Chorus

What do you think is currently working well?:

The Telecommunications Dispute Resolution Scheme (TDRS) is working well for industry participants and end-consumers and is a free service for end-consumers. It is a service available for parties to take their unresolved disputes to (i.e. they may be able to resolve disputes through 'business as usual' means in the first instance), and where only a small percentage of disputes require adjudication. Chorus is a wholesale TDRS member, which reflects the nature of our relationship with the end-consumer who has the direct contractual relationship with their retail service provider (RSP). This means we are involved in TDRS lodged disputes by request, i.e. any party can request that Chorus be party to a dispute where relevant. To illustrate the scale of disputes we're involved in, there were approximately 2,800 complaints and enquiries for the year ending June 2020. Of those complaints and enquiries, Chorus was involved in 192 cases (i.e. where the RSP or the TDRS on behalf of the consumer requests Chorus' involvement), where only 4 went to adjudication. In other words, approximately 2% of TDRS disputes involving Chorus escalate to adjudication (i.e. where a resolution cannot otherwise be reached). This demonstrates that the TDRS is effective at resolving disputes outside of adjudication, which is good for consumers as its likely they would prefer proceedings to be resolved as quickly as possible and outside of formal adjudication proceedings.

What do you think could be improved and how?:

The TDRS could be improved by increasing consumer accessibility and awareness. We discuss each in below. 1. Improving consumer accessibility In principle, all consumers should have the right to escalate complaints to the TDRS. Generally, only consumers with RSPs that are TDRS members can access the TDRS for assistance unless there's a complaint relating to the 111 Code or the Copper Withdrawal Code (in which case consumers with a dispute related to either Code can access the TDRS for those specific complaints). It should be noted that where Chorus is involved in disputes, we work with the relevant RSP regardless of whether they're a member to the TDRS or not. Although there are other dispute resolution channels (such as the disputes tribunal) for non-TDRS RSPs and their customers, access to these alternatives are costly, intimidating and time consuming for consumers – and therefore, not as accessible as the TDRS. 2. Increasing consumer awareness We support improving awareness for consumers and consider there are low cost ways to increase awareness. For example, through more proactive engagement by RSPs with their customers. We would also support initiatives to promote awareness through relevant and appropriate channels, such as consumer advocacy groups, the Commerce Commission and / or Consumer NZ.

Are there any other ways you think the TDRS could be improved for the benefit of consumers? See above.

Others comments: N/A

Confidential information: Not confidential