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Internet woes 'a wakeup call'

EXCLUSIVE
ANTHONY GALLOWAY

QUEENSLANDERS unsure about where to take their phone and internet problems are turning to the community legal sector to complain.

Almost half of all community legal workers hear telecommunications complaints every week, a new report by the industry's Ombudsman will reveal today.

At the same time, the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman has been forced to increase staff by more than a third over the past two years to cope with the rising complaints.

Grievances about the National Broadband Network more than doubled in Queensland last year, while overall complaints rose by almost half.

"It's a wakeup call for the industry," Ombudsman Judi

Jones said.

"We shouldn't need to continually employ more staff."

The release of today's report follows a *Courier-Mail* revelation that Queensland is

receiving one of the lowest rollouts of the superior all-fibre NBN.

The report surveyed 137 Queensland community legal sector workers and found:

- The majority said their clients didn't know how to complain about their phone and internet issues;
- Almost half of their clients

said they experienced phone and internet service problems every week; and

- The most common issue was increasing debt and an inability to pay for a service.

Ms Jones said it was crucial for people to try to resolve their issues with their service provider first. "If the complaint

is unresolved, they should then

go to the Ombudsman. We are free and accessible," she said.

There were 28,988 complaints to the Ombudsman in Queensland in 2016-17, an increase of 42.7 per cent on the previous year.

James Farrell, director of Community Legal Centres Queensland, said: "Don't feel you're on your own."