

NATIONAL QUEENSLAND PHONES

## Queenslanders desperate for help in not being able to pay phone bills

By Felicity Caldwell  
8 March 2018 — 8:11pm

Desperate Queenslanders are reaching out for help after struggling to pay mounting phone and internet bills.

More than 137 lawyers, social workers, financial counsellors, NGO workers and professionals were surveyed as part of a report to be released by the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman and Community Legal Centres Queensland on Friday.

[A](#) [A](#)



Almost half of Queensland's community legal sector workers hear about phone and internet issues every week.

The most common phone or internet issues reported by clients were not having enough money to pay for bills, increasing debt, legal action for debt recovery, misunderstanding their contract, late bill payment, overselling, problems moving house and language barriers.

As a result, some clients suffered mental health issues, unemployment, housing issues, had services shut off, acquired a poor credit rating or had legal problems.

Many people did not know they could complain about their service or to whom to complain.

Payment plans, financial education and restrictions on overselling plans were listed as the top ways to help people avoid problems with phone or internet companies.

Almost half of workers in the community legal sector reported hearing from clients with a phone or internet problem every week.

More than half said their clients did not know how to complain about problems with their phone or internet service.

The most common help given to clients was advocacy, referrals to other professionals or organisations and communicating with third parties.

Community Legal Centres Queensland director James Farrell said phones and the internet were central to people's lives.

"The message from Queensland's community legal sector workers is, don't feel like you're on your own," he said.

"In tough times, mounting problems have a domino effect, one problem leads to another, and on to another.

"Our members and wider professionals in the field can offer support and advocate on your behalf."

In 2016-17, 28,988 residential and small business customers contacted the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman with a problem with their phone or internet service.

That was a 42.7 per cent increase in complaints from 2015-16.

Customers are advised to try to resolve their complaint with their phone or internet provider first.

If that fails, they can contact the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman by visiting [www.tio.com.au](http://www.tio.com.au) or call 1800 062 058.

[License this article](#)

PHONES NBN



Felicity Caldwell is state political reporter at the Brisbane Times

**MORNING & AFTERNOON NEWSLETTER**  
Delivered Mon–Fri.

Your email address

SIGN UP

By signing up you accept our [privacy policy](#) and [conditions of use](#)

## JOBS BY

**Graduate Software Engineer ...**  
Cognizant  
Melbourne, Melbourne Region

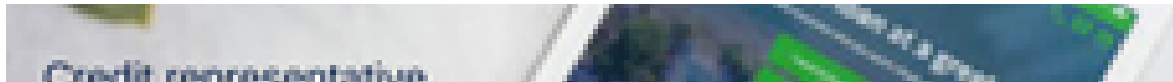
**Data Migration / Test Lead**  
Cognizant  
Melbourne CBD, Melbourne

**Sr Test Analyst – Flexcab**  
Cognizant  
Melbourne CBD, Melbourne



**Every In Everywhere**

## COMPARE & SAVE



Found your new home?  
Let us help you find your new home loan

GET STARTED

### OUR SITES

The Sydney Morning Herald  
The Age  
Brisbane Times  
The Canberra Times  
WA Today  
The Australian Financial Review  
Domain  
Traveller  
Good Food  
Executive Style  
The Store by Fairfax  
Drive  
Adzuna  
RSVP  
Essential Baby  
Weatherzone

### CLASSIFIEDS

Tributes

[Celebrations](#)  
[Place your ad](#)  
[Commercial Real Estate](#)  
[Oneflare](#)  
[Nabo](#)

---

THE AGE

[Contact & support](#)  
[Advertise with us](#)  
[Newsletters](#)  
[Accessibility guide](#)  
[Sitemap](#)

---

PRODUCTS & SERVICES

[Subscription packages](#)  
[Subscriber benefits](#)  
[My account](#)  
[Subscriptions FAQs](#)  
[Today's Paper](#)

---

FAIRFAX MEDIA

[Photo sales](#)  
[Purchase front pages](#)  
[Fairfax syndication](#)  
[Fairfax events](#)  
[Fairfax careers](#)  
[Conditions of use](#)  
[Privacy policy](#)  
[Press Council](#)