

# Tangerine Telecom Investigation Report

## Findings

The ACMA finds that Tangerine Telecom Pty Ltd (ACN 602 814 791) (**Tangerine Telecom**) contravened paragraph 7(1)(a) of the *Telecommunications (Consumer Complaints Handling) Industry Standard 2018* (the **Complaints Standard**) on 1 August 2018 by failing to establish a complaints handling process that includes the minimum requirements for consumer complaints handling.

The ACMA also finds that Tangerine Telecom contravened subsection 128(1) of the *Telecommunications Act 1997* (the **Act**) by failing to comply with an industry standard determined under subsection 125AA(1) of the Act on 1 August 2018.

## Background

In a letter dated 4 September 2018, the ACMA advised Tangerine Telecom that it was investigating Tangerine Telecom's compliance with sections 8, 9 and 10 of the Complaints Standard (the **minimum requirements for consumer complaints handling**).

That same letter advised:

- that ACMA staff had assessed the complaints handling process that was available on Tangerine Telecom's website on 1 August 2018 (the **CHP**); and
- the ACMA's preliminary findings in relation to Tangerine Telecom's compliance with the minimum requirements for consumer complaints handling.

Tangerine Telecom provided submissions on 6 September 2018 in response to those preliminary views of ACMA staff (**response**).

For the purposes of this investigation, the ACMA considers the CHP is a Complaints Handling Policy for the purposes of the Complaints Standard.

Tangerine Telecom did not dispute the preliminary findings in its response but did provide an updated CHP. The revised CHP is not the subject of the findings.

## Reasons

The table below sets out the ACMA's final findings and the reasons for those findings. In making its final findings, the ACMA has considered the CHP and the response.

### ***Compliance with the minimum requirements for consumer complaints handling***

Provision	Requirement	ACMA finding and reasons
7(1)(a)	A carriage service provider, that offers to supply telecommunications products to consumers under a consumer contract must establish a complaints handling process that includes the minimum requirements for consumer complaints handling.	Tangerine Telecom has contravened paragraph 7(1)(a) by failing to include the minimum requirements for consumer complaints handling in the CHP as set out below.
8(1)	A complaints handling process must:	
8(1)(b)	be made available to the public on the carriage service provider's website in a concise form that sets out the minimum requirements for	The CHP did not refer to all of the matters set out in paragraphs (d) to (m) and section 9 and 10, namely:

	complaints handling referred to in paragraphs (d) to (m), and sections 9 and 10;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- paragraph 8(1)(d);</li> <li>- paragraph 8(1)(h);</li> <li>- paragraph 8(1)(j);</li> <li>- paragraph 8(1)(k);</li> <li>- paragraph 8(1)(m);</li> <li>- section 9;</li> <li>- paragraph 10(b);</li> <li>- paragraph 10(d); and</li> <li>- paragraph 10(g).</li> </ul> <p>Therefore, the ACMA finds that Tangerine Telecom did not include the minimum requirements in paragraph 8(1)(b) of the Complaints Standard in the CHP.</p>
8(1)(d)	be free of charge for consumers to use;	<p>The CHP stated:</p> <p><i>We will not charge you for dealing with your complaint in most instances, and we will never charge you without telling you first.</i></p> <p><i>We may charge you to recover our costs in very specific circumstances only, i.e. we may charge you where you request information that was collected more than two years ago or where you request information that is not free of charge as per our Standard Form Customer Contract or our Critical Information Summary.</i></p> <p><i>If cost recovery charges apply, we will tell you before charging you (and you may of course choose not to pay and discontinue your complaint) and we will inform you about your options for external dispute resolution, e.g. the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (TIO).</i></p> <p>There are no exceptions which allow for charging under the Standard.</p> <p>Therefore, the ACMA finds that Tangerine Telecom did not include the minimum requirements in paragraph 8(1)(d) of the Complaints Standard in the CHP.</p>
8(1)(h)	permit consumers to make complaints by telephone, letter, email and online;	<p>The Tangerine Telecom CHP only specified a telephone number that a consumer could use to make a complaint.</p> <p>Therefore, the ACMA finds that Tangerine Telecom did not include the minimum requirements in paragraph 8(1)(h) of the Complaints Standard in the CHP.</p>

8(1)(j)	specify the telephone number, email address and web address where a consumer can make a complaint;	<p>The CHP only specified a telephone number that a consumer could use to make a complaint.</p> <p>Therefore, the ACMA finds that Tangerine Telecom did not include the minimum requirements in paragraph 8(1)(j) of the Complaints Standard in the CHP.</p>
8(1)(k)	require members of its personnel to:	
8(1)(k)(i)	clarify with a consumer if they wish to make a complaint where the consumer has made contact and expressed dissatisfaction through one of the channels referred to in paragraph (h) or paragraph (i), and the member of the personnel is uncertain if the consumer wishes to make a complaint; and	<p>The CHP did not include any information requiring personnel to clarify with a consumer whether they wish to make a complaint.</p>
8(1)(k)(ii)	provide consumers with help to formulate, make and progress a complaint, and set out steps to assist members of its personnel to help consumers with special needs or disabilities, and consumers from non-English backgrounds or those suffering financial hardship;	<p>While the CHP provided information about requiring personnel to provide assistance to consumers in formulating, making and progressing a complaint, it did not provide any information in relation to consumers with special needs or disabilities, consumers from non-English speaking backgrounds and those suffering financial hardship.</p> <p>Therefore, the ACMA finds that Tangerine Telecom did not include the minimum requirements in paragraph 8(1)(k) of the Complaints Standard in the CHP.</p>
8(1)(m)	set out in sequence each potential step in the process for managing a complaint that was unable to be resolved on first contact, including the following steps:	<p>The CHP did not set out in sequence the potential step in the process for managing a complaint unable to be resolved on first contact as required under subparagraph (8)(1)(m)(viii) as described below.</p>
8(1)(m)(viii)	closing a complaint;	<p>The CHP did not set out in sequence the potential step in the process for a complaint to be closed.</p> <p>Accordingly, the ACMA finds that Tangerine Telecom did not include the minimum requirement in paragraph 8(1)(m) of the Complaints Standard in the CHP.</p>
9	A complaints handling process must identify the relevant time periods associated with each step in the process, including the response times for managing a complaint set out in sections 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17.	<p>The CHP did not provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- timeframes for advice regarding prioritisation, escalation and external dispute resolution as required by section 15;</li> <li>- information regarding the timeframes for advising of frivolous or vexatious</li> </ul>



		<p>complaints as required by section 16; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- timeframes for attempting to contact a consumer where the CSP has been unable to contact the consumer to discuss the complaint as required by section 17.</li> </ul> <p>Therefore, the ACMA finds that Tangerine Telecom did not include the minimum requirements in section 9 of the Complaints Standard in the CHP.</p>
10	A complaints handling process must:	
10(b)	include an internal process for escalating a consumer's complaint, which is clear, accessible and transparent for consumers;	<p>The CHP did not include an internal process for escalating a complaint that was clear, accessible and transparent for consumers. While the CHP noted circumstances where Tangerine Telecom would escalate a complaint, information was not given about what escalating a complaint would involve.</p> <p>Therefore, the ACMA finds that Tangerine Telecom did not include the minimum requirements in paragraph 10(b) of the Complaints Standard in the CHP.</p>
10(d)	set out a description of how escalated complaints will be managed;	<p>The CHP did not set out the steps for managing an escalated complaint.</p> <p>Therefore, the ACMA finds that Tangerine Telecom did not include the minimum requirements in paragraph 10(d) of the Complaints Standard in the CHP.</p>
10(g)	include a process for classifying complaints into different categories, which clearly describes each category of complaint.	<p>The CHP did not include a process for classifying complaints into different categories, which clearly describes each category of complaint.</p> <p>Therefore, the ACMA finds that Tangerine Telecom did not include the minimum requirements in paragraph 10(g) of the Complaints Standard in the CHP.</p>

**Compliance with subsection 128(1) of the Act**

Provision	Requirement	ACMA finding and reasons
Subsection 128(1)	if an industry standard applies to participants in a particular section of the telecommunications industry and is registered under Part 6 of the Act, each participant in that section of the industry must comply with the standard.	<p>The Complaints Standard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- is an industry standard determined under subsection 125AA(1) of the Act and registered under Part 6 of the Act; and</li> <li>- applies to participants in the telecommunications industry including carriage service providers (<b>CSPs</b>).</li> </ul> <p>Tangerine Telecom is a CSP that supplies internet, landline and mobile services to the public. As a participant in the section of the telecommunications industry to which the Complaints Standard applies, Tangerine Telecom is required to comply with the Complaints Standard under subsection 128(1) of the Act.</p> <p>Tangerine Telecom's CHP did not include the minimum requirements for consumer complaints handling as described above.</p> <p>Therefore, the ACMA finds that Tangerine Telecom contravened subsection 128(1) of the Act on 1 August 2018 by failing to comply with paragraph 7(1)(a) of the Complaints Standard.</p>