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COMPLAINTS ABOUT TELCOS CONTINUE TO FALL



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CONSUMER COMPLAINTS ABOUT TELCOS CONTINUE TO FALL

Consumer complaints to Australia’s telcos have fallen by 12% in the three months between April and June this year – the lowest rate for the quarter since 2016.

In its latest Complaints in Context report released on Tuesday, the Communications Alliance reveals a decline in complaint ratios over the last quarter and continuing year-on-year reductions and continuing year-in-year reductions in complaint levels.

And the last three quarters reported have been the lowest rate since their equivalent 2016 quarter (except October – December, which was the lowest rate since 2015), which CA says shows ongoing progress in improving customer service over the last three years.

Provider	New Complaints per 10,000 services in operation					
	Jan-Mar 18	Apr-Jun 18	Jul - Sep 18	Oct - Dec 18	Jan-Mar 19	Apr-Jun 19
Telstra	9.5	7.9	6.5	6.6	8.2	7.2
Optus	12.1	9.4	7.7	6.9	9.0	7.7
Vodafone	5.0	3.5	3.0	3.0	3.1	2.7
amaysim	1.3	0.9	0.8	0.5	0.5	0.4
Pivotel	1.0	0.8	0.5	0.5	0.5	1.0
All participants*	9.3	7.5	6.2	6.0	7.5	6.6

* Calculated by dividing participants' total TIO new complaints by participants' total SIO

John Stanton, chief executive, Communications Alliance, said “we are pleased to see the continuing decrease in the rate of TIO complaints, reflecting improvements in experience for customers of participating providers.

“This ongoing progress will be enhanced with the commencement of Communications Alliance’s revised Telecommunications Consumer Protections (TCP) Code on 1 August, which includes increased protections for consumers.

“In addition to stronger selling practices, stricter credit assessment, and increased financial hardship provisions, the revised TCP Code will expand our quarterly Complaints in Context report to the top 10 providers who received the most TIO complaints last year, in addition to any volunteers.

“To this date, all participants have been volunteers, and we appreciate their ongoing participation in this valuable report.

“We look forward to publishing the first expanded Complaints in Context report in October, reporting on the July – September quarter. This contextualised data will be helpful for consumers.”

Peter Dinham

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OPPO LAUNCHES 'WORLD FIRST' 5G-POWERED SMART HOTEL

Chinese smartphone vendor OPPO has announced the launch of what the company says is a “world first” travelling 5G powered smart hotel - The OPPO 5G Hotel – following the launch of the OPPO Reno 5G smartphone in Australia.

Oppo says it aims to showcase the real-world applications of 5G to Australians all around the country in a tour set to be undertaken.



The 5G powered Smart Hotel is a 40ft shipping container, which OPPO says has been transformed into a luxury one-bedroom suite, complete with the latest technology and smart home features.

The OPPO 5G Hotel made its debut at Splendour in the Grass in Byron Bay last weekend and will now travel down to the Gold Coast’s Home of The Arts (HOTA) from the 24th of July, where the hotel will remain until the end of August.

OPPO says the new network promises to herald the next era of connectivity.

Michael Tran, managing director at OPPO Australia, says he believes the faster speeds and lower latency provided by the 5G network will “revolutionise smart connectivity and enable unprecedented applications and different user scenarios”.

“5G marks a new era of connectivity that is set to revolutionise the way we use our smartphones and connected devices. Like any new technology, it’s about evolution, and we can expect to see more new applications utilising the power of AR, VR, AI as well as a greater focus on mobile gaming to provide new, exciting innovations.

“We know Aussies are excited for the arrival of 5G, so we’ve built the ultimate live-in experience for consumers to be able to fully immerse themselves in the advancements and innovations that come with the network.

“We look forward to customers experiencing our innovative 5G powered smart hotel and see the real-life benefits of the new network.”

At the centre of the smart hotel is the OPPO Reno 5G, acting as the control centre of the accommodation.

The smartphone powers everything from lighting to entertainment - essentially acting as the ‘brain’ of the hotel.

OPPO says that from the device, Aussies will be able to:

- **Game Anywhere:** Through the hotel’s 5G Gaming Suite, guests can experience a high-end gaming computer in the palm of their hand. The Reno 5G is connected via Steam Link to the computer within the hotel. Users can game locally on the PC, or leverage the 5G smartphone to access a library of games and play from anywhere inside the hotel, using the device as a portable screen.
- **Access info through a Smart Mirror** - The hotel Smart Mirror has everything guests could wish for in a mirror, allowing them to connect their smart devices, watch the latest news, get updates on stocks, read the morning newspaper, watch movies, or get the ideal light for the perfect mirror selfie.
- **Get things done hands-free** - The Hotel’s Reno 5G device is connected to a Google Home Hub, as well as an array of smart home features. Guests can use their voice to control the lighting, play their favourite songs from YouTube Music, ask questions and get visual, immersive answers from Google.
- **Gain access to OPPO AR Apps** - Among these apps are an interactive AR demonstration of the key features of the Reno 5G; and an AR wardrobe, merging the very best in tech with the very best in fashion, allowing guests to preview different outfits in a virtual AR runway. There will also be a number of additional AR apps to showcase the power of the OPPO Reno 5G and the network.
- **Access entertainment buffer-free** - Download, stream and watch to your heart’s content with 5G. Enjoy Netflix buffer-free or download a whole season of your favourite show while you make a cup of coffee, and watch it on the hotel’s widescreen TV.

Peter Dinham



John de Ridder

Telecommunications Economist

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APPLE SAID TO BE CLOSE TO BUYING INTEL'S 5G MODEM BIZ

Apple may soon have a missing piece in its iPhone manufacturing chain if it succeeds in acquiring Intel's 5G smartphone modem business, with reports that the two companies are well advanced in talks to achieve this end.

The deal will be worth about US\$1 billion, pocket change for either Apple or Intel, but a crucial one for Apple as it seeks to prop up its iPhone business that has been its main money maker but which has lost some steam over the last couple of years, *The Wall Street Journal* [reported](#).

Earlier this year, Intel [said](#) it was shutting down its 5G modem business after Apple and Qualcomm [reached](#) an out-of-court settlement to end all pending litigation between them, and also signed a multi-year deal for supply.

The two companies struck a six-year licence agreement, effective from 1 April, which includes a two-year option for extension and a multi-year chip supply deal.

Intel had been Apple's supplier of 4G smartphone modems after the relationship between Qualcomm and the iPhone manufacturer soured.

But soon after the Apple-Qualcomm announcement, Intel said it would be exiting the 5G smartphone modem business and not even launching the products it had planned for 2020.

The *WSJ* said any deal would give Apple access to development work as it looked to differentiate the iPhone further from other smartphones in what has become a crowded field. The iPhone maker has hired engineers, some from Intel, and announced some 1200 workers would take up this work in an office in San Diego.

The benefit to Intel would be getting rid of an unit that has been losing close to US\$1 billion every year. However, Intel would continue to work on 5G technology for other connected devices.

At the time when it announced it would halt work on 5G smartphone modems, Intel's chief executive Bob Swan [said](#) it had become apparent that there was no clear path to profitability for this line.

"5G continues to be a strategic priority across Intel, and our team has developed a valuable portfolio of wireless products and intellectual property," Swan, who took over from Brian Krzanich earlier this year, said.

"We are assessing our options to realise the value we have created, including the opportunities in a wide variety of data-centric platforms and devices in a 5G world."

Sam Varghese



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UK BLAMES US LACK OF CLARITY ON HUAWEI FOR OWN INDECISION

The UK says a lack of clarity about the US Government's stance on the Chinese telecommunications equipment vendor Huawei Technology has forced London to delay its own decision on using 5G technology from the firm.

British Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Jeremy Wright [told](#) Parliament on Monday: "The government is not yet in a position to decide what involvement Huawei should have in the provision of the UK's 5G network and I want to explain why that is."



"On 16 May, the US Government added Huawei Technologies and 68 affiliates to its Entity List on national security grounds."

"US companies now have to apply for a licence to export, re-export or transfer a specified range of goods, software and technology to Huawei and named affiliates, with a presumption of denial."

"On 20 May, the US Government issued a 90-day Temporary General Licence that authorises transactions in relation to specified areas."

Wright said he had sought clarity on the extent of the US restrictions but Washington was yet to make its position clear.

"Until it is, we have concluded it would be wrong to make specific decisions in relation to Huawei. We will do so as soon as possible," he added.

This means that the next prime minister, who will be named this week, will have to announce the UK decision on Huawei.

Two providers, [EE](#) and [Vodafone](#), have already launched 5G services using Huawei gear in the non-core parts of their network as per the standing policy of the government.

In April, a National Security Council decision on allowing the use of Huawei gear in non-core parts of the network was [leaked](#).

The decision, attributed to Prime Minister Theresa May, said the Chinese firm would be allowed to contribute antennas and other infrastructure that are not considered to be part of the core.

Last year, BT and Huawei [jointly announced](#) that the Chinese firm's gear would be removed from the core of 3G and 4G networks as had been planned by BT when it bought EE — earlier known as Everything Everywhere — in 2016.

Wright told Parliament that his department had finalised [a review](#) into the country's telecommunications supply chain and had identified three areas of concern:

"Firstly, that existing arrangements may have achieved good commercial outcomes but have not incentivised cyber security risk management.

"Secondly, that policy and regulation in enforcing telecoms cyber security needs to be significantly strengthened to address these concerns.

"And finally, that the lack of diversity across the telecoms supply chain creates the possibility of national dependence on single suppliers, which poses a range of risks to the security and resilience of UK telecoms networks."

On 15 July, the UK Parliamentary Science and Technology Committee [said](#) it had found no evidence to suggest that the complete exclusion of Huawei from British telecommunications networks would constitute "a proportionate response to the potential security threat posed by foreign suppliers".

And four days later, the Intelligence and Security Committee warned that excluding Huawei would harm resilience and lower security standards.

He said the review had called for setting up of a new security framework for the country's telecommunications sector.

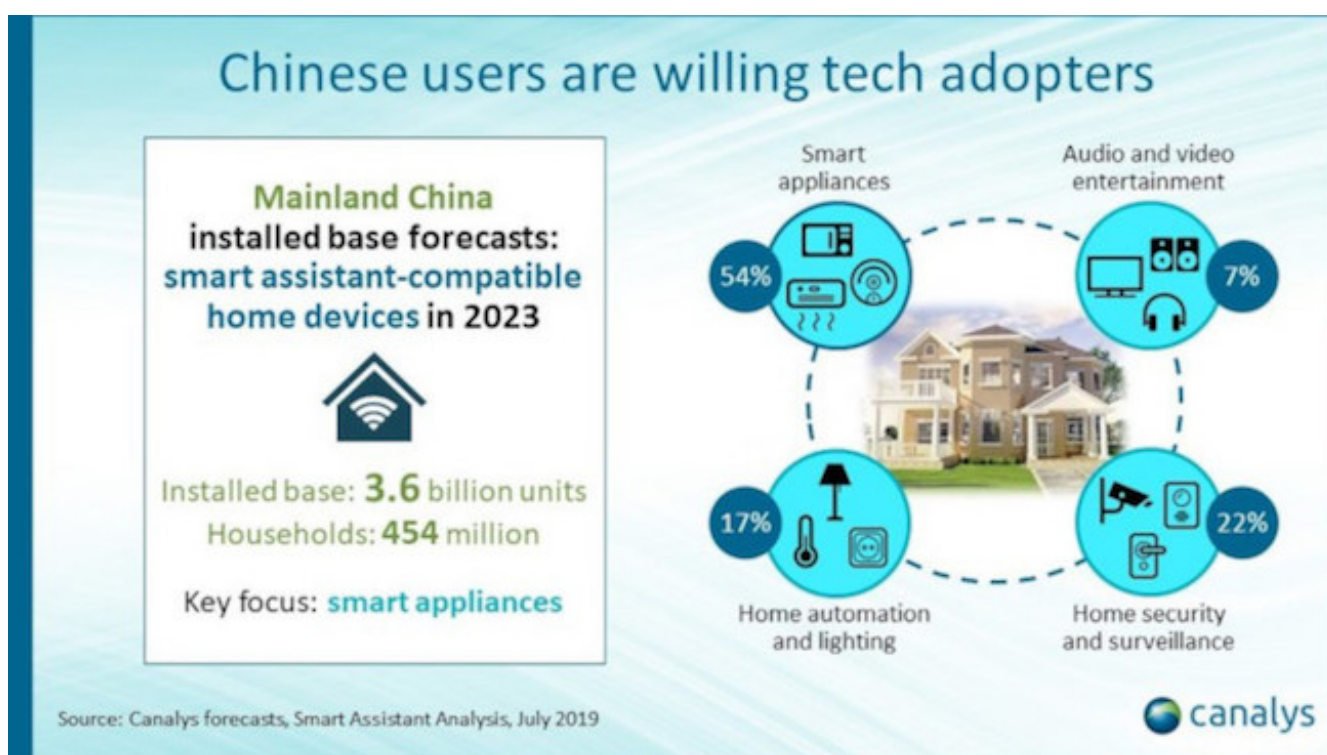
Sam Varghese

CHINA SMART ASSISTANT DEVICE INSTALLED BASE TO DWARF US

The installed base of smart assistant devices in China will reach 5.8 billion by 2023, the tech analyst firm Canals has forecast, adding that this would be about twice the installed base of the US at the same point.

In a statement, Canals said the total market in China was made up of a large population and household base, and consumers had the means and enthusiasm to adopt new IoT trends.

It said devices for the home such as air-conditioners, door locks, TVs and refrigerators, which could be operated by a smart assistant via the network, would reach 3.6 billion in 2023.



The prediction was that every Chinese household would own an average of seven smart assistant-compatible home devices by 2023.

“The large appliance category, which includes refrigerators, washing machines and air conditioners, is expected to contribute the biggest growth,” said Canals research analyst Cynthia Chen.

“The growing Chinese middle class is relentlessly pursuing a higher standard of living, and smart appliances will play a major part in their vision of the ideal home.

"Appliance makers Haier, TCL and Hisense are changing their strategies to capture the trend early.

"Even the retailer Suning and smartphone vendor Xiaomi are aiming to disrupt the market."

The rise of built-in smart assistants for speakers acted as a catalyst for growth of smart home devices that could be controlled via voice.

Unlike compatible-only devices, smartphones, smart speakers, mobile PCs, smartwatches and connected cars had built-in smart assistants that could carry out user commands, with the leading smart assistants in China being Xiaodu, Tmall Genie and XiaoAI.

Canalys estimates that the installed base of devices with built-in smart assistants would reach 2.2 billion units in China with a CAGR of 42% between 2018 and 2023.

The smartphone would continue to be the main device category for smart assistants in 2023.

"Chinese smartphone vendors, such as Huawei, OPPO and vivo, are shifting their strategies to create IoT ecosystems with smart assistants, especially targeting homes with smart speakers and smart assistant-compatible devices," said Canalys senior analyst Jason Low.

"Having such devices work together seamlessly, especially across brands and platforms, to create new intuitive use-cases remains an industry-wide challenge for vendors around the world."

Canalys claimed the China market differed from the trend-setting US.

"Trying to copy the successful strategies used in the US market, or elsewhere, in China will not work," said Chen.

"For example, home security is an important area where IoT devices are being adopted. But due to the housing structure and lifestyle habits, devices embraced in China are different.

"Americans focus more on home surveillance, such as using cameras to check around their houses, while the Chinese are more concerned with using security devices in the home to take care of families.

"Over the next few years, Canalys predicts that increasing awareness of saving energy and creating a healthier living environment will also be important for the Chinese market."

Sam Varghese

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