

for and on behalf of
Arne Pedersen

Highfields QLD 4352

To Ms Rosemary Sinclair
Chair of the Committee
www.rtirc.gov.au

12 September 2011

Dear Ms Sinclair

My name is Lars Pedersen and I respectively make this submission to the Regional Telecommunications Review, on behalf of my father, Arne Pedersen.

This submission describes a failure by Telstra to adequately provide a solution to a simple request; ensure the delivery of a facsimile transmission originating in Denmark, Malaysia and USA to a Telstra Faxstream service in Highfields, Queensland.

Enclosed a copy of the letter from Telstra, received 7 September stating that they will not be fixing the problem.

Background

I (Arne) receive facsimile transmissions from my two sons, who live in Denmark. I have been sending and receiving faxes for over twenty years, without any difficulty to any fax machine world wide. In the beginning months of this year, faxes from Denmark and Malaysia, then subsequently USA, began to fail, at first intermittently, then on every transmission.

Telstra Service Stream

A line fault complaint was made with Telstra and a Service Stream technician was sent to investigate the lines between the address above and "post" on the street. Faults on the line were found and the problem was escalated further.

Telstra Technicians

On two occasions, a Telstra technician ("Errol") was despatched to the Highfields address and on both occasions minor line issues were corrected, the fax machine was tested to ensure that it was not faulty and even a new fax machine was purchased to ensure that the fax machine itself was not a confounding issue. None of this work corrected the problem, as the fax machine answered the calls but could not handshake and complete the receipt.

Telstra Fax Service, International and Corporate

The call was escalated further to Rowan Parmitter, Telstra fax services, and then further to international. Lars, my son, spent many tens of hours assisting Rowan and subsequently, Ross Porter, Adam .F. Sears, and Mr Puska [D287298] in ensuring that the problem was not related to our fax machine. Further, my son facilitated our international contacts to send test faxes to Telstra in Sydney from the originating numbers that failed in Highfields. They were received without problem by Telstra, in Sydney.

To further investigate the problem, Ross Porter took the fax machine to the Highfields exchange and a test transmission was sent. It failed to receive at the Highfields exchange. Mr Porter then went to a neighbouring exchange, Gowrie Junction, where it also failed. He then took the fax machine to the main Toowoomba exchange, where it successfully received ALL transmissions sent from overseas.

At this point, it seemed fairly obvious that the problem was related to the quality of service being provided to the regional exchanges of Highfields and Gowrie Junction. We were told that Mr Porter could do nothing more, and the problem would be escalated to International. Mr Adam.F.Sears became our new contact.

Mr Sears commenced a process of call monitoring and tracing to determine the path of entry of the calls that came in from Denmark and USA. Our contacts in Malaysia were not willing to continue assistance (we are now three months into the problem at this stage).

After approximately ten days of monitoring, Mr Sears informed us that the calls that were failing at Highfields were, in fact, not entering the Telstra network from overseas, but were a VOIP portal in Sydney, owned by Optus. The totality of Telstra's response is in their letter, as attached. Not our problem, they said. Lars, my son, spoke with Puska on two occasions and was finally informed that nothing further was to be done.

On every verbal occasion, with both Mr Sears and Puska, made reference to the originating telco (Teledanmark in one instance) choosing a cheap international entry point, that VOIP is unsupported (not our choice as a customer, but seemingly irrelevant) and that it was also irrelevant *that Toowoomba could receive the fax transmission while Highfields could not*. Technical terms such as "propagation delay" were used freely. It was also suggested that my son in Denmark make a complaint with Teledanmark. He was informed by Teledanmark that the fax leaves Denmark as an analog signal and they are not responsible from that point onwards.

This raises a number of immediate issues, not the least being we still cannot receive facsimile transmissions. I will list them, for your convenience and for clarity:

- 1) We still cannot receive international fax transmissions.
- 2) We are not in control of the sender's fax transmission.
- 3) We cannot be expected to have control over the sender's method of transmission, be it analog, digital, VOIP, FOIP or any other "method". Surely, for me, the simple customer, it should be a seamless affair.
- 4) We have no recourse of complaint to anyone, given that the problem has been deflected and blamed on Optus. Telstra have refused to help further and as we are not a direct customer of Optus or Teledanmark, there is no recourse there either. We have been paying Telstra for a Fax Stream service, which cannot guarantee the delivery of an international fax.
- 5) The calls can be received, in full, without error, every time in Sydney and in Toowoomba, but not in Highfields.

There clearly is an issue of responsibility of service quality through the telecommunications supply chain, and a complete disregard for transparency of service and of complaint recourse. It is very clear that service standards are not being upheld in smaller exchange areas, and that many other obfuscating reasons are used to avoid problem rectification.

This has been a most unsatisfying affair for me and a time consuming one for my son. I turned 83 during this process and would dearly like to be able to receive a fax from two sons in Denmark for future birthdays. I would not like to suggest that Telstra could be assisting me to an early grave.

I thank you for the opportunity to provide this submission to your Regional Telecommunications Review.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lars Pedersen', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

signed by Lars Pedersen, on behalf of
Arne Pedersen
Highfields, 4352

by
Lars Pedersen
[REDACTED]
Mudjimba QLD 4564
[REDACTED]



7 September 2011

**Telstra Consumer &
Telstra Country Wide**
Telstra Customer Relations

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Dear Mr Pedersen

Re: Telstra Account 2000034626513

I am writing in relation to our recent conversation regarding the above complaint. I have further investigated and reviewed your concern that:

- You are unable to receive international fax transmissions from USA, Malaysia and Denmark

I can confirm:

- The supplied Telstra line is capable and functioning for the use that it is intended and supplied
- Call analysis of the reported failed calls identified that they were in fact not an international call and were in fact from an Australian number
- It was also identified that this Australian number is a VOIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol) for another carrier
- Telstra has performed its role in providing the connection of the calls with a line that is capable of fax transmission
- The fax machines are disconnecting the call after failure to handshake when the VOIP technology is used as part of this call
- Telstra has no control over how the fax call is modified with compression other means when this technology is used
- The carrier is using lower quality least cost routing for this call

In this instance, there is nothing beyond the above that I can do to assist you in resolving your issues. I am satisfied that Telstra has made every effort to resolve all issues and therefore consider this matter finalised. I regret that a mutually agreeable solution could not be reached on this occasion.

If you are not satisfied with the actions taken by Telstra, you may wish to pursue an external independent review by an external body such as the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman.

In the meantime, if you have any outstanding accounts, could you please ensure that they are paid.

At Telstra, we are committed to helping our customers. If you have a complaint in the future you can call our call centres on 13 22 00 and say 'complaint' at the voice prompt and you will be directed to a consultant specifically trained to handle your concerns.

Sincerely

Puska [D287298]
Complaint Resolution Coordinator
Customer Relations Group
Telstra Corporation Limited
**A free number from most fixed line phones*