



Australian Government

Private Health Insurance Ombudsman

MEDIA RELEASE

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REPORT OF PRIVATE HEALTH FUND SERVICE AND PERFORMANCE

The Private Health Insurance Ombudsman (PHIO) today published its annual *State of the Health Funds Report* (the Report), providing information on the comparative performance and service delivery of private health insurance funds in Australia for the period from 1 July 2013 - 30 June 2014.

Acting Ombudsman David McGregor encouraged consumers to read the Report, which focuses on general performance and service delivery by health funds and compares funds against a number of measures, including service delivery, financial management and health fund operation.

"The best private health insurance outcomes result from access to the best quality information and the Report provides consumers with access to information about how their current or potential fund performs on measures such as membership retention, complaints, the effectiveness of its Gap Scheme in reducing out-of-pocket medical costs and the percentage of Hospital and General Treatment related charges covered," Mr McGregor said.

The overall number of complaints in 2013-14 was 3,417 compared with 2,955 the previous year - a 16% increase, with the leading causes of complaints to PHIO being oral advice, hospital exclusions and restrictions, service complaints and the pre-existing condition waiting period.

Mr McGregor said the overall theme linking these key complaint issues together was the quality of information provided to members about health insurance policies and claiming benefits.

"PHIO encourages health funds and others in the industry to continuously monitor and improve the quality of information they provide to policyholders in assisting keep health insurance complaints as low as possible."

Mr McGregor said that the higher number of complaints should also be viewed against the extremely positive result of a 45% increase in the number of consumers using the PHIO's consumer website Privatehealth.gov.au.

"The dramatic increase in the number of unique visitors to the consumer website to be now almost a million people (899,841) is very pleasing and demonstrates that consumers are increasingly embracing one of PHIO's key messages to be diligent on their own behalf in finding out about private health insurance."

The Report can be viewed on the PHIO website at www.phio.gov.au.

PHIO also produces a range of Fact Sheets and Brochures in relation to private health insurance, which are available from its www.phio.gov.au website.

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