

# Interview

## **what is the Customer Relations Unit?**

“Customer Relations Units have been established (in each Area Office) to give our customers the opportunity to comment on the service we provide. Customers are able to contact the Customer Relations Unit with complaints, compliments and/or suggestions. The Customer Relations Unit helps to resolve problems that customers have encountered in their dealings with Centrelink. They record all feedback received so that they are able to identify areas of concern and improve our service to customers.”

## **what are the most common problems that people contact the CRU with?**

“Our records show that the most frequent calls over the past twelve months were related to customers disagreeing with payment related decisions and delays in the processing of payments and services.”

## **when a client contacts the Customer Relations Unit, what happens?**

“When a customer contacts the Customer Relations Unit the Customer Relations Officer endeavours to resolve the situation straight away over the telephone. When required, we utilise a network of Customer Service ‘Champions’ in each Customer Service Centre who investigate the matter and attempt to resolve the situation to the customer’s satisfaction.

A lot of our clients lodge appeals with an Authorised Review Officer, but often the appeal never gets to the ARO or is held up by the Original Decision Maker.”

## **what do you suggest people do when this happens?**

“If a customer wishes to have a matter reviewed, s/he should first be invited to discuss the matter with the Original Decision Maker. This discussion may take place in person or over the telephone. If, after talking to the Original Decision Maker, the customer is still not satisfied they can ask that it be referred on to an Authorised Review Officer (ARO).

Our statistics show that the average time for a decision to be referred to the ARO is 3 days which is in keeping with our timeliness standards. When a customer has requested a review by an ARO and they believe that the case has not been referred in a timely manner, we would encourage them to call the Customer Relations Unit. We will ensure that the correct appeals procedure is followed.”

## **what advice would you give a person if they are having problems trying to get information from Centrelink or can’t fix their Social Security problem?**

“If a customer is having any difficulties in their dealings with Centrelink, we would encourage them to call us as we will be able to assist.

## **rights review December 1999**

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If a customer is happy or unhappy with the service they have received, there are four ways they can tell us:

- Talk to any of our staff
- Call us on our Customer Relations Line **Freecall 1800 050 004** (this number goes through to the local Area office)
- Complete a customer comment card
- Visit our web site at **[www.centrelink.gov.au](http://www.centrelink.gov.au)** ▲