AUSTEL
AUSTRALIAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS AUTHORITY

THE COT CASES

AUSTEL's
Findings
and
Recommendations

April 1994

issues to be addressed in the *Fast Track Settlement* and proposed arbitration procedures.

The Cape Bridgewater Remote Customer Multiplexer (RCM)

7.29   Mr Smith of the Cape Bridgewater Holiday Camp, one of the *original COT Cases*, reported a significant level of faults when serviced by the analogue ARK exchange at Cape Bridgewater. That exchange was replaced in 1991 with a modern AXE digital exchange at Portland together with a Remote Customer Multiplexer (RCM) at Cape Bridgewater. It appears that there were problems in the installation of the RCM and that the alarm system which was meant to be activated when the level of faults exceeded a specified threshold was not connected effectively. The alarm system may have remained non-operative for some 18 months. Data produced by Telecom indicates that during that 18 months one-third of the RCM capacity, including that part providing Mr Smith's service, was subject to 46,000 minutes of degraded service (Minute dated 12 July 1993, Telecom's Supervising Engineer, National Switching Support, Melbourne to Manager, Warrnambool Control Operations Group).

7.30   It is difficult to reconcile Telecom's recent explanation of the effect of the RCM's fault on Mr Smith's service with Telecom's own contemporaneous notes of its effect.

7.31   The Cape Bridgewater RCM fault was diagnosed by a technical expert from Telecom's National Network Investigations team in July 1993. He then wrote in the following terms to Telecom's Manager, Warrnambool Central Operations Group -

> "Initial reports were of a vocal customer at Cape Bridgewater complaining of VF cut-offs [a term referring to loss of voice communications] in one direction. The customer had been transferred off system 1, onto systems 2 and 3 on the 24th February '93, and had experienced no further problems. Investigations revealed that system 1 was running a large number of degraded minutes (DM) and errored seconds (ES) in the Portland to Cape Bridgewater direction, these errors could have caused the VF cut-off problem."

(Minute dated 12 July 1993, Telecom's Supervising Engineer, National Switching Support, Melbourne to Manager Warrnambool COG)