

The logo for the Organisation of Caribbean Utility Regulators (OCUR) features the acronym 'OCUR' in a large, bold, white serif font. The letters are set against a dark blue rectangular background that has a subtle, wavy pattern. The background of the entire slide is a light blue map of the Caribbean region.

ORGANISATION OF CARIBBEAN
UTILITY REGULATORS

2nd ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Handling Complaints

In an Independent and Transparent Manner,

The Trinidad and Tobago Experience

A large, stylized blue arrow graphic that originates from the left side of the slide and points towards the bottom right corner, passing behind the speaker's name and date.

Mohan Chadee
Customer Services Manager
Regulated Industries Commission

November 4, 2004





Presentation Outline

- **INTRODUCTION**
- **DEMONSTRATING TRANSPARENCY & ASSERTING INDEPENDENCE**
 - The Legal Mandate For Complaints And Review
 - Limitations
 - Balancing the Various Interests
 - Complaints Management Policy and Procedures
- **A WAY FORWARD**



Introduction

One broad objective of reform is “to protect consumers from abuse by firms with substantial market power ” (Berg et al, circa 2002)



A successful way to protect consumers is through the establishment of an efficient and effective medium for customers to obtain complaints redress and voice their dissatisfaction with the services provided by Service Providers.


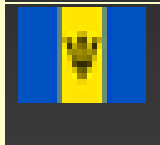


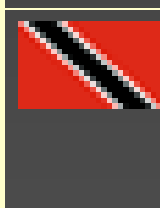


The Legal Mandate

- The RIC Act, Section 6. 1 (1) the Commission is required to “investigate complaints by consumers, of their failure to obtain redress from Service Providers in respect to rates, billing and unsatisfactory service and *facilitate* relief where necessary”.
- Further, Sections 53 – 55
- Section 24 Provides for Establishment of CSC
- Internal Policies and Procedure
- Principles of Natural Justice and Administrative Law
- Precedent in Common Law



The Legal Mandate

	Regulator	Legal Provision for Handling Complaints
	PUC Bahamas	Holds public inquiry, has the power to enforce remedial measures by Memorandum
	FTC Barbados	Holds enquiry, has the power to enforce decisions by Order
	PUC Guyana	Holds enquiry, has the power to enforce decisions by Order
	OUR Jamaica	Holds enquiry, has the power to enforce remedial measures
	RIC Trinidad & Tobago	Can only <i><u>facilitate</u></i> a resolution – through the use of ADR techniques, which includes Conciliation, Mediation, and Facilitation.



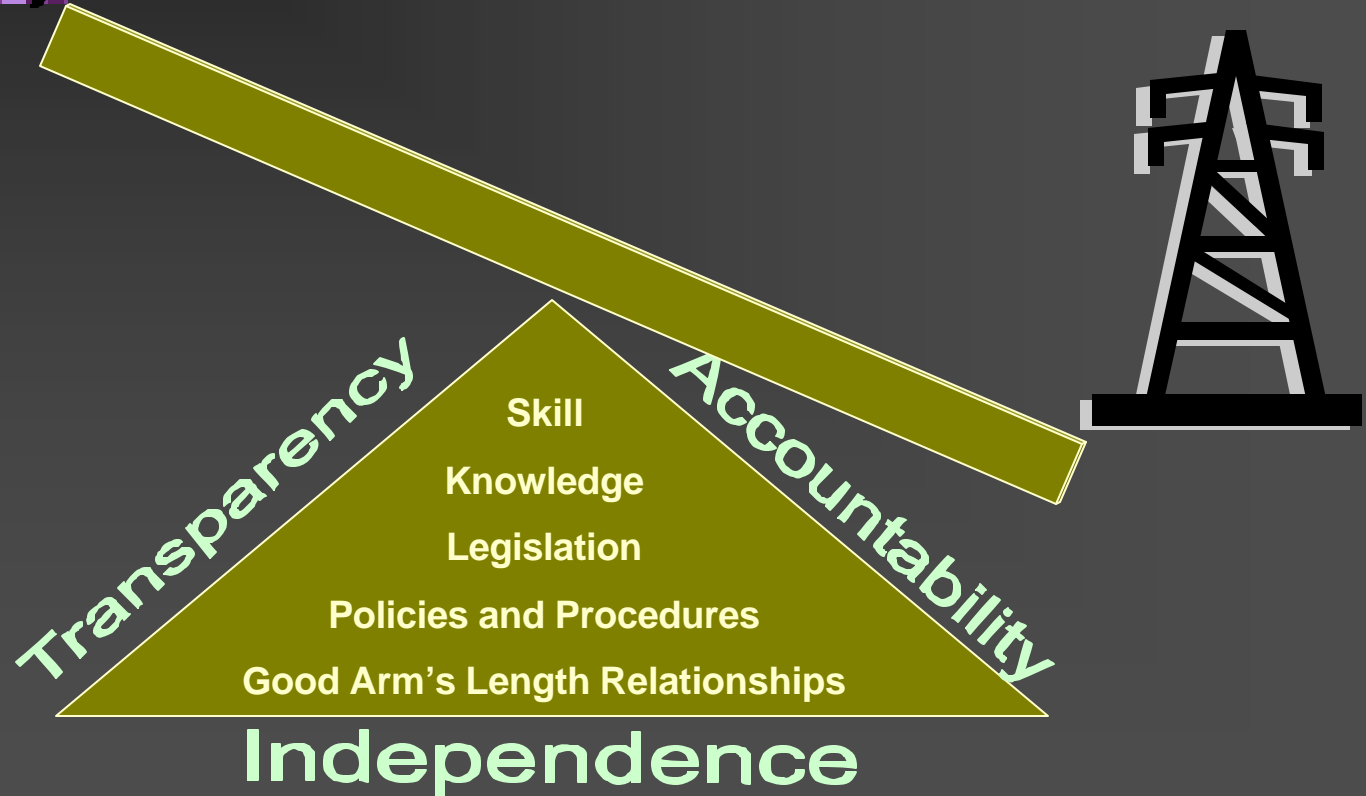
The Legal Mandate

Limitations

- RIC does not have the power to enforce its decisions directly through the provision in the enabling legislation.
- RIC has to rely on Subsidiary Legislation.
 - Quality of Service Standards
 - Terms and Conditions of Licence
- Many Subsidiary Legislation are not in place
- Must be Approved by the Minister
- Lengthy Period for Enactment

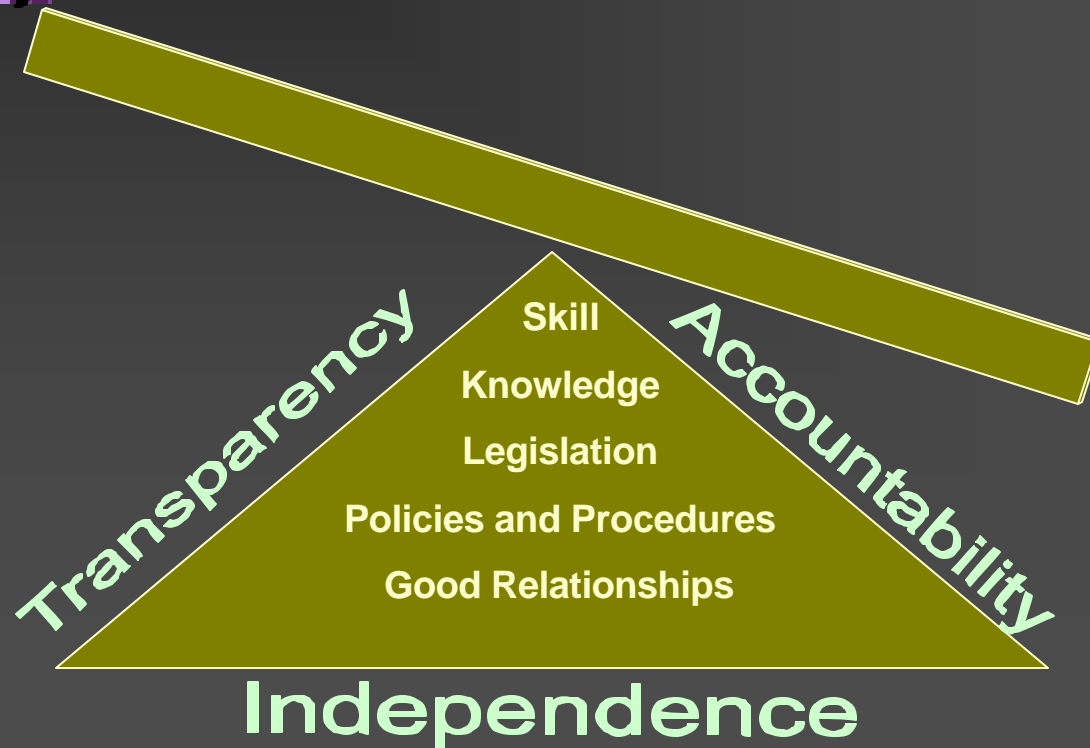
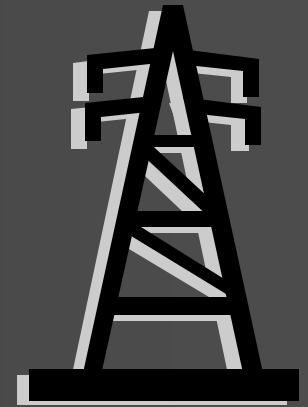


Balancing The Various Interest



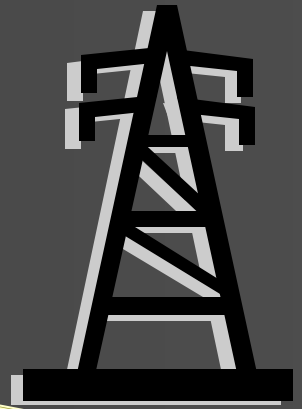


Balancing The Various Interest



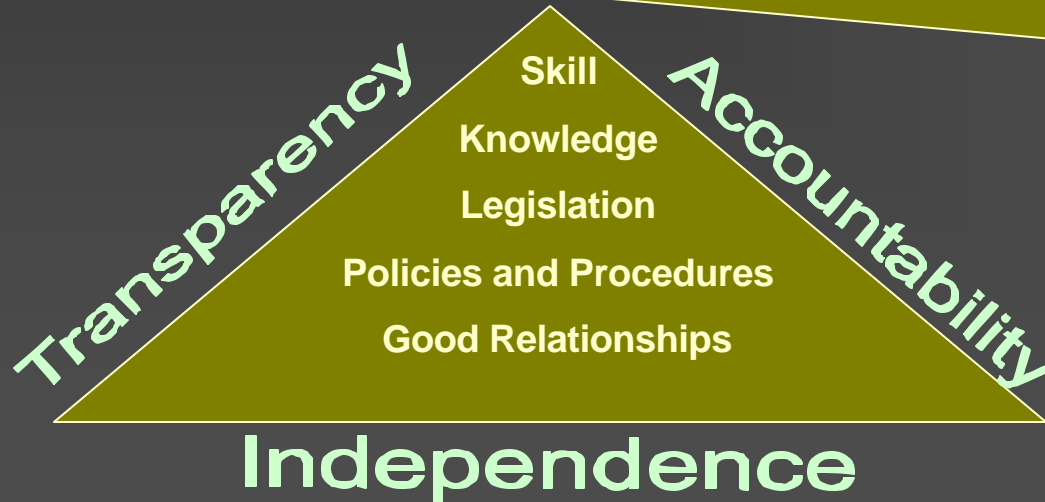
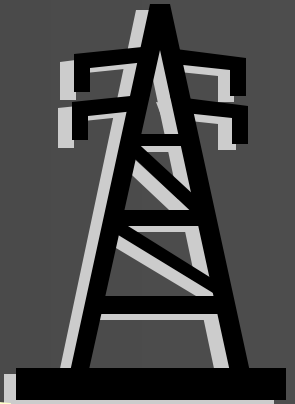


Balancing The Various Interest





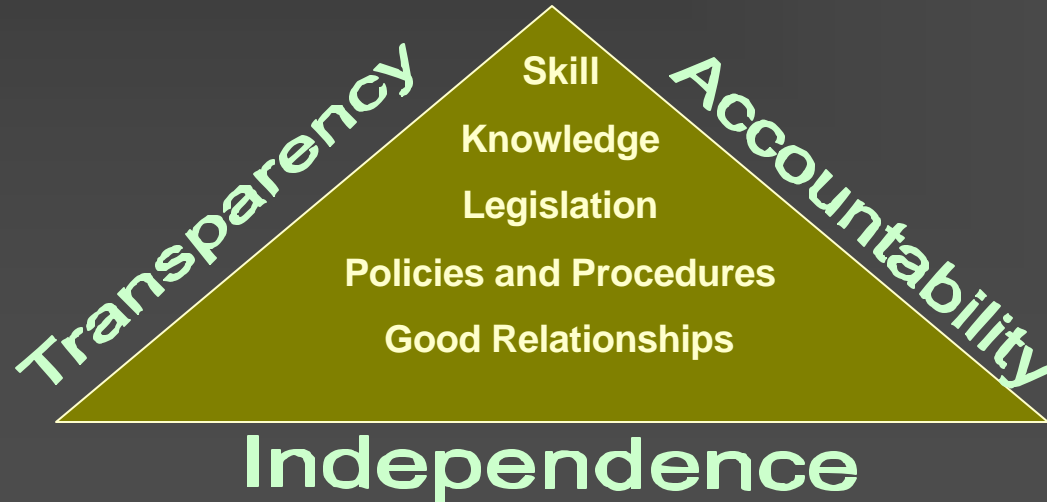
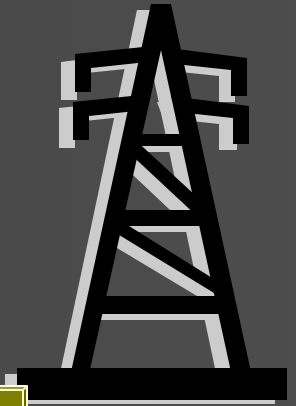
Balancing The Various Interest



Balancing The Various Interest



Customer Satisfaction





Complaints Management Policy

Objectives:

- **Service Providers more sensitive to the needs of Customers.**
- **Consumers aware of their rights to fair treatment and proper redress**
- **CSRs are aware of their Roles and Responsibilities**
- **Facilitate Research for Policy Decision.**
- **Identified Roles for CSCs**
 - **Initial Arbiter**
 - **Independent Audit Committee**
 - **Consumer Advocacy Group**
 - **Ensure Non-discriminatory Practice**



Complaints Management Policy

Focus on Critical Areas

- Customer Information and Education
- Dispute Resolution
- Research & Policy Development
- Periodic Monitoring and Review
- Confidentiality

Consumer Info. & Education



Customers' right to unbiased and accurate information to make informed choices.

- **Based on a 2003 Survey only 8% aware of the RIC**
- **Commission embarked on a Mass Media Campaign**

Consumer Info. & Education

YOU'RE NO LONGER JUST ANOTHER NUMBER

THE REGULATED INDUSTRIES COMMISSION (RIC)

is an independent body with the *responsibility* and *power* to ensure that consumers receive a reliable, safe and efficient service from public utilities.

For the RIC to be fully effective, however, it is important that you, the consumer, become aware of your rights and the standards that are to be met by the Utility Companies. For more details, you can collect our New Service Standards brochure at the RIC office, or log on to www.ric.org.tt

**You will be our eyes and ears.
We are your voice.**



REGULATED INDUSTRIES COMMISSION (RIC)

FURNESS HOUSE, 1ST & 3RD FLOORS, COR. WRIGHTSON ROAD & INDEPENDENCE SQUARE, PORT OF SPAIN
MONDAY TO FRIDAY 9AM - 4PM (7/11th hours message service available)
TEL: 627-0821/0500/7820, 825-5384 • FAX: 624-2027 • E-MAIL: ric@ric.org.tt

Consumer Info. & Education



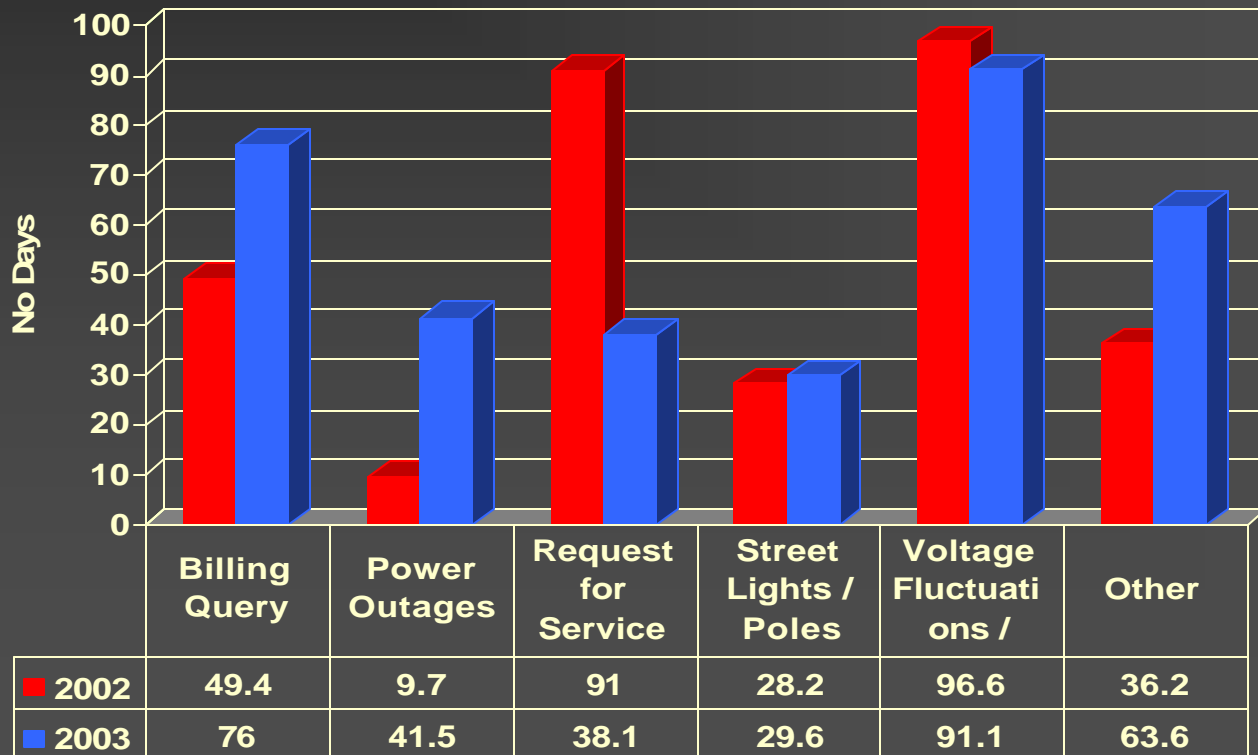
- **CSD works very closely with the Corporate Communications Department**
 - **To make the General Public aware of their Rights and Responsibilities**
 - **Participated in Conferences and Seminars**
 - **Public Consultations**
 - **RIC Web-site**



Dispute Resolution Process

Lengthy Resolution Time

Resolution Time - Complaints Against T&TEC
For - 2002 & 2003





Dispute Resolution Process

Resolving disputes quickly, with little or no cost to the customer.

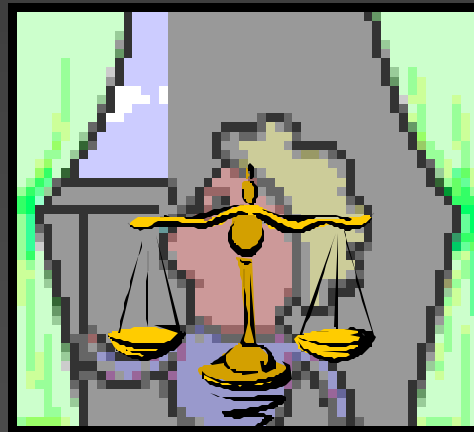
- Established QSS for the Electricity Transmission and Distribution Sector – Enforceable from April 7, 2004.
- Final stages of establishing QSS for the Water and Wastewater Sectors.
- Reduced Cost Barriers
 - RIC introduced a Toll Free Number (800-4RIC)
 - Approved the introduction of a Mobile Office





Dispute Resolution Process

- Fair & Transparent
- Complaints are assessed on their merits
- Use Joint/Independent 3rd party investigations/analysis where necessary





Dispute Resolution Process





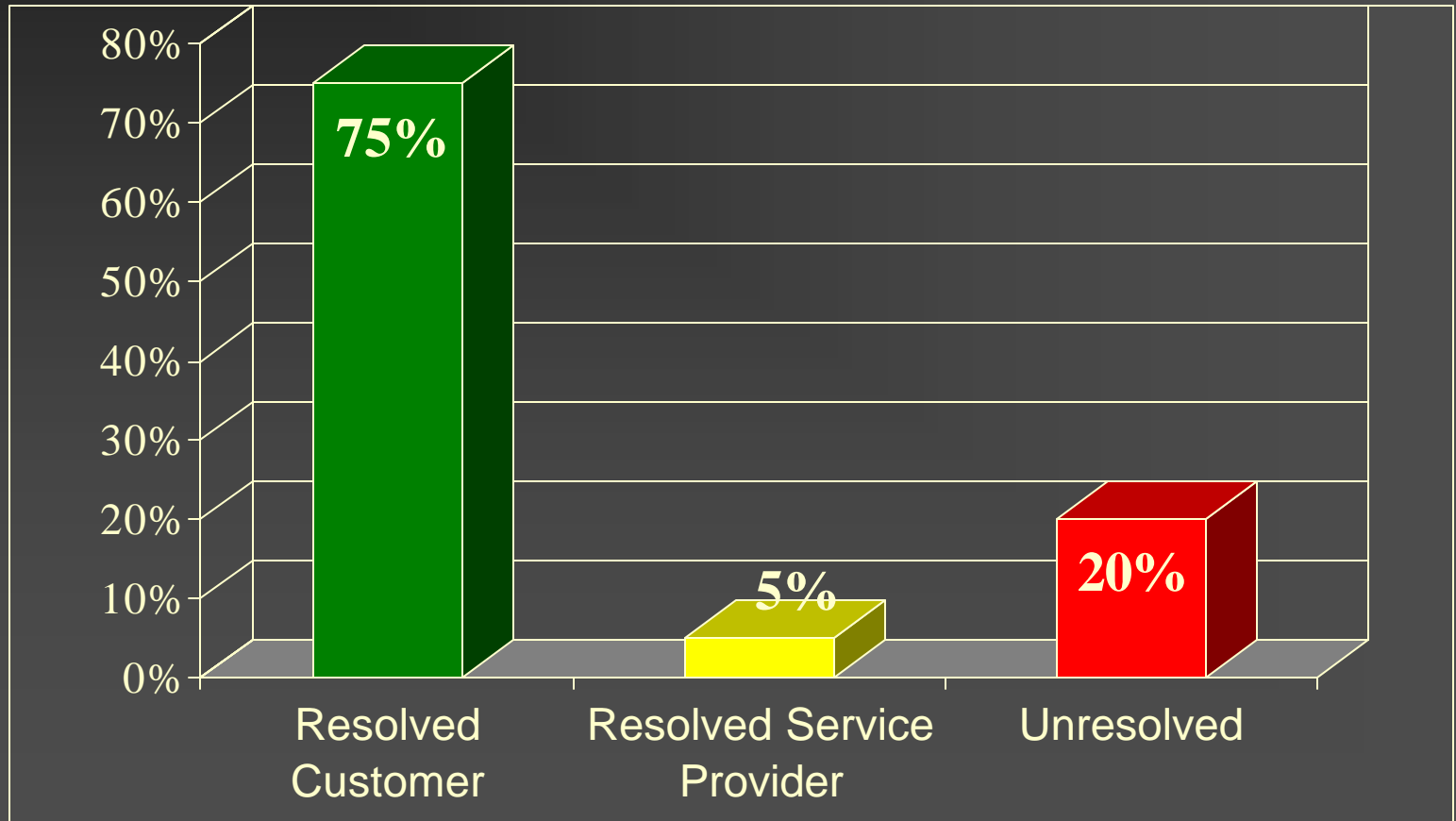
Dispute Resolution Process

- **Keep Customer update & provide reasons for decision**
- **RIC had been very successful in resolving complaints**
- **ADR Works**



Dispute Resolution Process

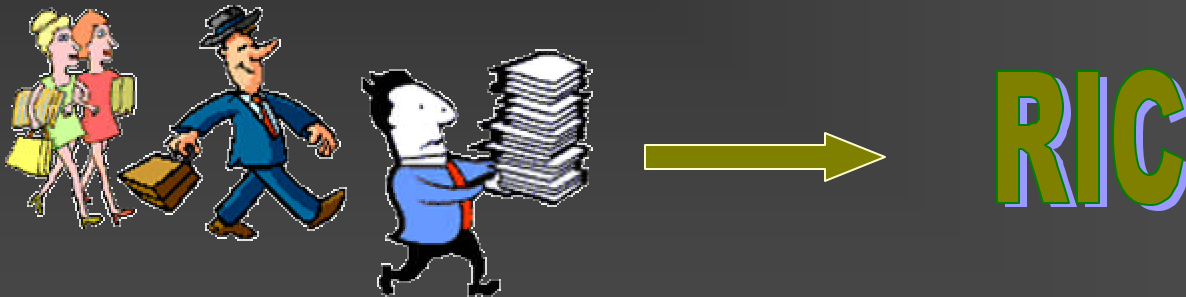
Status of Complaints Received in 2003





Dispute Resolution Process

- Maintains an arm's length relationship with the customer, service provider and government
- No attempt to influence our assessment/decisions
- Consumers are referred by both Govt. Officials and SP



- Indication of the level of independence, respect and confidence the RIC has earned



Research and Policy Development

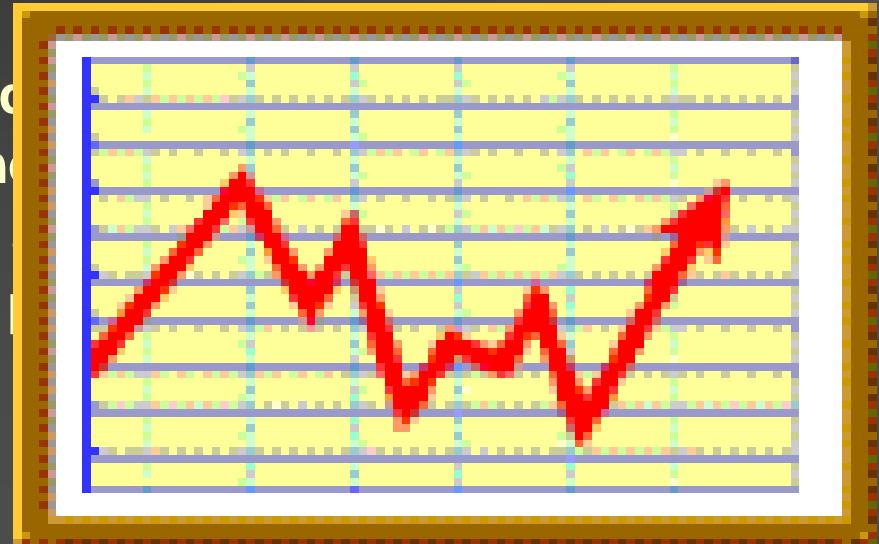
Empirical evidence critical for regulatory decisions.

Analysis of complaints statistics

2003 Data showed 82% increase in billing complaints

COP were developed utilizing the consultative process in seven (7) critical areas including:

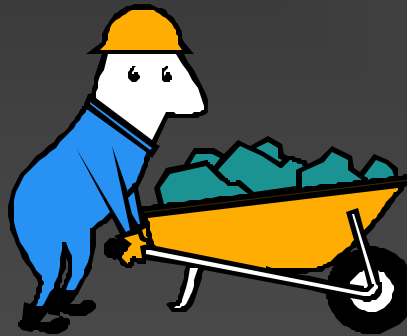
- Dealing with customers in c
- Debt recovery and disconn
- Retroactive policies
- Policy of





A Way Forward

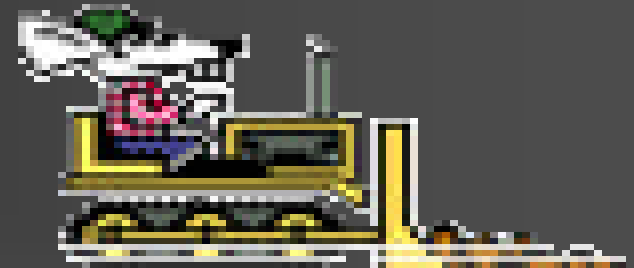
- Regulatory oversight is like a wheel barrow.
“ It will go no further than we take it”





A Way Forward

- Develop New and Amend Existing Legislation
- Monitor and Enforce Compliance
- Engage in Continuous Consumer Education
- Conduct Audits & Surveys





A Way Forward

- **Develop our Human Resource Capabilities**
- **Get Stakeholders involve in the Regulatory Decision-Making Process**
- **Link Tariffs to Service Quality**
- **Engage in Continuous Improvement**





**On behalf of the
Regulated Industries Commission**

Thank You

THE END