

Department of Human Services' Online Compliance System

Thank you to everyone who has contacted me regarding the Department of Human Services' online compliance system. I have noted the concerns that you have raised with the system and provided some information below to clarify these matters.

The welfare budget is about \$150 billion a year, approximately one third of the total Federal budget and equates to around eight in every ten dollars of income tax collected.

The Government is working to ensure that there is integrity in the welfare system and taxpayers rightly expect us to take all steps possible to ensure that people get the correct welfare payments - not a cent more and not a cent less than they are entitled to. That is what this system is about.

All Centrelink customers must report their details (including all income/assets and personal situations) to ensure they are receiving the payment they are entitled to and make sure the system is fair.

The Government believes it is reasonable to request that recipients take a little time to clarify their information if there is a discrepancy between their income data held at the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) and with their self-reported income data at Centrelink. Seeking this data has been a long standing practice of both Labor and Coalition Governments. Additionally, the Department of Human Services is legally bound to ensure that public monies are distributed in accordance with the law and recover any debts.

It is no doubt disappointing to be advised that you have a debt that needs to be repaid. There is a process in place for all welfare recipients to explain discrepancies and have these reviewed. For people who do owe a debt to the Government, they can enter into an affordable repayment plan, which can be as little as \$5 per week for current recipients.

This process of data matching is not new, this is the same approach that was used by Bill Shorten and Labor in the past. The set of rules is the same, only the automation of the process is different. It does not change how income is assessed or how debts are calculated.

For those who have received a letter from Centrelink you can contact **1800 086 400** for further information regarding your matters.

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