



Management of Centrelink telephone services

Parliament's Joint Public Accounts Committee will hold a public hearing on Thursday 20 August as part of its review of the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) report into the management of telephone services in Centrelink Smart Centres.

A large proportion of Centrelink's business with customers is conducted by telephone, with 43.1 million calls received in 2013–14. Centrelink provides these services through a network of 29 Smart Centres, where telephony and processing work are blended so as to improve customer service and allow staff to be deployed more flexibly.

Committee Chair, Dr Andrew Southcott MP, said that the effectiveness and efficiency of the management of Centrelink telephone services by the Department of Human Services are of ongoing interest to both the Parliament and the community.

"The ANAO concluded that, while the Department of Human Services is making progress in its transition to revised Centrelink service delivery arrangements, the average time taken to answer customer calls has increased in recent years and call wait times have been the largest single cause of customer complaint. This is an issue worth further scrutiny by the Committee."

"The Committee will also examine the effectiveness of the Department's performance monitoring and reporting framework to ensure appropriate visibility is being given to performance information on telephone services," Dr Southcott said.

The ANAO's findings and recommendations are set out in Report No. 37 (2014-15), *Management of Smart Centres' Centrelink Telephone Services*.

Details of the hearing are as follows:

Thursday, 20 August 2015 – 11.00 am to 12.00 noon

Committee Room 2R1, Parliament House, Canberra

Further information about the Committee's reviews is available on the Committee's website at www.aph.gov.au/jcpaa.

For media comment: please contact Committee Chair, Dr Andrew Southcott MP, on 0402 579 674 (Matthew Hee).

For information about the inquiry and public hearing: please contact the Committee Secretariat on (02) 6277 4615, email jcpaa@aph.gov.au, or visit the Committee website <http://www.aph.gov.au/jcpaa>.