



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

Senate Community Affairs References Committee

Centrelink's automated debt-recovery system final opportunities to speak to the committee

The Senate Community Affairs Committee will hold its final public hearings for its inquiry into Centrelink's automated debt –recovery system in Brisbane and Canberra next week.

The committee is examining the design, scope, cost-benefit analysis, contracts awarded and implementation of the Better Management of the Social Welfare System initiative, and is interested to hear from individuals who have experience of the automated debt-recovery system in those locations.

"In our hearings around Australia, the committee has listened to evidence from organisations on the effects on the community of the automated debt-recovery system. Importantly, the committee has also heard first-hand accounts from many individuals whose lives have been impacted by Centrelink debt letters," said committee Chair, Senator Rachel Siewert. "In the upcoming Brisbane and Canberra hearings, the committee will continue to allocate time to hear from individuals, to ensure that the human impact remains at the forefront of this inquiry," Senator Siewert said.

Anyone who wishes to make a short, three minute statement to the committee at one of its hearings please email the committee's secretariat to register their interest: community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au.

Opportunities to speak will be allocated in the order in which they are received.

"If anyone would prefer to speak to the committee in private, they should let the committee's secretariat know this when they register", Senator Siewert said. "Similarly, if anyone would like to speak to the committee via teleconference at the committee's Canberra hearing, they should let the secretariat know."

Details of the final two hearings are as follows:

Tuesday 16 May 2017 – Brisbane

Thursday 18 May 2017 – Canberra

Information about each of the committee's public hearings will be placed on the committee's website as it becomes available.

Information about what to do if you would like to register to speak to the committee is attached to this media release.

DATE REFERRED
8 February 2017

SUBMISSIONS CLOSE
19 April 2017

COMPLETED HEARINGS
8 March – Canberra
10 April – Adelaide
11 April – Melbourne
19 April – Sydney
21 April – Perth
26 April – Hobart
27 April – Launceston

UPCOMING HEARINGS
16 May – Brisbane
18 May – Canberra

REPORTING DATE
21 June 2017

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP
Senator Rachel Siewert
(Chair)
Senator Jonathon Duniam
(Deputy Chair)
Senator Sam Dastyari
Senator Louise Pratt
Senator Linda Reynolds
Senator Murray Watt

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How to register your interest in speaking to the committee:

If you, or someone you know, would like to speak to the committee, please email the following information to the committee as soon as possible to register your interest:

Preferred hearing location: <i>eg Adelaide</i>	
Title <i>eg Mr, Ms, Mrs, Miss</i>	
First name: <i>eg: Jenny</i>	
Family name: <i>eg: Citizen</i>	
Telephone number: <i>eg 02 62773005</i>	
Email address: <i>eg: jenny.citizen@hotmail.com</i>	
Would you prefer to speak to the committee at a public or private hearing session? (See * below)	

Please note:

This information will only be used to contact you in relation to the committee's hearings. It will not be made public or provided to anyone other than members of the committee and its staff.

What happens next

Requests to speak to the committee will be processed in the order in which they are received. The committee's staff will allocate a time to each individual on the day they have requested, taking account of any requests to speak in public or in private.

If you are allocated a time to speak, you will receive an email advising the time and panel number that you have been allocated and confirming the hearing location. You will be sent a witness form to complete and information on the protection of witnesses and parliamentary privilege.

If all time slots for individual statements at the hearing you would like to attend have been allocated, you will receive an email telling you this. You can still attend and listen to the hearing.

What to expect on the day of the hearing

* Most committee hearings are held in public and anyone is welcome to come and listen. The audio of each public hearing will also be broadcast live on the internet:

www.aph.gov.au/News_and_Events/Watch_Parliament. Private hearings are restricted to those witnesses giving evidence, committee members and secretariat staff.

A transcript is made of each hearing and the transcripts of public hearings are published on the committee's website. Transcripts of private sessions are not published.

When it is time for individuals to speak to the committee, the Chair of the committee will invite the individuals in each panel to come forward to the witness table. Each individual will be asked to state their first name and to confirm that they have received information about the protection of witnesses and parliamentary privilege.

Each individual will have the opportunity to speak to the committee for three (3) minutes. At the conclusion of your time, a bell will sound and you should finish your sentence and then hand the microphone to the next person.

Members of the committee may ask you some questions about what you have said.

Further information about what to expect when attending a Senate committee hearing is available on the Senate website: [Attending a public hearing](#)