

The Secretary
Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Attention: Dr John Carter

Dear John,

INQUIRY INTO THE MANAGEMENT AND INTEGRITY OF ELECTRONIC INFORMATION IN THE COMMONWEALTH

Centrelink is pleased to contribute to this inquiry and welcomes the opportunity to assure Parliament of the measures it has implemented to protect electronic information for which it is custodian.

Electronic information is the core resource for Centrelink business processes and provides Centrelink with the ability to offer services to customers through a range of life events in a one stop shop service delivery approach. Protecting this information is therefore a high priority for Centrelink and a range of strategies are employed to ensure the privacy, confidentiality and integrity of this information.

Centrelink has been at the forefront of internet developments and is represented on several committees organised by NOIE. Some of the initiatives Centrelink has taken in relation to electronic information protection and on-line services are:

- Centrelink is one of the leading agencies with internet gateway security. DSD fully security certified Centrelink's Gateway and Firewall environments in September 2002.
- A range of measures have been put in place to protect the Centrelink website and electronic data holdings that could be considered best practice.
- These measures which are at the forefront of internet security include:
 - graded transactions (level of access and authentication depends on nature of transaction);
 - a registration system;
 - an access control facility;
 - application testing and certification;
 - a Web capture facility that logs and records all customer online usage;
 - external penetration testing;
 - an internet intrusion detection system (IDS);
 - security vulnerability assessment conducted by a leading Internet Security Company; and
 - effective governance and control arrangements that ensure the continued integrity of any system updates or releases.

- Centrelink has developed a strong privacy culture which has been extended into the internet environment. All Centrelink internet applications are privacy compliant and are implemented after a Privacy Impact Assessment has been undertaken in accordance with guidelines endorsed by the Privacy Commissioner.
- Centrelink has a mature security regime that has followed the Best Practice Guides and principles associated with internet and application security. We follow formal risk methodologies, require mitigation strategies, internet application code is security tested and external penetration testing of our internet site is regularly conducted.
- To ensure the protection and the recovery of its electronic information in the case of an emergency situation or disaster Centrelink has developed an extensive Business Continuity management and planing process. Centrelink has implemented a Business Continuity Framework that enables different parts of the Centrelink environment to develop Business Continuity plans to meet their specific requirements and also fit within the whole Centrelink Business Continuity strategy.

Centrelink would be happy to provide further information or discuss any of the above matters relating to the comprehensive measures it has introduced to protect electronic information. The Centrelink Contact Officer for this inquiry is Robert Martin Telephone: 62198823 or email robert.martin@centrelink.gov.au.

Yours Sincerely,

Luke Woolmer
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