

RESPONSE:

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- It is important to note this case is not related to the online compliance system – debt relates to Family Tax Benefit (FTB).
- The experience described by [redacted] could have been avoided if she had informed the department she had separated from her partner in a timely way, and if she had lodged her tax returns in a timely way.
- These are both fundamental elements of the Family Tax Benefit system, and it's a strong reminder that people who accept government payments are required to fulfil their obligations.

Online compliance system:

- In regards to the online compliance system, we encourage anyone who receives a letter from the department, and needs to update or confirm their details, to do this online by following the instructions in their letter. This is the easiest way for people to confirm their details with the department.
- Anyone who needs help to go online or who needs to speak with a staff member about their letter can call the dedicated compliance line on 1800 086 400. Calls to this number are currently answered in under 5 minutes.

Accessing services:

- When a person visits a department service centre they are greeted by a staff member who will ask what help they need and direct them to the most appropriate next step. This may include asking them to use the onsite self-service facilities, either computers or telephony, with the help of staff if needed.
- People with complex or urgent needs will be booked into the wait room so that they can speak with a staff member. There is no time limit on these conversations.
- The department encourages anyone able to do their routine business online to do so using myGov or the Express Plus mobile apps. For many people this is the quickest and easiest way to do their business and allows staff to focus face-to-face services on people most in need.
- The department is introducing new technology to improve our service delivery.
- We are in the process of introducing a new telephony platform for Centrelink phone lines, which will allow us to better manage call wait times and respond to customer calls.
- Major work is also currently underway to replace the department's antiquated IT system. In the longer term, the overhaul of our IT system will allow us to modernise the delivery of welfare payments and services.

Note: the recipient's name has been removed.