



CEO - Message 15 September 2006

Chief Executive Officer

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All Staff Message

15 September 2006

All staff,

Recent media coverage of Centrelink's action against employees who breach privacy guidelines has overwhelmingly supported the view that our customers have the right to privacy and to expect that information they give us will be treated with respect.

Public comment from Centrelink employees and internal email feedback has also been supportive of the policy, and has emphasised that it is a small minority who breach the guidelines and that Centrelink has a highly professional and responsible workforce.

This has been echoed by statements from the Privacy Commissioner, the CPSU, and various welfare rights groups. I would like to draw your attention, however, to a recent statement by the Industrial Relations Commission after a case of unfair dismissal against Centrelink was recently taken there after an officer was dismissed for the unauthorised access of records.

After the case was finalised, the Commissioner released a statement on September 5 confirming that:

"Unauthorised access, including browsing, is contrary to the Social Security Act 1991, the Crimes Act 1914 and, with very good public policy reasons, the policy of Centrelink. I also draw attention to the fact that such conduct could be inconsistent with the Public Service Act 1999.

The policy against unauthorised browsing is sound and employees should understand that appropriate penalties, including dismissal, will result."

This is a very powerful statement and worth passing on to you all. It is an affirmation for all Centrelink employees who do the right thing, and a strong warning that browsing is not in line with the expectations that the community has of Centrelink.

Carolyn Hogg
Ag Chief Executive Officer



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