



**Australian Government**  
**Attorney-General's Department**

Secretary

07/7150

28 June 2007

Senator Guy Barnett  
Chair  
Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator

**Clarification: Privacy Act regulations that permit use of Centrelink number**

I refer to the recent public meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs on 23–24 May 2007 regarding budget estimates for the Attorney-General's portfolio.

On Thursday 24 May, during the Office of the Privacy Commissioner's appearance before the Committee, I noted that regulations under the *Privacy Act 1988* permit the Centrelink Customer Reference Number to be used to assist Centrelink customers to verify that they qualify for concessions.

I refer you to page 106 of the Proof Committee Hansard and to my sentence beginning 'I also want to add that we have introduced some regulations that permit the Centrelink client...'. Where I referred to 'agencies' in that sentence, I was referring to organisations such as utilities or private businesses rather than government agencies.

I was also referring to organisations and not government agencies in my further response to Senator Ludwig's question about the regulations applying to parliamentary officers.

I trust this information is of assistance to the Committee.

Yours sincerely

Robert Cornall AO  
Secretary