



MEDIA RELEASE

SENATOR THE HON DOUG CAMERON SHADOW MINISTER FOR HUMAN SERVICES SENATOR FOR NEW SOUTH WALES

HUMAN SERVICES IT PROBLEMS SHOWS TURNBULL GOVERNMENT'S INNOVATION TALK IS ALL SPAM

Access to myGov, the Centrelink website and the Medicare system is proving increasingly difficult for Australians, just as the Turnbull Government begins [spending \\$28 million on ads to say it 'embraces innovation'](#).

"It is the height of irony that the Turnbull Government is spending so much telling us how they're innovative at the same time as you can't access MyGov because the system is down" said Senator Cameron.

"It's like a script for a political satire. People can't use MyGov, Centrelink, Medicare and DHS websites? [IT glitches are telling people they owe the Government money when they don't?](#) Phone lines are jammed and offices full because the online systems won't work? Here's the solution- spend \$28 million saying we're a Government that's in favour of innovation!

"If it weren't so frustrating it'd be funny.

"And worst of all these are problems of the Abbott/Turnbull Government's own making. [Staff say that many of the problems are due to cuts.](#)

"The Minister responsible has no interest in these issues. He just wants to be seen to be acting tough.

"He needs to focus on his portfolio, settle the long-running industrial dispute in DHS fairly, and be open and transparent about what the problems in DHS are and how he plans to fix them.

"The Government says it will be spending up to \$1b on the welfare infrastructure payment transformation program, but they won't release details of how that transformation will proceed. They won't tell us how much, if anything, will be used to strengthen Australia's long term IT capabilities.

DHS is beset by problems:

- The [Australian National Audit Office's Management of Smart Centre's Centrelink Telephone Services Report](#) showed that approximately 40 per cent of all incoming calls result from failed online or self-services and the growth of digital transactions has not reduced demand for call centre services as was anticipated.
- The [New Year's Day glitch that caused 70,000 people to be told they owed up to \\$800 to the Government.](#)
- [DHS Annual Report](#) shows complaints are up 18.8 per cent on last year, customer satisfaction is down by 8%.
- For over 20 months DHS has been under a WorkChoices-inspired ideological attack on the wages and conditions of staff. The 2014-15 Australian Public Service '[State of the Service Report](#)', shows that only 59% of APS staff believe they are paid fairly, down from 67 per cent last year.
- The Minister has failed to respond to Audit Office and Ombudsman reports which note service delivery failures in customer identity protection, call wait times, online and face to face services.
- The [Commonwealth Ombudsman's follow-up review of service delivery complaints at Centrelink](#) has revealed that problems have persisted for more than 18 months after his initial report was published in April 2014.

2015 has been described by [informed independent observers](#) as DHS' *annus horribilis*. The Minister should be ensuring that 2016 isn't just more of the same.

WEDNESDAY, 13 JANUARY 2016