



PAUL FLETCHER MP

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MEDIA RELEASE

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SHORTEN MUST FRONT UP ON DATA BREACH

Australians whose Medicare or Centrelink information was disclosed as part of the Optus data breach remain in the dark, with no official update from the Albanese Government in over a week about efforts to secure their personal information.

Services Australia commenced its data matching program on 5 September to identify whether Medicare number or Centrelink Reference Numbers involved in the breach could be fraudulently used to falsely claim government payments and services.

But instead of reassuring Australians about his agency's handling of their personal information, Bill Shorten has been silent on efforts to secure their data.

Shadow Minister for Government Services, the Hon Paul Fletcher MP, said Australians deserve answers.

"Bill Shorten wasted no time in picking fights and pointing fingers when the data breach first occurred, but now he's MIA," Mr Fletcher said.

"Australians need certainty when it comes to the security of their Medicare and Centrelink data but they're not getting it from this government.

"More than a week has passed since Services Australia received the customer data from Optus, but we still don't know how many accounts have been compromised and whether any were hijacked.

"It's also concerning that Services Australia isn't planning to let Australians know whether their data wasn't compromised, given this would ease unnecessary anxiety in the community, particularly among elderly and vulnerable.

"Instead of making a bad situation worse by staying silent, Bill Shorten needs to step up and provide an urgent update on how the data audit is progressing."

ENDS

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