



PAUL FLETCHER MP

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MEDIA RELEASE

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AUSTRALIANS HANG UP ON LABOR

During the Albanese Labor Government's cost of living crisis, over 6 million Australians were stuck on hold at Centrelink in financial year 2023-24 for longer than 30 minutes.

New data obtained by the Opposition reveals that in 2023-24, there were more 'congestion messages' (busy signals) than calls answered by a Service Officer for Australians on the social security line, as the below table shows.

Outcome	Number of calls
Self-managed calls	15,046,368
Calls answered by Service Officer	9,538,673
Congestion Messages	13,587,357

A shocking 4,025,417 Australians chose to terminate their call before reaching a Service Officer.

The below table compares average speed to answer (ASA) (the average time it takes for a call waiting in the queue to be answered) figures at Centrelink for different time periods. The figures are displayed as minutes and seconds.

Centrelink Line	ASA FY 2021-22	ASA FY 2022-23	ASA FY 2023-24
Disabilities, Sickness and Carers	20:59	32:22	46:39
Employment Services	24:55	34:08	47:24
Families and Parenting	24:45	34:37	50:04
Older Australians	21:30	31:52	44:31

The below table shows the number of calls in 2023-24 where a Centrelink customer waited longer than 30, 60, 90 and 120 minutes respectively.

Time period	Number of calls
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Greater than 30 minutes	3,707,248
Greater than 60 minutes	1,932,468
Greater than 90 minutes	613,316
Greater than 120 minutes	40,312

Shadow Minister for Government Services Paul Fletcher said the figures point to an incompetent government that has no idea how to deliver effective customer service.

“If you call Services Australia, there is a high likelihood you will either be kept on hold for longer than the average TV show, or you’ll hang up in frustration. This is unacceptable and Australians deserve better,” Mr Fletcher said.

“Services Australia is meant to be the front door to government, and that door is increasingly being slammed shut. Bill Shorten should be making life easier for customers and he’s done a terrible job at that.

“There needs to be a root and branch review of Services Australia to help improve the agency’s performance.”

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