



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2024-2025

Ms Nicole Lawder MLA (Chair), Ms Suzanne Orr MLA (Deputy Chair),
Miss Laura Nuttall MLA

**ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE
DURING PUBLIC HEARINGS**

Asked by: Miss Laura Nuttall MLA and Mr Andrew Braddock MLA

Addressed to: Treasurer

Redirected to: N/A

Reference: Uncorrected Hansard Transcript pp 109–110

In relation to: ACT entities taking payments via Centrepay

Hearing Date: 30 July 2024

QTON lodgement date: 31 July 2024

Answer Due Date: 5 August 2024

MISS NUTTALL: Yes, indeed. Thank you, Chair. I am interested in the Centrepay scandal that is embroiled in the commonwealth Department of Human Services. Does the ACT use Centrepay for any of its own purposes?

Mr Campbell: Not that I am aware of. Can you expand on the question a little further so I understand; the company Centrepay, is that the?

MISS NUTTALL: Yes, indeed, and there has been a scandal about it in the commonwealth government, but within the ACT I—there were allegations that AGL was charging people through the Centrepay scheme when they were no longer AGL's customers. I was wondering if that extended to AGL customers within the ACT.

Mr Barr: We might have to take that one on notice. I assume this is an automated payment recovery system.

[...]

Mr Barr: Okay. Well, certainly we would not be using it, but is the question would anyone who is voluntarily using it be making deductions to pay any ACT government charges; that the question?

MR BRADDOCK: Yes, or is the ACT government or any associated territory owned corporations partnered with Centrepay in which to garnish people's Centrelink payments.

Mr Barr: Right. Okay. In that case, Icon—

THE CHAIR: To do a Robodebt; is that what you are saying?

MR BRADDOCK: Well, a version. Yes.

Mr Barr: —docking Icon or Access Canberra, yes.

THE CHAIR: Rates.

Mr Barr: Well, I will need to consolidate that across government, because that would be multiple agencies, so we will take that on notice.

MR BRADDOCK: Thank you.

Andrew Barr MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

Access Canberra, Icon Water and ActewAGL are authorised users of the Centrepay platform. Information provided by each of these entities about their use of the platform is below.

Access Canberra

Community members that cannot, or do not wish to pay their infringements straight away can apply to pay their penalties in instalments. This is called an Infringement Notice Management Plan (INMP).

Community members who enter an INMP can request that regular deductions are made from their Centrelink payments. Community members ultimately decide whether or not to have the amounts deducted from their Centrelink payment, and they can amend or cancel this deduction at any time.

When an INMP is set up on the Centrepay platform, the total dollar amount payable and the end date of the plan is specified so that deductions do not continue longer than necessary.

Those experiencing financial hardship are also able to manage their infringement notice penalties in other ways, should they so choose. These options are detailed on their infringement notice and [here](#) on the Access Canberra website.

Icon Water

Icon Water – a Territory-owned corporation – accepts Centrepay as an option that a customer can choose to use to pay their Icon Water bills. Icon Water does not use Centrepay to garnish Centrelink payments to repay a debt based on court orders or similar.

Icon Water currently has 172 customers (up to 31 July 2024) making payments towards their Icon Water bill via Centrepay.

Icon Water has processes and controls in place to prevent payments from continuing via Centrepay on a closed Icon Water account. This includes a weekly process which is run to identify and cancel

any Centrepay deductions on closed Icon Water accounts. There are no Icon Water customers who continue to make Centrepay payments on a closed account.

ActewAGL

ActewAGL – an ACT electricity retailer that is owned equally by Icon Water and AGL Energy Ltd via subsidiary companies – accepts Centrepay as an option for customers to pay their ActewAGL bills.

Recent claims against AGL do not extend to ActewAGL, which operates as a separate entity.

ActewAGL has processes and controls in place to prevent payments from continuing via Centrepay when a customer has closed their account.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates 2024-2025

Signature: 

Date: 6.8.24

By the Treasurer , Andrew Barr MLA