



Keep Me Posted campaign increases momentum

For immediate release.

On Monday the Keep Me Posted team headed to Tasmania to continue lobbying politicians to support the campaign to promote paper bills and statements for Australians without penalty of fees. Senator Anne Urquhart, Member for Braddon Justine Keay, Colin Ormsby from Fair Go for Pensioners, Judy Huett from Speak Out and Kellie Northwood Executive Director of the Keep Me Posted campaign, were guest speakers at the campaign's first Public Forum. Hosted by Senator Anne Urquhart, the Public Forum set out to engage with members of the community and discuss key campaign issues.

In the presence of the media, over 50 members of the community, representatives of charities and local councilors the public forum called for the end of fees for paper bills and statements on a social justice platform.

With Banks, telcos and other service providers increasing pressure on their customers to electronic bills and statements, many Tasmanians are left out to dry. Tasmania is also one of the most affected States by the digital divide. The Australian Digital Inclusion Index released in August reveals that Tasmania is the least digitally included State of Australia. With a score of 48.2, it is 6.3 points below the national average. Keep Me Posted, is challenging corporations to remove 'pay-to-pay' penalties for Australians who prefer paper communications.

"In Australia internet accessibility and internet affordability are significant issues," commented Northwood, "As the campaign travels across Australia we are hearing more and more the first hand impact on the community of fees for paper bills and statements and it is simply unjust."

Senator Urquhart outlined she is "particularly concerned about the widespread 'pay-to-pay' practice of charging customers more to receive their bills by mail, rather than electronically. We know that these fees are disproportionately hitting those who can least afford it, and Tasmanians are hardest hit than other States across Australia which is even more disturbing."

The forum was an open invitation to all members of the community providing an opportunity to hear about the impact of these fees and advice on how Tasmanians can ask for these fees to be removed.

Senator Urquhart called on the audience to write to their local and federal representatives and pledge their support to the campaign. "The power of the people is strong," Senator Urquhart said.

"The practice of charging a fee for paper bills is excluding many in our community that don't use, or don't have access to the Internet in their homes. I don't think it's right for our elderly community members, or vulnerable Australians to be charged with extra fees that can easily stretch to hundreds of dollars a year," commented Justine Keay, Federal Member for Braddon.

"The opportunity to participate in the Public Forums is terrific and the Keep Me Posted campaign is certainly gaining momentum – to put it simply Australians prefer printed communications and this should be a choice they're entitled to without penalty when dealing with companies," commented Northwood.

This forum follows a series of meetings Kellie Northwood and the Keep Me Posted team had in Canberra last week with over 20 Federal politicians from across the political spectrum. More public forums will be organised across Australia in the weeks to come, providing an open space for the Australian voice to be expressed.

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The Keep Me Posted (KMP) campaign represents advocate groups, charities, consumer groups, employer and employee representatives, industry and political representatives who believe in the right to choose the way companies communicate with them. KMP believe every consumer should be able to choose, without penalty, how they prefer to be communicated to via banks, utility companies and other services providers. **www.keepmeposted.org.au**

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