



## Call on Government to protect vulnerable Australians

*For immediate release*

The release of the third Australian Digital Inclusion Index (ADII) earlier this week adds weight to the Keep Me Posted campaign who are advocating for a ban on paper billing fees. Multinationals profit on the back of struggling Australians and Keep Me Posted is calling on Government to restore sense to the digital divide debate.

Keep Me Posted is heading to Canberra in October to once again call on the Government to protect vulnerable Australians by implementing legislation banning paper bill fees. The campaign is demanding answers, despite being promised answers in April 2018 following Treasury's Consultation into paper billing fees conducted in December 2017.

Kellie Northwood, Campaign Director, Keep Me Posted commented, "Our most vulnerable Australians can no longer wait as the least able to afford these charges in our community are being impacted the most."

Whilst some states are improving, there's still work to be done to ensure all Australians are receiving important communications the way they wish to receive. As the digital divide widens, and while internet connectivity prices are not decreasing, struggling families who can least afford it are being hit the hardest.

The campaign supports Lead Researcher, Professor Julian Thomas' comments stating there are more than 2.5 million Australians who are not online and therefore missing out on benefits that come with connection. "What we've found is that nationally, digital inclusion is improving, but there is much more work to be done. Poorer and more vulnerable communities are more likely to be digitally excluded and are not enjoying all the benefits of being online. As an increasing number of essential services and essential communications move online, the divide is getting deeper." From this, paper-based alternatives are essential to a large portion of vulnerable communities.

"There are still several Australian communities who like, want and, more importantly, need paper-based communications. All homes come with a letterbox, not everyone has internet connectivity," Northwood furthered.

"It is unfair for Australians to succumb to everything digital when there are alternatives still available, and the paper bill is a favourable alternative that should be provided free of charge. As companies continue to push Australians online, a greater burden is put on those not connected."

Keep Me Posted applauded New South Wales earlier this year when premier Gladys Berejiklian announced the end of paper bill charges from energy retailers as part of a series of measures included in the Energy bill relief package and the campaign is now calling on other states to show the same leadership.

The campaign is also calling on new Energy Minister, Angus Taylor, to show similar leadership and implement legislation at a Federal level.

**Keep Me Posted**

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The 2018 ADII is based on data from more than 16,000 Australians captured in the annual cycle of the Roy Morgan Single Source Survey.

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**Keep Me Posted:**

Keep Me Posted AU (KMP) is a national advocacy campaign run by The Real Media Collective. KMP believes 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](http://www.keepmeposted.org.au)**

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