



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**Federation Chamber**

**STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

**Moreton Electorate: Keep Me Posted Campaign**

**SPEECH**

**Monday, 28 November 2016**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

**Date** Monday, 28 November 2016  
**Page** 4667  
**Questioner**  
**Speaker** Perrett, Graham, MP

**Source** House  
**Proof** No  
**Responder**  
**Question No.**

**Mr PERRETT** (Moreton—Opposition Whip) (16:22): I rise to thank Kellie Northwood, Colin Ormsby and Carol Sarasa from the Keep Me Posted campaign for visiting my electorate recently to talk to residents and community groups about the impact of the push for people to conduct their affairs digitally—that is, online, not just using their fingers. More and more businesses are imposing fees and restricting access to paper bills and statements, denying their customers an informed and appropriate choice.

Those who attended the forum in Yeronga were worried about the widespread increase of the pay-to-pay practice of charging customers more to receive their bills by mail rather than electronically. An Australian household receives an average of seven to eight invoices per month. With an average cost of two dollars per bill, this adds up to nearly \$180 a year. We heard from Kellie Griffiths, manager for St David's Neighbourhood Centre in Coopers Plain, that everyday the staff and volunteers at St David's come into contact with those who struggle to meet the pressures of day-to-day life.

Kelly talked about the concerns some of her clients expressed in this push for online billing. Many said they knew of older people who do not have computers or, if they did have a computer, did not know how to use it properly or were fearful about using the internet. Many mentioned the distrust in giving out their email addresses or losing their independence in having to rely on family members to help them work this stuff out. Kelly also talked about the length of time and the frustration experienced by centre staff trying to organise electronic billing from a local electricity company and wondered about the difficulty that those from non-English speaking backgrounds would experience in trying to navigate and understand difficult systems.