



Auditor-General for Australia



17 January 2017

Ms Linda Burney MP
Shadow Minister for Human Services
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

By email: Linda.Burney.MP@aph.gov.au

Dear Ms Burney

Request for an audit of Centrelink debt recovery and welfare integrity programs—automated data matching

I am writing in response to your letter of 5 January 2017, requesting that I consider undertaking an audit of the use of automated data matching in Centrelink debt recovery and welfare integrity programs, with a focus on risk management and planning by the Department of Human Services; the value of savings derived from the programs to date; and the efficiency of future budget allocations for the programs.

As you will be aware, the Commonwealth Ombudsman has recently commenced an investigation into the Centrelink debt recovery scheme. This investigation may result in an issues paper or public report issued under section 15 of the *Ombudsman Act 1976*.

I have consulted with the Ombudsman regarding the scope of his own motion investigation and do not intend to commence an audit while the Ombudsman's investigation is underway. Nonetheless, I will consider the inclusion of an audit in the development of my 2017-18 Audit Work Program.

Yours sincerely

Grant Hehir