

MEDIA RELEASE



The Hon **David Hawker** MP
Federal Member for Wannon



31 August 2009

TELSTRA FEES IMPACT UNFAIRLY ON ELDERLY AND DISADVANTAGED

Telstra's decision to charge an extra fee for bills not paid by phone or over the net is a heartless money grab directed at our disadvantaged and elderly, Federal Member for Wannon David Hawker said today.

"Telstra is currently charging an extra \$2.20 to customers who pay their bills at Telstra shops, post offices or via mail," Mr Hawker said.

"This is a direct hit at elderly and disadvantaged members of our community," he said.

Mr Hawker said the majority of elderly people do not have easy access to the internet and many would struggle to use it even if they did.

"Whilst younger generations have grown up comfortable with online technology there is still a considerable portion of the population out there who pay their bills with cash or a cheque book. Placing an extra fee on these people, who are paying their bills on time using the same payment method they have used for decades, is nothing more than a heartless money grab," he said.

"My office has received many calls from angry Telstra customers who are outraged at this extra charge."

Mr Hawker said the Shadow Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy is taking this issue up with Telstra in a bid to see this charge reversed.

In the mean time, pensioners should be sure to register their eligible pensioner concession card details with Telstra, in order for the fee to be waived.

"Whilst I welcome this concession for pensioners it is still unacceptable that other Western Victorians should be lumped with this fee and I urge anyone affected to register their complaint with the Telecommunications Ombudsman on 1800 062 058 or contact my office on 1300 131 692," Mr Hawker said.

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