

To Whom It May Concern:

My household at this stage has refused to fill out the census due to the changes to how it will be linked to your demographic details.

I have no problem with my demographic details being used for research and other demographic purposes by the ABS. My concern is whether or not this information will be used to track me through the linkage key, even if it would be difficult to extract my name and address details from said key.

I am very familiar with the IT environment and I do have concerns about whether the encryption used would be robust enough to prevent someone from decrypting the keys to get to the underlying data. With access to enough of these linkage keys and the associated demographic data, plus what is publicly available through the Internet, I am sure that someone at some stage would be able to decipher the algorithm. This in turn could put the privacy of many at risk.

I work in an agency that has a wide availability of data and the possibility of this net being widened to include more information as a result of the census is very concerning. If I was given the option to opt out of the linkage key being created, my household would have completed the census within a few days of census night and everything would be fine as we understand the value of the demographic data provided.

The lack of privacy in the changes that have been recently made to the census are of utmost concern to my entire household. This is why we have at this stage refused to complete the census. I do not trust that the government will respect my right to be a private citizen and not use that information to gather more data about me which I have no control over.

While I understand that there are private corporations that collect information such as browsing data and buying habits from me, I have the ability to opt out of their data collection by not using their websites or not dealing with those companies.

I do not have the ability to opt out of this linkage and I feel that this not only violates my privacy but also is cause for concern about how the ABS will use that data. No information has been provided on why it is necessary to link this demographic data to members of my household instead of street or suburb level demographics to inform researchers and policy makers on the best areas to target their efforts.

Until my concerns are allayed, which I feel would only happen if the ability to opt out of the linkage were made available, I am very reticent in providing my demographic details attached to my name or address.

I also feel that the size of the fines associated with not filling out the census are bullying tactics to force people to fill it out despite these concerns. And after the publicity of these concerns and discussion with others, I feel that the decision to create these linkage keys has likely resulted in enough false information being submitted by those attempting to avoid the

finer while preserving their privacy to render the data useless and a very valuable collection tool untrusted by the general Australian public.

As a result of this, I put to the committee whether the creation of these linkage keys as part of the Australian census has been valuable enough to potentially damage the reputation of a valuable research tool. This could lead to future census data being equally falsified with few ways to verify the data, in turn leading to the census no longer being able to truly represent the public to researchers and policy makers.

With regards,