



Public hearings on Data Retention Bill

Parliament's Intelligence and Security committee will hold public hearings this Thursday and Friday for its inquiry into the Telecommunications (Interception and Access) Amendment (Data Retention) Bill 2014.

A wide range of government and non-government organisations will be represented at the hearings, including telecommunications companies, IT industry bodies, legal experts, media and consumer organisations.

The Committee will also hear from state and federal police forces, as well as independent statutory authorities including the Commonwealth Ombudsman, the Australian Privacy Commissioner, the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security and the Australian Human Rights Commission.

The Data Retention Bill seeks to implement a mandatory telecommunications data retention regime. It contains measures to require telecommunications suppliers in Australia to retain certain data for two years. The data would not include a person's web-browsing history, or the content of a communication, email or social media post. The Bill would also limit those able to access telecommunications and stored data to enforcement agencies with a demonstrated need and with appropriate internal procedures to protect privacy.

The Chair of the Committee, Mr Dan Tehan MP, said "While the Committee's first hearing in December focused on the nature of the proposed data set and the utility of that data for law enforcement and security agencies, at this week's hearings we expect to discuss a very broad range of issues.

"We will be considering the appropriateness of the data retention regime proposed in this Bill and its application to the investigation and prosecution of serious criminal offences and to countering threats to national security. Safeguards and oversight will be a key focus for the Committee."

Details of the hearings are as follows:

Thursday, 29 January 2015 – 8.30am to 6.20pm
Committee Room 2R1, Parliament House, Canberra

Friday, 30 January 2015 – 8.00am to 1.30pm
Committee Room 2R1, Parliament House, Canberra

The Committee has received nearly 200 written submissions to date from a broad range of sources. The due date for submissions passed on 19 January, and the Committee intends to report by 27 February 2015.

Further information about the inquiry, including programs for the two hearings and copies of submissions, can be accessed via the Committee's website at <http://www.aph.gov.au/pjicis>. The Bill and Explanatory Memorandum can be accessed via http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Bills_Legislation.

For media comment, please contact the Office of the Chair, Dan Tehan MP, on 6277 4393 (Parliament House) or 03 5572 1100 (Electorate).

For inquiry information, please contact the Committee Secretariat on 02 6277 2360 or email dataretention@aph.gov.au.