



Submission No 24

Inquiry into potential reforms of National Security Legislation

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Surely this provides government with the ability to do their jobs better to protect us all? Well, that's the whole point, isn't it – will it lead to more efficient and effective law enforcement and a safer Australia, and at what cost? If these reforms are vastly in the public interest, can be guaranteed to be safe from potential abuse or misuse of the data and can be quantifiably proven to improve not just the effectiveness of law enforcement, but the capturing of dangerous criminals and disruption of their imminently fatal activities, then they have some reasonable basis.

The facts are the reforms will be extremely expensive to implement (particularly data retention), they severely encroach on rights and privacy of Australians, they will create a database of Internet usage unlike any other that will be a honey-pot irresistible to law enforcement, commercial enterprise and criminal elements alike, making the likelihood of misuse extremely high. They will make it an offence to hide any information, whether it be private, commercially sensitive or even potentially incriminating, from law enforcement, even if their search and seizure of your computers and data is merely a fishing expedition. They will trivialise the process of obtaining warrants for data tapping, surveillance and search and seizure of private property. But most importantly, **they are unlikely to improve the effectiveness of law enforcement activities against professional criminals who will be aware of these laws and will quickly determine the easiest way to circumvent them will be to simply use a VPN connection beyond the jurisdiction of these laws**. So after all these laws, all this cost, all that will happen is every Australian – not- going to extraordinary lengths to hide their data from the government will be under constant surveillance and monitoring, while actual criminals will simply be beyond the technical ability of the government to watch anyway. That sounds like giving up a hell of a lot of rights, allowing a highly invasive influence into our lives, in an unprecedented way without actually getting any increase in safety and security back in return.

Regards,

Victoria Knight