



Crime Commission to give evidence on disrupting illegal online activity

The ability of government agencies to disrupt the operation of illegal online services has proven to be a useful tool for Australian law enforcement to prevent harm to the Australian community caused by serious and organised crime, according to the Australian Crime Commission (ACC).

On Wednesday morning, the House Standing Committee on Communications will hear evidence from the ACC at its third public hearing for its inquiry into the use of the *Telecommunications Act 1997*.

The ACC is a strong advocate of maintaining section 313 of the Act, which gives powers to some agencies to disrupt illegal online activity, and also supports improvements in transparency and accountability in the use of the section.

In its submission, the ACC said that balancing transparency, accountability and law enforcement effectiveness can be achieved by creating a regime that is proportional to the threat posed by serious and organised crime.

Committee Chairman Jane Prentice said, "Striking a balance between freedom and protection is the essence of democratic government. The scale and nature of criminal activity online demanded a response from governments and law enforcement agencies. Nonetheless, agencies must be accountable for the use of the powers they are granted, and those powers must be proportional to the threat."

Mrs Prentice noted that the Committee would be examining those issues to ensure that the use of the powers conferred under section 313 was appropriate, proportionate and subject to effective accountability.

Details of the hearing are as follows:

Date: Wednesday, 25 February 2015
Time: 8:00 am
Venue: Committee Room 1R3, Parliament House, Canberra

Further information on the Inquiry, including the full terms of reference and how to prepare a submission can be obtained from the Committee's website at www.aph.gov.au/section313 or from the Secretariat on (02) 6277 2352.

For media comment: please contact the Committee Chairman, (02) 6277 4426 or (07) 3378 1599

Further information: contact the Inquiry Secretary (02) 6277 2352, email ic.reps@aph.gov.au or visit the Committee's webpage at www.aph.gov.au/section313