



New Parliamentary inquiry into Data Retention Bill 2014

The Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security today commenced an inquiry into the Telecommunications (Interception and Access) Amendment (Data Retention) Bill 2014.

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 Explanatory Memorandum to the Bill states that data retention is necessary at this time as:

- serious and organised criminals and persons seeking to harm Australia's national security, routinely use telecommunications service providers and communications technology to plan and to carry out their activities, and
- agencies have publicly identified the lack of availability of data as a key and growing impediment to the ability to investigate and to prosecute serious offences.

The proposal for a data retention regime was considered by the Committee in Chapter 5 of its 2013 *Report of the Inquiry into Potential Reforms of Australia's National Security Legislation*. In that report the Committee recommended a number of features that should characterise any proposed regime and the oversight mechanisms.

The Chair of the Committee, Mr Dan Tehan MP, commented that "Australia has recently introduced a number of counter terrorism measures to address emerging threats. The Committee has carefully scrutinised each of these measures and made a number of recommendations to ensure adequate safeguards and oversight are in place."

He added, "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."

The Committee invites submissions to the inquiry. Please email the secretariat at dataretention@aph.gov.au by **Monday 8 December 2014** if you intend to make a submission. Submissions are requested as early as possible, but no later than **Monday 19 January 2015**.

Public hearings will be held on 17 December 2014 and on Wednesday 28 and Thursday 29 January 2015, with the possibility of further hearings if required.

The Committee intends to report by 27 February 2015.

Further information about the inquiry can be accessed via the Committee's website at <http://www.aph.gov.au/pjcis>. 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.