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Committee Secretary
Parliamentary Joint Committee on Corporations and Financial Services
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Response to matters taken on notice - Mobile Payments and Digital Wallets inquiry

Please find enclosed our response to matters taken on notice during Google's appearance before the Committee's inquiry into mobile payment and digital wallet financial services.

If you have any questions or require any further information, please contact me directly.

Yours sincerely,

Justin Mining
Manager, Government Affairs and Public Policy

Item 3: Data - storage - location of data centres

CHAIR: Is the personal data pertaining to each of the users of your platform stored anywhere other than in the United States?

Ms Layfield: No. By the 'personal data', do you mean—I think there are a number of different pieces of data, as we said. Secure payments and transaction data is stored in the United States. There are other forms of data such as your Google address, your name and your general postal address that are part of your broader Google account, and that information can be stored—again, in secure format—in a distributed cloud infrastructure in other countries around the world.

CHAIR: What other countries are they?

Ms Layfield: They're typically European, Singapore—the kinds of countries you would expect. CHAIR: I'm not quite sure what I would expect.

Ms Layfield: Chair, I can happily give you a list of all our data centres. It's a very extensive list. I could begin reading it out to you, but I think you might run out of patience relatively rapidly. So, if it's helpful, I will, on notice, give you that data centre list.

Response:

Google is fully committed to protecting the privacy and security of the personal information of all of our users and offer them transparency, choice and control over their data.

We are transparent with our users that we maintain servers around the world and information is processed and stored on servers outside of Australia. We make the location of our data centres public - these can be found at the following site: <https://www.google.com.au/about/datacenters/locations/>.

Regardless of where user data is processed or stored, we apply the same protections outlined in our Privacy policy. Data is not sold or shared outside of Google with any third party.

Our collection and storage of data comes with the highest levels of security to protect this information with full encryption in place. We have designed and custom-built our servers and data centres, never selling or distributing them externally and we have an industry-leading security team available globally making our facilities one of the safest places for data to be stored.

Rather than storing each user's data on a single machine or set of machines, we distribute all data - including our own - across many computers in different locations as set out in the list linked above. We then chunk and replicate the data over multiple systems to avoid a single point of failure. We name these data chunks randomly, as an extra measure of security, making them unreadable to the human eye.