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the society for information technology professionals

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16 May 2000

Ms C. Cornish
The Secretary
Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

laca.reps@aph.gov.au

Dear Ms Cornish

Re: Submission to Inquiry into the Privacy Amendment
(Private Sector) Bill 2000

I refer to your call for submissions, and to your extension of the date of submission beyond the originally advertised date of 12 May.

I am the Director of the Australian Computer Society (ACS) Community Affairs Board (CAB). In that role, I oversee the work of the Australian Computer Society Economic, Legal and Social Implications Committee (ELSIC).

The ACS comprises around 15,000 information technology professionals. The Society's Code of Practice has always required its members to place a high value on the privacy of individuals during the design, implementation and operation of information systems. Consistently since the late 1960s, it has urged the passage of appropriate legislation. It accordingly welcomes the Government's commitment to establish a privacy protection regime relating to the private sector.

The ACS ELSIC has considered the Privacy Bill.

ELSIC wishes to express our serious concern about inadequacies in the Privacy Bill. In its current form, the Bill seems to contemplate a reduction in privacy protection, and even appears to sanction privacy-invasive

practices. In our respectful opinion the Bill needs to be very substantially revised to address these deficiencies.

The Australian Computer Society would welcome the opportunity to participate in the development of a revised Bill.

Additional background documentation on the ACS ELSIC position on privacy and recent submissions of relevance to this Bill are on the Web at:

<http://www.acs.org.au/boards/cab/privacy.html>

Yours sincerely

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