



New inquiry into Cyber Crime

The House of Representatives Communications Committee launched a new inquiry into cyber crime and its impact on Australian consumers today.

The Chair of the Communications Committee Belinda Neal has welcomed the chance this inquiry presents to investigate Australia's progress in combating cyber crime.

"Anyone who has done their banking on-line, used websites to purchase goods or emailed family or friends knows the Internet is now an integral part of the day to day lives of millions people and businesses worldwide," Ms Neal said.

"This technological revolution has delivered many exciting opportunities, but with the undoubted economic and social benefits has also come a new risk of 'cyber crime'. Illegal activity, such as identity theft and financial fraud, threaten the individuals' right to privacy and the competitiveness of Australian businesses and the international companies that operate here.

"E-security has emerged as an important concern for governments, the business sector and the wider community as criminals finds new and innovative ways to infect and misuse computer systems for criminal purposes. In this rapidly moving field it is timely to review Australia's progress in combating cyber crime and promoting e-security at home and abroad."

The inquiry was referred by the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, Senator Stephen Conroy and the Committee is interested in hearing the views of consumers, businesses and experts in the field, as well as federal, state and territory governments.

"This is an issue that affects all of us as we rely more and more on information and communications technology in this increasingly globalised world," Ms Neal said.

The Committee invites submissions by Friday, 26 June 2009.

Further information on the inquiry, including the terms of reference and preparing a submission can be obtained from the Committee's web site: www.aph.gov.au/coms or from the Secretariat on (02) 6277 4601.

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Media comment: please contact Committee Chair Ms Belinda Neal MP on (02) 6277 4971

Background: contact the Inquiry Secretary (02) 6277 2300

The full terms of reference are listed below.

TERM OF REFERENCE

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communications shall inquire into and report on the incidence of cyber crime on consumers:

- a) Nature and prevalence of e-security risks including financial fraud and theft of personal information, including the impact of malicious software such as viruses and Trojans;
- b) The implications of these risks on the wider economy, including the growing economic and security impact of botnets;
- c) Level of understanding and awareness of e-security risks within the Australian community;
- d) Measures currently deployed to mitigate e-security risks faced by Australian consumers
 - i) Education initiatives
 - ii) Legislative and regulatory initiatives
 - iii) Cross-portfolio and inter-jurisdictional coordination
 - iv) International co-operation;
- e) Future initiatives that will further mitigate the e-security risks to Australian internet users;
- f) Emerging technologies to combat these risks.