



Submission No 38

Inquiry into potential reforms of National Security Legislation

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To: Committee, PJCIS (REPS)

Inquiry into potential reforms of National Security Legislation

I wish to make the following points in opposition to the proposed changes to the

[Telecommunications Act 1997](#), [Telecommunications \(Interception and Access\) Act 1979](#), [Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Act 1979](#) and the [Intelligence Services Act 2001](#).

- I believe the Federal Government has excessive surveillance powers of the population already.
- To imagine the storage, for two years, of all electronic communications of all Australians is frightening. The number of times hackers have accessed sensitive national data bases around the world means no data base is totally safe.
- The proposal makes every Australian a suspect which raises the question “what Australian is going to watch the rest of us”?
- Every western democracy believes it will govern it’s people fairly and honorably. But the evidence shows that rogue leaders can cause as much damage to society as so-called-terrorists. Reference to Richard Nixon, the Pentagon Papers and the so called Weapons of Mass Destruction is just a small list of incidences.
- What could happen with access to vast amounts of data in the hands of so called authorities who had began to operate in secrecy, outside the law, with the tacit approval of those responsible in Government?

To quote Senator Scott Ludlam ‘Since the September 11 attacks, cyberspace has become steadily more militarised. In Australia, increasingly expansive and poorly defined surveillance powers are regularly passed through the Parliament with minimal debate.

As much as it is the Government's role to promote collective protection against identity theft, online crime and acts of political violence, we also have an expectation of privacy, freedom of expression and freedom from arbitrary acts of state coercion. As the lines between terrorism, civil disobedience and healthy dissent are deliberately blurred, Australia's security agencies and police forces have been deployed against climate change demonstrators, the occupy movement, anti-whaling campaigners and supporters of the WikiLeaks publishing organisation.

Australians have a strong tradition of standing up for free speech and freedom of association - we need to safeguard these traditions in the online environment. Here's a quick guide to what has been happening in your Parliament.

Regards

Bernard Terry