

From: [REDACTED]  
To: [Assistance Bill Consultation](#)  
Subject: Commentary on the Assistance and Access Bill  
Date: Tuesday, 21 August 2018 3:58:59 PM

---

To whom it may concern,

I would like to express my incredible dissatisfaction at the proposed Assistance and Access Bill. This bill is chilling for several reasons, though I'll stick to the most prominent points within this email.

**It's affect on free speech.**

It's been shown that even if you're a perfectly law-abiding citizen discussing everyday topics, knowing that someone else is listening in to your conversation can have very real effects on your interactions. This induces further anxiety, where you can never be sure who is listening in on something as simple as a catch-up conversation with a friend or family member.

If I want to do something as simple as talk to my friends and family on my phone without anyone listening in, I would no longer have that option. This is *wrong*. There is no reason to target innocent citizens for no defensible reason (see the next point).

**This Bill doesn't address the issue where mass surveillance hasn't been conclusively shown to be effective in the fight against terrorism.**

It's bad enough that this is a case of "harm everyone's rights in an attempt to catch a few", but it hasn't yet been shown that these efforts actually help to catch "the few" in the first place.

For example, see these news articles from various sources [here](#) (November 2015), [here](#) (March 2017), and [here](#) (November 2017). To date, there doesn't seem to be any *substantial* proof that these mass-surveillance schemes *help very much at all*. The only thing they successfully seem able to do is erode everyone's rights to privacy.

**There's nothing wrong with having these powers in a tight investigation for specific individuals.**

These kinds of powers are staggering. There is very little that can be said or done to morally or ethically justify their deployment them against the populace at large, especially given the immediately previous point.

That said, I would think that most people (myself included) do not have anywhere near as much of an issue with using these powers in a new or currently ongoing investigation to catch specific, known suspects. Indeed it makes sense, when you know specific people you're trying to catch, for the government to throw everything in their power to find and detain these people as soon as possible.

But to use these same powers to monitor *everything* that *every one* of your citizens is up to, even in the privacy of their own home and/or when they are performing no wrong-doing, is nothing less than assuming everyone is guilty until proven innocent. In fact, since these powers don't currently have any kind of "end-date", it's worse than that - it's assuming **everyone is guilty, with no recourse to prove innocence.**

My hope is that you reconsider this Bill, and make adequate changes to it so that it no longer falls afoul of these points. I urge you to consider your moral duty to your law-abiding citizens in not betraying their right to privacy (e.g as defined by the United Nations - especially [Article 12](#) - which Australia is a member of).

Kind regards,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the sender's name and contact information.