To Whom It May Concern,

I wish to express in the strongest possible terms my alarm at the draft 'Assistance and Access Bill' legislation, both as a software developer and as an Australian citizen.

While I understand that the modern world creates new & unique challenges for law enforcement and our national security agencies, it is critical that the fundamental integrity of encryption remains uncompromised. Attempting to subvert the foundations on which the modern internet is built creates considerable and serious risk that threatens the freedom, well-being, and financial security of everyone alive today.

As a software developer, I know that no system is truly impenetrable or secure. Cybersecurity is a constant battle, and we can only ever aspire for relative safety. Any legislation that requires software developers to deliberately weaken or subvert the security of their application, systems, or platforms, will undoubtedly lead to unintended vulnerabilities and breaches.

Additionally, the legal requirement on developers such as myself to assist government agencies in secret or face a large fine creates serious ethical and moral dilemmas, and I see it as an attack on our freedoms. I also believe that this requirement will lead to technologists and IT professionals relocating out of Australia, or potentially not choosing to work in Australia in the first place. Likewise, it is inevitable that large technology companies based out of Australia will be forced to move their business elsewhere, in order to protect the data & security of their many Australian and international customers. This will weaken our economy and status as a country of technological innovation.

I urge the relevant Minister and department to withdraw this piece of legislation and not put it to parliament. To move forward with this bill is to ignore the dire concern and warnings of leading technologists, software companies, legal experts, and digital rights organisations.

Regards,

Effy Elden
Technologist