

**From:** Jack Skinner  
**To:** [Assistance Bill Consultation](#)  
**Subject:** Assistance and Access Bill submission  
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Australians are increasingly aware and mindful of their digital presence, and critically so, their security privacy. Globally, we've seen high profile data breaches have educated billions of consumers on the value of their privacy.

Around the world, governments have reacted with broadly positive legislation such as EU's GDPR which focuses on consumer rights and protections, not governments.

The Assistance and Access Bill in its current form completely defies global policy trends and undermines Australians' trust in our government, its departments, and its agencies.

### **Access and Assistance Bill**

The current draft legislation undermines Australians trust in a multitude of ways. Of highlight to me:

- It removes judicial oversight for government-backed intrusions.
- It strong-arms companies and organisations into betraying their customer privacy; a direct contradiction of global thought leadership on the topic
- It silences any whistleblowers on abuse of power, removing any ability for Australians to keep the government honest.
- It requires technology providers to defy internationally recognised best practice when it comes to security and privacy.

### **Defying technology**

End-to-end encryption is not just a high-grade expensive way to secure communications; its part of everyday life for millions of Australians. Global technology providers such as Google and Mozilla are actively pushing to have secure-by-default as the new norm.

Australian consumers expect their data to be private and the Assistance and Access Bill completely undermines this.

By requiring hardwired backdoors and data access mechanisms, the government is not enhancing national security but is instead, rapidly undermining it. Secure technology simply cannot have selective backdoors, and suggesting so shows the lack of technology leadership that this country needs from its political leaders.

### **Lack of trust in “reasonable and proportionate”**

No recent Australian government has a demonstrated, trusted handling of terms like “reasonable and proportionate”. It's a flimsy definition designed to weaken responsibility and increase the abuse of the very powers its meant to protect against.

For a government that prides itself on human rights abuses, such vague wording does very little to instil confidence that such powers granted in the bill will ever be used “reasonably” or “proportionately”.

### **Cost and confidence of technology businesses**

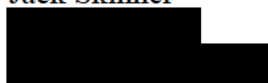
Australia has invested millions to put tech hubs around the nation on the global stage to encourage growing investment in local tech companies.

Shortsighted legislation that increases government reach and offloads responsibility to businesses to comply dramatically increases operating costs for compliance and undermines consumer trust in those businesses. This defies the investment into our growing technology businesses and risks pushing technical innovation off-shore. How un-Australian is that!

Should the government actively take this to consultation, this legislation would completely fail the so-called "pub-test".

I urge the government to reconsider this bill and to carefully consider the damage that it will do for technology, business and Australian citizens on a daily basis. As an Australian citizen, I see this as a direct betrayal of my civil rights by a government that I can clearly no longer trust with policy.

Regards,  
Jack Skinner



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Kind Regards,  
*Jack Skinner*

