

From: Jim Cullen
To: [Assistance Bill Consultation](#)
Subject: The Assistance and Access Bill 2018 Concerns
Date: Monday, 10 September 2018 12:09:13 AM

Dear Minister

I am a software engineer from Brisbane, and I am writing to express my concerns over the draft legislation titled 'The Assistance and Access Bill 2018'. These concerns are outlined below.

1. This Bill will hurt the Australian economy and Australian families

The Bill would require companies to foot the considerable expense of developing, testing, and maintaining new functionality required to comply with these laws, forcing them to change the software and hardware on millions of devices around the country. This is an expense that could be spent innovating and creating new technology. This cost will, in turn, be shifted along to consumers who will pay higher prices for their electronics goods, making worse the already significant "Australia tax" we face.

2. This Bill will hurt Australian cyber security

It is a law universally acknowledged in the field of software engineering that complexity is the enemy of security. The functionality that would be required by this Bill might not explicitly demand a weakening of security, but developing the functionality required to comply with it will increase the attack surface and make devices everywhere more vulnerable to attacks by malicious actors.

3. This Bill is a huge overreach into the fundamental workings of our digital world

As drafted, this Bill would authorise vast new powers to authorities with almost no understanding of the limitations, the implications, or oversight mechanisms. Encryption protocols are the backbone of the digital economy, facilitating every single action online, from banking to shopping to simple Google searches. Any attempt to weaken these will be a risk that no other democracy is taking. Strong encryption is essential to the modern Australian economy, and it would be a mistake to deliberately weaken it.

4. This Bill would erode trust in Australian technology

Much as our own security agencies and those of our allies have issued warnings to avoid using technology from companies associated directly with foreign autocratic regimes (for example, see: Huawei losing the right to be involved in 5G networks in Australia), this Bill would lead to other nations' trust in technology created in Australia being eroded. No citizen of another country is going to want to use a product or service built or run in a country that allows the government to surveil activity for such a broad range of reasons.

I urge the Government to consider how this Bill, in its current draft form, could damage the way that I, and many other Australians, use digital communications on a daily basis. I am also concerned about the impact on my rights — particularly the right to privacy.

Thank you
James Cullen
Software Engineer

