

From: Zoltan Somogyi
To: [Assistance Bill Consultation](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: I would like to register a strong objection to this bill
Date: Sunday, 19 August 2018 7:55:44 PM

I was brought to Australia in the 1970s by my father. We came as refugees from communism in Hungary. This history has left me sensitive to the dangers of totalitarian governments. This bill is just another in a long line of steps that both major Australian parties are taking towards a Big Brother style of government.

The example used to argue for the need for a bill like this on <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/about/consultations/assistance-and-access-bill-2018> <<https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/about/consultations/assistance-and-access-bill-2018>> uses a push-button issue and emotional language, but logically, it does not stack up. What the “enquiries showed” about the behavior of this Registered Sex Offender while on parole was either strong enough to convince an impartial observer about his guilt in new crimes, or it wasn’t. Your web page is trying to say that it was enough to convince one kind of impartial observer (the readers of the web page), but also that it is NOT enough to convince another kind (the members of the jury at a trial). That is a logical impossibility, unless the web-reading public is encouraged to accept a lower standard of evidence than the “beyond a reasonable doubt” standard jury members are supposed to use. In other words, the web page is ASKING for mob justice. This behavior is unworthy of the government of any civilized country.

Over the last 20 to 25 years, people have shifted from keeping their records on paper and in their heads to keeping them on computing devices, first PCs then laptops and phones. The web page says that 90% of cases now are impacted by being unable to access information on encrypted devices. It omits mentioning that 30+ years ago, as now, 100% of cases were/are impacted by being unable to access information stored inside people’s heads. I find it likely that the REASON why that is omitted is that stating this explicitly would lead too many people to realize the close analogy between the two situations: requiring tech companies to assist in breaking their customers’ encryption is too similar to requiring doctors to (first invent and then) administer a truth serum to their patients. The most significant difference between the two situations is the absence of anything resembling a Hippocratic oath in technological fields.

The other obvious analogy makes this proposal look even worse: requiring people to provide on-demand access to communications in flight is equivalent to requiring the bugging of all spaces, public and private, including people’s living rooms, kitchens, bathrooms, bedrooms etc.

I understand the government would like to get access to all communications, stored or otherwise, that may (or may not) reveal evidence of a crime by the people. The government should also understand that the people of Australia would also like to get access to all the communications INSIDE the government that may (or may not) reveal evidence of a crime by members of the government. Given that neither major party seems to want to impose ANY significant consequence on bankers who defraud their customers of many millions of dollars, and that they both routinely lavish infrastructure spending not on the places that need it most but on marginal electorates, the public has BY FAR more reason to believe that their getting the access they want will in fact reveal evidence of a crime. When will the government propose a bill that requires MPs, including ministers, to record, ALL of their conversations on unclassified matters? Releasing all such recordings a few weeks before each election would allow voters to consider facts, and not just campaign slogans and other propaganda, when making up their minds on who to vote for.

Zoltan Somogyi
[REDACTED]