

MEDIA RELEASE

Canberra, 11th August 2014

EFA partners with GetUp! to oppose indiscriminate data retention

Electronic Frontiers Australia (EFA), Australia's leading voice for digital rights since 1994 has partnered with GetUp!, Australia's largest campaigning community, to launch a petition opposing the government's plans to introduce a scheme requiring telecommunications and internet service providers to retain information on the digital communications of all Australians.

Such a mandatory data retention scheme would represent a massive invasion of the privacy of all Australians as well as a subversion of the presumption of innocence. It would also involve substantial implementation and compliance costs that will inevitably lead to increased mobile phone and internet access costs for all Australians, as well as hampering competition in these important industry sectors.

The massive databases that would be created by such a scheme would contain highly sensitive information and would be susceptible to being compromised in a number of ways, resulting in genuine risks to the safety of many Australians.

Such a scheme is also unnecessary. Australia's law enforcement and intelligence agencies already have broad powers to direct communications providers to retain information (and content) on persons of interest, without needing to involve the rest of society.

EFA Chair, David Cake said, "EFA, along with other civil liberties groups in Australia and around the world, is completely opposed to indiscriminate communications data retention. We recognise that access to communications data about persons of interest is of potential value to law enforcement and intelligence agencies, however we believe there is no justification for a society-wide scheme. Such a scheme puts the privacy, civil liberties and safety of Australians at risk and will involve Australians paying more so that they can be spied upon. Australians should be treated as Citizens, Not Suspects.

"EFA is very appreciative of the support GetUp! is providing to our Citizens, Not Suspects campaign. GetUp's record of raising awareness and organising Australians across a range of issues is second to none. We call on all Australians that are concerned about indiscriminate data retention to sign our petition at www.citizensnotsuspects.org.au and to write to their MP and Senators."

GetUp's National Director Sam McLean said, "Our members are gravely concerned by the government's plans to stockpile phone and online data."

"Just as the USA and EU are winding back similar programs, it's hard to understand why Australia's leaders want to take us back in time. Clearly many senior members of the government don't understand either."

"We're pleased to work with EFA again to make sure all Australians are treated as citizens not suspects."

In addition to the petition, EFA is also organising a series of events around Australia to raise awareness about the risks of indiscriminate communications data retention.

About EFA

Celebrating its 20th Anniversary in 2014, Electronic Frontiers Australia Inc. (EFA) is a non-profit national organisation that has been Australia's leading voice for digital rights since 1994. EFA's major objectives are to protect and promote the civil liberties of users and operators of digital communications systems such as the Internet, to advocate the amendment of laws and regulations in Australia and elsewhere (both current and

proposed) which restrict free speech and to educate the community at large about the social, political, and civil liberties issues involved in the use of digital communications systems. EFA website: www.efa.org.au.

EFA's Citizens, Not Suspects campaign, launched in 2013, is a campaign against indiscriminate communications data retention and mass surveillance more generally. Campaign website: www.citizensnotsuspects.org.au

EFA Media Contact

Jon Lawrence, Executive Officer
media@efa.org.au
0414 669 787

About GetUp!

GetUp is one of Australia's largest campaigning communities, with a membership of over 600,000 people. We're an independent, grassroots, community advocacy organisation that seeks to build a more progressive Australia and hold politicians to account.

GetUp! Media Contact

Matt Levinson
matt@getup.org.au
0499 319 385