

## MEDIA RELEASE

### Today is 'National Get a VPN Day'

Canberra, 13<sup>th</sup> April 2017

Today is the deadline for telecommunications and Internet service providers to be compliant with the requirements of the mandatory telecommunications (metadata) retention scheme.

EFA is therefore joining with other online rights organisations in declaring today to be 'National Get a VPN Day'.

Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) provide an important element of privacy protection for users and EFA therefore encourages all Australians to consider using a VPN service when accessing the Internet.

EFA Executive Officer Jon Lawrence said today, "VPNs are one of the most effective tools for protecting privacy when using the Internet. They provide a degree of anonymity when accessing online services and also protect against eavesdropping and government surveillance."

"We therefore encourage all Australians to consider using an appropriate VPN service when accessing the Internet, and we have published detailed guidance to assist people with choosing the right service for their needs. As with any industry, the quality of VPN services varies considerably, particularly in relation to privacy issues and people should therefore be well-informed before selecting a provider."

EFA also reiterates its previous calls for an urgent review of the data retention legislation and specifically calls for a universal warrant requirement to be introduced for access to retained telecommunications data.

EFA Executive Officer Jon Lawrence also said today, "A whole range of relationships are no less deserving of independent protection than are journalist's communications with their sources, including lawyers and their clients, doctors and their patients, and any other relationship where privacy is critical. The only effective means to achieve such protection is to have a universal warrant requirement for access to retained telecommunications data. A majority of European Union member states have some form of independent, judicial authorisation required for access to telecommunications data. Such arrangements are therefore clearly workable and Australians are no less deserving of the same protection."

EFA's guidance on choosing a VPN service is available at: [efa.org.au/getavpn](http://efa.org.au/getavpn)

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