



VICTORIAN COUNCIL FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES

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16 October 2009

PRIVACY AND CIVIL LIBERTIES –

The Federal Government's plan fails to address fundamental flaws

Liberty Victoria is one of Australia's leading civil liberties organisations and is concerned with promoting and defending human rights and freedoms in Victoria and across Australia.

Privacy is a human right and is fundamental to how we function as individuals and as a society. Unfortunately Australians do not have a right to privacy. Instead we have a patchwork of different privacy laws that often as not, fail to offer any protection at all. The Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) has recommended on a number of occasions that Australia legislate for a right to privacy and reform the current legislation to offer more comprehensive and uniform protection.

In the last few days, the Government has responded to the latest ALRC report and announced that it will implement some of the ALRC's recommendations. Whilst Liberty welcomes this initial and long overdue announcement, we note the announced reforms do not address the most fundamental flaws: the exemptions under the Act, notification of privacy breaches and other elements that affect every day privacy rights and abuses of those rights.

Overall Liberty remains disappointed with the Government's drawn out implementation of privacy law reform in Australia. We now await the second stage of reforms to be announced and hope that the Government chooses to protect the privacy of Australians over the interests of government, big business and other lobby groups. We also remain hopeful that over the longer term, Australians will eventually enjoy the same level of privacy protection that citizens in other developed countries take for granted.

Further information is available from our website (www.libertyvictoria.org.au) or by contacting our office on (03) 9670- 6422.

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