

To the A-G's Department,

With regards to your question as to whether or not the information captured as part of 2014 Metadata Retention Bill should be made available to civil court cases, may I humbly ask a question of my own:

Why, precisely, do we bother having privacy laws? Let's just drop the pretenses. If the goal is to simply make the data available to anyone who asks for it, why not just abolish all attempts at privacy entirely?

My suggestion to Mr. Brandis would be: how about we pass a law that forces all Australians to have a high definition camera strapped to their forehead at all times? This camera would of course feature on-board WiFi so that the footage could be streamed live to a big, unencrypted government database (hosted overseas, naturally) whereupon anyone who wants access to it can simply login anonymously and download as much as they like, warrant free. The costs of this scheme will naturally be worn by the Australian public, either through increased taxation or higher equipment and/or internet costs.

I think I could say with some confidence that this approach would virtually eliminate all crime entirely - a noble goal, I'm sure you'd agree.

So, in short, to answer your question as to whether or not this data should be made available to civil court cases, my answer is:

NO.

Frankly, you shouldn't have unfettered access to such a massive trove of personal information in the first place, for law enforcement purposes or otherwise. And please don't pretend as if this is anything other than an attempt to make it easier for Copyright holders to sue file sharers for downloading Game of the Thrones and the like - something which critics of your scheme pointed out from the very beginning and which the "honourable" Mr. Brandis went to great lengths to try and deny.

Perhaps also you shouldn't have announced this review right before Christmas and with such a short deadline for submissions - that tends to suggest you're trying to hide it from the public as much as possible (can't possibly imagine why that would be). It doesn't exactly help allay fears that there is some ulterior motive at work, you know?

Sincerely,
A law abiding citizen.