

1. What, if any, impact would there be on civil proceedings if parties were unable to access the telecommunications data set as outlined in section 187AA of the TIA Act?

Very little to no impact.

2. Are there particular kinds of civil proceedings or circumstances in which the prohibition in section 280(1B) of the *Telecommunications Act 1997* should not apply?

No. On the contrary, opening access further to other parties in civil cases presents *grave security risks*. The telco companies have a hard enough time protecting their own data (Telstra for example has had multiple breaches) let alone opening it to potentially thousands of civil proceedings. It also presents privacy risks and an unnecessary opening up of identifiable and personal data that could easily be obtained on release and used for malicious reasons. In my professional opinion the ethical balance is thus: great risk for very little return.

Dr Belinda Barnet
Senior Lecturer in Media, Swinburne University, Hawthorn