

Communications Security Branch  
Attorney-General's Department  
3-5 National Circuit  
Barton ACT 2600

I recently sighted a newspaper article in the Hobart Mercury of Saturday 7th January which reported that the Attorney-General's Department is proposing to allow private practice lawyers to access the mega data of respondents in contested divorce proceedings.

This can only be described as a morally indefensible selling out of the public interest to a totally corrupt element of the legal profession.

Family Law (*in Tasmania at least*) is already demonstratively manipulated by the legal profession, predominately by members of the Family Law Practitioners Association. Members of this bottom feeding offshoot of the Tasmanian Law Society actively cooperate to maximize remuneration at the financial and emotional expense of vulnerable clients. They do so by working in unison to exploit existing tensions and creating new animosities through innuendos, misrepresentation and threats. They inevitably create undeliverable expectations to their client while provoking animosity from respondents through demonstratively dishonest assertions and threats if they fail to comply. On the rare occasions where a lawyer is caught out the standard excuse is that they were acting on the instruction of their client.

To allow these individuals who lack any vestige of ethical behaviour unfettered access to troll through an individual's web, phone and email information is truly beyond comprehension.

**It is irrefutable fact that this access will be abused.**

I would like to ask what redress would any individual have against such inevitable abuse. No guidelines for granting approval could prevent unscrupulous lawyers from exploiting this new opportunity for financial gain.

To emphasise this point is anybody in your Canberra ivory tower aware that Tasmania doesn't even have a genuinely independent ethical, transparent or proactive complaint hearing body for victims of the systemic corrupt behaviour among Tasmania's legal fraternity. To provide even more opportunities for further exploitation of "legal privilege" is total madness.

As I have found to my expense the Family Court already categorically refuses to act when a lawyer openly flouts a Court sanctioned consent agreement between parties claiming this must be dealt with by the Law Society. That is totally offensive to those who are aware of the priorities and behaviour of the Tasmanian Law Society and its puppet Legal Profession Board. This abdication of its responsibilities by the Family Court simply highlights the existing cosy arrangement between its Registry and the lawyers who are allowed to dishonestly exploit the system for nothing more than a packed storeroom of Christmas gratuities.

As an aside, I noted in the newspaper report that submissions were being invited on this subject but a search of your Agency website appeared to have no reference to the review or

how makes representation. I finally resorted to contacting the office of my local MP and as a consequence have been able to get this truncated submission in before tomorrow's deadline.

Obviously the Communications Security Branch has taken a leaf out of the Tasmanian State Government's handbook of discouraging input from anyone other than those in agreement with a predetermined outcome. Nevertheless it is disappointing that a public service agency will work to ensure that the self interest of a manipulative, greedy and unprincipled pressure group takes precedence over the wider public interest. Still as that is the modus operandi of Tasmania's Justice Department it should not come as a surprise that this equally applies to bureaucrats in Canberra. Nevertheless it is disappointing.

John Forsyth