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MEDIA RELEASE

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Scrap the census, start again. Time for 'very, very bad boyfriend' to back off and stop threatening the kids

In the aftermath of the predictable 'Census Fail', and in the absence of credible, trustworthy information from the ABS or Ministers McCormack, Morrison or Brandis, the Australian Privacy Foundation calls for:

- a Senate Committee investigation of ABS' manifest failures and contempt for privacy and personal information security*
- the scrapping of the current census
- abandonment of the requirement for names, including names of people's employers
- clarification that the Census and Statistics Act cannot require names; amend if necessary
- amendment of the Census and Statistics Act to make clear that there is to be no use of census data for data linking (even without names they could try the SLK)
- abandonment of the (misleading and anxiety-inducing) threat of fines for non-completion**
- conduct of an open, independent IT risk and privacy impact assessment

So that we get it right the second time.

Prof. Greenleaf, long-time APF board member and professor of Law and IT, said "The SLK is indistinguishable from the Australia Card Number of 1987".

"This is an opportunity for the ABS to start to recover the trust it has so dramatically lost in the past few days, based on a social contract with the public that assures them that their data is for producing statistics and can't be used for anything else".

*The Senate inquiry should include seeking expert evidence and submissions about the nature of the vulnerabilities of the new online collection model and the new SLK ID number; the evidence of what actually happened; and prognosis for future risks over the 100 year retention plan. It could also investigate any plans for links to MyHealthRecord, mental health records and other SLK systems.

** See also APF's new Statement on Risk of Fines:
<https://www.privacy.org.au/Campaigns/Census2016/fines.html>

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