



**Australian
Privacy
Foundation**

<http://www.privacy.org.au>

Secretary@privacy.org.au

<http://www.privacy.org.au/About/Contacts.html>

8 October 2010

Andrew P. Howard
Chief Information Officer
Department of Health
50 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne, Victoria
Australia 3000
Andrew.P.Howard@health.vic.gov.au

cc. Mark Gardiner, Chief Information Officer, Alfred Health
M.Gardiner@alfred.org.au

Dear Mr Howard

**Re: 'Apple a day for doctors' and
'TGA sets its sights on iPhone medical apps'**

The Australian Privacy Foundation (APF) is the country's leading privacy advocacy organisation. A brief backgrounder is attached.

We note the report in the Melbourne Age of 30 July 2010, entitled 'Apple a day for doctors'. The report claimed that 500 iPads are to be provided to graduate doctors and nurses. Health Minister Daniel Andrews was quoted as saying that: "The iPads will allow doctors and nurses to access any web-enabled application run by their hospital as they move around the hospital, as well as allowing them to tap into health information resources".

A further article subsequently appeared in the Medical Observer of 5 October, entitled 'TGA sets its sights on iPhone medical apps'. The story claimed that "The days of iMedicine could be numbered, as the Federal Government turns its attention to the unregulated world of health-related iPhone applications".

The APF wrote to the CEO of Alfred Health asking several questions about the matter. The CIO replied that "Alfred Health has made no decision to implement Apple iPads", and referred us to yourself.

The APF is very supportive of appropriate application of technology in order to improve health care outcomes. On the other hand, inappropriate behaviour in relation to patient privacy is a major impediment to e-health initiatives.

The APF has been actively working with a variety of organisations in an endeavour to achieve positive outcomes, and avoid public backlash and project failures. The APF's policy statements on eHealth matters are provided as separate documents.

We appreciate the risks involved in relying on newspaper articles. However, the media reports give rise to many questions. For example:

Australian Privacy Foundation

Background Information

The Australian Privacy Foundation (APF) is the primary national association dedicated to protecting the privacy rights of Australians. The Foundation aims to focus public attention on emerging issues that pose a threat to the freedom and privacy of Australians. The Foundation has led the fight to defend the right of individuals to control their personal information and to be free of excessive intrusions.

The APF's primary activity is analysis of the privacy impact of systems and proposals for new systems. It makes frequent submissions to parliamentary committees and government agencies. It publishes information on privacy laws and privacy issues. It provides continual background briefings to the media on privacy-related matters.

Where possible, the APF cooperates with and supports privacy oversight agencies, but it is entirely independent of the agencies that administer privacy legislation, and regrettably often finds it necessary to be critical of their performance.

When necessary, the APF conducts campaigns for or against specific proposals. It works with civil liberties councils, consumer organisations, professional associations and other community groups as appropriate to the circumstances. The Privacy Foundation is also an active participant in Privacy International, the world-wide privacy protection network.

The APF's Board comprises professionals who bring to their work deep experience in privacy, information technology and the law.

The Board is supported by a Patron (Sir Zelman Cowen), and an Advisory Panel of eminent citizens, including former judges, former Ministers of the Crown, and a former Prime Minister.

The following pages provide access to information about the APF:

- Policies <http://www.privacy.org.au/Papers/>
- Resources <http://www.privacy.org.au/Resources/>
- Media <http://www.privacy.org.au/Media/>
- Current Board Members <http://www.privacy.org.au/About/Contacts.html>
- Patron and Advisory Panel <http://www.privacy.org.au/About/AdvisoryPanel.html>

The following pages provide outlines of several campaigns the APF has conducted:

- The Australia Card (1985-87)
<http://www.privacy.org.au/About/Formation.html>
- Credit Reporting (1988-90)
<http://www.privacy.org.au/Campaigns/CreditRpting/>
- The Access Card (2006-07)
http://www.privacy.org.au/Campaigns/ID_cards/HSAC.html
- The Media (2007-)
<http://www.privacy.org.au/Campaigns/Media/>