



**Australian
Privacy
Foundation**

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MEDIA RELEASE

Internet Censorship Bill

20 September 2007, 4pm

The Australian Privacy Foundation today expressed disbelief that the government of any country in the free world could table a Bill of the kind released this morning.

Without prior warning, the Government, through Senator Coonan, is proposing to provide the AFP with powers to censor the Internet.

A perhaps even worse aspect is that ISPs throughout the country are to be the vehicle for censorship, by being required to block Internet content.

These draconian powers would apply to a vast array of content which the AFP may "have reason to believe" "induces" or "facilitates" any criminal offence, or is even "likely to have [that] effect".

An adviser to the Minister said that justification for such measures is unnecessary.

"This Government's extremism has reached new heights today", said the Chair of the Australian Privacy Foundation, Roger Clarke.

"How can a politician claim the right to hold office if they set out to undermine the critical democratic right of freedom of speech, and blatantly decline to evaluate the impact of measures put before the Parliament?"

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Background Information

Communications Legislation Amendment (Crime or Terrorism Related Internet Content) Bill 2007

http://parlinfoweb.aph.gov.au/piweb/view_document.aspx?ID=2686&TABLE=BILLS

The key clause:

If the AFP Commissioner has reason to believe that Internet content is crime or terrorism related content, the ACMA must notify the content to Internet service providers so that the providers can deal with the content in accordance with procedures specified in an industry code or industry standard (for example, procedures for the filtering, by technical means, of such content).

The key definition:

crime or terrorism related content means ANY OF "[content that] encourages, incites or induces the commission of a Commonwealth offence", "[its] purpose ... is to to facilitate the commission of a Commonwealth offence", OR "[content that] has, or is likely to have, the effect of facilitating the commission of a Commonwealth offence"

The Bill was not visible in the Lists of Bills at close of business on Wednesday 13 September, but was tabled during the morning of Thursday 14th.