



**Australian
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Background report available
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MEDIA RELEASE

Big Brother to watch the Days of our Lives

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“Proposed changes to the Census will take government intrusion into our lives to a new high,” said the Chair of the Australian Privacy Foundation, Anna Johnston, today.

The Australian Privacy Foundation, the leading non-government organisation dedicated to protecting the privacy rights of Australians, today released its report on the Census changes, titled “Big Brother to watch the Days of our Lives”.

“The Bureau of Statistics has said it wants to turn the Census from being an anonymous ‘snapshot’ of Australians once every five years, into a ‘movie’ of every aspect of our lives” said Ms Johnston.

“But not everyone likes the idea of being watched by Big Brother. On behalf of all Australians who do not wish to become the subjects of pervasive government intrusion into intimate aspects of our lives, we are urging the ABS to drop this proposal immediately,” she said.

“By using every person’s name and address, and other indicators of identity, to link together records on every individual in Australia, we will have a national population database,” said Ms Johnston.

“The proposal is not just to link information about individuals from one census to the next, but to bring in data from a range of different sources, and then keep the database continually updated,” she said.

“They are proposing to add in data from disease registers, immigration data, birth and death registries, the agricultural census and other sources, to build up an even more comprehensive picture of every person’s life than the Census currently allows,” said Ms Johnston.

“The result will be a single database that paints a rich, deep and intimate picture of every Australian – not just once every five years, but on an on-going basis,” she said.

“Australians has consistently rejected the notion of a national identity card, but this proposal will result in a national population database just like the Australia Card would have supported,” she said.

“The Australian Privacy Foundation encourages anyone concerned about this idea to make a submission to the ABS, opposing the proposal,” said Ms Johnston.