



**Australian  
Privacy  
Foundation**

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

[Secretary@privacy.org.au](mailto:Secretary@privacy.org.au)

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

25 January 2011

Hon Brendan O'Connor MP  
Minister for Privacy and Freedom of Information

Dear Mr O'Connor

**Re: Financial Support for NGO Consultation Processes**

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

The APF applauds your commitment to a Credit Reporting Code of Conduct. The organisation was instrumental in support for the then Minister, Senator Nick Bolkus, who achieved passage of the Privacy Amendment Act 1990 and thereby established the current credit reporting regulatory regime.

The APF also notes that you have carriage of the commitments of the Rudd and Gillard governments to reform the processes of government, in particular by "creating more open government [by enabling] citizens to collaborate with government in policy and service design".

APF has been invited to the Roundtable on the proposed credit reporting amendments, on 10 February in Canberra. Unfortunately, your Department has declined a request for travel funding.

Public interest organisations have limited sources of funds, and run on slim budgets. Many have great difficulty in funding travel for their officers to the large numbers of consultation processes called by Ministers and agencies of the country's nine jurisdictions. In addition, many officers of those organisations are unpaid volunteers, who take unpaid time off from their occupations to provide advice to government, and who suffer considerable opportunity costs.

Government best practice recognises these problems, and many agencies routinely make available both travel support and a *per diem* in such circumstances. It is not credible for a consultation process to exclude key representatives and advocates because of a lack of funding to participate in critical events.

We accordingly request that you instruct your Department to adopt government best practice in this area.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely

Roger Clarke  
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## 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 is open to membership by individuals and organisations who support the APF's Objects. Funding that is provided by members and donors is used to run the Foundation and to support its activities including research, campaigns and awards events.

The APF does not claim any right to formally represent the public as a whole, nor to formally represent any particular population segment, and it accordingly makes no public declarations about its membership-base. The APF's contributions to policy are based on the expertise of the members of its Board, SubCommittees and Reference Groups, and its impact reflects the quality of the evidence, analysis and arguments that its contributions contain.

The APF's Board, SubCommittees and Reference Groups comprise 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](http://www.privacy.org.au/Campaigns/ID_cards/HSAC.html)
- The Media (2007-) <http://www.privacy.org.au/Campaigns/Media/>