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## **ALL AUSTRALIANS NEED THEIR PRIVACY PROTECTED – NOT JUST JOURNALISTS**

“Protections for journalists in the amended data retention bill need to be extended to all Australians,” says Chris Berg, Senior Fellow at the free market think tank the Institute of Public Affairs.

The government is reported to be amending the *Telecommunications (Interception and Access) Amendment (Data Retention) Bill 2014* to require law enforcement agencies to obtain warrants if they want to access communications data in the hunt for a journalist’s source.

The Abbott government has said it would like parliament to pass the data retention bill by the end of the week.

“This amendment for journalists gives the game away. The data retention bill is an unacceptable violation of the right to privacy and will have a chilling effect on freedom of speech,” says Mr Berg.

“Journalists are not a special class that deserve unique privileges. Many other professions value the confidentiality that they have with clients – for instance, lawyers and doctors.”

“But more importantly we all have a basic need for privacy. Requiring law enforcement officials to get a warrant in order to violate that privacy is a reasonable constraint on the power of the state. Regardless of whether we are journalists or not,” says Mr Berg.

In his submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security, Mr Berg argued that data retention was not a targeted national security policy. Instead, it was highly likely to be abused by economic regulators, a substantial regulatory burden on business, and unlikely to be an effective law enforcement tool.

“Ideally, parliament should reject the data retention bill, but if not, it should extend the same privileges granted to journalists to all Australians,” says Mr Berg.

Mr Berg’s submission is here <http://ipa.org.au/publications/2326/submission-to-parliamentary-joint-committee-on-intelligence-and-security-inquiry-in-to-data-retention>

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