



MEDIA RELEASE

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NSW PRIVACY COMMISSIONER CALLS FOR STATUTORY REMEDIES FOR SERIOUS INVASIONS OF PRIVACY

The NSW Privacy Commissioner, Dr Elizabeth Coombs, today appeared before the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Law and Justice Inquiry into serious invasions of privacy in NSW.

The Inquiry is investigating whether existing remedies available are adequately addressing this growing problem, or whether a statutory cause of action for serious invasions of privacy should be introduced.

“Privacy is increasingly becoming an asset – something an individual wants to, and believes they can, exercise proprietary control over,” Dr Coombs said.

“In that sense, we should be providing the same protections against theft and threats as we would any other piece of personal property.

“That’s why I have put on the record my support for the creation of a statutory cause of action in instances of serious invasions of privacy.”

Dr Coombs’ written submission, available on the Parliament of NSW website, supports the recommendations for the development of a statutory cause of action made by Law Reform Commission reports, produced by New South Wales, Victoria and at the Commonwealth level.

The development of a statutory cause of action, as opposed to reliance on common law remedies, is also supported by leading civil rights, privacy, legal and academic groups across NSW and Australia.

“In this age of instant global communication, where anyone with a smart phone can become an internet sensation in a matter of hours, the common law’s ability to protect privacy rights and regulate the appropriate use of personal information has not been seen to be keeping pace,” Dr Coombs said.

“Technology is developing rapidly. Those with a nefarious agenda are keeping up with this evolution. It’s all the more imperative that our legislators act to put the proper and appropriate remedies in place for dealing with serious invasions of personal privacy.”

Interviews:

Dr Coombs is available for interviews to discuss privacy issues affecting the NSW community. Please contact Kate Jobling on 0435 961 691 or email ipcinfo@ipc.nsw.gov.au to make your request.

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