



Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department

MC17-005513

22 June 2017

Mr Tim Singleton Norton
Chair, Digital Rights Watch
tim@digitalrightswatch.org.au

Dear Mr Singleton Norton

Thank you for your correspondence of 7 June 2017 to the Attorney-General, Senator the Hon George Brandis QC, concerning the Australian Government's position on encryption. The Attorney-General has asked me to respond on his behalf.

The Australian Government supports the use of strong encryption to protect personal, commercial and Government information. The Australian Government also recognises the need to protect both individual liberties and national security, and is committed to ensuring that law enforcement and national security agencies have the tools they need to keep Australians safe.

However, encrypted communications represent an increasingly significant barrier to the lawful ability of government agencies to investigate serious and organised crime and national security threats. Although Australian law enforcement and national security agencies already work closely with communications and technology companies, the Australian Government believes that more can be done to ensure that terrorists and organised criminals are not able to operate with impunity within ungoverned digital spaces online.

The Australian Government also believes that if encrypted communications contain information that can help prevent or investigate of terrorist or serious criminal offences, communications providers and device manufacturers providing services in Australia should provide reasonable assistance to agencies.

I hope this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Tara Inverarity'.

Tara Inverarity
Assistant Secretary
Communications Security and Intelligence Branch