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Announcement: Bundled consents and the Privacy Act

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"Bundled consents are not good privacy or business practices and are totally contrary to the spirit of the Privacy Act", said Malcolm Crompton, Federal Privacy Commissioner.

"Consent for the collection, use and disclosure of one's personal information should always be given freely and voluntarily. It should not be conditional upon the individual giving consent for any other form of information handling practice," he said.

"Bundled consent is a problem that is not going to go away unless the organisations involved stop doing it, or worse, are forced to stop doing it.

"Where the exchange of personal information for a service is necessary, the information collected should be required to undertake that particular service--this is the whole thrust of National Privacy Principle One. If the organisation wants to use that information for a purpose other than that for which it was collected, then the individual's consent should be sought for the extended use of that information but it should not be made a condition of the original service.

"Bundled consents diminish an individual's freedom of choice, inducing individuals to hand over their valuable personal information in exchange for a service. Bundled consents usually ask individuals to consent to a number of unrelated, often intrusive, information handling practices as a condition of receiving a service.

"My Office is raising these concerns with peak industry organisations and we look forward to meaningful dialogue on this issue. If this issue isn't resolved through discussions it could become a matter for consideration during the two year review of the Privacy Act."

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