Australian organisations sign letter rejecting government encryption ban

Rebecca Merrett (CIO) 12 January, 2016 10:47

Electronic Frontiers Australia (EFA), Australian Privacy Foundation and Australian Lawyers for Human Rights have joined more than 130 other organisations worldwide that want to put a stop to governments and third parties trying to circumvent encryption.

They have signed an open letter urging governments to not go ahead with any policies that would ban encryption in order for them to access information, create backdoor access to information, allow for third-party access, mandate insecure encryption algorithms, and pressure organisations to undermine their encryption standards to allow access.

"All governments should reject laws, policies, or other mandates or practices, including secret agreements with companies, that limit access to or undermine encryption and other secure communications tools and technologies," the letter stated.

"Users should have the option to use – and companies the option to provide – the strongest encryption available, including end-to-end encryption, without fear that governments will compel access to the content, metadata, or encryption keys without due process and respect for human rights."

In November last year, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull said he is looking at ways to counter the use of encrypted communications channels by terrorists. This came about in the wake of terrorist attacks in Paris.

In March 2014, the Australian Crime Commission commented that tackling the issues of organised crime groups using encrypted communications is a priority.

"The Australian Crime Commission is working with law enforcement and regulatory agencies, both domestic and international to overcome this growing challenge."

Submitted by Ruth Edge – Cardinia Shire Council