

I have a few comments to make on this ill advised idea.

- It seems to be the Australia card re-invented
- There is little advantage to the people who provide the information. The claims otherwise are very exaggerated!
- The similar legislation relating to the use of private information by commercial businesses starts from the assumption that the provider is the owner of that information NOT the business. This proposal reverses that in assuming that once information is provided to Government it becomes the property of government to do with as they will.
- This proposal gives excessive power to those claiming to do useful research using the data. This has in the past overcome the real need why data has been collected. I quote the case of the ABN. My ABN number was cancelled when I had not done any work for a while. I queried this and a reply from the tax department via my Senator said that the data on business activity would be compromised if non-operating businesses continued to hold an ABN. The ABN was created to cut down on cash transactions. However, the tail is now wagging the dog in determining that the principle use of ABN is to collect business statistics. Seems silly to me. Better that most people have an ABN then they are not tempted just to put cash in the wallet! An example of good public policy stuffed up!
- Having been involved in a few big data projects I am skeptical of the ability to create such a cross department system. It will founder or suffer massive cost escalations on the trivial definitions of data which are required by particular groups or departments. Even cross correlations will cause huge definitional problems. Take me as an example. My full name is Richard Martin Luther. For instances where formality is required the full name is used. However even then some entities have the option of giving a preferred first name which in my case is Martin. Then there are other entities where I am just recorded as Martin Luther and a few as R Martin Luther. Good luck with the abbreviations of names or in a migrant society the variation in first and last names. That is a trivial example but there will be thousands of trivial examples all leading to huge problems and attempts to force many square pegs into limited round holes! In short it will be a costly waste of money.
- Take my word for it that each management group will fight and fight to retain “their” definitions. If they are overpowered they will go behind the scenes to create their own system that feeds off and sends to the new major data base while retaining their preferred definition. Another waste!

Quite simply I see this as an unnecessary breach of privacy using my personal data to help others doing research. I am very skeptical of much of the research undertaken on data that was not specifically collected for the purpose of the research project. The accuracy and relevance have not been proved. The results can be very misleading. I do not accept that university level research can avoid these pitfalls. There is massive evidence that many published papers even after peer review report results that cannot be replicated! In my view this is because of very poor statistical understanding by everyone except perhaps mathematicians specializing in statistical analysis.

Stop this waste of public monies now before it gets out of hand!