

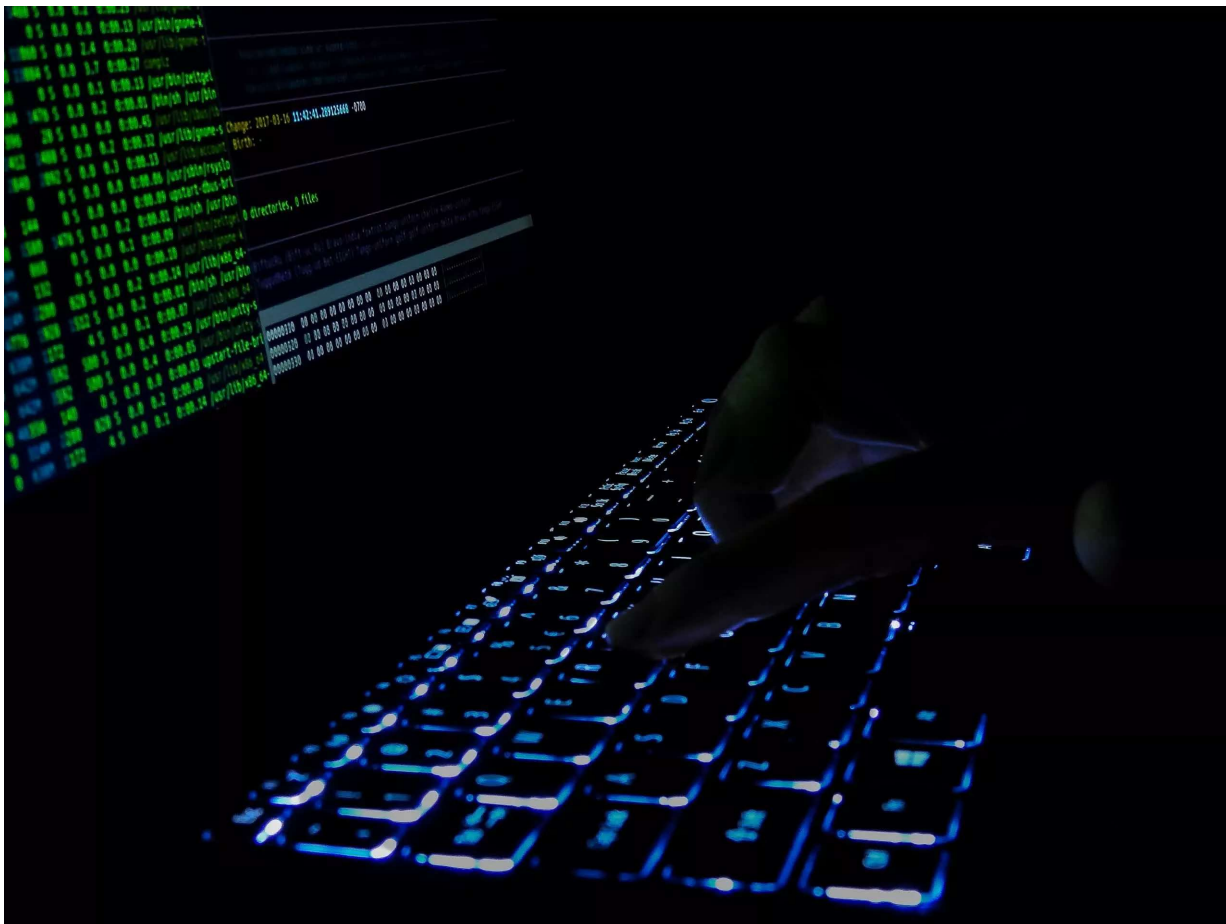


THE WEB SECURITY AUSTRALIA SURVEILLANCE

# Australia passes surveillance bill that lets police take over accounts, alter, and delete data

Critics say new police powers are too broad

By [Daniel Sims](#) September 1, 2021, 8:12 PM | [39 comments](#)



**What just happened?** The Australian Senate passed a new surveillance bill that grants police sweeping authority over online data this past week. Presumably, law enforcement will only use the law to combat serious crimes hidden on the dark web, but critics are taking serious issue with how broad the new powers seem.

The Surveillance Legislation Amendment (Identify and Disrupt) Bill 2020 gives the Australian Federal Police (AFP) and the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC) powers to modify, add to, copy, or delete data to "frustrate the commission of serious offenses online." To gather evidence of suspected criminal activity, they also have the power to take over online accounts.

The Australian Greens Party's website [warns](#) that police can do this without formally accusing a person of a crime. "The Richardson review concluded that this bill enables the AFP and ACIC to be 'judge, jury, and executioner.' That's not how we deliver justice in this country," said Greens senator Lidia Thorpe.

The bill was first [introduced](#) late last year and [passed](#) both houses on August 25. Now it's just waiting for Royal Assent—that is, final approval by the



Last August, former home affairs minister Peter Dutton [asserted](#) that police would only use this new law against things like drug trafficking, terrorism, and child exploitation on the dark web. Regarding people who commit those crimes, Dutton said the powers would apply "to those people and those people only."

Australia's Human Rights Law Centre was able to call for specific safeguards to prevent police from using the law against journalists and whistleblowers. However, the HRLC doesn't think the precautions go far enough.

"While the safeguards for journalists and whistleblowers are welcome, they highlight the lack of wider entrenched safeguards for press freedom and free speech in Australia," HRLC senior lawyer Kieran Pender [wrote](#) in a statement on the law center's website. "By enacting wide-ranging surveillance and secrecy laws in the absence of federal human rights laws, successive governments have put the cart before the horse." In the end, the HRLC estimates that parliament adopted only about half of the changes it recommended.

The HRLC also criticized the speed of the law's passage through parliament. "It is alarming that, instead of accepting the [parliamentary joint committee on intelligence and security's] recommendations and allowing time for scrutiny of subsequent amendments, the Morrison Government rushed these laws through Parliament in less than 24 hours," Pender said.

39 comments

924 interactions

Share this article:

## Related Reads

[Sony launches new PlayStation 5 disc and digital models, sort of](#)

[Amazon planning to monitor customer service workers' keyboard and mouse strokes](#)

[Australian retailer pauses sales of Apple's AirTags over safety concerns](#)

## VIDEO: 11 Great Free Steam Games





The U.S. wants Amazon, Google, Microsoft, others to join them in the fight against cybercrime

Facebook is reportedly trying to analyze encrypted data without decrypting it

---

## MOST READ

70 comments

AMD crashes in latest Steam survey

31 comments

2017's Best GPU in 2021: GeForce GTX 1080 Ti Revisit

9 comments

Hacker sells tool for hiding malware inside graphics card VRAM



### 11 Great Free Steam Games

21 comments

## User Comments: 39

Got something to say? Post a comment

[Load all comments...](#)

## DISCUSS

- 16 Sony reneges on promise of Horizon Forbidden West free PS5 upgrade
- 17 Court ruling: USPTO cannot issue patents to an artificial intelligence
- 10 Space Force blows up malfunctioning Firefly rocket during its first flight
- 9 Samsung said to be developing a 17-inch foldable Galaxy Book
- 51 GM to halt production at nearly all North American assembly plants next week

[Recently commented stories](#) | [Jump to forum mode](#)

## Add your comment to this article

You need to be a member to leave a comment. Join thousands of tech enthusiasts and participate.

### TechSpot Account

[Sign up for free](#), it takes 30 seconds.  
Already have an account? [Login now](#).

#### Main Sections

- Tech News
- Features
- Reviews
- The Best
- Downloads
- Drivers
- Tech Trivia

#### Top Resources

- GeForce vs Radeon
- Display Tech: TN vs VA vs IPS
- The Best SSDs and Storage
- What Is Cryptomining?
- microSD and SD Card Buying Guide
- Best Gaming Monitors
- 21 Great Benchmarking Apps

#### Popular Downloads

- Windows Media Creation Tool
- iTunes Download
- Discord Download
- Google Earth Pro
- Cinebench
- MSI Afterburner

Subscribe to the TechSpot Newsletter

Follow TechSpot



Budget PCs

Roblox Download

TECHSPOT : Tech Enthusiasts, Power Users, Gamers

TechSpot is a registered trademark. [About Us](#) [Ethics Statement](#) [Terms of Use](#) [Privacy Policy](#) [Change Ad Consent](#) [Advertise](#)

© 2021 TechSpot, Inc. All Rights Reserved.