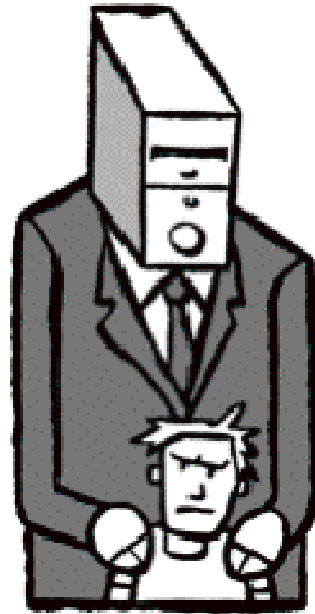




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*MEDIA RELEASE*

**Who's Attacking Privacy in these Fearful Times?**

(Australian Big Brother Awards for privacy intrusion)

[www.privacy.org.au/bba/](http://www.privacy.org.au/bba/)

Thursday 1 September 2005.

The Australian Privacy Foundation (APF) today called for nominations for Australia's annual *Big Brother Awards* for privacy intrusion, affectionately known as 'the Orwells'.

The international award programme is for corporations, public officials and governments that have shown a blatant disregard for privacy. The Awards also feature categories for individuals and organisations who have made a major positive contribution to protecting the privacy of Australians.

Each year, the national members and affiliated organisations of Privacy International present the Big Brother Awards to government and private sector organisations that have done the most to threaten personal privacy in their countries. Since 1998, over 40 ceremonies have been held in 16 countries. Local nominees may also be in the running for Privacy International's global prize for 'Most Egregiously Stupid Security Measure'. (NB: The Big Brother Awards have no relationship to the TEN Network TV program of the same name.)

"Last year's Orwell winners really went over the top, showing that Australians are capable of world class privacy invasion", said Privacy Foundation spokeswoman Anna Johnston.

"Both the Labor and Liberal parties, which operate increasingly as big businesses selling a product, were declared joint winners for a pattern of behaviour including:

- exempting themselves from privacy laws affecting all other big businesses, including the new

- Spam Act designed to control unsolicited electronic marketing
- successive failures to limit their own use of electoral roll data
- abuse of postal vote arrangements - sending out material with an official AEC postal vote form, but with a 'reply paid' envelope directing the form back to party HQ (so they can capture personal details before sending it on)

“And Biometric Passports won the ‘Most Invasive technology’ category in the 2004 Orwells, with one judge remarking ‘Australia appears to have caught the American virus of panic and suspicion. Not only are these devices technologically unproven but so is the idea that these devices could actually catch determined terrorists. This false portrayal of security is in the interests of no-one other than the manufacturers of biometric passports’ ”.

“In 2005, our politicians and corporations look set to follow the dubious lead of those in the US and UK, instinctively attacking privacy in these fearful times instead of looking for more balanced solutions to protecting our way of life,” said Ms Johnston.

“The Queensland government is leading the charge with its support of a new ID card (in the face of international doubt about their value), but an extremist entry like NSW’s range of ‘Surveillance State’ initiatives could yet win the People’s Choice award”, predicted Ms Johnston.

“We’re calling on all Australians to really get behind this event. Dob in your favourite politician, government department or corporation by nominating their outstanding achievements in invading privacy.”

“The protection of privacy is serious. Respect for people’s personal information and their private space is an essential part of the free, law-abiding and democratic way of life we cherish”, said Ms Johnston.

“But the Orwells allow the Privacy Foundation to show the lighter side of human rights work, while also highlighting the need for more public debate about initiatives which have negative privacy impacts.”

The award categories are:

- Greatest Corporate Invader - for a corporation that has shown a blatant disregard of privacy.
- Worst Public Agency or Official - for a government agency or official that has shown a blatant disregard of privacy.
- Most Invasive Technology - for a technology that is particularly privacy invasive.
- Lifetime Menace - for a privacy invader with a long record of profound disregard for privacy.
- People’s Choice - for the individual or organisation most frequently nominated by the public.
- Boot in the Mouth - for the best quote on a privacy related topic.

Nominations are also sought for:

- Best Privacy Guardian - for a meritorious act of privacy protection or defence.
- Lifetime Achievement - for provision of outstanding services to privacy protection.

Nominations will be accepted from members of the public until the closing date of **1 October** 2005. Nominations should be emailed to [mail@privacy.org.au](mailto:mail@privacy.org.au) . The APF website has further details on how to nominate, at [www.privacy.org.au/bba](http://www.privacy.org.au/bba) .

The winners of the Orwells will be announced in Melbourne on 8 November.

Last years winners can be found at

### **About the Privacy Foundation**

The Privacy Foundation was founded in 1987 as a last-ditch stand against the proposed Australia Card national identity system and has continued to be an advocate for privacy issues since that time.

The APF aims to represent the public interest across a wide range of issues including the privacy of people's bodies, homes, health records, email, internet usage, spending habits and communications.

The APF's website at [www.privacy.org.au](http://www.privacy.org.au) is a significant resource for any person who has an interest or issue that concerns privacy. It includes a comprehensive directory of relevant organisations, membership information, analysis of current privacy issues, APF submissions, catalogues of privacy laws, a list of Board members, a history of the APF and media contact points for various issues.

*- end of release -*

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Use of the Big Brother Awards image:

The Big Brother cartoon image was developed for the APF by New Zealand cartoonist Chris Slane. The Big Brother cartoon image may only be reproduced in conjunction with a story about the Australian Big Brother Awards.