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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **ABS's Census-Fail Blame Game**

The Australian Bureau of Statistics has blamed everyone but themselves for the debacle that is the 2016 Census. So out-of-touch with reality is the agency that it published a Submission to the Senate Committee, and then withdrew it again.

One of the many organisations that the ABS blamed was the Australian Privacy Foundation:

"The ABS met with the Australian Privacy Foundation about these matters and they continued to reflect their views irrespective of ABS explanations of facts and process" (p.85).

There was a very simple reason for the APF continuing its criticisms: the ABS has ignored everything that's been said to it. The concerns of the Australian Privacy Foundation – a voice of the Australian community – still remain unaddressed.

"The ABS has destroyed public trust by converting the Census from an anonymous survey into a database containing identified personal data. There is also a proposal to use linkage keys which has not been explained or evaluated for privacy risks. These issues have still not been addressed by the ABS", says Kat Lane, Vice-Chair of the Australian Privacy Foundation.

The Parliament should ensure that the Senate Inquiry concentrates on restoring public trust by ensuring the census does not compromise the privacy of Australians. The ABS's incompetence in running the census is a secondary issue.

"The APF is calling on the Senate Inquiry to categorically reject any use of the census to make a digital Australia Card" according to Ms. Lane.

The APF also remains concerned by the many reports by Australians of harassment by ABS agents. The APF believes it is unacceptable to threaten Australians with fines when they have legitimate concerns about the census.

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**The APF Submission to the Senate Economics References Committee is here:**  
**<http://www.privacy.org.au/Papers/Sen-Census-160927.pdf>**

The APF Campaign Page: <http://www.privacy.org.au/Campaigns/Census2016/>

See also the ABS Submission to the Senate Economics References Committee  
<http://www.privacy.org.au/Campaigns/Census2016/ABS-CensusFail-160921.pdf>

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