

Privacy Foundation

Policy on privacy

The Green Party believes that privacy is a human right and should be protected in law and in practice. Widespread use of social media, advancements in ICT and Government's reliance on data and metadata have all affected the right to privacy and we need to take the issue seriously. We support amendments to the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 to specifically include a right to privacy, including the right to be forgotten online. Personal information should be collected, stored, and treated ethically, and access to this information by New Zealanders is paramount.

In Government the Green Party would scrutinise closely any information sharing between different state databases, and oppose those that are unwarranted. While access to official information is an important cornerstone of an open democracy, we need to ensure that there are effective reviews in place for anyone consider that information held about them is incorrect. The Green party would also review controls on the sale of private information, and the exchange of information between government agencies, to ensure consistency with the aims of the Privacy Act. We would publicise the right of people to see the personal information held on them in state and other databases and to correct such information. Government plays a central role in guaranteeing the right to privacy, but so does the ICT industry. Vendors of ICT equipment have a duty to ensure that users are aware of the level of security they can expect and to inform them if this changes

NGOs, Social Investment and Individual Client Level Data

New Zealand is data rich but information poor. We support using existing anonymous data to inform public policy. We do not support requiring NGOs to share individuals' client level data. The Green Party's vision of Government goes beyond Government acting like an insurance company. An example that the Green Party has been concerned about is how Te Tiriti obligations fit into the actuarial model.

In short, the Green Party has serious concerns about the way National has enacted its Social Investment Approach. Government should clearly articulate priorities in enough detail for everyone to understand the consequences and values statement that they represent. These priorities should then be open to democratic debate. We believe in building strong foundations for everyone to thrive. We do not support hyper-targeting of individuals.

We believe that confidentiality is an absolute cornerstone of the work that community groups and NGOs do, and should be protected. The Government must realise that it will not achieve its social objectives by over-riding individuals' rights to privacy. The Government had not put sufficient consideration into the scope of unintended consequences that could occur as result of sharing individual client level data.

Security Services

The Green Party has consistently lobbied against the violation of New Zealander's privacy by the security agencies. We campaigned for the Government to ensure greater protections for privacy during the debates on the Intelligence and Security Bill of 2017 and to ensure better oversight of

agencies with extraordinary powers. We welcome some of the changes in the Bill- for example the fact that the Privacy Act now applies to the security organisations, which means that the public have an avenue to make complaints. However we remain concerned about the sweeping powers that the intelligence agencies will have, and the scope of Government officials to make broad-brush policy changes without detailed oversight.

Privacy Act reform

The Government has not yet brought proposed amendments to the Privacy Act to the House. However the Green Party is broadly supportive of the recommendations of the Privacy Commissioner to strengthen and update relevant legislation. In particular there is a strong case to be made for enhanced oversight and powers for the Commissioner, a stronger focus on consumer rights, and better protection for individuals identified in data that had been purportedly anonymised.