

RSL NSW CONCERNS ABOUT CENSUS SECURITY

The acting State President of the NSW State Branch of the Returned and Services League of Australia has reinforced concerns over the compulsory collection and proposed retention of names and addresses in tonight's Census.

Mr John Haines says there's no question that the Census is an important and valuable tool for the collection and storage of statistical data. However the collection of names and addresses and the possibility these may be linked to other data raises a number of unintended but significant questions of privacy and security.

"We should be very concerned that the Census regulations require everyone resident in Australia, including those in high security positions, both civilian and military, to submit their personal identification," said Mr Haines.

"The individual's name is not by definition a portion of any census data, nor is it relevant to the statistics being collected.

"Individuals in high risk security positions, or those with protected identities, must not be placed in a position where their safety could be jeopardised.

"As an organisation whose priority is the welfare of serving Australian Defence Force members and ex-service members, our concern is their privacy may be breached if data collected by the Census falls into the hands of those who may take advantage of that data."

Mr Haines said the RSL believed the Census should proceed, but no prosecutions should be instigated if people filling out the forms withhold their names or addresses on paper forms, or use aliases if they have reason to be concerned for their safety.

ENDS

About RSL

The purpose of the RSL is to support serving and ex-service personnel and their families, ensuring the best life for them upon returning home. Since 1916, the RSL has evolved to ensure it can continue to deliver services that improve the welfare of past, current and future veterans. The RSL supports personnel and their families at each stage of life to transition from service into the community.

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