

THE AUSTRALIAN

My Health Record program will save lives, there's no debate

MICHAEL CONNORY THE AUSTRALIAN 12:00AM July 24, 2018

Australians are in a lather over the misconceived belief that the government's My Health Record (MHR) is open to hacking and puts every Australian's personal health records at risk.

Data breaches are far too common and Australians are right to be cautious about who holds their personal information and the level of security provided. However, to what degree do we interpret vigilance for paranoia?

Privacy and the protection of personal information will always remain an important issue and Australians should never give away the right to demand utmost accountability.

However, the current debate around the ability of MHR to provide and maintain a level of security guaranteeing privacy is flawed and lacking in logic.

Australia has a health system the envy of the world. We lead the way in medical research, medical technology and specialist treatment programs.

A federally funded system is part of the mosaic that makes what we have so special. MHR adds to that mosaic.

The idea of a central system allowing Australians' health records to be available to hospitals and doctors is a model we need to embrace. It is well overdue. Information in real time allows doctor faced with an emergency to treat someone with greater efficiency and speed, and make accurate diagnoses based on medical history.

It saves lives and improves care. Nothing is better than that.

The detractors believe the cons outweigh the pros. It's difficult to understand how saving lives and improved healthcare is a negative.

Choice to decide is a right we value. When presented with the right information, our decision-making is enhanced. Yet Australians choosing to opt out of MHR are making a shortsighted decision based on misinformation.

It's a decision they could live to regret when faced with an emergency.

Various media reports have painted a picture of dire inevitability, where every Australian's health records will be up for grabs. No federal government would ever put at risk the personal and private information of Australians.

It has invested hundreds of millions of dollars developing MHR not for it to be a security risk.

It's wrong to think a flagship-based records system will be without the highest form of security to ensure data protection.

I am highly protective about data privacy and protection. My decision to opt in is based on considered fact and the right information, as opposed to speculative noise generated by special interest groups attempting to derail an overdue program.

Saving lives is what the MHR will achieve.

For an ageing population, it also improves healthcare and outcomes, and, over the long term, reduced costs.

MHR allows:

Doctors to make better-informed decisions on prescribing medicines.

Doctors who discover patients shopping for drugs to provide alternatives.

Doctors to see what medicines are being used and prescribe medicines that are supportive.

Australians to control who sees what information and when.

People to see their medical records and use them for their own medical purposes.

People to track who looks at their health records — identifying and addressing any potential misuse.

Every Australian should be cautious about privacy but being fearful of doctors using information for personal gain is a difficult argument to accept. The introduction of MHR is not to be feared. The government isn't lurking in the shadows waiting to snare our personal information — they already have it.

Michael Connory is CEO of Security in Depth



Less power to the rent-seekers

JUDITH SLOAN

Rent-seekers in the renewable energy space leave others for dead when it comes to misinforming, threatening and bullying.



COMMENT

Build a bridge and get over it

CHRIS KENNY

A South Australian MP aligned to Mayo candidate Rebekha Sharkie is backing a crazy plan to spend billions of taxpayer dollars on a bridge to Kangaroo Island.



STATE OF DISORDER

Teen arrested over Airbnb death

RICHARD FERGUSON

A 17-year-old man has been taken into custody over the death of Melbourne teenager Laa Chol in an Airbnb apartment.



Ristevski phones ‘deactivated’

Mobile phones belonging to accused killer Borce Ristevski and his wife Karen were “deactivated” on the day of her disappearance.



'I did nothing wrong'

VICTORIA LAURIE

A Perth teenager accused of killing his mother and two siblings has protested his innocence during a court appearance.



'Demented words of violence'

Donald Trump has issued an extraordinary warning to Iran over its threats to unleash the “mother of all wars” on the US.

