

A fundamental aspect of the government's proposed improvement in the transparency of information relating to Beneficial Ownership and Control of Companies is that it will only be made 'available to relevant authorities'.

This is unacceptable.

The government has stated that it is determined to be open and to make anonymised data available for exploitation by businesses and researchers. This must also mean that the government is ready and willing to assist the public by ensuring that data serving the public interest is made freely available for scrutiny by any interested party: be it a private individual, association, organisation or journalist. For example, it should not be possible for the owners of a company such as Indue Pty Ltd to disguise themselves via the establishment of shell companies, etc., but be able to be readily identified so the public can be confident that members of political parties are not the beneficiaries, receiving tax payer's money via government contracts, which contravenes S44.

If the government does not ensure that this information is readily available; in a searchable format, and is collated in one portal for anyone to access, then encouraging submissions from the public is simply an exercise in busy work with no possibility of a meaningful outcome.

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