

# Commercial Insights

## Make privacy a priority, today and every day

Currently, 85% of all Australians have a clear understanding of why they should protect personal information, yet 49% don't know how to do it. Privacy Awareness Week (PAW 2021) runs from 3-9 May 2021. The theme for PAW2021 is '**Make privacy a priority**'. PAW 2021 is about sharing information and practical tips that empower organisations and individuals to take control of personal information.

PAW 2021 serves as a timely reminder to review your privacy practices and policies and to educate your staff about their obligations around handling of personal information and sensitive information.

There are many areas where personal information and sensitive information collected by you may be vulnerable to misuse or unauthorised access. None more so than the online world, where poor protection of personal information can expose organisations and individuals to identity theft, fraud and data breaches.

To minimise such threats, simple steps you can take today include:

1. Using multi-factor authentication and strong passphrases when accessing the online environment. This is your first line of defence in securing your personal information and protecting your privacy.
2. Ensure you are comfortable with how your personal information will be used by always querying '*why*', '*how*' and '*by whom*' your information will be used by when your personal information is requested.
3. Limiting your internet browser's privacy settings to restrict access to your behavioural data. You should also consider limiting location tracking on all devices.
4. In the unfortunate case of a real or suspected data breach occurring, immediately changing your login details, being alert for scam emails and checking your account statements for suspicious activity.

Further privacy tips for entities who collect personal information in the course of business include:

1. Collecting only that personal information that is necessary for your business and deleting or de-identifying personal information once it is no longer needed for a legal purpose. This includes deleting unused accounts and wiping data from any old or unused devices. See our previous article on the [consequences of handling and storing personal information incorrectly](#).
2. Being transparent in how you handle your customers' personal information and in what format it is stored. You should give customers a choice wherever possible.

For further information on PAW2021 and for more tips on protecting your privacy, see the [PAW Tips for Work](#) and [PAW Tips for Home](#) guides.

**This article was written by Special Counsel, Hayley Bowman. If you have any questions about your obligations when handling personal information or require assistance in reviewing your privacy practices and policies, please contact Hayley.**



**Hayley Bowman**

**Special Counsel**

+61 3 9810 6723

[hbowman@meridianlawyers.com.au](mailto:hbowman@meridianlawyers.com.au)

Disclaimer: This information is current as of April 2021. This article does not constitute legal advice and does not give rise to any solicitor/client relationship between Meridian Lawyers and the reader. Professional legal advice should be sought before acting or relying upon the content of this article.