



Union called out over privacy ‘abuse’

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The higher education sector needs strong guard rails to protect employee privacy.

The Australian Higher Education Industrial Association (AHEIA) believes the privacy of all university staff is under threat from off campus.

AHEIA said the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) wants unfettered access to the pay records of university staff, whether they are union members or not.

The proposal is contained in a recent Senate inquiry submission. Such access rightly, is against the law.

The NTEU’s Privacy statement (dated 28 May 2022), available on its website, implies that it will collect personal information on almost anyone, some of it of a highly sensitive nature, to further its aims and campaigns.

“The statement reveals the union may collect data such as social media details, blogs, marital status, health status and areas of personal interest. Additionally, it may collect information about people relating to political opinions, political party memberships and sexual orientation,” the Executive Director of AHEIA, Craig Laughton, said.

“This amounts to ‘stalking’.

“We believe university staff would be very concerned about the union’s personal data harvesting business model.

“Privacy is held dear by everyone and attacks on it are not legitimized by policy statements.”

AHEIA recently called the union out over its proposal to the Senate inquiry that it have almost unfettered access to all university employee pay records.

“This is massive over-reach and a major attack on privacy,” Mr Laughton said.

Private information of employees or potential employees should not be harvested by a union for its industrial activities or campaigns.

AHEIA presently is revising its privacy policy, which will be on its website.

Ends

Craig Laughton | (he/him)

Executive Director | Australian Higher Education Industrial Association
phone: 0477 799 149 | craig.laughton@aheia.edu.au | www.aheia.edu.au