

MEDIA RELEASE

Meet the United Nations' top privacy official

2 May 2016

A visit by the United Nations' leading privacy investigator is a special opportunity for New Zealand, says Privacy Commissioner John Edwards.

The UN Special Rapporteur for the right to privacy, Professor Joe Cannataci, will be in New Zealand during Privacy Week (9-14 May) to present his agenda for privacy.

Privacy Forums

During his visit, Prof Cannataci will give two public presentations at Privacy Forums in Wellington (11 May) and Auckland (12 May).

John Edwards says Prof Cannataci will be a guest of the Office of the Privacy Commissioner in his capacity as an international representative for privacy rights with a key role in raising privacy awareness.

Prof Cannataci is the UN's first Special Rapporteur for the right to privacy. His UN mandate includes special consideration of issues related to the digital age and new technologies, including surveillance.

Mr Edwards says the creation of Prof Cannataci's role last year represents a welcome elevation at an international level of the universal right to privacy. "It's more than symbolism; it's a reflection of the growing international convention that privacy is a value that needs special attention in changing world."

Surveillance and oversight

Mr Edwards says he is looking forward to finding out more about Prof Cannataci's views on surveillance and oversight. "Many New Zealanders who are concerned about the present and future of privacy will also be keenly interested in what he has to say. I'm positive Prof Cannataci will have a compelling contribution to make to our national discourse on privacy, oversight and transparency."

Prof Cannataci, who is from Malta, is a co-founder of the Security, Technology & e-Privacy Research Group at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands, where he holds the chair of European Information Policy and Technology Law. He is also deputy dean of the Faculty of Media and Knowledge Sciences at the University of Malta and head of the Department of Information Policy and Governance.

He coordinated the [SMART](#) and [RESPECT](#) research projects on surveillance and he currently coordinates the European Union's [MAPPING](#) project which deals with Internet governance.

Notes for editors

A Special Rapporteur is an independent expert appointed by the Human Rights Council to examine and report back on a country situation or a specific human rights theme. The UN Human Rights Council appointed Prof Cannataci in July 2015. The appointment is for three years.

Privacy Week is an annual event run by the Office of the Privacy Commissioner to promote privacy awareness in organisations, workplaces and the public. Find out more about what is planned for this year [here](#).

Information about the Privacy Forums in Wellington on 11 May and Auckland on 12 May can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

For more information, contact Charles Mabbett 021 509 735.