

**MEDIA RELEASE**

## **Privacy Commissioner releases 2015 credit reporters' assurance reports**

7 April 2016

Privacy Commissioner John Edwards has released the latest compliance assurance reports submitted by the national credit reporting companies.

This time, the Privacy Commissioner asked the credit reporters to provide particular assurances around specific topics of interest arising out of the recent privacy case *Orcon v Taylor*.

The Orcon case highlighted real risks for consumers as a result of careless reporting of credit defaults by credit providers, such as banks or utility companies. The credit reporters were asked to tell us how they addressed disputed debts; out of date credit defaults; landlord access to credit reports and the ongoing reporting of court judgments.

"The reports were all submitted on time and each credit reporter took care to address my questions. I was pleased to see a general wariness by credit reporters of accepting and loading disputed debts about consumers. I have been given assurances that disputed defaults will either be flagged as such or masked from view until a proper investigation has taken place," Mr Edwards said.

Mr Edwards noted that robust processes for addressing disputes were crucial, both to give consumers a meaningful way to exercise their rights and to ensure that credit information was accurate and up to date for subscribers. Disputed debts should not be referred to credit reporters as a means of applying leverage.

"By putting my concerns to the credit reporters, I have ensured that real attention will be given to these risk areas. I am pleased to note that each credit reporter has sought to further engage with my office on these issues," Mr Edwards said.

### **Note for editors**

The obligation on credit reporters to submit annual compliance reports is one of several safeguards within the credit reporting system. Making the reports public is part of the oversight that the Privacy Commissioner has to ensure credit reporters accountable for handling the sensitive financial information of New Zealanders.

For more information, contact Charles Mabbett on 021 509 735.