

Good Report Card but Data Breaches Are Up, with No Sign of Letting Up

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Shortly after the Government announced their ambition to make [Australia a global leader in cyber security](#), Australia has been named the country with “the greatest progress and commitment toward creating a cyber defence environment” in [MIT’s Cyber Defence Index of 2022/23](#).

However, the [Office of the Australian Information Commissioner’s latest notifiable data breaches report](#) paints a different picture. The Commissioner reported a 26% increase in the number of total reported data breaches and a 41% increase in the number of reported data breaches arising from malicious or criminal attacks compared with the first half of 2022. Health service providers and the finance sector were the worst hit, together representing almost a third of reported data breaches.

In releasing the report, the Commissioner once again stressed the need for organisations to collect only the minimum amount of personal information required and deleting it when it is no longer needed. In the report the Commissioner has recommended a number of steps to address the kinds of issues featured in the second half of 2022, including:

- implementing the [Essential Eight](#) cybersecurity strategies;
- establishing a data breach response plan that includes timely notification of data breaches in compliance with the [NDB scheme](#);
- establishing audit and activity logging on networks, email servers and accounts to track data holdings and quickly and effectively assess suspected data breaches;
- training staff on identify verification and procedures for reporting fraud;
- notifying customers when there are changes to their account or failed authentication attempts;

and

- ensuring arrangements with third-party service providers include agreement on the procedures for responding to data breaches and the handling of personal information.

With increased malicious cyber activity and the Government's keen eye on [privacy](#) and [cybersecurity legislation reform](#), the time has not been better to get in line with the Commissioner's recommendations.

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