



Facial recognition technology and privacy

Facial recognition technology for identification involves collecting a digital image of an individual's face and extracting their distinct features into a biometric template, which is compared against templates in a database to identify the individual.



Privacy need to know

- Biometric templates and biometric information are sensitive information under the Privacy Act. Sensitive information has a higher level of privacy protection than other personal information.
- Businesses must take reasonable steps to protect personal information they hold from misuse, interference and loss, as well as unauthorised access, modification and disclosure.
- It is best practice for businesses considering using facial recognition technology to undertake a privacy impact assessment at the outset to identify and address any impacts on an individual's privacy. This will assist businesses to embed good privacy practices from the start.



Key privacy considerations

Necessity and proportionality

Facial recognition technology must only be used when it is necessary and proportionate and where the purpose cannot be reasonably achieved through a less privacy intrusive means. Businesses should carefully consider whether the benefits clearly outweigh risks posed to individuals' privacy.

Consent and transparency

Businesses need to manage personal information in an open and transparent way. They also need to proactively provide individuals with sufficient information to allow them to provide meaningful consent to the collection of their biometric information.

Accuracy, bias and discrimination

Businesses need to ensure biometric information used in facial recognition technology is accurate and take steps to address any risk of bias.

Governance and ongoing assurance

Businesses need to have clear governance arrangements in place, including documented practices and procedures, to minimise privacy risks. These should be implemented in practice, clearly communicated and reviewed regularly.



This document is a summary only.