

Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Department of Human Services

Budget Estimates 2007-08 - May 2007

Question: HS71

Outcome 1, Output 1

Topic: Department of Human Services – Access Card: Card/Database Design

Hansard Page/Written Question on Notice: Written

SENATOR STOTT DESPOJA asked on 24/05/2007:

1. Will people have "truncated" records due to their "fame" or sensitive employment? If not, why not?
2. Who exactly will have access to the Audit trail of data produced within the database and when an access card is read at carder reader machines?
3. What are the warranty periods given by the suppliers of the card and the chip for the card? On what grounds has the Government settled on this warranty period?
4. What levels of reliability are required in relation to the biometric photograph database? What will be the accepted level of false positives and false negatives? How has this acceptance level been calculated?
5. Who owns the intellectual property of the chips?
6. What durability testing will the card be put to?
7. Will States be required to implement any part of the access card project?
8. Is there any proposal to prohibit the linking of the access card number with other numbers? For example, will it be prohibited to link the access card number with the e-health identifier?
9. What data interchange format and personal information security protocols will be put in place to allow information to be exchanged between federal government agencies and doctors, federal government agencies and banks, and federal government agencies and private businesses?

Answer

The Government has decided not to proceed with the Access Card Program. With respect to the specific questions asked by the Senator, the answers are as follow:

1. All Human Services Portfolio agencies already have processes in place to handle sensitive records, and these were not proposed to be altered by the introduction of the access card. Existing access control regimes were to apply to all records. There would not have been any "truncated" records.
2. Access to the audit data produced by the Access Card System was proposed to be covered by confidentiality provisions.

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3. As at 24 May 2007, the evaluation process for the Cards Issuance and Management Request for Tender (RFT) had not been concluded and a warranty period had not been settled. The warranty periods sought in the RFT documents were derived from the relevant international standards.
4. The evaluation process for the Systems Integrator RFT was not concluded, so metrics that pertain to reliability had not been settled. Guidance was provided in the RFT documents, and this information was based on empirical data from the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST).

Through the RFT process, the best solutions available on the market were being sought.

5. Tenderers had put forward a number of different intellectual property arrangements in regards to the intellectual property rights of the Commonwealth in the physical chips, applications that may have appeared on the chips and operating systems on the chips. Tenders were being evaluated at the time of this question, and therefore decisions on the detail of the intellectual property rights associated with the chips had not been made, and it was not appropriate to release details of the positions adopted by the Tenderers. The evaluation of the Tenderers had not been concluded, so there was no final position in relation to ownership of the intellectual property of the chip.

Generally, the Commonwealth seeks, through contracts with vendors, all such intellectual property rights as may have been necessary or expedient to have so as to enable the Commonwealth to lawfully, effectively and efficiently implement projects consistent with the Commonwealth IT IP Guidelines. The Guidelines can be accessed at:

http://archive.dcita.gov.au/2004/09/commonwealth_it_ip_guidelines

6. The access card was to have been subjected to a comprehensive testing schedule, which was to test compliance with the relevant international standards for the physical characteristics of the Card. This was to have included test methods defined in ISO 10373.
7. There was ongoing consultation with the State Governments in relation to access to concession information, and use of the Document Verification Service.
8. It had not been proposed to link the access card number with the e-health identifier. The adoption, disclosure or use of the access card number was to have been regulated by legislation.
9. The proposal did not include any exchange of information in the scenarios described in this question.