

Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Finance and Administration Portfolio

Department of Human Services and Agencies

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2006-2007, 31 October, 2006

Question: HS35

Outcome 1, Output 1

Topic: Office of Access Card - Access Card standards

Hansard Page/Written Question on Notice: Written

SENATOR EVANS on 31/10/06:

1. Will smartcard numbers be afforded the legal protections, pertaining to their usage, that currently protect Australian Tax File Numbers?
2. Will the smartcard operate according to the international standard ISO 24727 operating system? Has the use of ISO 24727 been ruled out?
3. Will the smartcard operate according to a proprietary operating system? If so, will it be Microsoft?
4. Has the use of a proprietary operating system been ruled out?
5. Is the use of a Microsoft proprietary operating system being considered?
6. Will publicly accessible smartcard readers be made available for Australians to see what is recorded on their card? Has this service been budgeted?
7. Will smartcard contracts include 'shared returns' features, ie. where contractors / consultants share financial returns in order to align their interests with public interests?

Answer:

1. Provision will be made in the proposed legislation to provide legal protections in relation to the use of the Access Card.
2. Specifications are being drawn up now for the Access Card and the standards with which it will comply. ISO 24727 Parts 1-3 are in draft; Parts 4-5 are as yet not available. Compliance with the ISO standard is considered desirable.
3. The specification will not prescribe any particular operating system.
4. No.
5. The specification will identify the features required of the operating system but will not prescribe a particular operating system.
6. Card readers will be available in agency offices to enable cardholders to view the details stored in their cards. Card readers will require authorised software and card details will be PIN protected with the consent of the cardholder.
7. We are investigating contract strategies to ensure timely delivery of the Access Card.

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To prepare this answer it has taken approximately 5 hours and thirty minutes at an estimated cost of \$340.