

From: Michael Skeggs  
Sent: Monday, 12 February 2007 3:00 PM

To: FPA, Committee (SEN)

Subject: Submission Access Card - Inquiry Into Human Services (Enhanced Service Delivery) Bill 2007

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my opposition to the Access Card in its proposed form. Firstly, the card is costly as budgeted, and offers limited scope for fraud savings in even the most optimistic projections. Previous experience locally and internationally shows such complex IT projects are extremely prone to budget overrun. Secondly, the rationale for the card is unclear. The claimed benefit of reducing 17 cards to one is nonsensical, since some of the 17 cards are exclusionary nobody will see a benefit of that scale. For the vast majority, it will replace a single Medicare card, and offer no advantage. Additionally, the administrative costs and hurdles to issuing the card are likely to negate any overall benefit. If there are really too many entitlements cards, replace 16 with 1, and leave the bulk of people with only a Medicare card unaffected. Thirdly, the inclusion of a signature and photograph on the card face will encourage its use as an ID card, even if laws prevent its demand. Those reluctant to provide the card to a voluntary request will be stigmatised as potentially somebody with something to hide. The inclusion of card face photo and signature does not appear to further any aims of the card as stated, and seems ripe for it to be abused. Should the card proceed I strongly oppose the inclusion of this information on its face. Fourthly, the minimal analysis conducted to date provided recommendations from Professor Fels group that have only partially been accepted, there is a need for more considered analysis and a commitment to implement any recommendations. Finally, I object to the haste, lack of adequate consultation, poorly articulated scope, secretive approach to process and the amateurish approach to date in managing this project. A project of such scope is extremely serious, complex and far-reaching. To attempt to deliver it in the haphazard way demonstrated to date is seeking failure and increasing risk. For these reasons I urge the committee to recommend:

- A careful, transparent and thorough review of the proposal, including consideration of alternatives.
- A reduced scope for the card to maximise chances of success should it proceed, including consideration of removing medicare card replacement from the scope.
- Release of budget and analysis documents currently kept from the public, and;
- removal of photograph and signature information from the card's face. Yours Sincerely,  
Michael Skeggs