

Sent: Sunday, 18 February 2007 2:21 PM

To: FPA, Committee (SEN)

Subject: Submission to Human Services (Enhanced Service Delivery) Bill 2007

Senate Finance and Public Administration Standing Committee

fpa.sen@aph.gov.au

18 February 2007

Dear Committee,

Re: Submission to Human Services (Enhanced Service Delivery) Bill 2007

The Access Card will be a national identity card and creates the opportunity for future misuse, commercial exploitation, and invasion of privacy. No case has been made for its necessity.

It is in fact a Denial of Access Card; denial, that is, of the services we already have, without this national identity card.

Future Misuse

The database technology potentially enables government and private businesses to track the normal movements of Australians.

While legislation will penalise non-authorised persons demanding to see it, it is a 'benefits' card, and many transactions may be smoother and easier through its presentation: admission to venues, travel concessions, or anywhere requiring confirmation of benefits status. Presentation will be voluntary only inasmuch as the individual chooses to forego benefits (this was stated on the Access Card website in the industry briefings)!

The range of authorised persons can change over time, and can be changed by government with very little public discussion or knowledge.

It is discriminatory in that only the very rich will be able to live without an Access Card.

At present it does not contain medical information but the Minister has stated that there may be room for discussion at a later date (Mr Hockey May 2006).

Again, while there is no mention of linking the biometric photographic database with CCTV camera footage, (Hansard 25 May 2006), the subject of CCTV national standards has arisen.

Storing huge amounts of data in one system renders any breach far more serious than if the data were stored separately by those requiring it. Hackers succeed.

Commercial Exploitation

At present the Commonwealth will own and operate the card. But for how long? The present government outsources its operations and sells publicly-owned service organisations.

The very tendering process for construction of the Access Card system involves many subcontractors. Who will ensure that all components of the system operate perfectly?

The essence of the Card is that individual access details for sensitive personal files presently kept on separate databases will be compatible with the Access Card.

Invasion of Privacy

The Card creates an identity database unprecedented in Australia. This is not how democracies operate.

A search of the Bill revealed no mention of the words 'privacy', 'misuse', or 'correction'. I found no statement of the cardholder's right to know their unique ID number (it should not be printed on the surface), the data actually recorded against them, the means of correcting data, nor even how they enter and correct data in what is supposed to be their own data portion of the card. Even our current privacy legislation ensures these rights.

It will be an offense to give information to a third party, but how will individuals know when this has happened?

The Bill allows for 'other information' to be included in the future.

No Case Made for Access Card

I found nowhere in the government information a quantified statement of fraud presently occurring, nor how much fraud is guaranteed not to occur with the Card. Preventing fraud is one of the primary reasons for instituting this very expensive and invasive system.

Use by emergency services is problematical. Will every ambulance carry a reader? Will precious seconds be wasted looking for the card? What assurance that the appropriate information is recorded and is accurate? And finally, will emergency workers come to rely on it instead of their experience and training?

It is well known that Australians do not want a national identity card. If the Privacy Impact Assessment commissioned by the Government from Clayton Utz, or the uncensored KPMG Business Case on this proposal are publicly available, their availability has not been widely publicised. Why?

I found no statement of who is paying for the Card. The estimate of \$1.09 billion will doubtless increase before it is finished. One could imagine that the government is creating a database that will be very useful, once operating, for marketers, the police, hackers, and other opportunists, through data matching and data farming. In fact it is hard to see what benefit the public will get.

Margery Street