



**HUMANIST SOCIETY OF VICTORIA Inc.**  
Affiliated with the Council of Australian Humanist Societies (CAHS) and  
the International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU) London, UK.  
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The Secretary,  
Legal and Constitutional  
Senate Committee,  
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Re: HUMAN SERVICES ( ENHANCED SERVICE DELIVERY ) BILL 2007.

**SUBMISSION FROM THE HUMANIST SOCIETY OF VICTORIA INC. (HSV)**

The HSV is a secular organisation whose members foster an ethical, reasoned and responsible approach to life. It supports human rights, democratic processes, and a just and inclusive governance.

It seeks to alleviate suffering, to promote well-being and the circumstances where all individuals can attain their full potential. It engages in educational, counselling and charitable activities.

The views that follow have been formulated at specially convened group discussions to which all HSV members are invited. Further supportive information is obtained from print publications, the Internet, public lectures and from individuals with relevant expertise.

The Convenor of the HSV Submissions Committee is authorised to present these views.

GENERAL REMARKS

1. The benefits of modern technologies have to be balanced against the considerable risks they carry for electronic data misuse and privacy rights violation.
2. Humanists regard the right to privacy as a salient human right, a basic aspect of human dignity. And they regard a government's respect for personal privacy as a mark of a free, democratic and civilised society.
3. A democratic society should be widely consulted by its parliamentary representatives before changes to its fundamental rights are introduced.

SPECIFIC POINTS OF CONCERN

4. The lack of public debate.

The call for submissions from 22nd December 06 to 12 January 07 ensured a limited response. We find this timing to seek public opinion most peculiar.

5. The lack of disclosure of assessment.

Parts of the KPMG reports on this matter are not open to scrutiny. Such lack of transparency causes justified mistrust.

6. The danger of breach of privacy

- a. Well known instances of previous unauthorised access to private information by police officers (LEAP), Taxation Office staff and others , raise serious concerns.
- b. The new databases will be accessible to a large number of public servants and private employees in a wide range of agencies. This ensures that breaches of privacy will be frequent in spite of threatened penalties. Some breaches may result in irreversible consequences (e.g. locating a victim of domestic violence now living at a secret address.)
- c. The large amount of data in one place presents a great temptation to hackers. Even the Pentagon failed to prevent such intrusions.

7. Extention into an ID card.

So called 'function creep' is highly likely. It has already occurred in Britain where the smart card known as an entitlement card is now an ID card with some surveillance facilities.

cont. 7. It is not possible to implement measures that will prevent function creep now or in the future. The Federal Attorney-General acknowledges that the card could be extended, exploited or misused by future governments, as no government can bind its successors.

A supporter of the card, Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, expresses serious concern " that it not extend into anything else beyond its original intention." ( The Age 9.2.07. 'Access to Whom?').

We are entitled to ask who will have access to this information. Will it include police, doctors, chemists, prospective employers, or even supermarkets as Minister Joe Hickey has suggested?. Will it then be sold on without our knowledge.

8. Arguments in support of the card

- a. The comparison with driver's licences is spurious. Unlike information stored on databases. the information on the licence is limited and known to the owners.
- b. The "nothing to hide, nothing to fear" argument has been used by many tyrants. Traits and associations now acceptable and regarded as innocuous, may be deemed undesirable or illegal by a future government.
- c. That the card is not compulsory to have is in direct contradiction with its pupose as the required card to many services.
- d. The card as an anti terrorist measure. It has been pointed out that it may indeed protect terrorists from detection once they establish a false identity as did the 9/11 bombers. The Madrid bombers carried ID cards.
- e. Modern technology will allow dedicated and sophisticated criminals to produce duplicates, insert false data, and permit a variety of misuses.

Yours sincerely,



Halina Strnad,  
convenor, submission committee.

17.2.2007.

copy to the Hon Ian Campbell MP