

Dear Secretary

ACCESS CARD BILL

I refer to your Committee's advertised invitation for submissions on the above legislation.

Since I have no doubt that the legislation will be passed as the Government majority wishes, I see no point in providing substantive comments on this issue. The Bill will become another part of the jigsaw of central government controls which now dominates Australian life.

Nevertheless, the Committee might wish to pursue the likelihood that this scheme, once in place, will be incrementally extended to a range of other purposes. The Tax File Number is an example of what is likely to happen: promised to be strictly limited to tax and connected purposes, Tax File Numbers are now available (with associated data) to scores of Federal and State agencies.

While not offering substantive

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comments on the legislation, may I note some peripheral points.

First, the time allowed for your Committee's consideration is derisory - the more so as the last stage of public consultation by the Department took place over the Christmas holiday period. Whatever happened to the rule, adopted by a blocking Opposition majority in earlier times, that legislation introduced in one sitting period was automatically adjourned to the next, so as to allow full consideration?

Second, I deplore the practice of giving short titles to bills which amount to little more than public relations: "Enhanced Service Delivery" is questionable as a description of this scheme and is just an exercise in spin.

Third, I am disappointed that your Committee's advertisement does not provide a postal address for submissions. At least 40% of the population does not have Internet access, and a website is no use to them.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Brown
(MR STEPHEN BROWN)