



**Australian
Privacy
Foundation**

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MEDIA RELEASE

Access Card fast resembling a train wreck

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"The project management of the Access Card is in such a state of shambles that the project should be shut down immediately", said the Australian Privacy Foundation today.

"It's like watching a train wreck in slow motion", said the Foundation's 'No ID Card' Campaign Director, Anna Johnston. "The Government doesn't know whether it's coming or going on this project, yet millions of dollars of taxpayers' money continues to be wasted".

"After we raised doubts about some of their claims, the Government was last week forced to amend the Access Card website. It was revealed that their claims about 'tried and true' biometric technology referred to projects that did not use biometric photos at all", she said. "How many other sloppy mistakes are they making?"

"\$40M of taxpayers' money has already been spent this year on external advisers on this project, and yet the Government still has not figured out how the Access Card is supposed to work as a concession card; or how registration will work; or how emergency health information will work", said Ms Johnston.

"Another \$3M has already been spent on communication campaigns to advertise this unapproved and shambolic project", she said.

"The Minister has claimed that he will have the entire scheme explained in a Bill to be tabled next week, but he has been forced to admit that critical policy decisions still have not been made", said Ms Johnston.

"They've yet again got the cart before the horse. The Government tendered for the IT design before even getting Parliament's approval for the project. Now they're trying to draft the law without first settling key policy issues", she said. "This is a textbook case of bad project management, and bad policy development".

"If the Government still does not know how the scheme is supposed to work, how can we be sure they've got their cost estimates right? Or whether the benefits will be worth the costs?"

"We again call upon the Minister to dump this ID Card in disguise. The Access Card is unjustified, unworkable, and a potentially costly and stupid mistake. There is not a single good reason to try and rush this proposal through before the election – and plenty of reasons why the Australian public will oppose it", said Ms Johnston.

"All major political parties, including the Liberals and Nationals, have stated that they are opposed to a national ID card", noted Ms Johnston.

"We would welcome the chance to meet with Minister Ellison and discuss alternative strategies to deal with welfare fraud, and improve government service delivery, that do not involve complex, unpopular, expensive schemes that will morph into an ID card. But the Minister cancelled his meeting with us in March, and still has not rescheduled", she said.

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