



**Australian
Privacy
Foundation**

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MEDIA RELEASE

What does the Government have to hide?

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"The Government is hiding behind spin on its so-called Access Card Bill", warned Australian Privacy Foundation spokeswoman, Anna Johnston, today.

"This is a national ID card, plain and simple", she said. "It has all the same features as the much-hated Australia Card proposal from the 1980's – plus biometric photos to boot".

"Today's tactics smack of political opportunism – sneaking a Bill into Parliament before it is ready, while attention is diverted by the climate change debate", she said.

"We suspect the Government is trying to hide the division in its own ranks. But it's too late, senior backbenchers like Bronwyn Bishop are already speaking out".

The Australian Privacy Foundation, the leading non-governmental organisation dedicated to protecting the privacy rights of Australians, has again called on the Minister for Human Services to release full details on the so-called 'Access Card' project, so the public can see exactly what the Government has planned.

"The Government promised us that they would listen to the public on this one – but today they've rushed a Bill into Parliament before they've even published all the submissions they received, let alone addressed them all," she said.

"The Government keeps assuring us that privacy is foremost in its mind – and yet the key recommendations of their own Consumer & Privacy Taskforce have been rejected."

"New Minister for Human Services Ian Campbell has adopted his predecessor's ludicrous level of secrecy about this project. The Privacy Impact Assessment and the full costings from KPMG still haven't been released", said Ms Johnston.

"Members of the public can't review or discuss the tender documents, and even the legislation is hard to find – all you get on the Access Card website is the Minister's media release".

"If Senator Campbell won't release these reports, and he won't wait until the public's concerns have been addressed, and he won't accept Professor Fels' advice, how can we trust that this project is at all well considered or balanced – or that it will even work?" she said. "It is likely to be a costly white elephant".

"The public has a right to know exactly how the so-called 'Access Card' is going to impact on their daily lives", said Ms Johnston. "What is the Government hiding? Unlike the 20 million Australians whose lives will be under your scrutiny if this project goes ahead, if they've got nothing to hide, they've got nothing to fear!"

~ end of release ~

Background information

The Privacy Foundation conducts careful analysis of proposals. In order to do that, it needs access to information. Here's what we've found, after looking hard.

The Government Tenders Web-Site says, at:

https://www.tenders.gov.au/federal/shared/rftdetail.cfm?p_id=6989&p_criteria=DHS0607%2F079&p_advert=0&p_displayContext=front-end

“This RFT is seeking a prime contractor to implement a cards management system and for the design, manufacture, initialisation, personalisation and distribution of the Access Card.

“Tenderers are required to sign and return to the Department of Human Services, a Deed of Confidentiality in the form attached to this RFT notice, before being issued a password to access the RFT documentation.

“RFT Documentation will be available for download, with the use of a password, in the fortnight commencing 29 January 2007.

“Once access to the RFT documentation is obtained, Tenderers should take particular note of the Tenderer's Confidentiality Obligations as outlined in the RFT, in addition to the Tenderer's obligations under the Deed of Confidentiality”.

Here is **an index of Government Documents that we've had to search out:**

http://www.privacy.org.au/Campaigns/ID_cards/HSAC-GovDocs.html#Feb07

The Bill and associated documents are at:

Human Services (Enhanced Service Delivery) Bill 2007

<http://parlinfoweb.aph.gov.au/piweb/browse.aspx?NodeID=73>

No details can be found on **the Office of Access Card web-site** at:

<http://www.accesscard.gov.au/>

The **Australian Privacy Foundation's Campaign-Site** is here:

http://www.privacy.org.au/Campaigns/ID_cards/HSAC.html

Here's our answer to the question **'If I've got nothing to hide, why should I be afraid of a National Identification Scheme?'**

http://www.privacy.org.au/Campaigns/ID_cards/HSAC-FAQ10.html