



**Australian  
Privacy  
Foundation**

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G.P.O. Box 1196, Sydney NSW 2001

email: [mail@privacy.org.au](mailto:mail@privacy.org.au)

web: [www.privacy.org.au](http://www.privacy.org.au)

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Costa's Bill will mean an 'Australia Card' for NSW**

6 April 2005

A Bill that passed through the NSW Legislative Assembly today allows for "an all-purpose identity card", said APF Chair Anna Johnston.

"This Bill has seen almost no debate, and no public consultation – yet it introduces the most fundamental attack on our personal freedoms since the failed 'Australia Card' proposal of the 1980s" she said.

"The Government's plan is to introduce a central database to hold the personal details of the whole NSW population. The Bill places no limits on how much information the RTA can collect about people, and few limits on who can access the data – they've even mentioned fingerprinting as a possibility."

"This is the worst kind of 'Big Brother' proposal. The Bill even makes it a crime not to tell the RTA every time you move home, even if you don't have a driver's licence."

"One of the biggest privacy risks is from the proposal to create a 'unique identifier' for every person – the number that would be shown on the card. This allows both government and businesses to track, link and profile people's movements and transactions" she said.

"They will be able to track when you book a flight, borrow a video, post a gift overseas, or go to the pub."

Ms Johnston also noted that a centralised database poses greater security risks to people, and is more likely to increase the risks of identity theft and identity fraud.

"The Commonwealth Government has recognised the risks of centralising vast amounts of personal data – it is a gift to organised criminals, terrorists, and other people intent on doing harm. It means only one database to hack into, or one clerk at the RTA to bribe. Yet the Government seems intent on creating this great honey-pot of data, despite the obvious risks involved for the people of NSW."

The Government's proposal is set out in the Photo Card Bill 2004, which has already passed through the lower house of Parliament without opposition, and is set to be debated in the Legislative Council shortly.

The Australian Privacy Foundation last month published its analysis of the Bill, and sent a copy to both the Minister for Roads Mr Costa, and the Shadow Minister Mr Page.

“We’ve actually come up with a workable alternative, in consultation with groups like NCOSS. We believe our alternative model can deliver a suitable form of photo ID for people who don’t have driver’s licences, without introducing a ‘Big Brother’ database or a universal identity card.”

“The Government has so far not budged on this issue. If the Coalition, minor parties and independents don’t force amendments to this Bill, we will soon be seeing an ‘Australia Card’ for NSW.”

~ end of release ~

APF’s *Review of the Photo Card Bill*:

<http://www.privacy.org.au/Papers/NSWIDCardAnal0502.pdf>

Our alternative model, and how to achieve it:

<http://www.privacy.org.au/Papers/NSWIDCardAmendmts050330.pdf>

Contact for further comment:

Anna Johnston  
Chair, Australian Privacy Foundation  
0400 432 241

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#### **About the Australian Privacy Foundation**

The Australian Privacy Foundation is the main non-governmental organisation dedicated to protecting the privacy rights of Australians. The Foundation aims to focus public attention on emerging issues which pose a threat to the freedom and privacy of Australians.

Since 1987 the Foundation has led the defence of the rights of individuals to control their personal information and to be free of excessive intrusions. For further information see [www.privacy.org.au](http://www.privacy.org.au)

Since 2003 the Australian Privacy Foundation has also hosted the Australian *Big Brother Awards*, which are presented around the world to corporations, public officials and governments that have shown a blatant disregard for privacy, and those who have done the most to threaten personal privacy in their countries.