

Access Card

AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRATS ACTION PLAN
ACCESS CARD
ATTORNEY-GENERAL

The Australian Democrats are strongly opposed to an Access Card. We believe the Access Card is a surrogate national identity card. We are concerned with a photograph and electronic signature on the surface of the card and the privacy and security of the microchip and databases. Instead of one card we propose three separate cards fit for their purpose: a Medicare Card, a Concession Card and a Health Card.

Our Action Plan

While we support responsible use of smartcard technology and improving access to Government services with the aim to minimise fraud, we do not believe the Access Card project is the best way forward because of governance, accountability, privacy and security concerns. We propose:

- A standalone MediCare Card whose magnetic strip technology is replaced with smart card technology
- A standalone welfare benefit Card that can be used to claim concessions and administer emergency relief
- A standalone consumer health card
- Giving consumers the option of suppressing features like a photograph and electronic signature on the surface of the card. Ideally, these features should be embedded in the chip
- Where reasonable and practicable, storing personal information in the microchip and remaining in the control of the individual rather than in new databases
- Having multiple customer numbers and customer identities to limit data matching
- Not withholding payments based on access card compliance
- Legislating for the highest level of security
- Legislating to ensure police and spy agencies can only access personal and health information with a warrant

The Issues

Australia's Federal Government is trying to bring in an Access Card for every man, woman and child in Australia. While the card itself will not be available automatically to anyone under 18, young people's details will be recorded on their parent's card.



Other ACTION PLANS are available online at
www.democrats.org.au

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The Access Card – an ID card in disguise - is significantly different from what we have now and is much more intrusive even than the Australia Card proposed in 1986 and voted down by the Democrats and the Liberal Party.

It will create a single key through which both government and business can confidently index, link, track and profile our movements, transactions and personal affairs, combining records in large scale and routine ways. The central register will be a massive database with potentially no limits to who will have access to it.

In practice, once you need an Access Card to live, you will have no choice but to always carry the Card.

They will not be self financing. You may have to contribute to their cost.

The error rate in government databases is substantial and is likely to be magnified in the large Access Card database.

The dangers are likely to become apparent only after it's been set up, and to increase over time as more and more data is added, and the card is used by more and more organisations for an increasing number of functions.