

Rodney Lovell

On March 15, 2010, I had the unfortunate experience to be initially refused service at a Queensland pharmacy. I was attempting to purchase a product, "Demazin 6 hour". This product contains pseudoephedrine and is subject to restricted sale as part of "Project Stop". (The Project Stop website as at March 15, 2010 had logos of The Pharmacy Guild of Australia and Australian Government Attorney-General's Department. It had a supporting letter from the Queensland Police Service. It refers to Queensland State Government legislation.)

I am aware of the restriction on sale of this product and so, had "Government issued photo identification" (my passport) in accordance with information on the Project Stop website at that time.

My request for the product was refused by the pharmacy because:

"We have been in trouble from the police because we are not allowed to take passports."

"You need to show us your driver's licence."

I explained to the pharmacist that I do not have a drivers licence, and I am offering my passport, supported by payment using a current credit card.

I am very aware of the reasons for pharmacy vigilance.

I am accepting of pharmacists recording my personal information and product purchases.

However, it seems as if 'someone' is auditing and enforcing pharmacists identification records in a method that leads to unhelpful and embarrassing moments for customers like me. It is also suggesting that a driver's licence is a pseudo "identification card."

This is not the first time in my experience that retailers requiring photo identification specifically ask for a drivers licence and balk at a passport, in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. Frankly, it is ridiculous.

The June 2007 Letter from the Minister for Justice and Customs that was on the Project STOP website states, "while also ensuring its continued availability to those with a genuine therapeutic need."

I have been using this product for over ten years. It is the only tablet I have found that reduces the severity of my hay fever. This product is often out of stock, or not stocked. When I find it, I like to buy two packets and I can't even do that, even though the information is recorded!

I would like to continue to use this product, and am happy to provide government issued photo identification.

Since my initial letters to my local MP and the Pharmacy Guild regarding this issue, the

Project Stop website has been changed. In lieu of “Government issued photo identification”, it now reads,
“Forms of photographic identification that are acceptable for the purposes of Project STOP include:

a State or Territory issued driver’s license

a State or Territory issued Proof of Age card

any other State or Territory assigned form of photographic identification.

Use of an Australian Government issued form of identification (such as an Australian Passport or Medicare card) is expressly forbidden by the Privacy Act (under National Privacy Principle 7).

Therefore, Project Stop acknowledged the shortcoming, but simply changed from a ‘government issued id’, to a ‘State issued id’.

I note that the primary purpose of a state issued Card 18+ (also known as an 18+ Card or a proof of age card) is available as evidence that you are legally able to enter licensed premises. I am 49 years of age!

A state based identity card does not guarantee me service at interstate pharmacies. Although, not your area, I find it absurd to source (and pay \$24.90) for a proof of age card whose stated purpose is proof of age to enter licensed premises.

One of the suggested Identification requirements to obtain an 18+ card is a passport!

A Card 18+ (also known as an 18+ Card or a proof of age card) is available as evidence that you are legally able to enter licensed premises. The Card 18+ is an alternative if you don't have a passport or a driver licence demonstrating proof of age. It is also commonly used by people with a licence who, for security reasons, do not want other private information displayed as the Card 18+ does not include your address.

Yet, pharmacies I have been to ask for my address as part of their required recording.

Aside from a drivers licence or 18+ Card, I can find no other ‘state based’ photo identification cards available to the general public.

The practical summary is a drivers licence has become an official “Identification Card”.

Using my Passport as identification I can be admitted to any country in the world, but cannot buy 1 packet of ‘Demazin 6 hour’. Other than this one issue, I use my Passport for ALL my id requirements, and add that a Passport can be used to obtain any state based service or card!

The change to state based ID for Project Stop, made after my first enquiries, is simply a bureaucratic ‘workaround’. Workarounds are for systems that don’t work.

Here is a summary of my issue.

I want to buy ‘Demazin tablets’ from a pharmacy...simple.

The pharmacy want me to produce ID, as the product now comes under the Federal Gov’t

“Project Stop” requirements....simple.

Project Stop stated, ‘Government issued id must be presented’simple.

I produce my Passport....simple.

The pharmacy refuses to accept my passport, as it is illegal to for them to record passport details... The Pharmacy Guild response states " the relevant law which prohibits us from accepting a Federal Government identifier. This is contained within Principle 7 of the Australian National Privacy Principles".

A practical amendment to Principle 7 to meet the needs of Project Stop, and other official requirements, is preferable to any workarounds. Alternatively, a federal government identification card would be a good thing, although it sounds similar to a Passport.

Every card or document I have been issued does not have a photo, except for my passport. Amongst other requirements, I have had police checks, become a Justice of the Peace, and travelled to Afghanistan and USA using my Passport. Surely, a Passport could be, and should be, suitable identification to buy the occasional packet of suitable hay fever relief.

Please make appropriate changes to legislation.

Electronically submitted by
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