

SENATE LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL LEGISLATION COMMITTEE
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

Output 2.1

Question No. 53

Senator Ludwig asked the following question at the hearing on 24 May 2006:

In relation to the \$28.3 million over four years for the Document Verification Service, are there any key dates in relation to forward plans?

The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

In the 2005 Budget the Australian Government allocated \$5.9 million over two years to initiate the development of a national identity security strategy, including a prototype document verification service (DVS).

The prototype DVS began operation on 6 February 2006 and officially concluded on 30 June 2006. The prototype DVS has informed the decision to proceed with a national DVS and confirmed the viability of verifying proof-of-identity documents in a real time online environment. Elements of the formal evaluation of the prototype will further assist in specifying the technical requirements of a DVS. Privacy considerations and safeguards associated with document verification are also being addressed.

It is proposed to continue operating the DVS at its current capacity from 1 July 2006. This will allow AGD over the next four years to progressively build and enhance the DVS. Enhancement of the IT systems over the next 12-18 months will involve improving and strengthening the capability of the DVS to handle an increased volume of document verification requests. Appropriate governance arrangements will also need to be implemented to ensure effective control and commitment to a national service. Management and operational details negotiated with States and Territories to implement the national DVS will be included in an inter-governmental agreement.

We anticipate that the DVS will be operating effectively to assist in the enrolment of customers for the Health and Services Access Card in 2008.