

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

**Output 2.1**

**Question No. 87**

**Senator Ludwig asked the following questions at the hearing on 31 October 2005**

- a) Regarding the development of the whole of government approach to identity security, could you provide a breakdown of the \$5.9 billion dollars allocated over 2 years to undertake the key project work in supporting the strategy?
- b) What key project work is being undertaken for the strategy?
- c) What agencies and department are being consulted in the development of whole government approach?
- d) What sorts of consultations are currently underway, have been completed or are planned to be underway?
- e) What is the form of the consultation?

**The answers to the honourable senator's questions are as follows:**

- a) I note that the Budget allocation to the Attorney-General's Department (AGD) was \$5.9 million over two years, and not \$5.9 billion.

This allocation was to initiate the development of the National Identity Security Strategy (the Strategy) and to fund two pilot projects:

- a Document Verification Service prototype (DVS), and
- a data integrity project.

The AGD is negotiating allocations from the \$5.9 million with other participating agencies to cover their resource requirements for the two pilots.

- b) The first project will pilot an online Document Verification Service (DVS) to enable the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) to check key documents presented by clients to establish their identity. The data recorded on those documents will be verified online by the document issuer (eg. a state registry for births, deaths and marriages) with a simple 'yes' or 'no' response. The DVS will not allocate an identifying number nor store personal details on a database.

The aim of the second pilot is to trial processes designed to identify key data matching elements that can be used to improve the accuracy of identity information held of government databases. The project is testing the integrity of a sample of 25 000 records of the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) tax file number database against records held by DIMIA, DFAT, the State Registries of births, deaths and marriages, the Health Insurance Commission, Centrelink and Austroads to identify false identities and inaccurate records.

- c) The following Australian Government agencies are being consulted:

- Australian Bureau of Statistics

- Australian Communications and Media Authority
- Australian Crime Commission
- Australian Customs Service
- Australian Electoral Commission
- Australian Federal Police
- Australian Government Information Management Office
- Australian Securities and Investments Commission
- Australian Security Intelligence Organisation
- Australian Taxation Office
- Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre
- Centrelink
- Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
- Defence Signals Directorate
- Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts
- Department of Defence
- Department of Education, Science and Training
- Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
- Department of Family and Community Services
- Department of Finance and Administration
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Department of Health and Ageing
- Department of Human Services
- Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs
- Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources
- Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
- Department of the Treasury
- Department of Transport and Regional Services
- Department of Veterans' Affairs
- Health Insurance Commission, and
- Office of the Privacy Commissioner.

d) The Australian Government has consulted States and Territories, culminating in the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), at its Special Meeting on Counter-Terrorism on 27 September 2005, agreeing to the development and implementation of a national identity security strategy to better protect the identities of Australians.

The Attorney-General's Department has established a consultative framework which includes high-level committees underpinned by working groups. Participants in the committees and working groups are drawn from Australian Government agencies and the States and Territories.

The consultative process will continue to evolve as the Strategy is developed.

e) The committees and working groups of the consultative framework supporting the Strategy are the primary form of consultation. Bilateral discussions between agencies also occur as issues arise. The form of consultation will be responsive to the needs of participants as the Strategy is developed.