



AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

MEDIA RELEASE

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ACCI OPPOSES AN AUSTRALIA CARD

Statement by Mr Peter Hendy, Chief Executive

The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI), Australia's largest and most representative business organisation, has reiterated its firm opposition to the introduction of a national identity card or "Australia Card."

ACCI's call is featured in the lead article of the December edition of the *ACCI Review*.

We remain to be persuaded that it would address incidents of serious crime and terrorism and believe that the Australian Government must be able to clearly show how such a measure would demonstrably improve Australia's security arrangements.

ACCI is particularly concerned given international assessments of the potential costs and compliance obligations associated with a national identification system especially as many of these costs may be borne by business.

Overseas experience indicates the potential cost of an identity card could be as high as A\$750 per person or around A\$15 billion in total – and that does not include the flow on costs to business.

The business community is also concerned that it would become heavily involved in the identification card process in that businesses will be required to read, manage and store confidential information in areas such as employment verification, adding yet another level of red tape and regulatory complexity.

The need to create a national identity register to cross check with bearers of a card and the prospect that once introduced, an identity card would be used for far more extensive purposes than originally intended means that a card should only proceed after long and considered analysis.

Two of ACCI's major predecessor organisations, who merged in 1992, the Confederation of Australian Industry and Australian Chamber of Commerce, were also opposed to the introduction of an Australia Card in 1985-87.

A robust cost-benefit analysis which quantifies the direct and indirect compliance costs that may be faced by business and the wider community should be conducted before any firm decision to introduce an Australia Card is taken – not, as is so often the case, afterwards.

A copy of the December *ACCI Review* is available on the ACCI website – www.acci.asn.au

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Note, the December ACCI Review also contains articles on Personal Income Taxation Reform, the Implementation of WorkChoices and the Foreign Aid Program White Paper.

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