

Australia Card Provisions and Feasibility of National Identification.

The report does not recommend the establishment of a national identification scheme. In essence it concentrates on the Births, Deaths and Marriages Register and the feasibility of National Identification based on it.

The Committee seemed to accept the non-computer literate viewpoint that computerising a BDM Register would miraculously improve accuracy and completeness. It did not seem to realise that interstate and international movements, coupled with legitimate name changing by deed poll or common law rights, makes the BDM useless for identification and that no amount of computerisation can affect the external logical inconsistencies and incompleteness of the Register.

Fraud

The Committee did not see a role for a national identity system in addressing tax avoidance and welfare cheating. In spite of this, the majority did not appreciate that if there are other procedures available now without a national identity number, these same techniques could be used without the proposed tax file number.

There is a degree of naivete in that the report assumes

that because Departmental officers at a senior level were aware of fraud, then all officers, including the newest recruits, are equally aware and concerned. This false assumption continues into their consideration of privacy.

Australian Federal Police Reports

The Committee could not gain access to reports supposedly used to argue the benefits of identification schemes, and which were specifically mentioned in its terms of reference! A letter from Senator Tate summarising these reports was accepted. However, the Committee, Senator Tate and the AFP seemed unaware of some of the "advantages" in using a computer to commit fraud. Certainly it is not cost-effective to spend \$900 to investigate a one-off cheque fraud of \$200, but when a computer is used, that cheque may represent only one of many incidents repeated automatically over many accounts and over a long period of time. Hence, controls over information security play a more important preventive role than does any legislative penalty.

Cost to the Private Sector

The Committee recognised the problem of obtaining figures on the cost associated with
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NEW SOUTH WALES SOCIETY NEWS

The society wishes to thank all last years speakers and members for their support and to wish them a Happy New Year. Last year was most productive for the Society with an overwhelming response to our half day Computer Law Seminar in July and the Gala meeting, Catching the Pirates and the Loot, in December.

This year's planned meetings cover a wide range of topics including Shrink-Wrap licensing, the Legal Aspects of EDI, Local Area Networks, Computer Viruses and many more. We also hope to include overseas speakers on our meetings schedule if the opportunity arises. A provisional timetable is included on the last page of the newsletter. Any other suggestions on topics can be forwarded to the Editors.

The Society's AGM will be held on 21st March at the Law Society, Level 2 at 5:30pm. We will bring you a list of new office bearers in our next edition.

The Editors have recently heard from the New Zealand Society for Computers and the Law which was formed in September 1987. They also have a very full conference schedule and details of their program for 1989 will be included in our next newsletter.