

SMARTGATE: THE NEXT STEP

The Australian Government will commit a total of \$185 million over the next four years to develop biometric technology at Australia's borders to speed passenger processing and boost border security.

The use of biometric technology at our borders will improve the security and efficiency of passenger processing and enable Australia to cope with increased passenger volumes. The initiative will also contribute to national security and reduce the cost to the community of identity fraud.

The initiative includes the introduction of biometric passports later this year for all new and replacement Australian Passport holders. The ePassports contain a microchip that will store an electronic image of the passport holder.

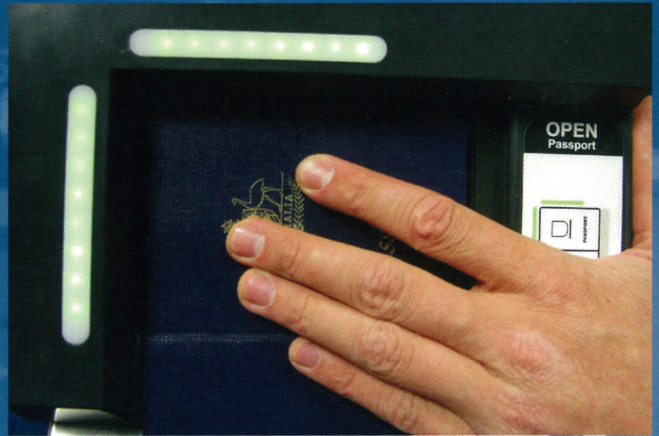
The introduction of ePassports will ensure Australia's continued participation in the US Visa Waiver Program. It will also provide Australians with a highly secure and reliable identity document and ensure that we remain at the leading edge of international passport technology and fraud detection techniques.

An allocation of \$61 million over four years will enable Customs to automate border processing. This will enable travellers using ePassports to self-process through the primary line without having to present to a Customs officer. The face of the traveller presenting at the self-processing kiosk will be matched against the image stored in their ePassport, to confirm their identity.

Customs will build on the success of the SmartGate system currently trialling self processing using face recognition at Sydney and Melbourne International Airports, to gradually phase in automated border processing at major airports. The rollout will be linked to the anticipated uptake of Australian and foreign biometrically enabled ePassports.

The Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs has been allocated funding to implement biometric technology for border security and identity verification. This technology will enable better identification and screening of non-citizens seeking to enter Australia.

The Office of the Federal Privacy Commissioner will continue to provide advice and conduct privacy audits to assist the three agencies in addressing privacy issues that may arise as a result of the use of biometrics.



In February the SmartGate trial was extended to include Qantas platinum frequent flyers. As frequent international travellers, the platinum flyers were selected as ideal participants for the trial. They provide an assessable and measurable group who can regularly test the SmartGate system at both Sydney and Melbourne airports.

SmartGate has been trialled successfully by Qantas aircrew in Sydney since November 2002 and Melbourne since September 2004.

Extending the SmartGate trial assists Customs to further evaluate with particular emphasis on how passengers, who are less-frequent travellers than aircrew, interact with the kiosk.

To date, more than 6400 selected frequent travellers have enrolled in the SmartGate trial, generating around 5000 successful transactions.

In total, SmartGate has done more than 200,000 transactions since the trial began in November 2002.