



NSW Legislative Assembly Hansard

Photo Card Bill

Extract from NSW Legislative Assembly Hansard and Papers Wednesday 8 December 2004.

Second Reading.

Mr TONY STEWART (Bankstown—Parliamentary Secretary) [11.17 a.m.], on behalf of Mr Carl Scully: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of the Photo Card Bill is to authorise the Roads and Traffic Authority [RTA] to introduce a New South Wales photo card for those who do not hold a drivers licence, a proof of age card, or other form of identification such as a passport or a New South Wales photo birth card. The New South Wales photo card will be a voluntary card and will be available to residents of New South Wales aged 16 years and above who do not hold a drivers licence. The New South Wales photo card is not an Australia card. The card will be purely voluntary and will help those in the community who have a need for a photo card but cannot have one because they do not fit the criteria for other photo identification. For example, they may not be medically fit to hold a drivers licence; they may be older than 25 years of age and cannot obtain a proof of age card; or they may not be born in New South Wales and cannot obtain a photo birth card. The card will provide New South Wales residents who do not hold a drivers licence with a document that will assist them to establish their entitlement to rights and privileges in the community.

Many people often have a need to produce some form of personal identification in order to secure goods and services. Businesses and government agencies also rely on a photo identification document to provide assurance that the person they are dealing with is who they say they are. The New South Wales Government has been approached by numerous community groups asking for a New South Wales photo card. The RTA will also undertake a community education campaign to inform people about the purpose of the card. The New South Wales drivers licence was designed specifically to achieve driver management goals. Over recent years the New South Wales drivers licence card has increasingly been relied upon as a trusted and reliable photo identification document. This has placed an obligation on the Government to ensure that people who are unable to obtain a drivers licence for whatever reason are not unfairly disadvantaged. The voluntary New South Wales photo card will make it easier for older people and people with disabilities who require photo identification but cannot obtain a valid photo identification document.

The card will replace the existing proof of age card, which will be phased out over the next three years, and it will contain security and design features that will assist service providers in establishing evidence that a photo card holder is at least 18 years of age. The bill will enable the RTA to produce photo cards under different eligibility requirements. These include requirements that only New South Wales residents may apply for the voluntary card and that a resident may not hold both a New South Wales photo card and a New South Wales drivers licence. The eligibility requirements and the customer enrolment and proof of identity processes used by the RTA to establish entitlement to the photo card are consistent with New South Wales and national strategies to prevent identity fraud. The RTA will apply stringent proof-of-identity checks on each individual and will implement a new technical capacity to ensure that the photo image management regime is of the highest integrity and security. The bill will enable the re-use of the latest valid photo images for the purposes of the Government licensing service. Business rules will be consistent across both schemes.

The bill will also enable the RTA to adapt the photo card to incorporate future developments in security technology that will help prevent identity fraud. The RTA is at the forefront of national strategies to protect the integrity of these systems, which in future may include the use of biometric indicators and anti-tampering and anti-forgery technologies. Of course biometric indicators would only be introduced after proper community consultation and would be strictly regulated under legislation or regulation. It is desirable that any technological solutions in these areas should be developed nationally to ensure compatibility and interoperability between jurisdictions.

In developing the New South Wales photo card, the RTA has sought a co-ordinated and co-operative national approach to maximise work being undertaken to prevent identity crime. The bill authorises the RTA to refuse an application for the issue of a photo card in circumstances when the RTA forms the opinion that the applicant is not a fit and proper person to hold such a card. The bill also provides the RTA with the power to cancel a photo card. Grounds for such cancellation action will be prescribed by regulation and will include fraudulent use of a photo card and misuse of a photo card.

The cost of the card will be \$40 for a five-year period. This will ensure that the full cost of the card is recovered and that improvements to the security of the card can be introduced over time as new technologies emerge. The RTA will index the photo card fee annually from 1 July to ensure that cost recovery is maintained, applying the consumer price index in line with other RTA fees and charges. Given the voluntary nature of the card, no concessions will be available. However, if an elderly holder of a New South Wales drivers licence is directed to surrender his or her licence on medical or age grounds, the fee for the photo card may not apply. It is worth noting that the current proof of age card and the birth, deaths and marriages photo birth card do not have pensioner concessions. The New South Wales photo card will provide real benefits to a large number of New South Wales resident, and I commend the bill to the House.