

Australia identity docs driving to digital to slash scams and crime

The [Digital ID Bill 2023](#), introducing a digital identity verification scheme, passed the Australian Senate with a 33 to 26 vote this week. Accredited businesses [will be able to apply to trial the scheme within two years](#) of commencement of the Act, with banks and credit card operators expected to be the first to access the scheme.

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The new legislation will broaden the availability of digital ID in Australia, which is currently limited to government services lacking sophisticated user interfaces and including MyGov and Centrelink, to include State and Territory governments and private businesses. The changes are aimed at streamlining online ID verification processes, preventing businesses from holding copies of primary documents which are then susceptible to hacks and theft. Under the system, individuals will be able to use smart wallets to link credentials to the chosen identity app.

Not all were pleased with the Bill, with former fish and chip shop owner and conservative senator Pauline Hanson throwing shade:



Pauline Hanson  
 @PaulineHansonOz · [Follow](#)



BREAKING NEWS: Anthony Albanese's Labor Government has just rammed Digital ID legislation through the parliament. No debate was allowed, and no questions were allowed to be asked of ministers.

Labor, Greens, Pocock, Lambie, Tyrrell and Van all voted to pass this legislation.... [Show more](#)

Wednesday, 27 March 2024 (05.50pm)

Division no. 907

Digital ID Bill 2023 and a related bill

Remaining stages

Question—That the remaining stages of the bills be agreed to and the bills be now passed

The Senate divided—

AYES, 33

Senators—

Allman-Payne
 Ayres
 Bilyk
 Brown
 Chisholm
 Ciccone
 Cox
 Faruqi
 Ghosh

Green
 Grogan*
 Hanson-Young
 Lambie
 Lines
 McKim
 Payman
 Pocock, Barbara

Pocock, David
 Polley
 Pratt
 Rice
 Sheldon
 Shoebridge
 Smith, Marielle
 Steele-John

Sterle
 Stewart
 Tyrrell
 Urenhart
 Van
 Walsh
 Waters
 Whish-Wilson

NOES, 26

Senators—

Antic
 Askew
 Babet
 Bragg
 Brockman
 Cadell*
 Canavan

Cash
 Chandler
 Colbeck
 Davey
 Duniam
 Fawcett
 Hanson

Hume
 Liddle
 McDonald
 McGrath
 McLachlan
 Nampijinpa Price

O'Sullivan
 Rennick
 Roberts
 Ruston
 Scarr
 Smith, Dean

* Tellers

Question agreed to.

Although the passage was met with concerns from critics that the bill was expedited through the Parliament without proper debate, [Katy Gallagher, the minister for finance said:](#)

Improving safety online is a priority for us and legislation will ensure strong independent oversight is in place to support the expansion of the Australian Government Digital ID System from mid-2024.

We've spoken with business, community and privacy groups to ensure the Bill will deliver the privacy safeguards, accreditation options and consumer safeguards they expect

Gallagher also highlighted that the digital ID scheme will remain voluntary and alternative methods will be available for those that do not wish to use digital identity verification processes. The Government is budgeting AUD\$145.5M to implement regulation and oversight of the scheme.

Large-scale data breaches in recent years, including Optus, Medibank and Challenger hacks highlights the problems of records of identity being kept in servers for years as mandated by law.

New South Wales has had a very successful digital driver's licence in place for a number of years, but it has not been accepted as valid ID at the federal level. A move to reduce friction and prevent copies of identification being kept where they aren't needed is hoped to lead to greater efficiencies for businesses that must check ID, and reduce identity theft and other problems.

The danger of Australia becoming a "digital papers please" environment may be overblown, but concerns of creeping surveillance will remain and it is hoped the Government keeps a careful review and limit on just what information is needed to be collected from citizens to keep our privacy and freedom protected.