



**Public Consultation about Verifying Your Identity
to Government Agencies Using the Internet**

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND
ANSWERS ABOUT THIS NEW SERVICE**

A new service is being introduced as a way for people to verify their identity to government agencies online and in real-time to a high level of confidence.

The proposed **identity verification service** is part of igovt. Igovt is the working title for a group of online services that will help people to interact securely with government agencies online. Another key component of igovt is the government logon service, which will work in combination with the identity verification service.

The government now wants to hear your views on this proposed **identity verification service**. In particular:

- What you think about verifying your identity to government agencies using the Internet; and
- What you think about the **identity verification service**.

To send you views, you can:

- Complete a submission response form online at **www.dia.govt.nz/idconsult**, or
- Download a submission response form from **www.dia.govt.nz/idconsult** to type and email your views, or
- Download a submission response form to complete by hand and post (call 0800 432 667 if you would like us to send you a form instead of downloading it).
- You can also write to us without using the submission response form.

Submissions returned by post should be sent to:

The Department of Internal Affairs
Identity Verification Consultation
freepost idconsult
PO Box 10526
The Terrace
Wellington 6143

(Note: No postage stamp is required if you quote 'freepost idconsult').

Submissions returned by email should be sent to **idconsult@dia.govt.nz**.

Please ensure your submission reaches the Department of Internal Affairs by 4pm on Friday 7 December 2007.

For further information about the new service go to **www.dia.govt.nz/idconsult** for the booklet called 'Information for Public Consultation'.

For further information about the **consultation process**, phone 0800 idconsult (0800 432 667).



This document has been prepared by the Department of Internal Affairs and the State Services Commission. It is intended to provide you with information on the proposed new service. Below are answers to some of the questions that people have asked so far about the new service. Other documents and a submission response form have been prepared and are available from www.dia.govt.nz/idconsult.

What is the service and what's it for?

The purpose of the new service is to allow you to use the Internet as a more convenient way to prove who you are when you are dealing with government agencies.

To use some government services, people need to verify who they are. For example, government agencies cannot provide services that involve the exchange of money or personal information unless they have verified your identity. They can only provide services, such as student allowances, if they are sure about who they are dealing with.

Currently, proving your identity to government agencies can require you to provide multiple documents, which can take time. Additionally, different agencies can require different forms of identification and you can't always do it online.

The new service aims to give you a way to do this that is quick, safe, and easy while protecting your privacy at the same time. Using the Internet provides you with the convenience of anytime/anywhere access.

The new service won't replace other methods of verifying identity. If you prefer, other ways of verifying your identity when accessing government services can be used, such as visiting the relevant government agency office or by post.

We would like to know whether you are likely to use the Internet to verify your identity with a government agency.

How will the service work?

There are two steps: joining the service and using the service.

Joining the service

You have to apply to join the service.

- In many cases, a government agency will have already established your identity to a high level of confidence. If you already have a New Zealand passport or grant of citizenship, you can apply to join the service without having to go through the identity establishment step all over again.
- In other cases, you will have to submit documents and may have to go through other processes to establish your identity – a lot like applying for a passport.
- Having established your identity, your core identity information (name/s, date of birth, place of birth, and sex) will be electronically recorded and held securely in a database.
- A username, password, and token (or something similar) will be provided. A "token" is a physical device that can be used to provide extra security, over and above a username and password. Together, they are like the "logon". They are required whenever the service is to be accessed.

This process is like obtaining and using a bankcard – an account and PIN number must be set up before the card can be used.

Using the service

Once you have joined, you can use the service to verify your identity to a government agency whenever you need to, using the Internet.

- First, you will go to the website of the government agency providing the service you require.
- From there, you will be re-directed to the igovt website, which will ask for logon details.
- Once you log on, you will be able to view your identity information and then consent to it being sent to the specific government agency through the Internet. This all happens while online.
- You will then be re-directed back to the original government agency website which will now know who you are and enable access to the service you require.
- The logon can also be used for ongoing access to that government agency's online services.

This process is instantaneous and seamless.

What kinds of things could I use the service for?

The new service could help people to complete, online, the proof of identity aspect of an activity such as renewing a passport or applying for a student loan. There may be other steps that need to be taken to complete these activities, but the new service will help with any part that requires a person to prove who they are online.

The new service could result in more government services being available using the Internet, including those that require a person's identity to be verified at a high-level of confidence, for example applying for a passport renewal.

We would like to hear from you regarding the type of services you might want to access that require you to verify your identity.

Will I have to join the service?

It's completely up to you whether or not you choose to join, or use the service once you have joined. You are in control and can decide whether or not you want to use the identity verification service. You have to give permission each time your identity information is sent to any other agency. You can choose to stop using it any time you like.

Is it only for government services?

Over time, government may consider extending the service so that people can choose to use it to also verify their identity to businesses and other organisations.

We would like to know what you think of being able to verify your identity with businesses and other organisations.

How secure is my information?

Security of personal information has been a major consideration in the design of the service. Some of the very best security standards, practices and guidelines available will be used to protect information, both while in transit and storage.

For example:

- The only way that a government agency can be sent your identity information using this service is if you access the service using your personal logon details, and give permission.
- The service will provide you with an online way of checking your own service history, including which agencies you have used the service with.
- There will be regular independent reviews by experts to provide ongoing assurance that the security measures are working as intended.

We would like to know whether you believe that verifying your identity using the Internet can be sufficiently secure.

Is my privacy protected by the service?

All services under igovt, including the identity verification service, are being designed with a strong commitment to protecting your privacy.

A comprehensive range of privacy measures are proposed, including new laws, technical design, and appropriate administration of the service.

In particular, the technical design is such that the sharing of personal or collective information about your activities with other parties is not possible using the service. The service itself only knows your core identity information (name/s, date of birth, place of birth, and sex).

Each agency involved with the service will identify you in a different way using an identifier or code unique to that agency. There will be no external national unique identifier. There is no way for agencies to share information about anyone through this service.

The Privacy Commissioner has been kept informed of the proposal. Privacy assessments will be ongoing. Previous Privacy Impact Assessments are available online at www.e.govt.nz/services/authentication/library/docs.

We would like to hear from you about whether you believe the identity verification service will ensure your privacy is protected.

Is the service just another name for a national identity card?

The new **identity verification service** is not a national identity card. It has a number of features that clearly make it different.

- National ID cards are mandatory. The new identity verification service is not. A person has a choice as to whether they join, or use the new service.
- A person's identity information (and possibly much more) is held on an ID card. The new identity verification service only stores a minimum amount of core identity information (name/s, date of birth, place of birth and sex). This information is held securely in a database.
- All of a person's identity information is available through an ID card, even if that information is not required. The new identity verification service gives agencies only the information they require.
- A national ID card typically can enable biometric information (e.g. fingerprints), to be passed electronically to another agency. The new identity verification service will not do this.
- Checking for theft or identity fraud is more difficult when using an ID card. The new identity verification service does that each time it is used.

How often will I have to establish my identity?

One of the major aims of the new service is that an identity will only have to be established with government once. You can then avoid the cost and effort of repeatedly having to provide documents to

those government agencies using this service to prove who you are.

Once you have established your identity, you will be able to use the service to access agencies that use the service, as many times as you like. However, identity verification credentials, which will be supplied to users as part of the service, will expire and need to be renewed every 5 years to ensure the integrity and security of the service.

We would like to hear whether you think the identity verification service will be useful to you.

When will I be able to use the service?

The new service is proposed to be introduced in phases, beginning in 2009 and within existing laws. Initially, people who have received a New Zealand passport or grant of citizenship in the previous 5 years will be eligible to join the service as they will have the most up-to-date verified identities and photos.

Then, over time, processes will be developed to cover those who have received permanent residence in the last 5 years. Eventually, the service will be extended to establish people's identity "from scratch" so that any person who wants to join the service can do so.

From 2010, or once new laws are in place, the full-service version will be introduced and made available more widely. The intention is that the identity verification service will be available to everyone who can establish their identity to the standards required by the Department of Internal Affairs and who accepts the service's terms and conditions.

We would like your thoughts on whether people who don't have a New Zealand passport or grant of citizenship should be able to register in the initial phase of the service.

How would I get help if I have a problem using the service?

There will be a helpdesk and other customer support when help is needed. The helpdesk will be able to sort out problems with username, password, lost tokens, or any problem with logging on, joining, using or leaving igovt or in accessing services.

What if I am unhappy, or have a complaint about the service?

If you have a complaint about the actions and decisions of any government agency, you can have it considered by an Ombudsman. If you have a complaint about protection of your privacy that is not satisfactorily resolved by the agency's privacy officer, you can lodge a complaint with the Office of the Privacy Commissioner.

Will I have to pay for the service?

At this point there has been no final decision on charging you for using the new identity verification service. We would welcome your views on this.

We are interested to know whether you feel that people should pay to use the service.

Who's behind the service?

The Department of Internal Affairs is working together with the State Services Commission to develop the service.

What's this consultation for?

We want people to know how this proposed new service will work, and what you think of it. The service has been developed to make it easier for you to prove who you are and access a wide range of government services online, so we need to know if you think we've got it right.

What happens after the consultation?

The Department of Internal Affairs will receive a report covering all of the views that have been expressed throughout the consultation process.

All the views expressed will be carefully analysed and used to refine the design of the service as well as in development of supporting legislation.

A report on the consultation will be made publicly available online. If you prefer, we can email it to you. If you would like an emailed copy, you will need to supply your email address at the end of your submission.

No individual will be identified in the report. The report will focus on the themes that come out of the consultation rather than singling out individual views.

Where can I get more information?

If further information on the proposed service is required, go to www.dia.govt.nz/idconsult for the booklet called 'Information for Public Consultation'.

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How do I send in my views?

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